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**CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**

**Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd**

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**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROMOTIONAL  
STRATEGIES DESIGNED TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN  
WOMENS FOOTBALL: A FOCUS UPON ENGLAND AND  
WALES**

**(Dissertation submitted under the Management &  
Development area)**

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PARTICIPATION IN WOMENS FOOTBALL: A FOCUS  
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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

DCMS – Department for Culture Media and Sport

FIFA – Federal International Football Association

WHO – World Health Organisation

WSSF – Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation

FAWSL – Football Association Women’s Super League

WSL – Women’s Super League

PE – Physical Education

CASE – Culture and Sport Evidence

WSWG - The Women and Sport Working Group

HSE- Health Survey for England

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## **ABSTRACT**

The awareness and representation of football has always been male dominated, however recent literature has highlighted a steady increase in girls participation of football over the years. This paper intends to explore and analyse the marketing strategies that has initially accelerated women's participation in football. Primarily, focus will be given upon the Barriers affecting participation and foresee an insight towards the understanding of Health Benefits generated from participation in sport.

This research gains an in depth understanding of female's perception upon the marketing strategies implemented to increase women's participation in football and whether they are sufficient. A qualitative mixed method approach was utilized in the form a questionnaire consisting of closed-ended and open-ended questions. Additionally, a purposive sample group of females 18+ years were approached to take part in the research study in order to gain acuity within the current promotional strategies and highlight their effectiveness in increasing female participation in football. The analysis of the results emerged key themes in which were coded (a) Health Benefits in Physical Activity, (b) Barriers in Women's Football (c) Promotional Strategies in Women's Football. The main findings from this research study indicated that there still remains the concern of Gender Roles within football however the emphasis upon promotional strategies within women's football is continuing to remain effective and increase participation levels as the Olympics 2012 evidently portrayed.

# **CHAPTER I:**

## **Introduction**

## **1.0 Introduction**

According to Sport England (2010), there has been a steady acceleration in people playing sport during the year 2012. In comparison to previous years, this has significantly increased around 1.4 million more people participating in physical activity. These higher than average statistics received from the Active People Survey during summer 2012, show a rise in participation levels after the London 2012 Olympic Games. However, through recent findings, Livingstone (2003) argues that the decreasing participation rates in sport and physical activity are an active growing concern for the nation. Despite potential benefits from physical activity and sport, there is still a wide scope across the UK of adults and children who are inactive to meet required recommendations each week (Sport England 2010). As Coleman & Schofield (2005) discuss this has been noted in a recent review over adolescents. The importance of sport activity is essential and the requirement of inducing a healthy and active lifestyle may lead to prevention of sedentary illnesses (Bramham & Hylton 2008).

There are many research studies established on sports participation, which state that there was a significant increase in participation among young people since the 1980's (Roberts, 1996; Sport England, 2003; 2008.) However according to Howard (1992) he identifies from a research study that women exhibit less participation than men through the years 1996-1997. Reflection upon this, marketing implications and other factors may have altered statistics in comparison to participation trends today. The fluctuation of participation trends in physical activity evidently suggest there was no steady ultimatum for young adults to engage within sport. As a consequence the government created initiative programmes and policies that would promote participation and international success to create sustainability within sport and physical activity (Department for Culture Media and Sport 2002).

During the period of April 2012/13, the Active People Survey portrays 15.3 million people played sport at least once a week. Significantly the recognition of sport and physical activity from the government plays an active role in increasing rates throughout the country. According to the DCMS (2012) the UK Government, who are ensuring Physical Education remains compulsory in schools upon the national curriculum, are funding a sum of £160m into community facilities to ensure rates of participation from grassroots level notice acceleration. Large investments from the

London 2012 bid are hoping to increase sport participation from a young age. In addition to this, the rise in participation of women's football is slowly accelerating.

In 2006 an estimated 26 million females played football, with 4.1 million of those being registered players (Women and Girls Football Strategy 2008). There is a huge push to promote women's football even more intensively from the associations, where the development structure is secure. As UEFA has created an innovative programme for women's football development, the aim to increase awareness of females in football is a major concern. Chalin (2013) discusses that the basic goal of achieving their objectives include; increasing attendance at women's league matches, making the domestic league more attractive and overall boosting revenue streams for a sustainable future. As well as working with other partnerships such as the WSL, promoting the image of women's football from grassroots to elite level is an important factor.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The aim of this research study is to critically analyse the findings of the promotional strategies designed to increase female participation in football. Upon this, evidence can be portrayed on the factors why women's participation is accelerating in comparison to previous years. Developing an understanding as to why more women and girls are participating in sport and physical activity can lead to further promotion to maintain participation levels. Additionally, the results assembled from this study have the potential to impact a sustainable involvement within physical activity for women particularly and discourage stereotypical gender roles in sport.

In the meeting of this aim, three key objectives were to explore the following:

- 1) Identify the barriers that diminish female participation in physical activity
- 2) Recognize the potential benefits that are associated with physical activity involvement
- 3) Explore the range of promotional strategies used in order to increase women's participation in football.

**CHAPTER II:**  
**Literature Review**

## **2.1 Introduction**

This section will include a range of factors that are important towards the study. The literature review will focus upon topic areas relating to the research of the study. Relevant theories will be underpinned; including peer reviewed articles, journals and referenced online sources, in order to find external research data that has already been established within the subject area. These topic areas will outline the barriers affecting women to participate in sport and the benefits of sport and physical activity. Further discussed will specifically be focused upon women's participation in sport, and women who are involved in football. In order to gain extensive data to analyse for the study, a focus upon the promotional strategies used to involve women within sport will be discussed. As Gratton and Jones (2010, p.55) state the purpose of the literature review is to 'provide an outline of the relevant theories and concepts important within research project'.

## **2.2 Women in Sport**

The dominance of males in sport and physical activity is still apparent within society (Women, Gender Equality & Sport 2007, p.3). Messner & Sabo (1990) arguably discuss that sport is created for men and designed for men only. Regarding boys and men within sport it is often seen as a traditional natural event; whereas women's participation in sport is not perceived in the same way Scratton & Flintoff (2002). This may significantly relate to a series of potential barriers that are still inhibiting women's involvement within sport activity such as negative school experiences, lack of role models, competitive classes, and boy's dominance (Allender et al 2006).

Findings upon previous research demonstrated profuse lack of coverage for women's sport in independent media outlets (Cuneen and Sidwell 1988). With gender and body identity still pursuing in sport, female athletes find it difficult to overcome the subdued factors in competing with traditional male sports (Women, Gender, Equality and Sport 2007). A comparison against traditional female stereotypes with female athletes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, women are now emerging themselves into the sporting world, (Wilde, 2015). As Wilde (2015) continues to discuss, this is evident through increasing levels of participation and significant changes in the attitudes and awareness of women's sport. Conversely traditional gender stereotypes continue to prevail (Women, Gender, Equality and Sport 2007

p.12). Nevertheless, Harding & Whiteside (2009) discuss that the reported number of females' involvement within competitive football has risen over time. Recently, there has been acknowledgement of successful female athletes from a study carried out (Chinurum, Ogunjimi & O'Neill, 2014). These have become role models for younger female athletes demonstrating they can compete and succeed in male dominant sports (Giuliano, Turner, Lundquist & Knight 2010).

It is apparent that from extensive study investigations (Sport England 2013) boys are more likely to participate in sports and physical activity throughout secondary school age, in comparison to girls. The gender imbalance then becomes more pronounced throughout the teenage years (14-15 year old). As founded by Balding (2004) the proportion of girls within this age transition participate in minimal physical activity sports on a weekly basis and as statistics show this has remained stable at around 15% to 20% from 1992-2003. In evidence to support these findings there are a number of additional reviews based upon physical activity levels founded from Biddle *et al.*, (2005).

Upon research findings, the first Olympic Games (776 B.C.) were privilege and pleasure of men only (Ponorac, Palija and Popović, 2013). It wasn't until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century where women in sport made progression and were gradually included into a range of sporting activities; as Genel *et al.*, (2010) discusses that there has always been great controversy when associating females with competitive sport. According to the Wales Active Adults Survey (2010) they support this statement as they indicate that 47% of adult males are more likely to participate in sport compared to 31% of females. Matthews *et al.*, (2012) believed that the opportunities for females to engage in sport were scarce at grass roots level; which made it difficult for women and girls to venture and begin new sports. From this statement a series of factors could relate to the lack of opportunities available and why they inhibited women and girls confidence. There are many physical and physiological characteristics associated with sport, and these have reflectively been considered unsuitable for females (Sallis 1995). Further underpinned research from the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (2011) recognised that 1.5 million fewer women than men participate in regular exercise. In essence, this may reflect upon the potential barriers that affect female's decision to participate in physical activity.

### **2.3 Barriers for Women in Physical Activity**

Previous studies have focused upon the factors in which affect participation levels that are low or decreasing, in order to implement strategies to increase and promote physical activity, (Seefeldt, Malina and Clark, 2002). Creating these interventions and acknowledging the factors could help raise participation levels within England and Wales. From a recent survey published Sport England (2009), there were a selection of apparent barriers including time, lack of women's facilities, lack of role models, and other commitments.

Underpinned research from a study systematically examining reasons for participation and non-participation in sport for UK children and adults, highlights that young women perceive barriers such as, appearing overly masculine, lacking confidence and competence in core skills (Allender, Cowburn & Foster, 2006). The review of this qualitative study evolved around collecting data within 1990-2004; it emphasised potential barriers and motivational aspects towards participation in sport and physical activity. These included amongst younger adults, peer pressure, identity conflict, and lack of teacher support (Allender *et al*; 2006). Allender (2006) goes on to discuss that between childhood and adulthood phase, there is possible links to factors affecting participation in sport. These barriers may include personal and environmental issues (Bailey *et al.*, 2015).

