

Effect of uniform choice on  
competence, autonomy and  
relatedness on perceptions of  
adolescent girls

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# Purpose Statement

The purpose of the current study is to explore how the **perceptions of adolescent girls** in Physical Education change in relation to their own **choices** of appropriate **attire**, through the lens of Deci and Ryan's (1985) **Self-Determination Theory**.

**Physical Education** provides important opportunities to **develop** effective motor skills, social adjustment, health literacy and **lifelong healthy habits** (Watson, Elliot, Mehta, 2015)



**Lack of participation**, in particular for adolescent girls, can be **detrimental to development** (socially, physiologically and psychologically)



**Many reasons for decreased participation** → social expectations, perceived ability and issues with changing identity and body image (Chorney & Weitz, 2003; Eime et al, 2004)



**Teachers constantly striving toward autonomy-supportive environments.**

- Choice
- Promoting interests
- Challenges
- Preferences

(Aelterman et al, 2015)



However **adolescent girls still facing participation barriers** in physical education settings (Wetton et al, 2013; Cury, 2006; Bailey et al)



From this, we believe giving a **choice in uniform** may make girls more comfortable and confident → **increased participation**

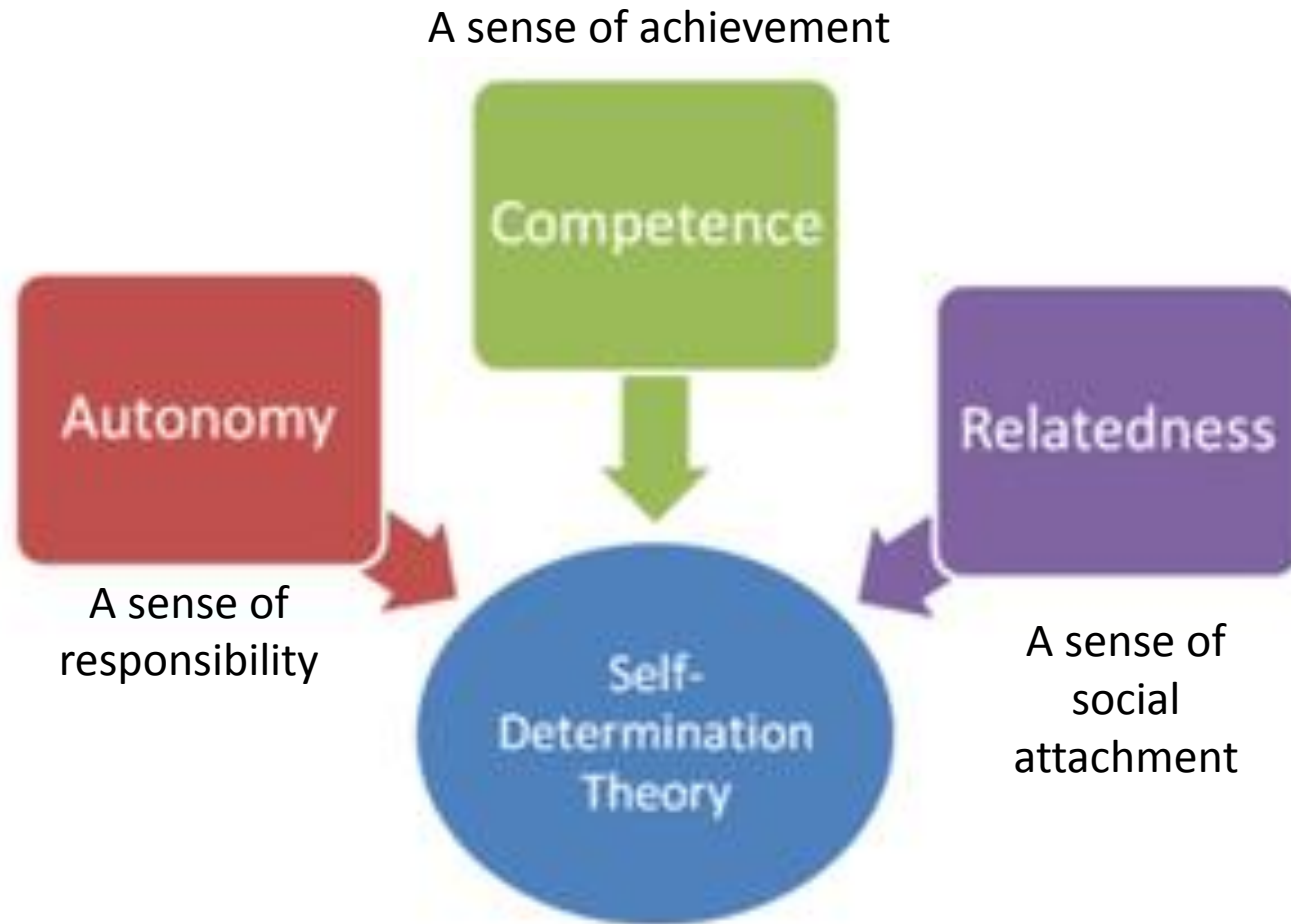
# Research Questions

1. How does *choice* regarding the selection of *appropriate Physical Education attire* influence adolescent girls' perceptions of *autonomy* and *relatedness*?

