A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF FACTORS AFFECTING DROP OUT IN
FEMALE ARTISTIC GYMNASICS IN BRIDGEND COUNTY
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors which affect dropout within female artistic gymnastics within Bridgend County. This will be investigated using qualitative methodology established by six in depth interviews. The six interviews were conducted to determine the main pressures and concern’s that gymnasts experience during their career. Interview questions were based on four themes which emerged from the review of literature they were, personal and situational factors, competition and body image.

Content analysis identified numerous factors which influence and contribute to dropout, such as, lack of facilities, lack of enjoyment, unsatisfactory social life, lack of preparation, coaches, family and body image. Results from the investigation suggested that dropout within gymnastics is best thought of in terms of Robinsons and Carron’s (1982) situational and personal factors theory.

Recommendations and a model were created in order to identify and illustrate and prevent dropout within gymnastics.

Conclusions of this study identified that there in not one single major factor which contributes to dropout. It can be caused by an equation of personal and situational factors which all contribute in one way or another. The main conclusion which emerged from this study is that every individual gymnast is different and unique, and each gymnast will experience different factors.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
Introduction

The intention of this chapter is to introduce the sport of artistic gymnastics, and to provide background information on the main issue of the investigation.

Many people differ for their reasoning’s behind participating in sport. One may be drawn to participate for health reasons, or one may be interested due to the social aspect of sport. At the other end of the scale some participants engage in physical activity in the form of strength, power or endurance training to underpin high level performance in a bid to excel in their sport. Many children in sport have undergone demanding training and high level competition for sports such as swimming, tennis and gymnastics. (Rowley, 1986)

Gymnastics is both an exciting and a beautiful sport, it not only demands physical courage but grace and mastery of the body as well (Diagram Group, 1976). Within the sport of gymnastics there has been four separate styles of gymnastics, these include; women’s artistic, men’s artistic, rhythmic and sport acrobatics.

Currently, British Gymnastics (BG) agree that Beth Tweddle is the one of the most successful gymnasts from Great Britain. She has been European and World Champion on the asymmetric bars, and has broken many records. Unfortunately, Britain struggles to keep and maintain the success of British Gymnastics. There are not many elite gymnasts developing through and coming onto the world scene. Elsa (2007) illustrated within the world rankings that there is only one British gymnast in the world top 10 (Beth Tweddle), furthermore, there is only one other British gymnast in the top 100. Many gymnasts are seen as exciting prospects from British Gymnastics, however, competitive gymnastics is very demanding from a young age, both physically and psychologically. Therefore, many cannot manage the demands and pressures and withdraw from the sport.

BG's mission (2008) is to establish the UK as one of the World's Leading Gymnastics Nations. This is not possible if many gymnasts are withdrawing prematurely for different reasons. Drop out from sport is also becoming an increasingly researched area due to the increasing number dropping out from sport
prematurely (Feigley, 1984). It is evident in comparisons with other sports that gymnastics only has a short and early window of opportunity in which they can succeed.

The researcher has experienced numerous years within the sport both as a coach and as participating and competitive gymnast. The writer understands and has experience that many elite gymnasts drop out from the sport at their peak of their careers for a perceived variety of differing reasons but did not understand why. The researcher was also one of many gymnasts who withdrew from the sport due to it becoming less enjoyable and less rewarding. This personal involvement within gymnastics has influenced the researcher to develop and understand this issue further. In order to address and contribute to the reduction, an understanding and the development of intervention strategies may assist and reduce this problem within gymnastics and sport as a whole.

Consequently, the researcher’s aim of this investigation is to identify the factors effecting and contributing to drop out within women’s artistic gymnastics within the County of Bridgend. This will be investigated using qualitative methodology established by six in depth interviews, two of which have a long time involvement within the sport of gymnastics, two of which have coached at gymnastics club’s within Bridgend and finally two participants that have dropped out of gymnastics within Bridgend.