With particular focus upon women and young adults Coakley and White (1992) discuss that negative experiences during school, sport appeared to be a major discouraging factor for participation. In essence, the article is dated portraying unreliable research data, where society may have changed and this is no longer a perceived barrier. A limitation from this study, may reflect upon own individual experiences and how many young adults were researched to display this data.

Flintoff & Scratton (2001) stated that the disruption of boys in mixed gender PE classes was a main impediment to girl's participation. They both argue that with the competitive aspect of sport girls were actively marginalized in PE class as they felt they were not able to be involved. However upon this government initiatives in schools have led to girls and boys PE classes to be separated (Gender Associations, 2013). Gender stereotyping can impact girl's participation in sport, in particular within male dominant sports (Women, Gender, Equality and Sport 2007). Mulvihill *et al.*,

(2001) and Coakley & White (1992) both argue that gender stereotyping has significant negative effects regarding women's involvement in sport, particularly when limited female role models consist in these sports such as football and rugby. However women taking part in physical activities are growing; such as swimming, aerobics and walking GHS (1998). A limitation regarding this study links to the date reaching almost 20 years old, when trends within women's sport may have fluctuated. Coakley and White (1992) debate the gender imbalance and noted that boys discouraged their girlfriends from taking part in physical activity as it portrayed them as unfeminine and masculine.

A number of studies from Porter (2002), Orme (1991) and Coakley (1992), state that PE uniforms became an impediment to girls participating in physical activity within school. A limitation towards this study concludes that only 24 papers were analysed from the undertaking of the project. This reflects upon a small focus group who responded with this barrier which limits reliable research data.

From an extensive study report a questionnaire was conducted to a series of 688 young people (including 366 girls), and a focus group of 182 girl participants. The study drew upon a number of key findings that display why women and girls are not involved in physical activity as much as men and boys (Whitehead et al., 2005). Results showed that girls see sport as being too competitive and regard sport as being more of a masculine thing, therefore inappropriate for them. Other findings highlighted that there is a significant decline in physical activity levels during the teenage years. They justify this factor with responding lack of time is a major aspect of being inactive. Other studies from Kientzler (1999) suggest that girls found other things to do with their time which may be an explanation for inactivity levels for females. As well as work pressure, dissatisfaction with school PE classes, inaccessibility to sport clubs and being sweaty, (Michael *et al.*, 1972) discusses that these reduce women and girls to participate in physical activity.

#### **2.4 Health Benefits in Participation**

Research in which sport and physical activity has a positive impact on health, has portrayed that regular engagement within physical activity enhances health and well-being for women and girls (Auster, 2008; Brady, 2005; Clark and Paechter, 2007).

According to (Powell et al 1996), it is generally accepted that physical activity confers benefits to psychological health, functional ability and general quality of life. As Batty and Lee (2004) both reiterate that exercise has proven to reduce the risk of Coronary Heart Disease. However in terms of the activity providing health benefits it is apparent that the physical activity must be at least moderate intensity (Hallal *et al.*, 2006). From a national adult survey conducted from DCMS (2002) adults should be completing thirty minutes of moderate physical activity at least five times a week, with children undertaking sixty minutes of moderate physical activity and exercise five times a week. With consistent visions set in place more relevant statistics drawn from the DCMS (2012) they aim to specifically focus upon adolescents between those aged 14-25 years. With regular engagement in physical activity and a more productive role in everyday life, for older women, it can contribute to prevention of cardiovascular disease, which account for one third of deaths among women around the world (WHO 2007b). As well as this there is indication that it may decrease or slow down the onset of osteoporosis in women which according to United Nations (2003) women are more likely to develop than men (Crissey and Honea, 2006).

Nonetheless, there are other justifications as to why young people should become more physically active. As Powell *et al.*, (2011) discusses that 'some activity is better than none, and more is better than some'. Sport England (2010) examines the potential benefits through the Culture and Sport Evidence (CASE) programme led by the DCMS. Published studies signify that young people's participation in sport improves their numeracy scores by 8% on average above non-participants (DCMS 2010).

From a study proposed (Silvestri 1997), 44 middle class men were surveyed concerning their perceived benefits of physical activity. The results conveyed 91% of the men reported physical benefits of being active with weight reduction and endurance gains as their main reasons. The study also indicated that 80% of the participants (33 of the 44 individuals) stated that their membership fees in a fitness club were paid for by their employer. The study recommends that activity is to be maintained after school and the importance of involving individuals in instructional sport classes to pursue and maintain the physical, emotional and social benefits of exercise and participation (Silvestri 1997). Critically identifying the data collected, it suggests that the benefits do hold for adults as well as participation through high

school. In particular the findings from this article reflect only men partaking in the data recordings. This significantly indicates a difference in results as female and male participation in physical activity would reveal diverse data. Regarding a limitation of the survey a potential issue may relate to the survey instrument used to gather data. As the survey was a short set of questions it restricts the respondents' opportunity to express further views and opinions upon the questions asked.

## **2.5 Females in football**

As Lopez (1997) discusses that from extensive study research traditional male dominant sports such as football are rapidly growing with women participating. However in comparison to men women's football has significantly been discouraged particularly in early years (Chinurum *et al.*, 2014). In 1921, the Football Association had publicly banned women from playing on football league grounds and states that 'the game of football is quite unsuitable for females and ought not to be encouraged' (Fasting, 2006 & Football Association 2001). This ban was related to the unsuccessful popularity of female football and the threat of masculinity (Creedon, 1994).

Creedon (1998) stated that previously the recognition of female athletes within the media was invisible, due to the stereotypical views society held over women participating in sport. However, the development of women's football is continually growing and is currently ranked most popular team sport for women (The Football Association 2001). In wales this is evidently demonstrated from the growth of around 4000 registered players since 2000 (UEFA, 2013b). This data emphasizes how overtime women's participation in sport, particularly football, has become increasingly popular.

Regarding women's involvement in football 2011 was proved to be a pivotal year for female football in the UK (The Football Association, 2001). A new, elite summer league was launched by the FA named Football Association Women's Super League (FAWSL). With the introduction of the new semi-professional league the concept of FAWSL involved women in the UK competing from different clubs highlighting the very top of the elite structure. These games were frequently televised live which pushed recognition of women's football (TheFAWSL, 2001).

In Wales the Football Association launched a new strategic report including a 10 year prospectus for women's football in 2013. Fundamentally the target goals during this period included participation, investment, and increasing the profile. Presented within the new strategy there is focus upon grassroots level with encouragement for increased participation and involvement in refereeing and coaching elements. From this there is a clear pathway for female referees to progress to an international status in women's football (UEFA, 2013a).

## **2.6 Representation of Women in Sports Media**

In research on gender within sport one of the largest trends is the lack of coverage of women's sport (Adams & Tuggle, 2004; Duncan, Messner & Willms, 2005). Despite the growing participation levels, increasing professional leagues and growing popularity with women in sport; there are ongoing patterns regarding lack of media coverage for females. A research study from Messner *et al.*, (2003) included the examination of local and national televised news media coverage of men and women's sport. These results reflected that between 1989 and 1999 there was a gradual increase in coverage for females. From this the increase from 5% in 1989, to 9% in 1999 did not improve the amount of coverage for females in sport. As Messner *et al.*, (2003) carried out this study over 12 years ago; it is valuable to acknowledge recent dated studies in order to portray relevant comparisons. However women in the sport media have always been silenced and trivialized against men. There are similar studies from (Adams & Tuggle, 2004; Tuggle 1997) in which reflect recent statistics. In 2002 two professional women's leagues were examined. Whilst assumption from researchers that the amount of coverage in women's sport would increase from the 1995 sample, it had in fact declined over the years.

The media's differential coverage of men and women's sport has always been significant in society (Greer *et al.*, 2009; Kian *et al.*, 2008; Vincent, 2004). It is perceived that the above trends are partly due to the fact the editors of sport events are male (Lapchick, 2008). Elsewhere Lapchick (2006) goes onto discuss how the ideological worldview of male reporters editors and columnists have a huge impact upon which sports get covered and how the athletes get represented. Kian & Hardin (2009) back up this statement as they argue female sport writers are more likely to frame female athletes.

Over time there has been countless research into the mass media of women in sport. This has been exploited through many theories, articles and books by numerous authors but as Creedon (2002 p.89) reiterates there is little agreement on how powerful the media actually is. There is controversy in today's society why women do not receive equal amount of media coverage in comparison to men (Creedon, 1994). Media coverage within women's sport remains influenced by gender stereotypes (Women, Gender and Equality in Sport 2007). In consequence, Creedon (2002) argues that professional football remains a male only preserve. He also states that denying women access to the game as players they remain less powerful and physical than men (Creedon 2002). Even though women's football currently has a well-regarded player pathway and a strong centre of excellence infrastructure there is still investigation into successfully increasing participation and the outlet of promotional strategies used.

As a reflection upon today's society digital media is now more apparent. Girginov *et al.*, (2009) considered the design of Web sites for marketing activities within a Canadian national sport organisation. Significantly the use of social media tools have become a collection of open-source, knowledge and expanding the experiences of participants (Constantinides & Foundation, 2008, p. 252). In 2008 significant changes within sport media concluded from the Beijing Olympics. The value of the internet and web became more apparent over the duration of the Olympics and global attraction (Boyle & Whalan 2010b, p.356). According to Bernstein (2002) over the last decade women have made advances in competitive sport. The popularity threshold for online sport shone through during this year of 2008, as there were reports of 53 million people in China who watched the games through online streaming (Global Sports Media 2012). Significantly the digital media has progressively encountered success and this has effected sports contribution to promotion, attraction and awareness. In previous years sponsorship has been difficult to entice people through lack of media outlets. In today's society women in the media are accelerating upwards; thus the increase of participation is gradually rising (Hutchins and Rowe, 2012).

