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Foreword

The **Swedish Journal of Sport Research** is an open access journal publishing original articles on mainly pedagogical, psychological and sociological aspects of sport, but also educational, historical, and philosophical aspects. The aim of the journal is to be an international forum for sport researchers.

I would like to thank the authors for choosing the Swedish Journal of Sport Research for publication of their studies. I would also like to thank the reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions to improve the quality of the manuscripts in the reviewing process.

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How managers talk about children's football

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to illuminate the norms and values that emerge when leaders of football clubs talk about their clubs' activities for children. We used an explorative interpretive design. The study sample included nine football sports clubs out of a total of 37 football clubs that signed cooperation agreements with a financing company in western Sweden that supports sport clubs with sponsorship if they adhere to the Swedish Sports Confederation's policy program for children's sports and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The data were gathered via interviews with leaders. Three themes were constructed: Performance and results orientation for the club's best interests, Fostering for children's best, and Organizational differentiation of children's teams. We find that some of the football clubs still do not follow the policy program and the CRC, even if the clubs received funding to do so.

Keywords: children's rights, football, policies.

Norms and values in football

How leaders talk about children's football

Sports for children and adolescents play an important role in Swedish society. The positive benefits from children's sports – increased social, mental, physical skills, and health, as well as a sense of democracy, ethics, and respect for others (Fraser-Tomas, Côte, & Deakin, 2007; Telama, Yang, Hirvensalo, & Raitakari, 2006) – enable the Swedish government to invest a significant amount of money in children's sports (Norberg, 2013). More than half of all children in Sweden represent an association when they practice and compete in sports (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2013) and more than 600,000 non-profit coaches and leaders devote time to the sports organizations (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2009). Football has the largest numbers of participants of all sports in Sweden and football engages more than half of all children in Sweden; the sport also engages volunteer coaches and parents (von Essen, 2012). Performance oriented goals and winning in Swedish children's sports have in the previous years been the main priority for many sports clubs and has been difficult to challenge in Swedish sports clubs (Larsson, 2013; Norberg, 2013; Statens Offentliga Utredningar, 2008); similar patterns have been found in other countries (e.g., Walters, Payne, Schluter, & Thomson, 2012). This fact means that values of adult sports are observed in children's sports, when a traditional competition logic based on adult values and ideals prevails. For instance, this sentiment prevails when a coach's own agenda is more focused on early specialization, results, and success with children's sports in order to foster successful athletes. Early specialization creates a conflict in children's sports since it is opposed to the integration of all children regardless of talent (Norberg, 2013).

In order to ensure that the sports clubs attempt to counteract early specialization and make sure that all children benefit from the positive effects of sports, the

Swedish Sports Confederation (SSC) has written the guidelines/policy 'Idrotten vill' (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2009). These guidelines form the basis of activities of children aged 12 and younger; the guidelines declare that sporting activities should be organized in accordance with the children's own needs and wishes and should include strategies to discourage insults in children's sports. The SSC guidelines for children point out that children's sports should generate good habits and a safe social environment. Furthermore, the guidelines state that the development of children should be nurtured and that competition is a natural part of children's sports. However, the outcome of the game should not play a significant role in the process and all children should obtain the same chance to participate. Children should also be involved in sports that are close to their homes. Children should be encouraged to take part in several sports activities to stimulate their learning; all members of sports clubs should be treated as equals (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2009). The challenge for sports clubs is to organize a policy or guidelines that secures all positive aspects of children's sports and minimizes the risks of insults and other negative effects (Fraser-Tomas et al, 2007); it is furthermore a challenge for leaders who are responsible for children's sport in clubs to ensure that coaches actually follow these guidelines.

Early specialization

Early specialization in the form of the selection of talented teams can affect children negatively by decreasing their self-esteem (Kerr & Stirling, 2013); all children have the right to learn what is important and valuable in their sports. All children who want to participate in a team may not be selected if coaches choose only talented children to play on teams. It is also well known that the selection of talent in all sports favours those individuals with early physical development of speed, strength, and stature (Helsen, van Winckel, & Williams, 2005). These

attributes are complicated by significant growth and maturity and such children are often born in the first quarter in the year (Cobley, Baker, Wattie, & McKenna, 2009). Coaches in football clubs select children early to favour football development, but selecting the best children at young ages can do more harm than good (Helsen et al., 2005). This misuse of power by coaches can unfortunately become accepted as a standard in children's sports (Kerr & Stirling, 2012), and sports clubs do not protect children as much as is demanded by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Fransson, 2009). Talent programs, sports programs, and developing processes do not adopt a child's perspective in children's sports (e.g., Baker, Schorer, & Cobley, 2012).