One key theory which vital in this area were situational factors and personal factors (Robinson and Carron (1982). This study will examine the pressures and thoughts perceived from both a coaches and gymnasts perspective on why female gymnasts drop out of the sport prematurely. It is essential to understand and appreciate the factors affecting drop out in order to prevent these factors and protect gymnasts from prematurely leaving the sport at the peak of the career or when they have more to offer to the sport.

It is essential that the concepts and implications of drop out are researched. By conducting this study it will inform the sport of gymnastics of potential problems gymnast may experience in order to prevent them from reoccurring. It will supply
knowledge and understanding of the issue of drop out to clubs of a local level, and to the governing bodies of gymnastics. This investigation will not only provide information to coaches and the sport, but it will also add to the academic literature as a whole. Literature on this area is limited and has a tendency to be dated; therefore, the findings from this study will move the understanding within this specific area forward and develop this issue further.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY
Methodology

Rationale

Due to the research question, it has been decided to use qualitative research methods in order to collect the data, qualitative research methods is thought to be more appropriate as it develops information about the values, beliefs and behaviours of sport consumers, and uncover much richer information regarding the underlying motivations (Gratton and Jones 2002).

There are numerous types of qualitative research methods such as questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. The fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can communicate their own understanding in their own words (Patton, 2002). Therefore, interviews would be most appropriate method of gaining information as it will allow the participants to have choice and freedom in what they are going to say. Gratton and Jones (2004) suggested that one to one interview is undoubtedly the most common method by which qualitative data is collected in sport research, interviewing is also associated with the collection of qualitative data that is the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of a phenomenon.

The structure of the interview will follow a semi structured interview format. Conversely, questionnaire’s was not a suitable method for gaining enough information as questionnaires are restricted to a series of questions developed by the researcher, and respondents are limited to these questions and semi structured interviews allow the emergence of important themes that may not emerge from a more structured format (Gratton and Jones 2004). A semi structured interview was chosen to enable participants to talk about their own experiences in their own words, and allow them to elaborate on any areas of particular interest or importance. A semi structured interview uses a standard set of questions; however, the researcher adopts a flexible approach to the data collection and can alter the sequence of questions or probe for more information (Gratton and Jones, 2004). By using interviews, the researcher can introduce him or herself to the subject and establish trust and rapport, especially if any information is considered confidential, or sensitive to the participant (Gratton and Jones, 2004). Such Method ensures that each interviewee’s are asked the same questions, in the same way, and in the same order, enabling in depth information to be collected (Patton, 2002).
Research Design

Participants

There were three themes which emerged from the review of literature that will need to be considered in order to get a broad range of factors of why female gymnasts withdraw from the sport. The three emerged groups were;

1. The Individual
2. The Club
3. The Sport

The first identified group were individuals who participate in gymnastics, secondly, individuals who are members of gymnastics clubs within Bridgend County such as coaches or officials and finally individuals who are involved in the sport such as judges, officials or experienced coaches.

The first group was selected to be two female gymnasts; these are female participants who have previously competed at any level in gymnastics within the County of Bridgend in South Wales. These participants were selected to take part in an interview in order to commence with this study. Two female gymnasts aged between 18 and 20 years old participated in the interview. Both Gymnasts had been introduced into gymnastics between the ages of 4 – 10 and all withdrew from gymnastics before the ages of 18. The second group of participants who were selected were participants that were involved within clubs within the Bridgend County Borough. Two head coaches from different clubs with Bridgend County were selected in order to get different views on why they believe female gymnasts withdraw gymnastics and their club. The third and final participant group were people who had been involved within the sport of gymnastics and are experience within the field of gymnastics. All three participant groups will provide a comprehensive explanation on factors that affect female gymnasts withdrawing from the sport. In total 6 participants were selected to participate within this investigation. The participants were selected on the basis that they would easy to contact and conduct the interviews as the researcher had a personal involvement with all participants within the past 5 years.
Ethical considerations of Participants

The study considered the ethical issues associated with the research, which is the question of whether the research design is socially and morally acceptable (Gratton and Jones, 2004). Qualitative research methods are extremely personal as it uses personal thoughts and feelings in order to collect the relevant data. Within the literature review it is understood that many gymnasts leave the sport prematurely and before the age of eighteen. As a result of this, it was decided that subjects should be over the age of eighteen years old in order, to take part in the interview process. Prior to the commencement of this study and its interviews, four ethical considerations were taken into account; informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity and finally the potential harm of risk to the participant.