### **2.6.1 Role Models**

Gibson (2004 p.136) defines a role model as a cognitive construction in which individuals perceive similar to him or herself to some extent and desires to increase similarity by emulating those attributes. There is empirical evidence that males only select athletic role models of the same gender and females tend to select male, athletic role models instead of female (Adriaanse & Crosswhite, 2008 Bricheno & Thornton, 2007, Bromnick & Swallow 1999 and Vescio *et al.*, 2005). Upon the use of social media tools the image of male athletes may have a higher status than female athletes; thus concluding to selection of role models. Role models have great impact upon children's participation in physical activity as according to World Health Organisation (2004). Significant research studies show that boys and girls tend to attribute role models differently whereby girls tend to look up to parents as models, whilst boys look upon sport stars (Reijer *et al.*, 2002). Upon further research findings this may be evident due to the lack of female sporting role models existing. However as Lewko & Greendorfer (1978) discuss that as well sporting role models there are other effective role models including: peers, teachers, parents, or coaches. With many perceived barriers in sport it may lead to non-participation which can create potential health problems for the future (Mason 1995a).

From a case study in Guyana (Women, gender equality and sport 2007), 'The Women and Sport Working Group' established under youth and sports promoted female role models in sport through the course of an International Women's Day where celebrations were held in 2001. This included a showcase of over 300 athletes competing in 15 different sports in which the 'WSWG' organised to be televised to the nation highlighting females in sport at all levels.

### **2.7 Rationale**

From the discussed literature it is acknowledged that women's football is gradually increasing with participation levels and recognition. However there are still a number of supposed barriers that females are discouraged from participating even acknowledging a number of health benefits. The purpose of this study is to identify these key themes through setting 3 objectives: (a) Health Benefits, (b) Barriers for Women, (c) Promotional Strategies in football, which would underline what makes football so popular with women and girls in comparison to previous years. As a

proposed study there is further research required to explore the promotional strategies to increase women's football involvement, and how to sustain this.

**CHAPTER III:**  
**Methodology and Research Design**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter addresses the research design and methodology implemented for this study. The aim of the study was to explore and conduct an analysis upon the promotional strategies designed to increase participation in women's football. Investigating into the study consists of generating feelings and views from female footballers who are still engaged within football. The analysis of these results can correspond with the objectives for this study, which include:

- i. Identifying the potential barriers that may reduce female participation
- ii. The awareness of marketing strategies in sport, in particular women's football.
- iii. Highlighting the health benefits that are associated from involvement within sport participation

### **3.2 Research Design**

The proposed research study will adopt a mixed method approach whereby qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches will be used to analyse the research question. The questionnaire will comprise of using mixed methods simultaneously including the use of open-ended and closed-ended questions.

The research philosophy of the study would adopt an Interpretivist approach. Livesy, (2006) states that interpretivist methodology refers to the collation of qualitative data using methods such as unstructured interviews, participant observation and questionnaires. In addition Smith and Stewart (2001) noted that utilising qualitative techniques the researcher is able to determine the views and perceptions rather than simply measuring behaviour. It is important to choose a method suitable for the research purpose as it prophesies relevant findings. When generating the data there is room for unexpected findings and it is important have a degree of flexibility as Smith and Stewart (2001) outline.

### **3.3 Research Methodology**

Markula & Silk (2011) stated that qualitative research can be assembled through a number of different methodological approaches and practices such as interviews, questionnaires or case studies. Both authors added that no single methodological

practise is privileged over another. For that reason the appropriate research method designed for this particular study was formulated by means of an online questionnaire. The use of questionnaire data is an appropriate tool for this analysis as it enquires an array of questions directed at a specific small scale target group of female footballing individuals.

### **3.4 Sampling**

The process of determining a sample (Amis 2005) states that the participants who are able to give a detailed understanding and insight towards the phenomenon being explored are crucial. The participants required for the study will range from females who are still active in playing football, to women who are no longer involved. The sample group will be a small concentrated selection of people to gain a more profound understanding (Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling was adopted for this study in order to recruit specific female footballers from Cardiff Metropolitan Ladies FC and Crewe Alexandra FC. These selected clubs were useful as the researcher was affiliated to both of these, enabling easy access and a variable comparison between England and Wales to analyse the distribution of success and knowledge in both countries. Subsequently there were limitations to this particular type of sampling. Groger and Mayberry (1999) suggest that there is doubt on the validity of sample generated using certain methods. These include gatekeeper bias which means the participants somehow take control of the sampling of respondents; this could relate to participants completing the questionnaire in pairs or together.

Any participants under the age of 18 will be excluded as the target audience will age around 18-30. As the intention was to reduce the amount of variables from the survey, the differentiation between male and female did not need to be compared so therefore gender was not a desired variable (Davies 2007). As Davies (2007) adds that strategic sampling involves selecting people, situations or experience which will help to explore the research question and effectively enable the development of theoretical ideas.

### **3.5 Pilot Study**

A pilot study of the questionnaire was conducted and delivered to the participants who met the criteria for the study (See Appendix C1). Before developing the finalised

questionnaire the first draft was distributed in a word document format with the intention to highlight any concerns or areas to improve upon. This enabled the researcher to test the methods and provide valuable informative feedback on whether the survey was produced in a logical format. As Gillham (2000) reiterates that the wording of questions are important as it can cause ambiguity; as a result of this a pilot study was issued so the participants would fully understand the questions. The pilot study underlined some key areas to adjust before implementing the final version as the layout of each section was not clear and concise for the participants to easily read. These changes were applied in sectioning the questionnaire with distinguished headings.

### **3.6 Data Collection**

Oppenheim (1992) stated that questions should be as open and projective as possible in order to avoid the possibility of directing preconceived ideas towards the participants. The proposed questionnaire included closed questions and open ended questions which enabled personal views to be gathered from female participants. This is an important factor for this study as the use of questionnaire research tool allowed the data collected to be based upon the feelings and thoughts of the females; to therefore gain an extended understanding of how promotional strategies within women's football had a great influence upon increasing participation levels (Gratton and Jones, 2010). However, there were some closed questions included which Gillham (2000) described as answers that are pre-determined. A cluster of questions were accumulated into key themed areas, in order to predetermine effective analysis and evaluation. Particular questions were accustomed for literature comparison from the Sport Wales (Adults Active Survey 2012).

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Thoroughly analysing data enables the researcher to draw upon all the information from the responses of the questionnaires. As Sparkes & Smith (2014) state that 'data cannot speak for itself' thus analysis is an important process. It allows the researcher to analyse prominent results to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon and describe what is learnt through minimal interruption (Maykut & Moorehouse, 1994). Consequently without the requirement of cautious analysis, data could be unnoticed leading to the outcome becoming unreliable.

A thematic analysis was adopted once the data was collected. Braun & Clarke (2006) described this particular tool as the ability to minimally organise and describe the proposed data in great detail. To facilitate the thematic analysis key themes were highlighted and acknowledged in a format of tables and figures using Microsoft Excel and Word. It was important to identify these themes in order to answer the research question. A coded system would enable a clear analysis of open ended responses within the questionnaire to help distinguish common themes. As Dawson (2009) described content analysis as a method in which acknowledged common themes in the research tool in order to highlight them when the thematic analysis is undertaken.

### **3.8 Validity & Reliability**

Wainer and Braun (1998) describe validity within qualitative research as the initial concept in which determines what data is going to be gathered and how. In order to pledge the use of validity in the online questionnaire a participation information sheet (See Appendix A-1) outline the key definitions and instructions before executing the questionnaire would be included. This allows a greater understanding of the intentions of the study and would ideally portray more detailed feedback within the answers. Another key validity issue measured was ensuring participants understood the format of the questions therefore a pilot study was conducted to adhere towards a valid study.

Assessing the reliability of questionnaires they allow large amounts of data to be composed in a limited period of time. As Hanney *et al.*, (1999) declares questionnaires are less time consuming than an interview approach. Thus, this being a suitable research tool to benefit the three objectives of the study.

### **3.9 Ethical Consideration**

As Boynton & Greenhalgh (2004) understood that a research study must be processed via the ethics committee and accepted before the research commences. Any information gathered during the research project, it was important for the researcher to obtain ethics clearance to ensure any problems are sufficiently addressed prior to commencement of the study (Devers & Frankel, 2000b, p. 266-267). Therefore, the ethical procedures and precautions were validated previous to the study by Cardiff Metropolitan University. It was necessary for all participants who

were involved within the study to complete a consent form (See Appendix C-1) before filling out the questionnaire (De Vause 2002). Anonymity of the participants was protected, and confidentiality was stated and preserved throughout the whole process.