A social and educational development in children's sports

The SSC has a mission that includes the social and educational development of children's sport. This mission is based on children's well-being and the fun elements of participating in sports (Statens Offentliga Utredningar, 2008). This mission also emphasizes the importance of meeting friends, social interactions, learning, and the joy of participating in sports. A picture has emerged that there may be a greater chance that children will continue to participate in sports if they feel joy (e.g., Côte, Lidor, & Hackford, 2009). Researchers have stated that children's sports are in need of having a child-centred perspective that protects children's rights related to pressure and demands for children in top-level sports (Farstad, 2006; Weber, 2009). Likewise, taking part in children's sports is a right extended to every child irrespective of if he or she is successful or not; changes in society and in sports federations are required to ensure this perspective (Redelius, 2012). It has also been stated that children's sports should be based on developing an interest in sports, physical activity, encouraging good ethics, and the observance of equality and integration (Statens Offentliga Utredningar,

2008). A child's perspective on sport means having a human-rights perspective of children and represents the anti-discrimination policy in the CRC. A child's perspective furthermore means creating an environment that is appropriate for the best interests of the child (David, 2005; Donnelly, 2008; Eliasson, 2011). The best interest of a child is to benefit from friendships developed in sports, spend time experiencing social interactions, express opinions, and develop without pressure (Eliasson, 2011).

Deliberate play versus deliberate practice in children's sport

There are scholars who argue that the participation of children in sports should focus on maximizing participation, and free-play activities to minimize the risk of children quitting sports; general sporting skills can be developed without early specialization (Côte et al., 2009). Deliberate play allows any numbers of players of different ages and sizes to engage in sports with minimal equipment, and to develop sport skills based on activities that bring joy and focus to children's social interactions (Côte et al., 2009). However, this kind of sport does not require coaches and it allows children the freedom to experiment with different movements and tactics and the opportunity to learn.

Deliberate practice explains how to develop expertise, and an important aspect is that an athlete needs to train about 10.000 hours, have a social network, and train with expert coaches (Ward, Hodges, Williams, & Starkes, 2007). Deliberate play also explains how to develop skills but the big difference is that deliberate play favours joy in all parts of practice. Another important difference is that deliberate play focus on the sport for its own sake; in deliberate practice the sport is done to achieve a future goal (Côte et al., 2009). Creating an environment that encourages participation and joy does not prevent children from reaping the

benefits of training (Côte et al., 2009). Deliberate play combines organized sports games and practice with children's play and creates prerequisites for children who seek a professional career (ibid.). Sports programs that are characterized by institutionalization, early specialisation, and early selection may not provide an optimal environment for lifelong participation in sports or even future success in elite sports (ibid.). Competition affects children's sports, but it is not crucial for children's development in specific sports (Côte et al., 2009). One crucial element to children's sports development is that children participate in different sports activities and have the chance to participate on their own conditions and based on their own needs (Horton, 2012).

On the other hand, deliberate practice (Ward et al., 2007) has been shown to be determinant in children's development of expertise. Sports programs seem to focus significantly on early specialization and elitism. It is also evident that both early specialization and participation in different sports can lead to talent development (Horton, 2012). Crucial elements in talent development in sports include children having a large social network and that children's practice is organized by qualified sports coaches (ibid.). By participating in different sports activities and practicing deliberate play, it is possible to reach the top levels in a specific sport (Côte et al., 2009).

The study aim

A private investor in the financial market in western Sweden contributed by sponsoring team sports clubs that establish and follow guidelines that comply with SSC guidelines for children and the CRC. After the sport clubs had received this funding for one and a half years, we were interested in studying some aspects of this issue. The specific research question we formulated was: How do

leaders in football clubs, which have received funding from this private investor, talk about their mission regarding children's sports and how do they talk about the objective of children's football? The purpose of this study was therefore to illuminate the values and norms that emerge when leaders of children and youth activity in football clubs, which have received funding in order to establish and follow guidelines for children, talk about their sport club's activities for children.