Interview guide

As previously identified, a semi structured interview was selected as the best method in order for the data to be collected. The interview was devised around four common themes which emerged from the review of literature. The four themes were situational and personal factors, body image and competitions. These themes provided a solid structure which the researcher based their interview questions upon. These questions were then developed along with appropriate probes. Probing is where the researcher can gain additional information from the respondent (Gratton and Jones, 2004) in order to receive necessary information on a certain area.

The interview questions were grouped into four sections. They were:

1. General questions relating to their involvement in gymnastics based on personal factors.
2. Questions in relation to the situational factors, these factors are out of the participants control such as relationships with other people within gymnastics.
3. Questions in relation to the overall pressures of gymnastics.
4. Finally, the build up towards the participant withdrawing from the sport all together.

One interview guide was developed, it was organised in a way which allows each subject to answer the questions in context of their experience, as a coach or
participant. Section one related to the interviewee’s involvement within gymnastics. Within this section the questions related to personal factors was asked. Section two questions were developed on situational factors of the interviewee. These questions were related to issues beyond the gymnasts control such as parents, coaches and team mates, for example, ‘how was your relationship with other team members in your club/squad?’ Section three looked at the personal issues and pressures of participating in gymnastics, such as, ‘what do you feel are the main pressures of gymnastics?’ The final fourth section was concerned with the individual’s later career in the sport as it leads up to them withdrawing from the sport. ‘What finally led you to withdraw from the sport?’ was an example of a question asked at this section. Finally the last and final question was if they ‘liked to add anything else?’ (see appendix A for interview guide)

Pilot Study
No matter how well designed the interview may be, it is vital that it is piloted beforehand. Pilot studies are fundamental for those conducting interviews as it allows the interviewer to perfect their interview technique, but it also allows the interviewer to produce and reform new questions (Oppenheim, 1996). The subject who participated in the pilot study was a peer of who has reached a high level within gymnastics. The subject went through intensive training and later withdrew from the sport. At the end of the pilot study, both the positives and negatives of the pilot interview were reviewed and points of consideration were undertaken prior to the first interview. Both refinement in the interviewing technique and the modification of probes and questions were carried out.

Procedure
Prior to the organised interview an email or a personal telephone call was made to each subject in order for them to be informed of the nature of research which they were being asked to participate in. Following the response a time and venue was agreed on where the interview would take place. Prior to the interview the subject would be reassured that all information given and collected would remain confidential and no personal information will be used. The subjects were also informed that they would be able to terminate or withdraw from the interview at anytime. Each subject was also given a consent form prior to the interview and in
order to participate, the consent form must be signed by the participant. (See appendix B)

Whilst each interview was being conducted it was recorded by a Dictaphone. Prior to each interview all equipment was thoroughly checked in order for the interview to run without any complications. Each interview which has taken place and recorded on the Dictaphone was transcribed for later analysis.

In order for the study to be reliable many considerations must be looked at. It is said that if a research tool is consistent and stable, and hence, predictable and accurate, it is said to be reliable (Kumar, 1999). Therefore, the same procedures were taken in order to ensure reliability of the research. The same interview questions and probes were asked by the same researcher in order to accomplish reliability. By ensuring the study is reliable it will enable the results to be valid.

