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## MOTIVATIONAL LEVEL AND PARTICIPATION BARRIERS IN SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION AMONG ADOLESCENTS

### Introduction

Physical inactivity is a major public health challenge in the today world of technology advancement. It is known that adolescence its the time when a person tends to act as an adult, they do see themselves as an adult and tend to act independently. Adolescence prepares you to become a young adult able to be independent and responsible for yourself. Research findings demonstrate that adolescence is an important period of time to investigate the variables that support physical activity (PA) participation. More specifically, there is evidence that childhood patterns of PA track into adulthood, meaning that active adolescents tend to be active adults (Telama et al., 2005). However, it has been well documented that engagement in PA decreases during adolescence (Currie et al., 2008; Dumith et al., 2011). During the adolescent developmental period, there are a multitude of psychological, physical and social factors which may influence the decrease in PA patterns (Sallis et al., 2000).

Time is the one resource that we all struggle to make the best of it at all time and schools are no exceptions for example Physical education right now we got students receiving at Kosovo schools two 45 minute period /a week. The reward is that children need a break in order to go back and concentrate and focus better on the task and in order to achieve better results in other school subjects. Anybody who has worked with children will know that if they have a chance to interact with each other, when let go some other energy, get their heart rate going and get themselves just activated and the brain is more alert and able to focus on the learning that than will happen.

So, PE classes it's an excellent way of connecting with each other and reducing anxiety and getting students ready for the work that they are supposed to do for the rest of the day.

How much activity is needed in a 24 h day?

The recommendations guide to for a healthy living children and youth need a minimum of 60 minute a day a physical activity, and that includes daily vigorous and moderate physical activity and also opportunities for flexibility, strength and endurance, and children just don't get enough of that in Kosovo schools unless is integrated in their lives in many ways so at school for sure at home as well, but school is an opportunity where can reach all children, so it's an ideal place to do it!, unfortunately we don't see it happening in our schools, due to lack of motivation and different types of barriers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine two research questions:

- 1) What are student attitudes about their motivation regarding school based physical education (PE) and sport activities
- 2) What are student attitudes concerning the participation barriers into school based PE/Sport activities

### Methods

The participants of the study were ( $n = 305$ ) (155 males and 150 females) 10th , and 11th grade students from the two high schools in the northern Kosovo. The mean age of the participants was 15.57 ( $SD = 1.26$ ). All data were collected during the month of September and October 2014/15 school year. Students carried out the motivational and participation self reported questionnaires to gather quantitative data regarding students' perceptions of motivation and participation in PE.

*The Physical Activity and Leisure Measurement Scale* (PALMS, Morris & Rogers, 2004) is a 40-item self-report measure of motives for participation in physical activity, answering the stem question “I undertake physical activity...”. The scale consists of eight subscales: 1) mastery (e.g “to get better in an activity”), 2) enjoyment (e.g “because it’s fun”) , 3) affiliation (e.g “to do something in common with friends”), 4) competition/ego (e.g “to work harder than others”), 5) others’ expectations (e.g “because people tell me I need to”), 6) physical condition (e.g “because it helps me maintain a healthy body”), 7) psychological condition (e.g “because it acts as a stress release”), and 8) appearance (e.g “to improve body shape”). Each item uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Also, the participants were asked to state the number of days engaging in physical activity during a typical week and how important / useful / interesting exercise is for them, rated in a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = nothing at all to 5 = very much.

#### Data collection

Questionnaire items were designed by the author to reflect the research questions. Items sought information on student perceptions about their motivation, participation barriers during their school based PE/Sport activities. Perceptions of time spent on a PE/ sport activities were discussed to stimulate student discussion about their activity likes or dislikes and their reasons. Additional items included information related to activities they wanted to learn in PE. Focus group interview questions were modeled after the questionnaire so that the same topics were probed and answered in greater detail. Students were informed of the purpose of the study and the confidential treatment of the data. The study was explained by the researcher at the beginning of each class and questionnaires were distributed to every student who participated in the study. In general, questionnaires were completed in about 10-15 minutes

#### Data analysis

Questionnaire data were analyzed using three computerized programs. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS 21, a predictive analytic applications software, to provide mean and standard deviations derived from the nine Likert-scaled questions. Excel was used to organize data from the open-ended questions.

## Results

Children and adolescents in the Republic of Kosovo schools, cannot become more physically active and fit if they don't have a wide range of accessible, safe and affordable opportunities to be active. Teens, therefore, will not increase their levels of PA unless they are sufficiently motivated to do so.

Secondary upper school students ranked from most ('10') to least influential ('1') the barriers to their participation in school based PE/ and sport activities (see table 1).