## **CHAPTER IV:**

### **Results**

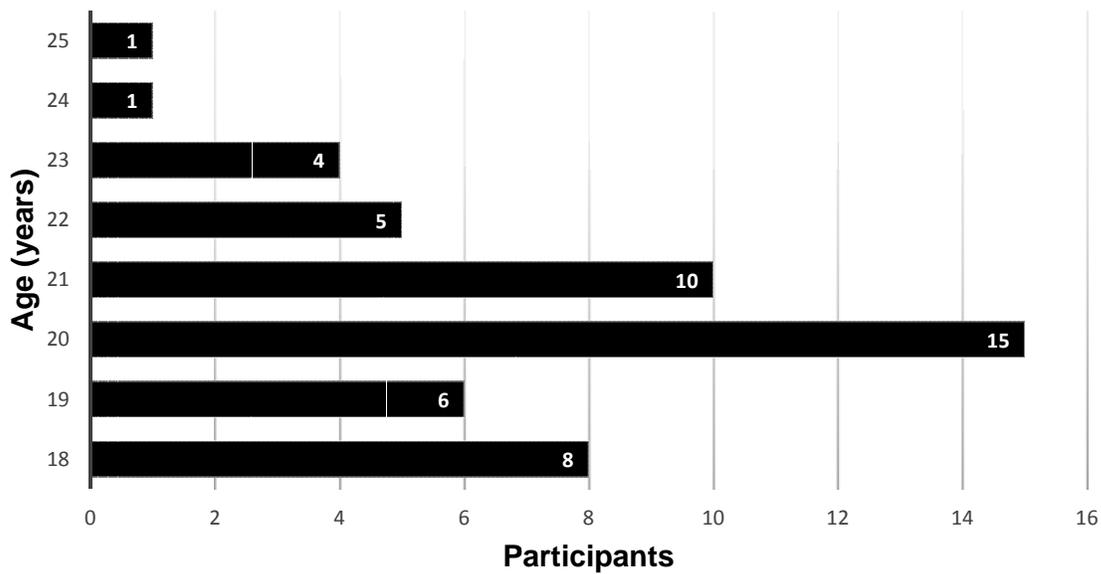
## **4.1 Introduction**

Chapter III has discussed the process of implementing the data. In this chapter relevant findings from the questionnaires have been organised into key themes which coincide with the proposed objectives in order to answer the research question. These themes include Health Benefits, Barriers for Participation and Promotion in Women's Football. The particular questions chosen for individual analysis were shortlisted for their immediate substance.

### **4.1.1 Sample Information**

Fifty-three questionnaires were completed in total and there was no gender split with 100% female feedback. The age profile of participants in Figure 1 were 18-25 with the mean age of individuals (n=21.5). The protocol of the purposive study targeted young female footballers with a mode age range of 20, which indicated the most popular sample age. In reflection upon literature findings the sample age differs therefore there is limitation on this particular age range.

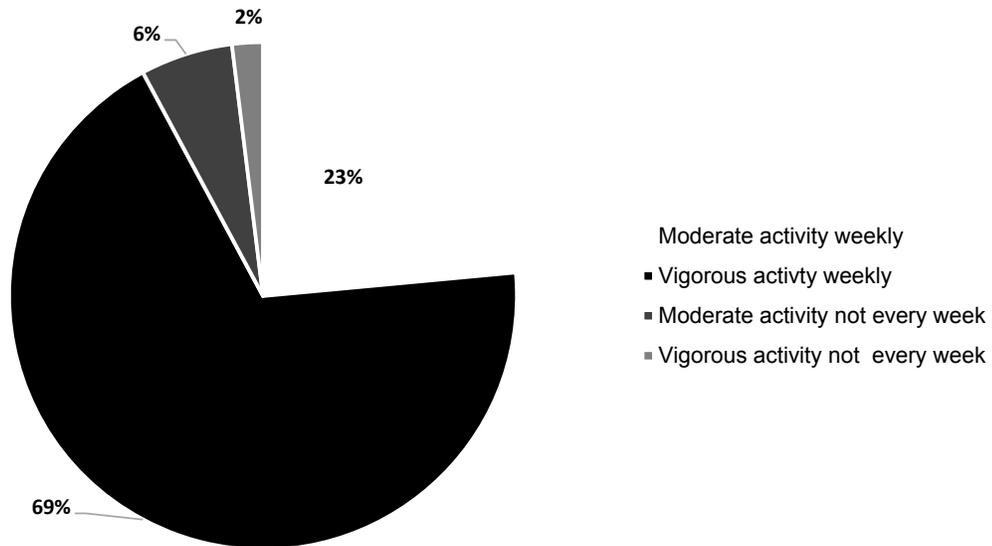
Though one participant's age was not recorded there were two other responders who were <18, as a result the data was disregarded. The multiple choice options embedded enabled participants to choose a range of answers however with reflection upon the data statistics some questions didn't collect a response.



**Figure 1.** Illustration of age range of purposive sample

#### **4.2 Health Benefits in Physical Activity**

Findings from the data can be used to assess awareness of health benefits and physical activity levels upon women in this age category. The sample group was recruited from a sporting background which may influence outcomes in a more desirable manner (Sport England 2012). These cluster of questions partnered in agreement with Hallal *et al.*, (2006) identifying that the participants targeted are moderately active.



**Figure 2.** Illustration of physical activity levels of all participants' engagement in physical activity.

#### **4.2.1 How physically active are you?**

The data exposed that the largest percentage of individuals (69%) was sustained from completing vigorous activity weekly (n=35) responders. A small proportion of females at 5% (n=3) are still moderately active but not every week. 8% of participants reported that they are not actively engaged every week. This theme suggests that the majority of individuals are actively participating in health related exercise however the results from the sample group indicate that there are still young women who are not which may interlink with a number of barriers.

#### 4.2.2 Recommended physical activity guidelines for 18-64 year olds

TRUE	No. of response	FALSE	No. of response
2 hr 30 moderate weekly	38	2 hr 30 vigorous weekly	4
1 hr 15 vigorous weekly	9	1 hr 40 moderate weekly	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>

**Table 1.** The total number of participant's response regarding recommended guidelines for physical activity.

Table 1 portrays the awareness of physical activity guidelines where the question examined if participants were aware of the guidelines with the opportunity to pick multiple answers. The question acknowledged that in total only six individuals selected the two correct answers which were 2 hours 30 of moderate intensity weekly or 1 hour 15 vigorous intensity weekly. Additionally over 92% (n=47) replied with at least one correct answer, identifying partial awareness of recommended activity levels. A series of unanswered responses highlighted unfamiliarity with the National Health guidelines. Conversely, over half of individuals recorded they do the required amount of physical activity a week; yet findings suggest that 3.5% of the sample group are somewhat unaware of recommended guidelines, which highlights the potential health and participation implications of sedentary lifestyles amongst young adults. As WHO (2015) reiterates the importance of physical activity and the significance to adhere towards the national guidelines as it highlights perceived health benefits including healthier body mass and composition (WHO 2011).

### **4.3 Barriers in Women's Football**

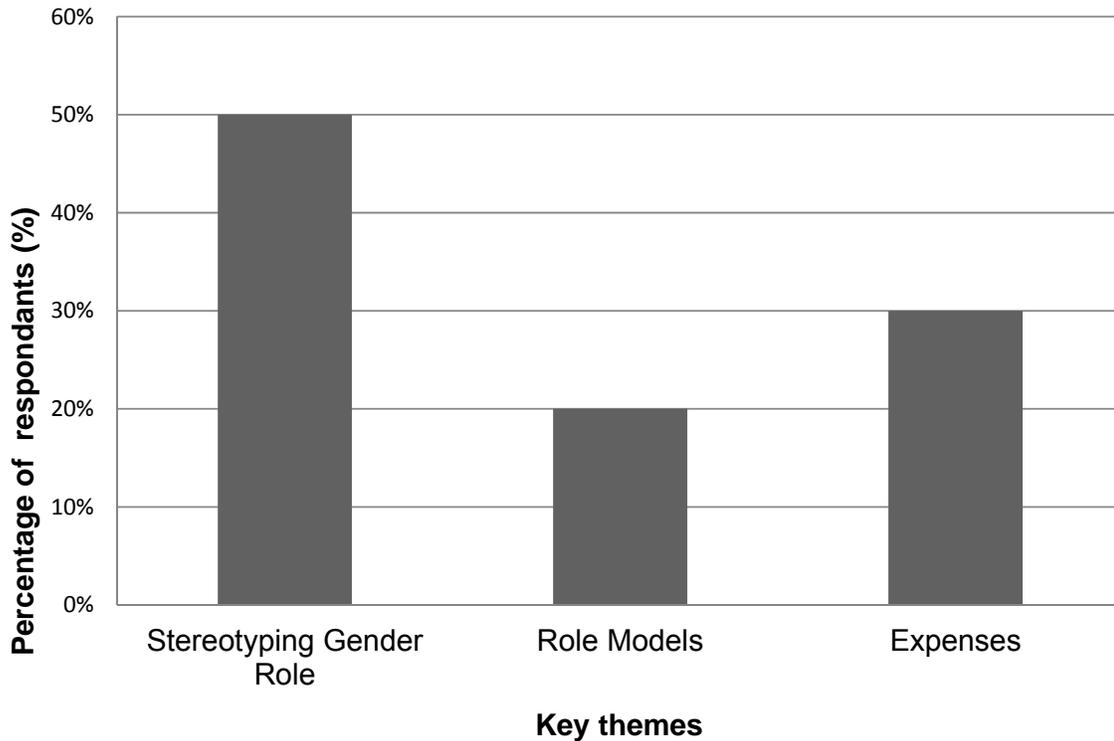
The method of open and closed questions were employed to achieve the aim of this section which was to interpret the perceived barriers for women, with particular reference to feelings and other factors which may discourage their participation in sport. The coding of questions was implemented which enabled concise data findings from a cluster of responses. From this, common themes were apparent as displayed below.



**Figure 3.** Perceived barriers for women illustrating why women stop playing football

The question 'Why do you think women stop playing football' was framed providing multiple options specifying factors that may stop women from participating in football. Due to the majority of selected participants still involved with football (n=42), a remaining nine (17%) respondents state they used to play. This signifies informative reasons as to why these particular participants no longer play. These non-participating participants reported a common theme 'Time' being a principal barrier

(n=12). In relation to literature studies internal factors were perceived barriers to adults (Smith 1998) whereas findings from (n=51) young female adults, an apparent theme was external motives that prohibited participation in football.