**Data Analysis**
Gratton and Jones (2002) suggested that analysing qualitative data can prove to be much less straightforward, at least initially, than the seemingly more ‘logical’ and ‘objective’ analysis of quantitative data. Both inductive and deductive analysis provides the researcher to understand the meanings and significance (Patton, 2002).

In order for the researcher to establish the findings and results for this study deductive analysis was used. Deductive analysis is where the researcher analyses data according to predetermined themes and categories. Each individual interview transcript was analysed in relation to the situational factors, personal factors, body image and competition in order for the common meanings to be identified. Content analysis refers to the searching for recurring words or themes (Patton, 2002).
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION
Conclusion

The main aim of this study was to determine the factors that underpin and contribute to female drop out within gymnastics. Qualitative research methods were used in the form of semi structured interviews. The semi structured interviews allowed the researcher to investigate and explore about the drop out occurrence. The semi structured interview questions were developed on four key themes which emerged from the review of literature. The four emerged issues were Robinson and Carron (1982) situational and personal factors, competition and body image. Although, many of the issues suggested and raised by the subjects supported the statements and literature with the review of literature. The most outstanding issues raised within this study were, lack of facilities, lack of enjoyment, unsatisfactory social life, lack of preparation, coaches, family and body image. Consequently, due to the small sample of subjects and the results of this study suggested the lack of knowledge with respect to development and talent identification of gymnasts. Is this a key factor which is accountable for the number of gymnasts prematurely leaving gymnastics?

As mentioned within the review of literature gymnastics entails a very demanding lifestyle. It is both physically and psychologically demanding, and only the gymnasts with the best physical and mental preparation will achieve success. Subsequently, not every gymnast reaches or receives the rewards and goals which are wanted.

A current finding within this study is hoped that it will aid towards, and protect gymnasts from drop out and preventing them from prematurely withdrawing from the sport.

This study has identified the general factors that affect drop out within gymnastics, however the main conclusion which emerged from this study is that every individual gymnast is different and unique, and each gymnast will experience different factors. It is essential not to assume that only one factor is most contributing factor of why they discontinue with the sport but it can be classed as an equation of factors. Therefore, further research needs to be examined and conducted to support the findings of this study.
The findings from this study and relevant literature helped to develop a timeline which illustrated the potential gates of when gymnasts are most likely to leave the sport. This model can help present guidance to coaches and parents of when the potential problems may occur. This will help provide guidance and support for the gymnasts in order for them to reach their full potential and not withdraw from the sport prematurely.

Figure 3 below shows the created timeline of potential gates of when gymnasts are most likely to leave the sport. There is one definitive time line from the ages of 1 to 18, below that timeline is a timeline of a typical gymnast career developing from preschool gymnastics to international. The second definitive line shows the years of which a gymnast may compete. The third time scale is the key stages which every child will undergo throughout school. By associating the three timelines with age it allows the researcher to develop thresholds/gates above the time line which may have an affect on the gymnast. The first threshold is parental influences, this factor can provide to little or too much pressure on the gymnast at a young age forcing them to withdraw. Secondly, one other key threshold is puberty in girls, this can be a difficult time for the gymnast and they may find gymnastics too much physically. Therefore, it important to work through this difficult time and let their body adapt to the new pressures they are put under. The final threshold is defined as secondary school; the gymnast may build new friendships which may affect their training and competitions. Secondary school also allows gymnasts to gain their own independence such as money or decisions they make.

The model below allows coaches and parents to become aware of these issues and protect and guide the gymnast through these times.
Figure 2 – A model which identifies potential gates where a gymnast may withdraw from the sport.
Strengths and Limitations
The present study allowed an examination of an occurrence, about which little was formally known. Limited, up-to-date research has been conducted previously; specifically, this study allowed the researcher to provide an insight of drop out within gymnastics. This study was conducted personally by the researcher; therefore, the same questions and probes were generated to each subject in order for the responses to be reliable and consistent. Finally, this study has been able to provide the field of gymnastics, such as gymnasts, coaches, officials and parents with possible thresholds which a gymnast may withdraw from the sport, therefore, providing them with knowledge and understanding in order to provide gymnasts with advice and guidance in order to prevent and combat premature drop out within female gymnastics.

