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

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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)

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

Teachers constantly striving toward autonomy-supportive environments.
- Choice
- Promoting interests
- Challenges
- Preferences (Aelterman et al, 2015)

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

A sense of achievement

Autonomy
A sense of responsibility

Competence

Relatedness
A sense of social attachment

Self-Determination Theory

(Deci & Ryan, 1985)
Observed drop in PE participation while at private girls school.

PE experience in China required no uniform.

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.

Experience with physical activity of elderly people.

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
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

Student Data
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?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Initial Coding</th>
<th>Focused Coding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I appreciate how much the instructor encouraged us to</td>
<td>Encouraging expression of viewpoint</td>
<td>Encouraging student participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voice our opinions and to ask questions in class. As much as possible,</td>
<td>Encouraging questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he took the time to respond to everyone’s questions and opinions, to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explain concepts, and then to make sure everyone understood his answers</td>
<td>Responded to questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>helped me because I felt like I was being heard and I became more</td>
<td>Explained content</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>involved in learning the material.</td>
<td>Check for understanding</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student feels valued</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student feels involved in own</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentation of content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student empowerment</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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