Methodology

In this study, we propose that language is central to creating and organizing beliefs about social reality, the meaning that language constructs and controls, and thoughts and perception of reality (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). We also propose using language as a form of social practice and therefore using leaders' statements as important tools in our analysis. Depending on how leaders talk about their sports clubs activities for children, there is always the possibility of conveying meaning and values. We used an explorative interpretive design, which means employing qualitative data production, and analysis strategies that are open-ended and explorative in nature and generating categories that describe and interpret the whole phenomenon as it was contained in the gathered data. Our study encompasses a conventional approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) to qualitative content analysis (Granehiem & Lundman, 2004).

Sample

Fifty-four team sports clubs had received funding (50,000 SEK per year) since 2012 from a private investor that had signed cooperation agreements with a financing company in western Sweden that supports sports clubs with sponsorship if they follow the SSC's policy program for children's sports and the

CRC. Of these 54 sports clubs, 37 were devoted to football. Nine of these football clubs (24%) were strategically chosen in order to ensure a broad sample with maximal variation (Fridlund & Hildingh, 2000). The football clubs' sizes and senior teams' positions in the division for both men and women's teams were chosen as theoretically important variables and are listed in Table 1. Of the selected football clubs, eight have both girls' and boys' teams and one club has only girls' teams. The participants (N=9) were leaders of the football clubs and had the responsibility for the children and the youth. One of the participants was a woman and eight of the participants were men. All participants were aware that they were selected to participate in the study because their sports club had received funding in order to establish and follow guidelines for children that comply with SSC guidelines for children and the CRC.

Table 1. Distribution of the strategically chosen football clubs in terms size of the football clubs and their divisions (N=9).

Size of football clubs	n
Small (300–400 active members)	4
Medium (400–600 active)	3
Big (700–800 active members)	2
Division for the clubs' senior teams (either women's or men's teams or both)	
Senior team in divisions 5–7	5
Senior team in divisions 2–4	4
Senior team in division 1, (”Allsvenskan” or ”Superettan”)	3

Interviews and ethical considerations

Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were used and the interviews were built up with open questions as a basis for the interviews. The interview outline consisted of the following questions: ‘Please, tell me what you and your coaches

do in order to create good children's sports,' 'Please, tell me the significance of your policy for children's sport in your club,' 'Please, tell me which approach you and your coaches employ regarding organizing children's sport in your club,' 'Please, tell me about your experience how coaches organize children's sports in your club,' 'Please, tell me what are your demands about the education of coaches in your club?' The interview also included follow-up questions to allow the leaders to clarify or elaborate on their responses. Initially, one pilot interview was carried out to test the interview outline. Minor linguistic adjustments were made to facilitate comprehension. The interviews were conducted in each clubhouse, in addition to an interview conducted at a neutral venue. Every conversation was conducted off-site to create as safe an environment as possible using a neutral dress code and safe conditions for the interviewees (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Each interview was recorded using an iPhone and lasted between 35 and 50 minutes and resulted in a total of 97 single-spaced pages of transcription. The study was conducted according to the principles and recommendations of ethical research (Vetenskapsrådet, 2011). The interviews were conducted with the first author (JD) and were then tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. The first contact with the participants was made by phone. The participants received information about the study and were asked if they wanted to participate in the study. They were also informed that their participation was voluntary, that they could withdraw from the study at any time, and that the information they provided would be treated confidentially.

Data analysis

Initially, the interviews were read several times as open minded as possible in order to gain a sense of the whole conversation and obtain a first impression of the interviews. Qualitative content analysis was used on both the manifest and

latent levels (Graneheim & Lundman, 2003). At the manifest level (i.e., meaning units, codes, and categories), the analysis was inductive. As a first step at the manifest level, after the initial reading, the text was divided into meaning units: words, sentences, or paragraphs containing the same fundamental meaning relevant to the aim and research question of the study. The next step involved coding each meaning unit and then creating and conceptualizing categories that captured the essence of the ideas being discussed within the codes. The analysis constantly moved between the original texts and the various levels of abstraction to ensure that no data were excluded and that the categories were mutually exclusive at a manifest level. The last step was to analyse and interpret the categories to determine the underlying meaning of the analyses; this step was the analysis at the latent level (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). An example of the analysis process is listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Examples of meaning units, codes, categories and themes from the qualitative content analysis.