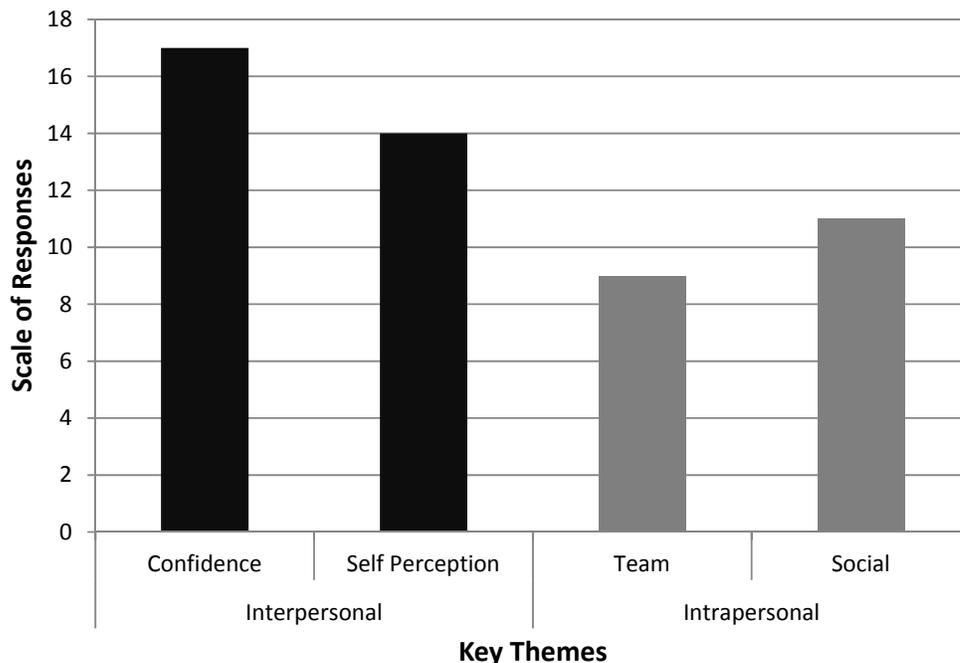
**Figure 4.** Key themes of the barriers why women stop playing football

Interlinking within this question there were ten additional comments gathered within the 'other factors' selection. A coded format within Figure 4 was created to distinguish themes relating to opinions which may stop women from participating in football. The results highlighted that 50% of responders state that 'stereotyping gender roles' may have a major influence as to why women stop playing football with another significant factor being 'expenses' at 30%. It is also noted that a lesbian stereotype appears to be a hindrance upon females playing football. Messner & Sabo, (1990, p.9) argue that sport is considered in most cultures primarily as a male domain. The data findings reflect that over half of participants asked, the reduction of stereotyping females in sport would effectively encourage more women to partake in

football. There are many sexist ideals in the media particularly in the sport football. Dunning (2007, p.325) reiterates a comment from Ted Croker a former secretary of the FA, “football is a game of hard, physical contact. It is a must remain a man’s game”.

#### 4.3.1 Positive or Negative influences of sport

The question, ‘Would you say sport has impacted you in a positive or negative way as a person’ was addressed. All participants (n=51) selected ‘positive’ and from this emerged an open ended outcome stating why they felt so. Responses were then gathered and coded into common categories of interpersonal and intrapersonal factors of the individual.



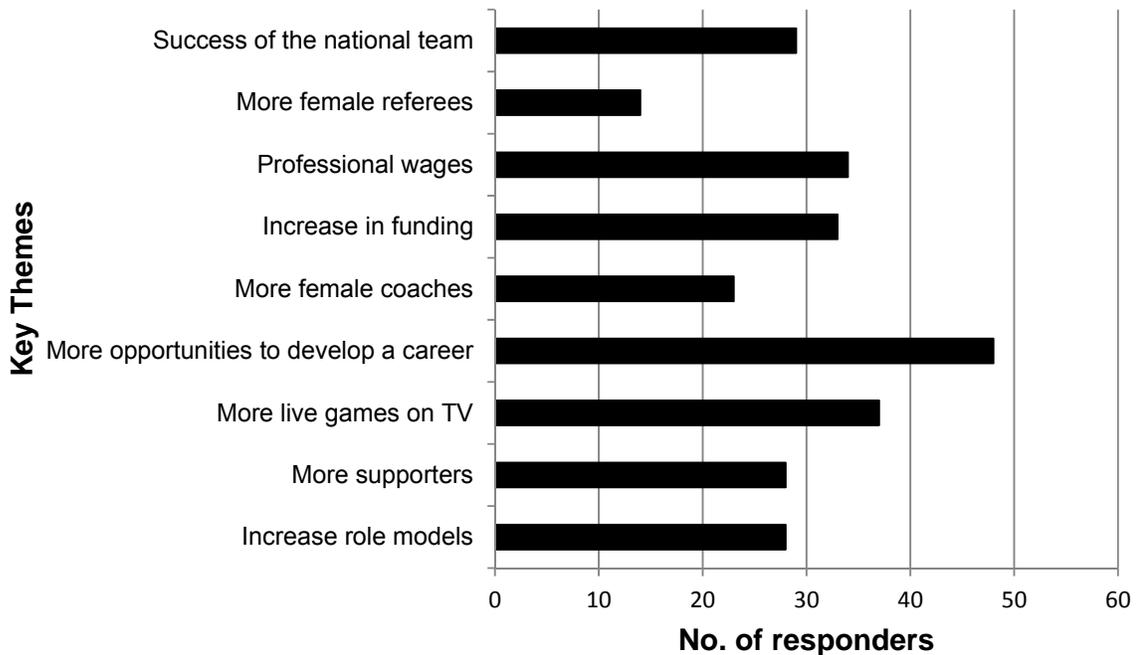
**Figure 5.** Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Factors of participants’ coded response

Figure 5 displays a comparison of interpersonal and intrapersonal factors which identify the dominance of Interpersonal aspects. This theme suggests ‘team’ and ‘social’ elements have not greatly impacted the participant. It was noticed that the common response of 33% (n=17) stated that sport has increased ‘confidence’ and with 27% of all participants stating self-perception, an interpersonal factor, has significantly influenced upon their positivity in physical activity. These data findings

may reiterate that internal factors are more important in which affect women in a positive aspect. The evidence base against literature findings suggest that the mean age of the sample group (n=21.5) are not as affected by situational factors in comparison to a young girls target group (Shank, 1999 p.135).

**4.4 Promotional Strategies in Women’s Football**

This section was completed to see whether participants were aware of the promotional work undertaken for women’s football. Particular questions were addressed to explore knowledge as to the effectiveness of promotional strategies and highlight key areas in which would sustain females’ involvement in football. However due to a broad question format some selected participants answered more than one option whilst others only chose one. Utilizing this data portrayed an overview of the general themes in which rose as focused issues.

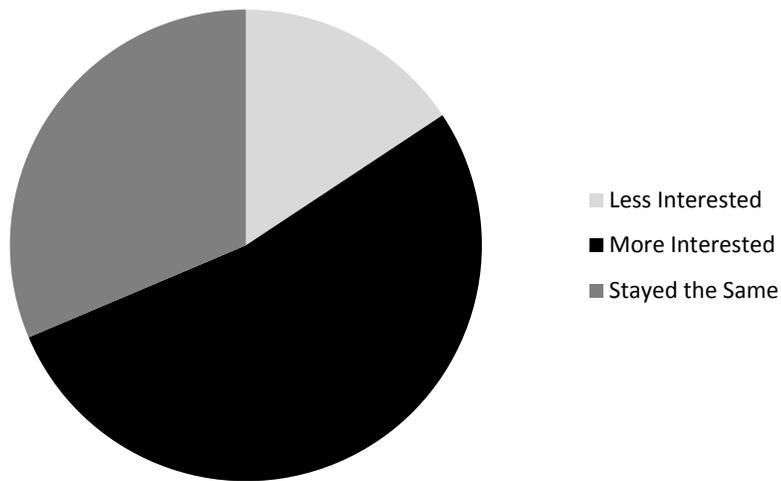


**Figure 6.** Representation of themes which would encourage more women to stay involved in football.

An important response generated from Figure 6 was the fact that 278 responses were accumulated in total, displaying 18% of females acknowledging more opportunities to develop a career was important for women to sustain participation in football; closely followed with 14% supporting more live women’s games would

encourage involvement. This chart signifies that all key themes accredited would encourage women to stay in football as there were no exemptions. In comparison having more female referees, 5% of responders state it does not have a great impact in relation to career opportunities and media coverage. As Coakley (2007) emphasizes that masculinity rules in media sports, sport has become a platform for reinforcing the ideology that males are naturally superior to women. Findings suggest that a breakthrough of women in the sporting media would encourage more females to participate in football (Hartshorn 2014). Interlinking with media coverage a prevalent theme from this question identifies that becoming an equal outlet to men's football but portrayed as a separate sport, would in fact encourage women's participation within the sport in football.

#### 4.4.2 Interest in football over the last 5 years



**Figure 7.** Representation of participant's interest in women's football over the past 5 years

In terms of interest within women's football just under half of participants at 49% stated they have become more interested over the past 5 years. Figure 7 demonstrates that 16% have in fact become less interested which may involve

personal preference or shortfall of women's coverage in the media (Creedon 1994). In agreement to this Hutchins & Rowe (2012) believe that female media coverage is becoming more apparent in today's society which may impact interest.