In opposition, although the present study has notable findings, the study experienced four limitations. Firstly, within this study, the researcher was inexperienced in conducting interviews, therefore, could have influenced the responses obtained from the interviewee’s. Secondly, only six in-depth interviews were conducted, there was a small sample size in relation to the area looked at, the small sample size may have influenced the findings and displayed a false illustration of factors effecting drop out. Thirdly, due to the specific area looked at, these factors and explanations may differ from area to area. Fourthly, many subjects had problems recalling important information; the gymnasts who took part in the study did not go into great detail about their thoughts and feelings which they experienced.

Further Research
In addition to this study, many other researches can be suggested in order to aid towards and predict drop out within gymnastics. As mentioned previously above, one limitation is due to the small sample size selected; due to this additionally, further research can expand on the number of subject’s interviewed in order to examine more in-depth factors and therefore predict drop out within gymnastics. Furthermore, due to the study being specific in the area of Bridgend, further research in other regions also needs to be examined. In order to gain a greater scope and to see if factors are similar in all gymnasts, a comparison of regions could also be further developed. With a bigger number of subjects being interviewed and in
different regions this will allow more in-depth reasoning’s behind female drop out within gymnastics. Additionally, gymnast’s motives for participating in gymnastics also need to be examined, and then compare these with motives at the end of their career. This may determine if motives for gymnastics have a contribution in drop out within gymnastics. One other research could be related to individual drop out in sport in general in order to analyse weather the factors for drop out are general across all sports. Further questions and research must be addressed in order for the specific strategies and interventions to be developed, in order to help individuals throughout gymnastics and sport to cope with the pressures and to be able to prevent drop out in order to create more elite athletes.
REFERENCES
References


Routledge Publication.


APPENDICIES
Interview Guide

- Hi my name is Joanne, and I would like to thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview.
- The main aim of this study is to find out and learn more about specific factors on why female gymnasts drop out from gymnastics from both a coaches and gymnasts perspective.
- If you feel uncomfortable at any time throughout the interview you can withdraw from this study at any time, and if any questions which you do not understand, I will explain them in further detail in order for you to understand.
- If there is any questions that you do not wish to answer then please state no comment and no further questions will be asked.

Firstly I am going to ask quick questions to find out about your career as a gymnast/coach/ involvement in gymnastics. These set of questions is based upon the personal factors.

1. How old were you when you started to get involved within gymnastics?
   - What were your reasons to participate in Gymnastics?
   - Was you encouraged by outside sources e.g. parents

2. At what age did you withdraw from the sport?

3. Did you have any injuries whilst being a gymnast?
   - What were they?
   - Did they affect your training?
   - Did it lead to you withdrawing from gymnastics?

4. Can you please tell me about your achievements whilst you was a gymnast/coach?
   - What was the highest standard you reached?
   - When did you decided to compete instead of doing it for fun?

5. Can you tell me about your training regime you undertook or gave to gymnasts?
   - How many hours did you train?
   - What types of training did you do?
   - Was your training to much or too little?
   - How were the facilities where you trained? Was every apparatus available to you?
   - Any problems with getting to training? (Too far away or transport?)
   - Did your training affect your views of being a gymnast?

6. How did you feel in regards to competition?
   - Were you/they pressurised into competing?
   - Did you/they always feel prepared before a competition?
Now I am going to ask you a series of question in relation to situational factors. I am going to ask you questions on areas which are out of your control such as you relationships other people involved in gymnastics.

1. **Can you please tell me about your gymnast’s feelings about your/their social life during training and competition?**
   - Did you/they have friends outside gymnastics?
   - Did other interests affect your/their training for gymnastics?
   - Did you feel like you/they were missing out?
   - Was your friends understanding of your/their training demands?