Meaning units	Codes	Categories	Themes
<i>It turns out that the children who want to “win every game” quit the club. The problem is if the best children quit, then their friends will follow them.</i>	Children will quit	Results are important to attract children to stay in the club	Performance and results orientation for the club’s best interests
<i>It is so important that you do not exclude children when you coach. All children should participate on their own term</i>	All children should participate	‘Football for children is based on the needs of children	Fostering for Children’s best
<i>The kids shall prioritise training if they want to participate in playing games. One should not just come and play matches.</i>	Attendance is important	Continuous exercise attendance is an important factor at team selection	Organizational differentiation of children’s team

The themes that were constructed reveal three different value principles: Performance and results orientation and development of children for the club's best interests, Fostering for children's best, and Organizational differentiation of children's teams. Both authors and interpreted the empirical data based on the contextual understanding and theoretical expertise.

Findings

Performance and results orientation for the club's best interests - results are important to attract children to stay in the club

The leaders expressed that there was a driving force from the children to compete and that competition matters. They also expressed that competitions necessarily have winners and losers. The leaders' statements revealed also that children want to win because of the joy of winning, and that winning is important in order to develop the football club.

It matters for the children, to win games. It matters, absolutely. It is an acknowledgment of that you have done something good, for the club.

Furthermore, they described that winning has a positive effect on the organization by boosting the club's reputation. One important aspect of recruitment is winning games so that new boys and girls find it attractive to play for the club.

We have a very talent group of girls; they played in the finals in a national tournament, and finished fourth. They are the best girl team in town. Now girls have joined joint (to play for the team) from all over.

The leaders described that there is a risk of losing children to other clubs if they are not successful at winning games; winning games is a motivating factor to practice and play football as well as develop as a player:

We want that they (the children) should be successful, otherwise they say 'they're better than us' and then they go to another club.

Successful football for children and adults benefits both parties

The leaders said that the senior players affected the children's teams by being role models. They also stated that a successful senior team attracts children to play on their youth team, and vice versa. The leaders also expressed that clubs that have a successful senior team are able to retain children in their club for a long period of time. One of the leaders said:

It is fun for the kids when the first team does well. They have role models. I think it is important for the children to have someone to look up to, so that they want to play in our first team when they grow up.

Fostering for children's best

Football clubs play an educational role in health, social, and moral aspects

Leaders said that the clubs focus on fostering and raising children to be good members of society. The leaders also stated that the clubs affect children's health by stimulating and developing good physical and psychological health. Children benefit from these aspects by being part of different sports. There is also an educational fostering aspect in the clubs regarding health, social issues, rules, and norms. One leader said:

The children should learn the benefit of being fit, learn how to train, take care of their bodies, and most important, learn how to be social. Learn to show respect.

Football for children is based on the needs of children

The leaders said that everyone is welcome in their clubs. They stated that children's football should work as social learning. Children's sports should work without demands and it important that the sports are joyful. Having fun in sports is a significant aspect of the sport experience for children, and having fun is being part of a group and learning the sport. The leaders also said that the clubs have a purpose to make sure that children's football is fun and joyful and that the children are allowed to play with their friends. One leader said:

First of all, we want the children to have a good time here at the club. We want them to enjoy themselves. The most important thing is that they have fun, and get friends for life. That's the main purpose.

Children's football has a greater need for social coaches than educated coaches

The leaders expressed that most of the clubs have coaches that work with non-profit organizations and that there is no qualification necessary to becoming a coach for children. The coaches can choose their own level of education, but the clubs support the non-profit coaches to educate themselves. The leaders also find it important that the coaches learn club policies. One leader said that it was not important that the coaches had an education in football because the coaches' mission is to educate children socially, rather than in specific football skills:

The most important is not that the coaches have education in football practice. They can always learn that in the club. The most important thing is that the coaches share our values on how to be a good coach and a role model.