**4.4.3 Why do you think your interest in women's football has increased/decreased?**

<b>MORE</b>		<b>LESS</b>	
Media	<b>5</b>	Lack of local teams	<b>2</b>
Opportunities	<b>3</b>	Lack of progression	<b>2</b>
Entertainment	<b>4</b>	Not interesting	<b>1</b>
Personal Progression	<b>7</b>	Played other sports	<b>1</b>
Social	<b>3</b>	Time	<b>2</b>
Improved Standards	<b>3</b>	Expenses	<b>1</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>		<b>9</b>

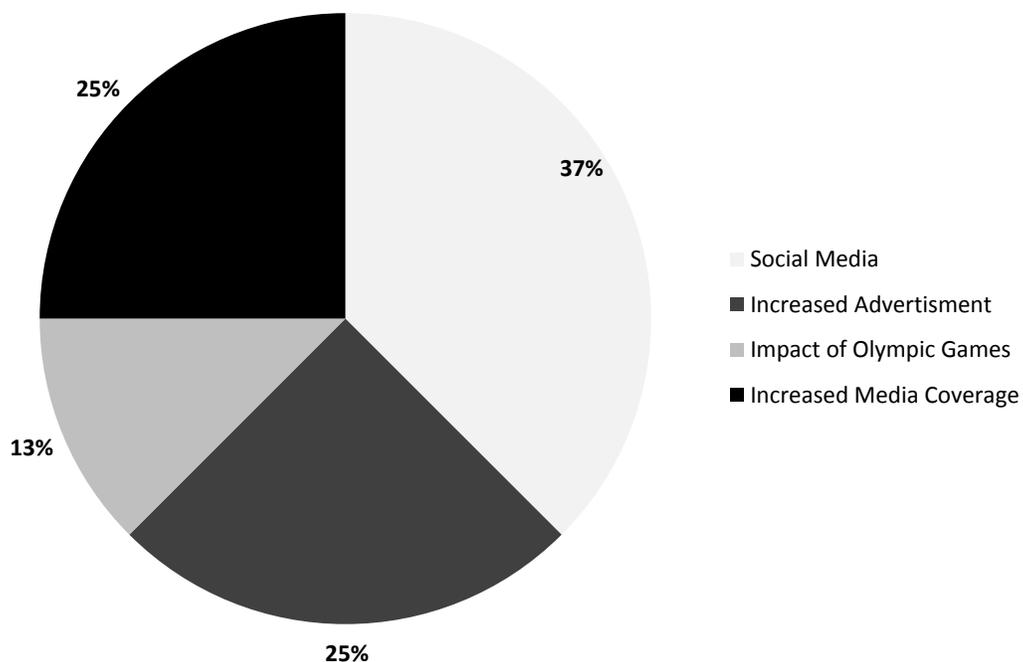
**Table 2.** Themes of why respondent's interest in women's football has increased/decreased

In Table 2 a series of key themes are displayed as to why the participants feel their interest in women's football has increased/decreased. The main theme which is apparent is personal progression; 28% of responders stated that improvement as a player has exceeded their interest in women's football. Generally 20% state that interest has increased due to more media coverage and publicity within the sport.

Though a minute selection (n=9) stated 'lack of local clubs', 'time' and 'expenses' are external factors in which have decreased interest.

#### 4.4.4 Are there enough sporting role models in your sport?

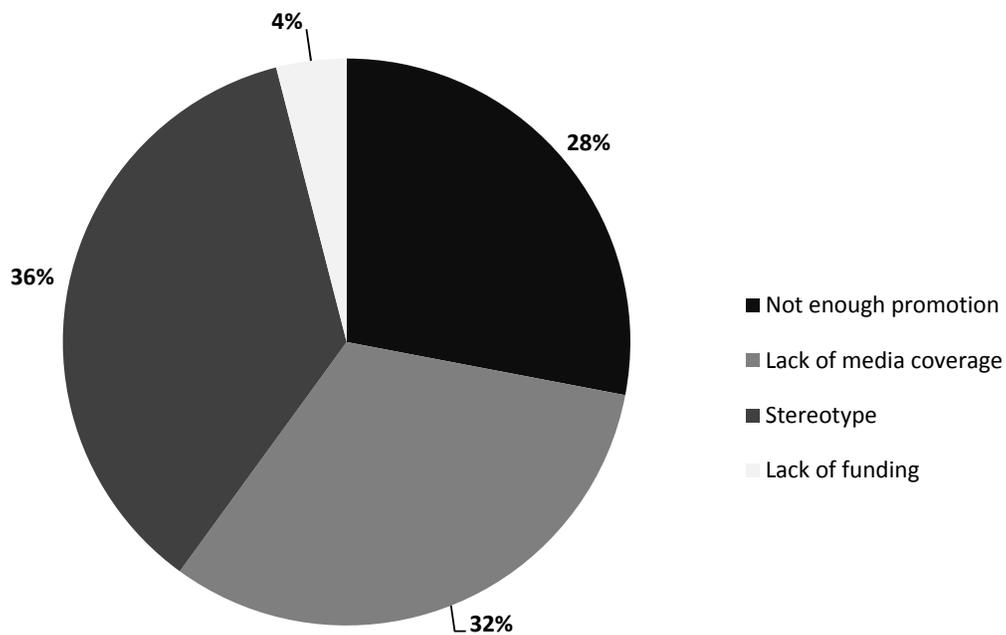
This question was implemented to see whether female sporting role models were apparent towards young women and to highlight if current media and promotional strategies designed were effective in portraying these role models.



**Figure 8.** Representation of themes which show why there are enough female football sporting role models

The pie chart in Figure 8 indicates that 37% of participants out of (n=8) responses believe that the influence of social media has had great impact and inspired women to look towards sportswomen as role models. Even though Gibson (2004 p.136) foresees the image of male athletes having a higher status than females within social media, participants responded against these literature findings and alleged that the increase publication and advertisement of female sporting role models has

encouraged women to participate and become aware of women role models in sport. With 25% of responders stating increased media coverage has emphasised the image of female role models in sport, there was a small percentage of 13% reflecting that the Olympic Games had a major impact of hosting women in sport.



**Figure 9.** Key themes displaying why there are not enough female football role models

In comparison there were 49% (n=25) participants who selected that there are not enough sporting female role models in today's society. Categorized into themes 36% of responses were accumulated from women in sport not having enough promotion or publicity in the media. In agreement to this theme Creedon (1994) believes that women do not receive equal amount of media coverage in comparison to men.

## **CHAPTER V:**

### **Discussion**

## **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter will endeavour to obtain an evaluation of the research findings against collation of literature concepts and theories through discussing and assessing the pivotal results from Chapter IV. Relevant data and information extracted from the questionnaire have individually been categorised into common themes which are discussed in depth within this section. It is important to note that some of the themes described are intertwined with more than one area so as a result some of the material can be placed under several key themes. In order to address the objectives which are identifying the potential barriers that may reduce female participation, highlighting the health benefits that are associated from the involvement of sport participation and acknowledging the marketing strategies within sport focusing upon women's football, the discussion will comprise the following:

- Health Benefits in Physical Activity
- Barriers for Women in Football
- Promotional Strategies in Women's Football

## **5.2 Health Benefits in Physical Activity**

### ***5.2.1 Recommended National Guidelines for Physical Activity***

Hallal *et al.*, (2006) argued that for individuals to sustain a healthy active lifestyle it is foreseen that at least moderate intensity should be undertaken. The revised physical activity recommendations for 18-64 year olds (DCMS 2002) state they should achieve a total of 150 minutes over a week of at least moderate activity; alternatively 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity across the week. All adults should adhere to these guidelines and also aim to improve muscle strength at least twice a week to minimise a sedentary lifestyle (Department of Health 2011).

The results of the present study revealed a dominant response referring to the health professional's physical activity guidelines, which acknowledged that 92% (n=47) of participants were partially aware to complete at least 2 hour 30 minutes of moderate activity weekly. A response from these results did however indicate that 3.5% of the participants were unfamiliar with the national set guidelines. Reflecting upon the

participant's perception and literature findings (Sport England 2013) of the recommended guidelines, it is clear to distinguish that the sample group of 18-25 females were deficient in their understanding of advised levels for physical activity weekly. The results of the study asked "*How physically active are you?*" reported 93% of participants' complete moderate or vigorous exercise weekly. In addition to this 64% (n=33) of participants mentioned physical activity is categorised as highly important. In comparison to the literature findings the Health Survey for England HSE (2007), Department of Health (2011) and Active People Survey (2012) proclaimed 29% of women thought they knew the current recommendations for physical activity in 2007.

The statistics in the 2007 study compared to the present study in 2015, illustrates females within the age bracket of 16-64 are unfamiliar of national guidelines yet engage with at least moderate or vigorous activity. Due to a small sample size for the present study this only reflects upon limited female adults across the United Kingdom. According to the British heart Foundation (2012) women were less active than men in the UK with a reported 29% in England and 24% in Wales (British Heart Foundation 2012). In order to engage and increase participation levels in activity the portrayal of guidelines should be more enforced amongst young adults. In reflection to this, the results from the present study highlighted the participants aged 18 were partially aware of national guidelines.

### **5.3 Barriers for Women in Football**

It is apparent that women in football are emerging gradually (The Football Association 2001), however understanding the reasons for young adults and women regarding non-participation in sport are still underlying factors in which little theory has been generated empirically (Allender *et al.*, 2006). There has been minimal pragmatic research upon barriers for participation in physical activity as the DCMS acknowledge this gap in their 'Game Plan' document:

“...throughout the sport and physical activity sector the quality and availability of data on facilities, participation, and other factors is very poor (DCMS 2002 p.14).”

There were a number of patterns which emerged from the questionnaire responses that deemed factors affecting participation in women's football. 'Gender Stereotyping Roles' and 'Time' appeared to be prevalent themes which were common responses from the participants.

### **5.3.1 Time**

Initially the question addressed to participants, "*Why do you think women stop playing football?*" signified that 23% (n=12) of responses identified that time was a growing concern for female participation in football. Exploring these data findings it is foreseen that young female adults (18-25 years) who previously or currently partake in football express that balancing work, study and other commitments alongside training and playing within a women's team presented a struggle.

