

Report for Qualitative Research Article

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| Step | Keyword/Phrase to find this | |
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| 1 | CITATION (1) What study report is this? Write a complete and accurate reference citation | Constantinou, P., Manson, M., & Silverman, S. (2009). Female Students' Perceptions about Gender-Role Stereotypes and Their Influence on Attitude toward Physical Education. <i>Physical Educator</i> , 66(2), 85-96. |
| 2 | PURPOSE AND GENERAL RATIONALE (1) In broad terms, what was the purpose of the study, and how did the author/s make a case for its general importance? | The purpose of this study was to determine if girls behave based on perceived stereotypical gender-role expectations of their teachers and if these same expectations influence their attitudes toward physical education. The authors make a case for this by giving a brief historical background on gender bias and noting the progress that has been made in this area due to the pre-title IX barriers being removed. The authors also state that many PE teachers generally have pre-determined expectations of what boys and girls are capable of doing in PE class. |
| 3 | FIT AND SPECIFIC RATIONALE (1) How does the topic of the study fit into the existing research literature, and how is that provenance used to make a specific case for the investigation? | The authors cite past research as showing that stereotypical gender-role expectations, attitudes, and behaviors seem to be more prevalent and intense in coeducational settings. In this co-ed setting, the girls are generally picked on and marginalized, which ultimately affects their attitude towards PE, and their participation in the class. The authors also point out that additional research has identified classroom environment and teacher behaviors as playing a role in whether a positive attitude is taken towards PE or a negative attitude. When a positive attitude is developed, this usually influences the level of participation. Based on these previous findings, the authors want to know more specifically whether or not the girls behave based on the perceived expectations and how it influences their attitudes. |
| 4 | PARTICIPANTS (1) Who was the author/s (important characteristics re: interpretation of data) and how was he/she related to the purpose, participants, and study site? Describe who was studied (give number and characteristics) and how they were selected. | No pertinent background information was given on any of the three authors beyond that they are all in higher education: Constantinou (Ithaca College), Manson (Adelphi University), and Silverman (Columbia University). This was a convenience sample. All 7 th and 8 th grade girls (total # unknown) were informed about study procedures and were encouraged to take part. However, the final sample for this study consisted of 20 girls and 2 PE teachers (1 male and 1 female). Students: 8 of the girls were from the male teacher's classes and 12 of the girls were from the female teacher's classes. The athletic skill level of the girls in the sample was from low level to varsity level. This level was determined based on her perceptions, her teacher's perceptions, and the investigator's perception of their skill. Teachers: The female teacher had 19 years of experience (15 of them teaching 7 th /8 th grade) and developed the curriculum. The male teacher had 5 years experience with only 1-year teaching 7 th /8 th graders at this school. |
| 5 | CONTEXT (1) Where did the study take place? Describe any important characteristics of that context. | The study took place in a U.S. suburban middle school (7 th -8 th grades). The school chosen was a middle school with a homogenous population (98% Caucasians and the remaining 2% African-American or Asian-American). This homogenous population was purposely chosen to eliminate any possible racial differences in gender-role stereotypes that may have influenced the perceptions of the students. Formal interviews took place in a quiet room during the girls' study hall or free period. Observations took place during the regular PE class (which could have created student participants and/or teachers to act differently). |
| 6 | STEPS IN SEQUENCE (3) In the order performed, what were the main procedural steps in the study? Describe or diagram in a flowchart, showing order and any important relationships among the steps. | See attached flowchart at end of document. |