Organizational differentiation of children's teams

Continuous exercise attendance is an important factor in team selection

There were leaders who expressed that football training develops children. Participation in games and training were key factors as opposed to the specific content of the football drills. Children's attendance at training was voiced as a motivation, and participation in training was a factor to be selected for the team.

One leader said:

Children like games most of all. If you skip the training, and only participate during games, you are not kind to those who have attended to all trainings. It's not about letting the best children play; it is about letting the most motivated children play.

The children are grouped based on different skills and abilities

The leaders described that the children was grouped by their skills and abilities because they and the coaches believed that this grouping was beneficial to the development of the children. They also expressed that the children find it more fun to play with others who are at the same level of development. One recurring statement was that all children are allowed to have a chance to play and practise with individuals that have the same level of skills and abilities because they develop faster.

If the children play “one against one” and one of them wins every time, they will not enjoy it. But if the children play with someone more equal in skill, it will be more fun, and they will develop faster.

There was no consensus in how the leaders talked about their sport club’s activities for children in this study. However, there were leaders who talked more in terms of Performance and results orientation for the club’s best interests and Organizational differentiation of children’s teams (I2, I5, I6, I8) than others (Table 3)

Table 3. Overview of categories and themes present in the interviews (I1-9).

Theme	Categories	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7	I8	I9
Performance and results orientation and development of children for the club’s best interests	Results are important to attract children to stay in the club					X		X	X	X
	Successful football for children and adults benefits both parties		X	X	X	X	X		X	
Fostering for children's best,' and 'Organisational differentiation of children’s teams	Football clubs play an educational role in health, social, and moral aspects	X		X	X	X		X	X	X
	Football for children is based on the needs of children		X		X			X		X
	Children’s football has a greater need for social coaches than educated coaches	X		X	X					X
Organisational differentiation of children’s teams	Continuous exercise attendance is an important factor in team selection		X				X		X	X
	The children are grouped based on different skills and abilities	X	X		X	X				

Discussion

In the leader's stories, we observed different norms and values that existed in their football club's activities for children. The findings manifest as three co-existing themes: Performance and results orientation for the club's best interests, Fostering for children's best, Organizational differentiation of children's teams.

Within the first theme – Performance and results orientation for the club's best interests – the leaders expressed that winning is important and has an effect on the clubs' reputations; a successful club is able to both retain and recruit new children. This approach, which focuses more on the club's best interest, will influence how coaches organize children's football. In the leaders' stories, we realized that results are important (instead of results playing a secondary role in children's sports). The overall aim of winning is not in agreement with SSC policy for children's sports (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2009), and some of the clubs seem to have failed to retain the best interests of the child in focus within children's football. By focusing on the contest rather than winning, is it possible to create opportunities for all children to develop on their own terms without hindering children's football development (Bailey et al., 2010; Côté et al., 2009). However, the leaders argue that winning is what the children want, but evidence suggests in several studies that children feel joy in the contest, with or without winning (e.g., Eliasson, 2009; Light, Harvey, & Memmert, 2011; Walters et al., 2012). In a longer perspective, too much focus on results in football clubs can decrease the chance that children continue to pursue sports when they become adults (Eley & Kirk, 2010). In spite all clubs in this study being financially sponsored to pursue a policy that strengthens children's rights, these findings indicate that some of the clubs are still based on the norms and values of an adult's perspective of children's sport, which is at odds with values based on children's rights.

Within the second theme – Fostering for children’s best – leaders expressed that the clubs work in order to let everyone participate on their own terms, that football should be joyful, and that the clubs’ most important purpose is to foster the social development of children. This approach reveals leaders’ values and norms, which are in accordance with the principle of deliberate play and may be a good prerequisite for children developing as football players later in life, no matter their physical maturity as young children (Côté et al., 2011). This approach is also in line with the SSC’s policy program for children and children’s rights (David, 2005; Donnelly, 2008; Eliasson, 2011). In the leaders’ stories, we can discern the importance that all children have the same opportunity to have good social coaches who have knowledge of the clubs’ values and norms. The leaders articulated that the coaches should foster democracy, ethics, and a respect for others, as well as a healthy lifestyle. This approach, highlighted in the leaders’ stories, is in line with the SSC mission related to children’s sport and the idea of a ‘club fosterage’ (Statens Offentliga Utredningar, 2008) and is also evident as an important factor in children’s sport (Börjesson & von Essen, 2007; Fraser-Tomas et al., 2007; Telama, Yang, Hirvensalo, & Raitakari, 2006).