From research judgments it is apparent that organisation and time management are imperative factors for participants to effectively compete in women's football whilst balancing other commitments. A study proposed unveiled that many adolescent girls had to drop out of sport in order to focus upon study and work commitments (Slater et al., 2010). Other empirical research discovered that competing priorities and a lack of time is a barrier for young women as they tend to adopt the burden of domestic responsibilities, caring roles and social activities (Caperchoine, Mummery & Joyner 2009; Kowal & Fortier 2007).

As the participants response was in agreement to literature verdicts it emphasises the focus required for women in sport to overcome this barrier (WHO 1995). Managing time is a substantial factor in which girls approaching late adolescence phase experience. It is noteworthy that a proportion of females (23%) elected 'time' as a prominent barrier to why women stop playing football. These runs parallel with the literature as after school jobs become an emerging factor within older adolescents and are a competing priority for sport participation (Craike et al. 2009; Halyk, Brittain, Dinger et al. 2010; Slater & Tiggemann 2010).

### **5.3.2 Gender, Stereotype and Masculinity**

This theme was predominant across the scope of answers collected from the '*other factors*' option relating to the previous question. The responses were coded and

formatted into key themes and evidently the most common theme underlined 'Stereotype of Women playing Football'.

A large proportion of participants stated that a major barrier within women's participation in playing football is the label of "lesbian" or "butch". Stereotyping towards individuals can hinder their confidence and willingness to participate, therefore women and girls avoid playing 'male dominant' sports such as football (Claudwell 1999). This issue has predominantly been manifested for many years and has impacted the participation levels upon women's football. In agreement to the present study findings, Mulvihill *et al.*, (2001) and Coakley & White (1992) both discuss that gender stereotyping has negative affects upon female participation in sport, in particular football where female role models are confined.

Analysing the barrier of gender concepts within sport it is apparent that the results of the study are in agreement with the literature (Women Gender Equality and Sport 2007). As one participant commented that women's football is associated with 'being lesbian' and even though in today's society there is a breakthrough of women in sport (WSSF 2002) the results reflected that there still remains a societal stereotype towards gender roles. With correspondence towards the literature there are still a proportion of girls who perceive participation in sport as unfeminine and therefore choose not to partake in sport as whole (Craike *et al.* 2009; Slater & Tiggemann 2010; Lee & Macdonald 2010).

In concurrence to the study results and research literature, the aspect of stereotypes within football is an ongoing barrier in which indicates why some females are reluctant to participate. Dunning (1986) argues that sport is described as a male preserve and that the segregation of women in sport has in effect reinforced dominant traditions in society (Whannel 2002). However this implication may be overruled within the near future if the attitude of gender order was suspended.

#### **5.4 Promotional Strategies in Women's Football**

This section has identified the promotional strategies involved within women's football and the outlook of participant's interpretation on marketing areas that require more focus in order to increase female football participation levels (Greer *et al.*, 2009; Kian *et al.*, 2008; Vincent, 2004). Significantly specific questions were chosen

to consider the common themes which arose from participant's responses. These established themes were 'Media Coverage of Women in Football', and the 'Influence of Role Models'.

Utilising these research findings outlines whether the promotional strategies designed are effective in increasing participation levels or highlight unsuccessful marketing aspects to improve upon. In overview of the collated responses it is foreseen that 49% of participants asked have become more interested in women's football over the past five years. In evidence of this the FA declare football is officially the biggest female team sport in England, with over 147,000 players who competed last season in affiliated league clubs and cup competitions (Association, T 2015).

#### **5.4.1 Media Coverage of Women**

Hutchins & Rowe (2012) expressed that women in the sporting media are accelerating upwards; thus has led to an increase in participation levels. This was confirmed by a prevailing theme within the results.

Participants were asked "*Why do you think your interest in women's football has increased/decreased?*" which established 'personal progression' and 'more media coverage' were the main factors why interest has increased. Interestingly 20% of participants discussed that the coverage of women's football has become more apparent, showing an increase in frequency of televised live games. Further within the questionnaire 37% of participants reported they have attended a women's match or watched it on TV. Wales does not broadcast any of their games live on TV; which could indicate why women in England have gained a higher interest in women's football in comparison to Wales.

Through this a small percentage of participants agreed that women's football has become more entertaining due to the promotion and advertisement of females associated in the game. Evidently the overlap of prevailing themes within this question all interlink as there are signs from the fluctuated patterns of women's coverage in the sport media that has led to publicity of female role models (Hutchins & Rowe 2012). The results of the questionnaire suggested that personal progression within football has been a pivotal element in interest within the game. From the results it was stated that competing at a higher standard has equalled opportunities

to access high standard of facilities and coaches. In agreement towards research study findings Bernstein (2002) articulates that over the last decade women have progressed within competitive sport. This could be due to the increase of opportunities for women and girls that enabled them to pursue their football experience.

In consequence to the results founded the extent of literature theories discuss that sport in general still reinforces gender identity (Hargreaves 1994). Jarvie (2006) also agrees that there is evidently more media coverage and public interest for males in comparison to females within sport. The results from the present study signified that interest decreased due to external factors including shortage of local teams. This may be because of interlinking factors such as time, expenses and unavailable opportunities in local areas in which Sallis (1995) highlights are all contributing personal and environmental factors that influence girl's participation. As the present study was designed for young adults in England and Wales, the results focused upon personal attributes from an open ended response which as Gratton and Jones (2010) reiterate feeling and thoughts of females can be collected to gain an in depth understanding.

There is controversy in today's society over why women fail to receive an equal amount of media coverage (Creedon 2002), however the development of women within sport in particular female football, may contradict literature views as Bernstein (2002) agrees that over the last decade women have advanced within high performance spectator sports. In comparison to result findings there have been studies which show women's sport as a whole accounts for as little as 2% of televised sports coverage (Groves 2012, Daily Mail). Even though participants reported that their interest in women's football had increased due to advancement in media coverage and publicity, there is profound research that only 7% of sports media coverage is devoted to women's sport and only 0.4% of commercial investment goes to women-only sport (WSFF 2012).

#### **5.4.2 Influence of Role Models**

In relation to the key question '*Are there enough sporting role models in your sport*' it was discovered that 37% stated that social media had influenced the perception of female role models towards the participants. In addition 25% of the participants

believed that with the increased media coverage of females in sport, it has amplified participants' outlook upon female sporting role models. The results also indicated that 25% (n=2) of collated responses signified that there has been an increase in advertisement for women's football, therefore this has impacted publication of female footballers. Equally 16% (n=49) of participant's taking into account two non-responses, suggested that the upsurge of female sporting role models was due to the increase of participation and the awareness of female footballers through televised games, advertisement, and publication on social media sites.

A critical element drawn upon the present study implied that a small percentage (12%) were in agreement that there are enough female football role models. However there is evidence to suggest these results do not concur with research literature, as a pragmatic study claims that there are low percentages of girls with a sport role model (Vescio 2005). This may be due to the impact of gendered heroism as Hargreaves (2000) discusses.

Consequently with the acceleration of women's football across England and Wales more female role models have emerged demonstrating their physical ability and image (WSFF 2002). Bishop (2003) specified that without media providing role models it is challenging when encouraging participation. In accordance to this literature the importance of role models is significant upon children's participation in physical activity (WHO 2004). It is also foreseen that participants are more aware of female role models from the acceleration of women athletes in the Olympic Games. The inspirational British athlete 'Jessica Ennis' believes that,

"Increasing the profile of sportswomen can help create a healthy body image for young girls to aspire to." - Jessica Ennis (BBC, 2012)

On the other hand the question indicates that amongst the 49% (n=25) of participants who responded, several themes developed as to why there are not enough female football role models. Considerably the results indicated that the gender theory in football influenced the perception of role models in women's football. One participant reflected upon how women's football is not taken as seriously to men's and there is still a stereotypical view of how women should not participate in male dominant sports. The results also generated that 8 participants (32%) reported that lack of media coverage was an apparent factor for why there are

not enough role models. It was suggested that lack of media in conjunction with promotion of female football role models are underrepresented. Noticeably just over half the participants (51%) who responded to the given question were in agreement with Cuneen and Sidwell (1988) who argue that there is lack of coverage for women's sport in independent media outlets.

### **5.5 Practical Implications and Future Recommendations**

Significantly a number of theoretical and practical implications have been considered in order to improve the value of research and obtain the objectives set forward for this study. Future research upon an extended sample group of females from a variety of backgrounds could entail a range of research findings to compare against and highlight specific areas in which were underrepresented in their marketing strategies for women's football.

The study designed and carried out reflected upon a series of practical suggestions in which Women's Football Association can adopt in order to increase participation levels. It highlighted that there are currently significant barriers in which young adults aged (18-25) who participated within the study feel are major factors that fluctuate participation levels. Encouraging women's football at grassroots level would overcome these issues and gradually boost participation levels and media coverage. The nature of this study identified the common themes in which were apparent regarding the interest of women's football. Matthews *et al.*, (2012) believed that the opportunities for females to engage in sport were scarce at grass roots level; thus concluding a perceived barrier.

As acknowledged from the results of the study it is important for individuals to have clear understanding and awareness of the national recommended guidelines for physical activity. It is foreseen that from the results and literature findings there are a large proportion of young adults who claim to be physically active, however are not aware how much they should be completing weekly. With this lack of knowledge of the national guidelines could produce health risks; thus stating these national guidelines should be implemented and addressed frequently across range of media outlets.