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| 7 | <p>DATA (2)</p> <p>What constituted data (e.g., test scores, questionnaire responses, frequency counts), how was it collected, and what was the role of the investigator/s in that process?</p> | <p>Data was collected from three main sources during the study. Data consisted of responses from formal interviews with the 20 girls, data from observations (consisting of descriptive field notes), and responses from informal interviews with the two teachers. The data collection was divided into two phases.</p> <p>Phase I contained the 30-minute formal interviews, which were audiotaped and then transcribed by a professional. It also included descriptive and interpretative field notes that were taken during observations of the girls during PE class. Lastly, questions inspired by the observations led to the informal interviews with the teachers, in which the investigators again took field notes.</p> <p>A professional transcribed all audiotapes from the interviews and all data was cross-examined, triangulated, and analyzed for common themes or lack of clarity amongst all three investigators.</p> <p>Phase II of the data collection consisted of the member check session (2nd interviews) in which the investigators made sure the transcription of the audio tapes was accurate and allowed the girls the opportunity to clarify anything with their perceptions. A second observation (field notes) was performed for each girl and a second informal interview was done with each teacher (by primary investigator).</p> |
| 8 | <p>ANALYSIS (2)</p> <p>What form of data analysis was used, and what was it designed to reveal? What (if any) computer programs were employed?</p> | <p>The type of data analysis used was induction. This is typical in qualitative studies to try to extract common threads or themes from all the data sources that were used in the study. In this case, the investigators pulled together the data from the interviews, field notes, and informal interviews to create common themes that encompassed their participants' perceptions. The data was analyzed in a four-stage analysis process. Stage 1 consisted of a preliminary analysis (after first set of interviews and observations) in which the data was triangulated to pinpoint common themes and to develop questions for the member check sessions. In Stage II, data was organized into three primary areas of interest:</p> <p>a) Teacher expectations, b) gender-role stereotypes, and c) student attitude toward PE.</p> <p>In Stage III, all data sources were "cross-examined, coded, triangulated, and compressed" (p. 88) to refine the important themes. Sub-themes were also added at this stage of analysis and were supported by data.</p> <p>The final stage included a peer debriefing process, which ensured that the data, along with the themes/sub-themes were reviewed and supported.</p> |
| 9 | <p>RESULTS (2)</p> <p>What did the author/s identify as the primary results (products or findings produced by the analysis of the data)? In general, "What was going on there?"</p> | <p>The primary results for this study included the themes and sub-themes that were derived from analyzing the data:</p> <p><u>Theme I:</u> Teachers expect students to increase their effort and participation in physical education. The girls perceived that their PE teachers had the same expectations for both genders.</p> <p><u>Theme II:</u> Boys are skillful and aggressive and create a competitive atmosphere in physical education. Many of the girls perceived boys as really competitive, yet many also thought this made PE more fun. They wanted the more skilled and aggressive boys on their team.</p> <p><u>Theme III:</u> A competitive atmosphere as a positive factor on girls' participation in and attitude toward physical education. Girls were excited and motivated to be in competitive atmosphere and this made them want to participate more.</p> <p><u>Theme IV:</u> Peers' behavior as a negative factor on girls' participation in and attitude toward physical education. Negative feelings towards participation were felt when they felt their peers (the boys) created an unsafe environment to play in (either physically or emotionally).</p> <p><u>Sub-theme I:</u> Girls perceive themselves as being athletic and competitive. As long as the girls felt adequately prepared for the sport, they felt competitive and athletic enough to play sports considered inappropriate for them (football, wrestling, etc).</p> <p><u>Sub-theme II:</u> Safety is a major concern for girls and parents. For those that would not participate in more male-oriented sports or activities, they gave safety as their main reason for not doing so.</p> |
| 10 | <p>CONCLUSIONS (2)</p> <p>What did the author/s assert about how the results in Step 9 responded to the purpose/s established in Step 2, and how did the events and experiences of the entire study contribute to that</p> | <p>Based on the results of the study, girls' participation in PE and their attitude toward PE is definitely influenced by their teachers' expectations and their own stereotyping of the gender-roles. As noted earlier, the girls felt that the teachers had the same expectation for both genders and that was to increase effort and participation. The field notes from the observations attested to this fact by the active participation in all PE classes. Additionally, as indicated by Theme IV (peer behavior) and Sub-Theme II (safety concerns), girls' participation in and attitude toward PE is also influenced by whether or not they feel the PE environment is physically and emotionally safe for them. One of the larger conclusions drawn was that many of the girls felt competitive and athletic, but needed to feel prepared to participate in a sport and needed to feel safe. Overall, the</p> |