**Table 1.** Perceived barriers to student participation in PE and sport in Kosovo public upper secondary schools (N= 305, boys 155 and 150 girls)

Barriers	Number of students	M	F	M+F %	Barrier category
1 Lack of facilities/ NO gym	290	140	150	95	I
2 Lack of sport equipment	284	133	151	93	I
3 Large class sizes	276	129	147	90	I
3 Outdated curriculum/Teacher centered	242	117	125	79	T
4 PE/Sport not priorities in the school	238	135	103	78	I
5 Focus on too many traditional sports/repetitive	219	117	102	71.8	T
7 Staff use outdated teaching methods	201	120	81	65.9	I/T
8 Peer pressure	151	65	89	49,5	S
9 Strict instructional strategies	130	84	26	42.62	T
10 Past negative experiences with PE	41	26	17	13.44	T
Total	305	155	150		

Note: Of all the participants, 305 students made one or multiple comments, T=teacher related barriers, i-institutional related barriers, s=student related barriers

Students ranked from most ('10') to least influential ('1') the barriers to their participation in school based PE/and sports. Lack of facilities and lack of sport equipment (institutional related barriers)  $\bar{x}=9.10$  (2.3) were ranked the greatest barriers to their participation during PE classes, third most influential barrier perceived by students was large class size (40), another factor ranked higher on the list of barriers to participation was listed outdated PE curriculum, teacher centered teaching (79%) see table 1, One of the most frequently chosen barrier (ranked most within the top five) by respondents was PE/ Sport not priorities in the school. Previous research on children's and adolescents' self-reported barriers to participation in PE and physical activity has reported changing attitudes to activity and PE, adolescents' decision making favoring more sedentary activities, similar to our study findings, 71,8 percent (219), stated that their PE teachers, focus on too many traditional and team sports, like football,

basketball, and volleyball. Theoretically, the 21st century schools are supposed to be also the places where students are able to express their opinions and be part of creating a healthy safe supportive climate in their schools. PE classes are the perfect setting for implementation of the theory into practice, PE curriculum content it is not just physical activity, competitive sports, highly structured activities, lack of teacher support, it's kind of "puzzle" pieces. As PE teacher, it is our responsibility, co-workers, school principals, school board members, to join our efforts and enable adolescents and youth to become physically active and healthy, by making school attractive place and make them happy during the time they spent within the junior high school years. Given the difficulties associated with adolescence for both girls and boys, offering PE extra-curricular classes to less skilled and less athletic students may provide them with the opportunity to develop their abilities in a non-threatening environment in both environments indoor and outdoor. It is our duty to take into consideration students' needs and rights, adolescents' "voice" needs to be heard, they must be part of the solution and part of creating norm of acceptance amongst each other and support for each other rather than negative behavior, bullying, tobacco and alcohol use, and other socio-pathologic behavior.

### **Discussion -**

The idea for the current study stemmed from the curiosity and the recognition that the psychological side of the participation and level of motivation into PE classes is under researched, especially in our country.

Qualitative results of the study are in accordance with the research of Barker (2013), our results shows that females wanted to participate in Volleyball, Swimming and Dancing, and they also expressed that they do prefer a coed setting during PE classes due to the possibilities that they tend to broke the mentality of 'traditionally dominant gender' stereotype. On the other hand, males wanted to take part in more competitive physical sports including Football, Basketball and Karate. This supported the cultural assumption that males want a more competitive sport environment, while females want a cooperative environment (Couturier et al., 2005; Hill & Cleven, 2006). Hohepa et al. (2005) also reported similar results when it came to gender differences and safety. However, this study provides further insights, demonstrating that there is a long list of different barriers that teachers may encounter when providing PE in secondary schools. Participation barriers including those imposed by the students themselves; lack of affordable school facilities, sport gym, safety school yards, lack of sport equipment and requisites, large class sizes, traditional teaching methodologies (teacher centered teaching, PE/sports not priorities in the school (PE ranked on the bottom of list of priorities), focus on too many traditional sports, team sports, repetitive/ not attractive learning topics, peer pressure, strict PE teacher instructional strategies, past negative experience.

Fitness-based activities are essential to the purpose of physical education but we must abandon militaristic teaching strategies of the past and replace them with positive motivation and encouragement coupled with activities that match adolescents' need for

physical exertion and play. Ultimately, students will value physical activity that is meaningful to them as cited in the National Association for Sport and Physical Education Standard 6 (NASPE, 2004). It is essential that teachers be able to justify why physical education is in the school curriculum (beside the fact that it is ‘compulsory’) and be knowledgeable about the value of physical education to the school, to students, other colleagues, management and leadership teams and those who make public and school policy decisions (Le Masurier & Corbin, 2006).

Teachers must help battle sedentary lifestyle habits by instilling in students the value and desire to be active (Standard 3 and 6) (NASPE, 2004, p. 11). Increased levels of sedentary behaviors among adolescents indicate a critical need for PE programs to adopt curriculum that is inclusive of all students and that increases their interest and motivation levels for physical activity participation. The level of challenge or the task has to be adjusted by the PE teacher, depending on the skills of the student’s results of the evaluation done in the beginning of the academic year.

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*The purpose of the present study was to explore motivation in school physical education (PE), barriers and demotivation factors that influence student's participation in PE. The participants of the study were (n = 305) kosovan students (155 boys, 150 girls), 15.5 years at grade 10 and 11 of secondary high schools. Results of the study indicate that adolescents showed lack of enthusiasm for stereotypical activities and lack of motivation. Students were more likely to report two main barriers (a) **Institutional related barriers** to participation in school Physical education (PE) such as ;the lack of facilities and equipment (Gym and sport requisites), lower priority given to PE by schools, traditional PE curriculum not flexible enough to meet different student's needs and (b) **PE teacher related barriers**; low levels of confidence and competence in teaching PE, being unable to provide safely planned and structured lessons, lack of teacher support, PE uniforms, outdated curriculum focusing mostly on team sports rather than overall fitness by giving more importance to winning than to participation. Often or most of the times teachers use "direct instruction" to introduce a new movement or activity, which has a lack of student involvement, group work, opportunities to explore, etc*

**Key words:** motivation, participation, barriers, Physical Education (PE), Physical Activity (PA)