**Issue 1:** A perceived lack of sustainable facilities for women and girls to participate in physical activity.

**Possible Solution:** From the results of the study it was acknowledged lack of local clubs for women and girls was a barrier. In order to meet this setting up community links to ensure they still have the opportunity to participate would be a solution. This could lead to providing a minibus for young people to external clubs as their area may be struggling to accommodate due to financial or other factors (Sport Scotland 2003). With the support of school initiatives school and clubs could interlink and deliver a range of after school activities.

**Issue 2:** Girls see sport as male dominant and therefore inappropriate for them.

**Possible Solution:** Advertise and promote sport in way girls and boys can recognise that equity is enforced. The use of posters and leaflets promoting to young people in an attractive manner should encourage adolescent's girls to participate (Sport Scotland 2003). As female role models in sport are marginalised girls should become more aware of them through social media and positive publicity.

## **5.6 Limitations of Study**

The outcome of this study would initially portray the current effects and awareness of the promotional strategies in women's football. As female participation in football has become one of the fastest growing sports in England it demonstrates that implementing these strategies may have increased participation.

A significant limitation of the present study would be the sample size. In future to gather further reliable data, the researcher could have distributed the questionnaires to a larger sample size. This would have led to a wider range of data to compare and contrast across a diversity of ages and football experience. A further limitation the use of semi structured interviews could have been enforced as well questionnaires in order to allow a more in depth response. As the methodology of this study adopted a mixed method approach, the open ended questions provided opportunity for participants to express their feelings and attitudes; however this was restricted to a number of questions.

**CHAPTER VI:**  
**Conclusion**

This research study has demonstrated a profound insight into the promotional strategies set out to increase women's participation in football. Extensive research and data analysis undertaken enabled the researcher to critically analyse the effectiveness of current promotional work used in women's football and to gain an understanding of factors which restrict female participation. The study used an online questionnaire towards a purposive sample of females age 18+ who are involved within football to explore their awareness and understanding of strategies used to increase participation.

The main finding in which was drawn upon from the results of the study, illustrated that females have become more interested in women's football. It was foreseen that 37% of females asked reported they had attended 10+ of women's live football games. This supported previous research which stated that in order to develop awareness for women's football, one key objective is to increase attendance at women's league matches (Chalin 2003).

The results from the study validate that the promotional strategies enforced within women's football are effective in increasing participation levels (Women and Girls Strategy 2008), however the problematic element women in sport face is stereotype of gender roles. Theberge (1981, p. 342) stated that sport is "a fundamentally sexist institutions that is male dominated and masculine in orientation". In contrast this study portrayed that in today's society participation in female football is continuing to rise and the opportunities and development plans implemented prove effective to publicise women's football further. Principally the outline of this research study highlighted that the marketing strategies utilized for women's football are effective, however there still remain factors in which restrict female participation in sport that are evident in society.

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## **APPENDICIES**

**APPENDIX A:  
PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE**

## Pilot Questionnaire

Please highlight each answer or use the circle tool. If the question requires more than one answer circle or highlight all that apply.

## Section A:

### **Gender**

Male / Female

### **What is your age group?**

16 below / 17 to 21 / 22 to 25 / 26+

### **In what region do you live?**

England / Wales / Scotland / Other

## Section B:

### **How important is it for you to be physically active?**

Important / slightly important / very important

### **How physically active are you? (highlight the appropriate boxes)**

- I rarely or never do any physical activities
- I do some light physical activity, but not every week
- I do some moderate exercise every week
- I do moderate physical activities every week, but less than 30 minutes a day or 5 days a week
- I do vigorous physical activities every week, but less than 20 minutes a day or 3 days a week
- I do 30 minutes or more a day of moderate physical activities, 5 or more days a week

**Do you know the current physical activity guidelines for adults aged 18-64? Please write which statement is true/false/not sure.**

1)150 mins (2 hours 30) of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity a week

3)75 mins (1 hour 15) of vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity a week

2)60 mins (1 hour) of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity a week

4)150 mins (2 hours 30) of vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity a week

5)100 mins (1 hour 40) of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity a week

**What sport activity do you mostly take part in?**

active recreation (cycling)

-health oriented activities (fitness gym/health classes)

-Sports (netball/football/rugby/basketball)

-Competitive sports

-other (please state)

-None

**Moderate exercise includes brisk walking, light effort exercise. In a typical week, how many days do you do moderate intensity physical activities?**

1 / 2 / **3** / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7

**Vigorous exercise includes jogging, sport games, carrying heavy loads. In a typical week, how many days do you do vigorous intensity physical activities?**

1 / **2** / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7

**Playing sport enables a better psychological status, for example, motivation and increased self-confidence. Do you feel like this is true for you?**

**YES**

NO

NOT SURE

**Would you say sport has impacted you in a negative or positive way as a person? For example, created a sense of individuality/working as a team?**

Positive

Negative

Not sure

## **Section C:**

**Do you play football? (if no move to next section...)**

YES / NO / used to

**In your opinion why do you think women stop playing football?**

Didn't enjoy it

Played another sport

Couldn't find a women's football team in my local area

Injury prevented me from carrying on

Negative experiences

Time

Other factors

**If YES, why do you continue play football currently? Tick all that apply**

Enjoy playing as a hobby

To keep fit and healthy

To compete

To improve performance

Social factors

**What were the main factors that influenced you to begin playing football?**

Parents/family

Peers who already played

Performance

After school clubs

**What level of football do you play?**

Club level / County level / University level / Professional level

**When did you start to play football?**

Grassroots / Secondary school / College / University

**Where did you hear about joining a girls/women's football team?**

Through school

Word of mouth

From friends

Advertising in local area

Other clubs

After school clubs

**What do you think could be done to help other women participate/continue in playing football?**

*Please state (eg more girls/women clubs, more advertisement, better facilities, more coaches)*

**More opportunities for women and more clubs at grassroots level**

## Section D:

**How many times per week, during the football season, do you watch football on TV/listen to it on the radio?**

Never

1

2

3

4

5+

**How often do you watch women's football on TV/listen on the radio?**

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

**Have you ever been to watch a live women's football game?**

YES / NO

**If yes, how many matches have you attended?**

1

2

3

4

**5+**

**Have you become more or less interested in football as a whole over the past 5 years?**

**More**

Less

The Same

**Statistics show that the number of registered players in women's football in Wales has increased by around 4,000 since the year 2000. Do you think this is because...**

-increase in women football clubs

-range of advertising that has increased participation

-more girls/women are getting involved in sport particularly football

**-all of the above**

**Do you think it is important to have a sporting role model?**

**YES**

NO

**Are there enough sporting role models in your sport?**

YES

**NO**

DON'T KNOW

**Why do you think this is?**

...not publicised as much as mens football

**Has a role model ever impacted you to participate in football or other sports? Please choose all that apply:**

- 1) My role model encouraged me to participate in women's football

- 2) I do not have a sporting role model
- 3) I have a sporting role model from another sport
- 4) My sporting role model is female

**What do you think would encourage more women to stay in football?**

- More role models
- More supporters
- More live games on TV regularly
- More opportunities to develop a career
- professional wages
- more female referees
- success of national team

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE. THANK YOU

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**APPENDIX B:**  
**PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET**

## **Participant information sheet**

*This information sheet is available in a variety of different formats to suit your preference, including: Large print, Audio and other languages. Please specify if you wish to continue a different format.*

### **Critical analysis of the promotional strategies designed to increase participation in women's football.**

This project aims to investigate into the promotional/marketing strategies used to increase participation in women's football, and effectively identify barriers of females in sport and potential health benefits from taking part in physical activity. Even though women are not portrayed as much as men in the sporting media, there is indication that gradually sporting females are becoming more popular. The aim of this study is to investigate and collect data to analyse the reasons for this.

#### **Why have I been asked?**

Essentially, I am attempting to collect a variety of data regarding a small scale selection of individuals. You have been asked to participate because you meet the criteria as follows:

- 18+ years
- Female
- Some form of football engagement at any level

The data you provide will prove very useful in conducting the analysis for this study.

#### **What am I required to do for the study?**

This study is a voluntary project in which you as the participant have the authority to withdraw at any time. After you have completed reading this information sheet you can decide whether you are willing to participate in the study. The information you provide will be beneficial so therefore it is important to record truthful data into your submission as the consequences may lead to false findings. All information you provide will be anonymous. It consists of a simple online questionnaire, issuing 4 question banks including all multiple choice and few open ended framed questions. This survey will take you between 5 – 10 minutes of your time.

### **How will your privacy be protected?**

As a voluntary based study, everyone involved within the project respects your privacy so the data and any additional personal information you submit, will be anonymous and levels of confidentiality are guaranteed.

The Data Protection Act 1998 classifies sensitive personal data as consisting of information as to:

- a) The racial or ethnic origin of the data subject
- b) Political opinions
- c) Religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature
- d) Membership of a trade union
- e) Physical or mental health condition
- f) Sexual life
- g) The commission or alleged commission of any offence
- h) Any proceedings for any offence committed or alleged to have been committed, the disposal of such proceedings or the sentence of any court in such proceedings

[[www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts1998/19980029.htm](http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts1998/19980029.htm)]

**Contact:** [st20021445@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:st20021445@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk)

**Supervisor name:** Steven Osbourne

**APPENDIX C:  
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

# **Consent Form for Participants**

**Reference Number:**

**Participant name or Study ID Number:**

**Title of Project:** *Critical analysis of the promotional strategies designed to increase participation in women's football*

**Name of Researcher:** Georgia Philippou

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**Participant: Please TICK box to provide given consent.**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
  
2. I understand that the study is voluntary and I am able to withdraw at any time stated during the project.
  
3. I fully consent to take part in the study.
  
4. If the study is published I agree for any quotes to be anonymised.

---

**Signature of participant**

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**Date:**

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**Name of person taking consent**

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**Date:**