Within the third theme – Organizational differentiation of children’s teams – leaders expressed that the clubs’ work is to yield good results and develop children’s skills by organizational differentiation. In other words, the coaches create relatively fixed groupings based on children’s abilities and skills to ‘individualize at the group level.’ By using differentiation, the leaders sort and categorize children based on skill. The leaders articulated this strategy as a good opportunity to develop children faster and that the children enjoy playing more with teammates at an equal skill level. Differentiation does not seem to be the clear path to developing expertise, and several studies have supported another approach that does not focus solely on sport-specific deliberate practice but emphasized playing activities and the sampling of various sporting activities

(Côté et al., 2009). Based on that notion, it could be a good idea to implement elements of deliberate play in football clubs that allows children with any numbers of players of different ages and sizes to engage in football to develop sport skills based on activities. Organizing children's football with the intent of developing children is complex, but it is important to remember that the policy for sport for children in Sweden points out that children under 12 years of age should not experience simplistic, dichotomized, linear pedagogical practices that separate children by talent. To separate children into different groups based on children's abilities and skills can be considered to be separating children by talent, but grouping is often based on children's growth and maturation (Cobley, Baker, Wattie, & McKenna, 2009). To differentiate children at young ages can also do more harm than good because it can be a negative experience for children who are not considered to be talented enough; being deselected can affect a child's self-esteem negatively (Helsen, van Winckel, & Williams, 2005; Kerr & Stirling, 2012; Kerr & Stirling, 2013).

In this study, the leaders also argue that it is important to differentiate children based on their ambition and motivation, i.e., only letting the children play games if they have good attendance at practice sessions. This sort of differentiation does not benefit children who participate in different sports, or other different activities. To encourage children to participate in different sports is a component of the SSC's policy for children and by this sort of differentiation the clubs do not organize children's sport in line with the SSC's policy for children (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2009). Differentiation in children's sport is a more consistent way of early specialization and to achieve future goals based on elite performance. These actions are more consistent with norms and values of adult's sports, as opposed to values in children's sports based on joy and playfulness (Ward et al., 2007).

Funding as a tool in order to follow the SSC's policy program for children's sports and the CRC is clearly not enough for some football clubs. In order to balance the perceived need of winning for the club and organizing differentiation with having a holistic child-centred approach in the clubs, the leaders, together with the coaches, parents, and the children, need to problematize practices in children's football with critical reflections. The Swedish Sport Education can also be a part of these discussions with the clubs in order to attempt to negotiate around these difficulties. Leaders' coaching behaviour is often shaped by their own values and beliefs (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2004). Even though many leaders' coaching philosophies match the principles of the SSC policy program, leaders' values and beliefs can be affected by coaching cultural tradition, organizations and club expectations (Cassidy et al., 2004). There is a need for research that evaluates the implementation process of policies that include children's rights in sport.

Method discussion

A qualitative content analysis was chosen in order to reveal the variation and diversity in the leaders' stories (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Selecting leaders who represented football clubs of different sizes and different divisions for both men's and women's teams increased the possibility of highlighting the research question from different perspectives, which is important for the credibility of the results (ibid.). During the interview, the first author endeavoured to create a mutually trusting relationship with the leaders. The rich variation of meaning units from the interviews facilitates an appraisal of the study's credibility. Trustworthiness can be understood in terms of discussing the meaning units, codes, categories, and themes in a reflective and systematic manner and is strengthened by the fact that the second researcher has extensive experience in

qualitative research (ibid.). Our own preconceptions and own values, i.e., proximity to the material, may, on the other hand, have inhibited critical reflections of the interpretations. In order to increase the trustworthiness of this study, the research process has been described in detail and the different steps of the analysis have been carefully outlined.

Conclusions

The study describes on the one hand an approach in children's football clubs where values and norms highlight the importance of an activity for children that is in accordance with a child's perspective that protect children's rights in football. On the other hand, the study also shows an approach that focuses on results in order to increase the quality of the football club and organise differentiation, even if the football clubs had received funding in order to not adopt this approach.