2. How will facilitating *autonomy influence* adolescent girls' *perceived competence*?

3. How will facilitating and *autonomy-supportive environment* influence observable changes in *peer interactions*?

# Self-determination theory



(Deci & Ryan, 1985)

# Reflexivity



Experience with physical activity of elderly people.

PE experience in China required no uniform.

Observed drop in PE participation while at private girls school.

PE pre-service teacher

During PE at Japanese junior high school where there were 2 choices for uniforms.

Experienced drop in PE participation during adolescence at co-ed school.

PE pre-service teacher.

# Qualitative Case Study

## School

- Private all girls school (Inner city)
- Currently have compulsory PE uniform
- All-girl schools shown to have high degree of social pressures (eg body image issues) (reference)

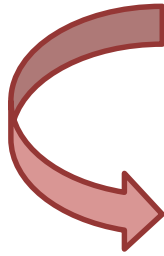
## Participants

- Year 9 girls aged 13-14
- 2 x classes of approximately 25-28 students
- Both classes taught by the same teacher (based on timetable)
- From moderate to high SES backgrounds

## Sampling

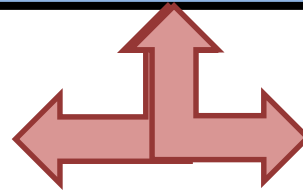
- Students placed in groups based on existing class allocations → retain natural environment (minimise associated bias).
- Each class exposed to natural and condition environments

**Baseline**  
2 classes  
Compulsory school uniform – no choice  
(3 lessons)



**Study**  
1 class – selected appropriate sport attire  
1 class – compulsory uniform  
(6 lessons)

**Teacher Data**



**Student Data**

1. Teacher to wear wireless audio recorder for student interaction and on-the-go commentary
2. Each lesson filmed and examined in conjunction with audio to create field notes (researcher)
3. Teacher required to complete audio reflection/log after every 3 lessons (provided with prompts)
4. Individual interview with teacher after final lesson

1. Focus group interview with students (start, midpoint and end → both conditions)
2. Student self-reflection (respond to prompts via email) 1, 2



# Data Analysis

- Data will be **coded**
  - **Key terms** established
  - **Themes** created to determine themes/trends

Question: "What in this course has helped you the most?"		
Response	Initial Coding	Focused Coding
<i>I appreciate how much the instructor encouraged us to voice our opinions and to ask questions in class. As much as possible, he took the time to respond to everyone's questions and opinions, to explain concepts, and then to make sure everyone understood his answers. This helped me because I felt like I was being heard and I became more involved in learning the material.</i>	Encouraging expression of viewpoint	Encouraging student participation
	Encouraging questions	
	Responded to questions	
	Explained content	Presentation of content
	Check for understanding	
	Student feels valued	Student empowerment
Student feels involved in own learning		

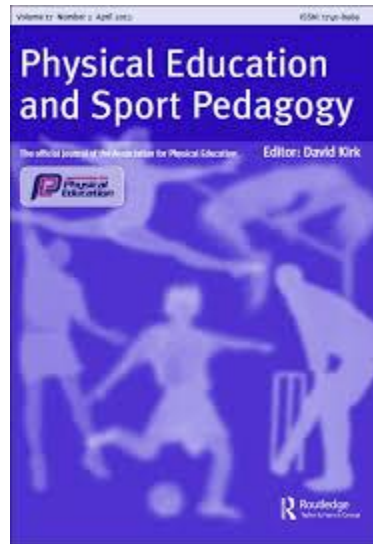
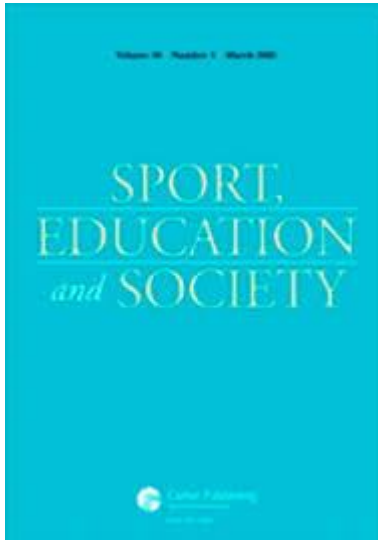
# Ethical implications

- Dealing with under age **children**
- School environment could potentially be affected (de-institutionalised)
- Increased **pressure** on **students** to express issues
- Increased **burden on** classroom **teacher**
- Increased **behavioural issues** could arise

# Research implications

- Potential findings may be problematic for schooling administrative bodies
- Will be dependant on **climate**
- **Cultural** impact

# Journals



- Share common missions
- Share common topics with published articles
- Looking to develop teachers knowledge to further improve student experiences and benefits from PE.

# Conferences



- Share common emphasis of developing and empowering children through PE
- Our study striving to reduce social and psychosocial barriers impacting participation for adolescent girls

# Future directions

- **Sport specific** (swimming, gymnastics or dance)
- **Different age groups** → intervene in year 7 or earlier before they drop out
- Do the findings change in a **co-educational** (mix gender) environment (regarding girls)
- Does **climate** or **culture** impact findings