2. **How was your relationship with other team members in your club/squad?**
   - Was there any tension between you and your team mates?
   - Was there a high level of competitiveness between you and your team mates?
   - Was it hard to compete against team mates?
   - Were your team mates your friends outside of gymnastics as well?

3. **What kind of support did you receive from your family?**
   - Did they give you a good amount of support?
   - Were your family to pushy?
   - How involved were they?
   - How did it make you feel? Good or bad?
   - Did the support continue throughout your career as a gymnast?

4. **What relationship did you have from your/as a coach?**
   - Did you have more than one coach?
   - If yes, why did u change coaches?
   - Can u explain the type of relationship you had with your coach?
   - What were their views on competition and training?
   - Did you have any input with your coach in terms of training?
   - Did your relationship with your coach change at any time throughout your career as a gymnast?

Now I have discussed general questions about your career as a gymnast and questions about situational and personal factors of gymnastics, now I am going to ask you some questions on your personal thoughts and pressure of gymnastics.

1) **What do you feel are the main pressures of gymnastics?**
   - Did your views towards competition and training change as you got older? Why?
   - Did you ever decide to not go training or compete due to other interests?

2) **What did you enjoy/ gymnasts about the training/competition?**
3)  
   - What did you enjoy?  
   - What didn’t you like?  
   - Were you always motivated to train and compete?  

4) **Did you/ your gymnasts ever feel pressured by others influences?**  
   - Did people put pressure on you/them to train etc? Does this affect the gymnast?  
   - Does this pressure affect your/their performance in training and competition?  
   - Does the pressure increase as you/they get older?  

5) **Did you associate gymnastics with a certain body image?**  
   - Did this affect you as a gymnast?  
   - Did you ever feel that your body was not fit for the sport?  

*The last set of questions will be focusing on the later stages of a gymnasts career and the build up to the withdrawal of the sport altogether.*

1. **Describe the gymnasts/your feelings you were undergoing whilst you was considering withdrawing from the sport?**  
   - Coach – did you notice a change in behaviour in your gymnasts?  
   - What lead to you/them think in this way?  
   - How did you feel about this?  

2. **What finally led you to withdraw from the sport?**  
   - Coach – did your gymnasts talk to you about any issues they were having?  
   - What were the main contributing factors for your/their withdrawal?  
   - Were you/they happy at this point?  
   - How did you/they feel?  

3. **How did you/your gymnast feel when they made the decision to fully withdraw from the sport?**  
   - Were you happy when you fully withdrew from the sport?  
   - Did you as a coach try and persuade them to continue?  
   - Did anyone try and persuade you to stay and continue?  
   - How do feel about them doing that
4. As a gymnast can you see yourself returning to the field of gymnastics as a coach etc?

Finally, is there anything you would like to add?
Consent Form

Dear Subject,

I am a level 3 undergraduate student in the School of Sport, P.E, & Recreation, at the University of Wales Institute Cardiff (UWIC) studying Sports Development. I am doing a dissertation on the factors which effect drop out within female artistic gymnastics within Bridgend County Borough from both an outside and personal perspective.

In order for this dissertation you will be required to under take an interview with a series of questions relating to drop out within gymnastics.

Participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any stage of the research process and for any reason.

Confidentiality will be upheld and no data will be transferred to any other party. You will be known as “subject” rather than by your name. Access of the data will be restricted to me as the researcher and the staff of the school i.e. dissertation supervisor.

If you are willing to participate in this research, please complete the form. If you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time. I will look forward to seeing you.

Joanne Davies.

I have read and understood the request to be a participant in the above research. I understand that participation is voluntary, and that withdrawal is possible at any time. I understand the measures that will be taken to uphold confidentiality. I agree to participate.