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| | conclusion? | students reported that teacher expectations and safe PE environments influenced their participation. The authors pointed out, “it was quite evident in this study that girls perceived a great connection between varsity sports, competition, and physical education” (p. 94). |
| 11 | CAUTIONS (1) What cautions were raised by the author/s about the study or about interpreting the results? Add here any of your own reservations, particularly those related to methods used to enhance credibility (trustworthiness and believability). | One of the larger limitations to this study was dealing with the teacher backgrounds. The female teacher had been the primary PE teacher at this school for 19 years and had developed the PE curriculum. Until the year of this study, she had been the only teacher until the male teacher started. The authors raised their own concern about this because when the girls in the study gave their perceptions in the interviews, they were referring mainly to the female teacher. The authors noted their convenience sample as a limitation, which I completely agree with. In a sense this created participant bias, because the girls that volunteered to do the study were most likely those that are interested in physical education. Therefore, the results are just for a specific group and are not as generalizable had they used a random sample. I felt an additional limitation or caution was the selected school. Beyond stating that it was a suburban school with 98% being Caucasian, they did not give any further details. This could have been of higher SES, which may mean they have better teachers, better equipment, better facilities for physical education. These factors alone may increase participation and improve attitudes towards PE. |
| 12 | DISCUSSION (3) What interesting facts or ideas did you learn from reading the report? Include here anything that was of value (to you), including results, research designs and methods, references, instruments, history, useful arguments, or personal inspirations. | The data revealed a few themes that led the authors to form a conclusion about the emphasis in PE class. One was that the perception of the teacher’s expectations influenced participation and secondly, none of the low-skilled girls seemed to be alienated in the class. From this information, the authors felt that possibly emphasizing effort instead of skill may help low-skill students feel less alienated. I also thought the overall conclusion to this study was interesting. In comparing their results to other studies, the authors pointed out that girl’s perceptions about competition and ‘masculine’ sports is changing and gender role stereotyping is diminishing more and more with time. In general, I am very intrigued with girls and women in sport and how perceptions and participation have changed since the adoption of Title IX. As a very competitive athlete myself, it is interesting to hear how young girls compare themselves to their male counterparts, and how much a teacher/coach can positively (or negatively) influence that mentality. |

Abstract:

Why girls' participation in physical education (PE) dramatically changes once girls reach middle school has been of interest to many researchers. Studying how middle school girls perceive things at this age helps ensure a greater understanding of how to better meet girls' needs. The purpose of this study was to determine how middle school girls perceive their PE teachers' gender-role expectations and how these perceptions affect the girls' participation in and attitudes toward physical education. Qualitative data collection methods were utilized for the study, including observations and formal and informal interviews. This study conducted in-depth interviews with twenty 7th- and 8th-grade girls in a midsize suburban middle school. The girls were observed twice during their 45-minute PE class along with their PE teachers, who were informally interviewed directly after each observation. To develop themes and commonalities, the data from the interviews and observation field notes were analyzed. The themes that emerged from the participants' responses and the observations are that (a) the teachers' primary expectations for girls and boys were to increase effort and participation in PE, (b) girls hold gender-role stereotypes, and (c) a competitive atmosphere and peers' behavior influence girls' participation in and attitude toward physical education. Furthermore, the girls participating in the study perceived themselves as athletically equals to their male peers and called themselves "athletic" and "competitive." However, the primary factors impacting the girls' participation in and attitude toward PE and competitive sports were the girls' perceptions of what constitutes a safe environment and what constitutes a safe sport.

Steps in Sequence:

Flowchart – (Constantinou et al. – “Female Students’ Perceptions About Gender-Role Stereotypes and Their Influence on Attitude Toward Physical Education”)

Methods/Data Collection