Name: ……………………………………………………………………………

Signature: ……………………………………….. Date……………………..
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<td>Personal</td>
<td>The Subject comments that lack of personal motivation can be a factor for withdrawal. However ‘when they are learning new moves’ that’s what they enjoy the most about gymnastics.</td>
<td>When the gymnast start skipping corners within their physical training their ‘interest disappears’ and their ‘whole rationale for gymnastics had disappeared’ Also subject B comments on the independence they gain as they get older, ‘the realisation increases on why they want to do sport and I think that determines the amount of effort they will put in doing the sport.’</td>
<td>Personal feeling such as ‘the feeling that you have achieved new skills and that you are improving in something’ shows the gymnasts enjoyment within the sport.</td>
<td>Self pressures are one factor identified. Subject D suggests that ‘once you get involved and you have put all your time into it you feel pressured yourself’ Gymnasts enjoy the personal feelings, e.g. ‘the buzz of new skills’</td>
<td>As a participant main reasons for participating in gymnastics was that all the subject friends did it. ‘it kept me fit and it gave me a chance to socialise with my other friends who have got the same interests as me’ Personal reasons for discontinuation was that it ‘got boring doing the same thing all the time’ and I ‘lost interest’</td>
<td>Personal reasons for participating in the sport is the social side of gymnastics. Subject F stated that ‘I just liked being with me friends in the gym and learning new stuff’</td>
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Subject B suggests that the achievement side is what they enjoy most, and when ‘children achieve and progress within the sport, they enjoy the learning of a new move, the overcoming of obstacles and barriers’. 

forever’ because if gymnast get an injury that prevents them from training any longer

Situational

Parents
Subject A states that the main pressures of gymnastics come from the parents as they make decisions for the gymnasts, subject A also states that ‘in our club the pressure does not come from us, but we do appreciate

Parents
Subject B suggests that there is whole spectrum of family support and some ‘parents wanted to do gymnastics for the child and pushing them to the gym’ and that this has an effect on their ‘behaviour socially and their

Parents
One main pressure is from parents because ‘once they have started to do something and put a lot of time into it, they are encouraged or pressured to keep going’. 

Coaches
A ‘good open relationship’ is needed as if they are having any problems they can talk to you however, some don’t talk to their gymnasts ‘end up

Parents
As a gymnast subject E felt that their parent were supportive ‘they encouraged me to condition in the house’

Coaches
Subject E did not comment fully on their relationship with their

Parents
as a performer in the sport subject F does not think that parental influence had an effect with her gymnastics. subject F stated that ‘my mother was supportive’ and had a good attitude towards gym
Subject A also identifies that not ever parent pressurises their child but ‘there is a lot of pressure to want the kid to win’ and it is also felt that ‘kids have finished gym because the parents are not supportive’.

Coaches
Suggests that clubs have a ‘nice little family’ and have good relationships with gymnasts.

The subject further goes to ownership on their own gymnastics’ you can always tell from the children that they are doing it for themselves not their parents.

Pressures from their coaches because ‘if they have been there for a while and they are doing well the coach does not want them to leave or drop hours

Friends
Within Maesteg the main factors are the social side, their ‘social circle might be changing’ and as they were older they would want to hang around with their friends or their friends would come and see them at the gym’ gymnasts would also say other reasons for not attending

suffering with bigger drop out and they can help them to stay in the sport’

‘sometimes if the coach had invested all their time in you they can put pressure on you’

Friends
Within Maesteg ‘you cant really have time for friends outside the gym drop out unless they are in the same situation and training as you’

Maesteg only have two areas of interest sport of gymnastics and training as you

Friends
Subject F found relationships with outside friends to be hard and states that ‘I did not have a social life’ and also suggests that training would be effected because of outside influences to ‘go out with friends’

Facilities
As subject E was a participant at a club within Bridgend suggested that they could have been better as they did not have every apparatus available for them to under go the correct training.

Coaches
Subject F describes their relationship with their coaches as good. ‘if I needed to talk to somebody about something I would always go to them’

Friends
Subject F found relationships with outside friends to be hard and states that ‘I did not have a social life’ and also suggests that training would be effected because of outside influences to ‘go out with friends’

Facilities
As Subject F was
identify that ‘they respect me as a coach but then they see me as some kind of friend as well’

One key statement which subject A comments about is that talented young gymnasts are fed up the elite pathway and the pressure can be too much, they fall behind and tend to give up, rather than sticking at it and catching up.

**Friends**
Subject does not comment on friends as a factor for gymnasts withdrawing from training for example ‘I’m supposed to be going with my friends to the cinema’.

**Facilities**
As an outside perspective subject C suggested that facilities at Maesteg were a problem, ‘we had all the apparatus, but we would have to put things away to get something out’ causing problems.

**Facilities**
Those children who want to do both don’t really end up staying in the sport’

As gymnasts get older friends play a big part on withdrawal as ‘they want more of a social life, they don’t want to spend all their time in the gym they would rather go out with friends’

Subject B also suggests that external pressures such as parents, coaches and friends all play a big part in the greater pressure

facilities at Maesteg were a problem, ‘we had all the apparatus, but we would have to put things away to get something out’ causing problems.

Facilities play an integral part to gymnastics. Subject D also suggests the lack of availability of facilities and this affected the gymnasts training. Gymnasts at Maesteg could only practice full size routines on a certain day but then ‘it’s not a sprung floor so they would have to walk through your tumbles’

also a participant she comments that the facilities in her club ‘was a pain’ as not every apparatus was available to them to use’.
the sport. However she does state that ‘they love gym and they want to be there, and gym is their social circle for a few of them but this will change as they get older’

**Facilities**
As a person who had been involved with gymnastics for numerous years she identifies that gymnasts need to train in couple of locations due to the lack of facilities available at certain clubs. Subject A states that gymnasts ‘get opportunities to train else where’
| Competition | As competition plays an important part within gymnastics subject A suggests that ‘not everyone has to compete’ but understands that some gymnasts get very ‘nervous’ in competitions especially if a gymnast does are not fully prepared the subject stated that ‘I think that’s awful for the gymnast having been through that myself’ | Again subject B also suggest competitions are important, ‘gymnasts skills need to be progressed for competitions’. Subject B also stresses the importance of preparation, the subject feels that a gymnasts ‘can never be well prepared as you could be, as the more preparation and the more prepared you are’ however, ‘I would never put a gymnast into a competition if they were adequately prepared as that is just dangerous’ | As a coach subject C states that ‘if a gymnasts has been training hard then they should compete, their main aim is that they are supposed to compete’ | No comments regarding competition | Subject E found that nerves played a bit part in competition | Subject F did not like competition and felt that they got really nervous before competition, however no pressure was put on the subject to compete |
| **Body Image**         | Subject A did associate gymnastics with a certain body image of ‘being ‘small, skinny and no fat’ on them. Even if the gymnasts are a ‘little bit chubby or got hips’ the subject will not select them as it hard for the kids to make it work. | Subject B also associated gymnastics with a certain body image because ‘if you are going to be a competitive gymnast you have to be the type’ and ‘conscious of what they look like’ in all areas. Some gymnasts find that their body cannot cope with the pressures of gymnastics ‘they become to heavy for their strength and it becomes very difficult and they start to struggle with the gymnastics level which they were at’ | Subject C also agrees that a certain body is required for gymnastics, they must be ‘quite small in stature, small shoulder compared to their hips and light and wirery’ | Subject D agrees with that a certain body image is required for gymnastics they should be small, broad shoulders to their hips and light. Some gymnasts undergo growth spurts and they tend to drop out because ‘they cant actually lift their own body weight and every thing changes for them’ | As a former gymnast subject E associated gymnastics with being slim fit and toned. As a gymnast ‘I used to get upset because I wanted to do it and carry on but physically it was too much’ Body image played an important part in the gymnasts life as the subject states that ‘I got older and I hated the fact of wearing a leotard’ | Subject F suggests that a typical body image for a gymnast would be slim and toned. |