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A Possible Mission?

An Action-based Case Study of a Teaching-Learning Model in Physical Education and Health

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Abstract

Aim: There is a request for different models of health education in the school sphere. The purpose of this study was to examine a teaching-learning model in PE with the aim to develop health literacy among students.

Methods: One upper secondary school class was chosen for the action based study. The implementation of the teaching-learning model was designed as a student task-oriented interactive model. The educational outcomes of the model were examined through tests, questionnaires and content analyses of student reports.

Results: The model contributed to an improvement of the students' educational outcomes related to aspects of health literacy and the knowledge object in focus.

Conclusion: The design of the model supported an active processing of knowledge and students' ability of critical self-reflection within the framework of health literacy.

Keywords: Health literacy, Physical education, Teaching-learning model, Educational outcome, Aerobic condition

Background

Health an issue for PE

To promote public health has been one argument for the existence of physical education (PE) over the years (Bertelsen & Thompson 2014; Lundvall & Schantz, 2013; Pfister, 2003). Despite this, the school subject physical education (PE) has been criticized in many Western countries for its lack of delivering knowledge in health (Silverman & Ennis, 2003; Kirk, 2013). PE has been organized as a “smorgasbord” of activities, with skill requests similar to different sport activities. This approach to teaching in PE has been supported by a strong belief that relevant, interesting, and enjoyable activities could influence adolescents’ intrinsic motivation to become positively engage in a lifelong interest for health and physical active lifestyle (Annerstedt, 2008; Haerens, Kirk, Cardon, & De Bourdeaudhuij, 2011; Marshall & Hardman, 2000).

The WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (DPAS) has called upon member states to develop and implement school policies and programs that promote healthy diets and increase levels of physical activity (Lagarde, Le Blanc, & Mc Kenna, 2008). Reasons behind this initiative are both that physical activity and fitness play a significant role in preventing physical and mental problems related to a sedentary lifestyle (Erikssen, 2001; Coombes, Law, Lancashire, & Fassett, 2013; Giannuzzi, Mezzani, & Saner, 2013; Janssen & Le Blanc, 2010; Ortega, Ruiz, & Castillo, 2013), and that school represents an important arena where children and young people from different socioeconomic groups are possible to reach. Furthermore claims are made that the school subject PE has the possibility to increase students’ physical capacity, self awareness and positive attitude towards physical activity (see e.g. Blair et. al., 2011; Sollerhed, 2006). But how the education in health is to be implemented in schools is less known and, hence less examined.

Literature shows that there is a gap between what students should learn in PE according to the steering documents and the actual content and learning outcomes (Annerstedt, 2008; Larsson et al., 2010; Lundvall & Meckbach, 2008). The interrelatedness between curricula, content, and assessment (learning outcomes) is vague (Annerstedt, 2008). Other studies point to a lack of theoretical understanding of learning processes among students in PE (see e.g. Barker, Quennerstedt, & Annerstedt, 2013; Nyberg & Larsson, 2014; Quennerstedt et al., 2014; Ward & Lee, 2005).

Even though knowledge in health has been accentuated as the PE subject's central assignment in Sweden, education in 'health' has continued to have a hidden role compared to education in sports (Schantz & Lundvall, 2014). The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen, 2010) stated after an unannounced inspection of PE lessons that 'students learn sport but not health'. Furthermore, a question mark was put around the assessment of students' knowledge, as the lesson content neither met the recommendations of core content, nor the knowledge requirement of the subject.

In order to secure a long-term plan for knowledge transfer to achieve knowledge in health new strategies seem to be requested both by authorities and researchers. Hence, one challenge is to design teaching-learning models that support learning processes and ways of assessing learning outcomes related to stipulated aims of physical health and bodily capacity. The limited time for Swedish PE in upper secondary school emphasizes the role of the subject, namely, to give students experience, knowledge, and tools to take care of and manage their present and future health (GY, 2011). For that reason, a crucial task for PE practitioners seems to be to find methods/models of how to promote students' learning in, through and about health, that supports and ensures learning outcomes in health

education and the measuring thereof, as a way to encourage a realization of a physically active lifestyle (see also Haerens, Kirk, Cardon, & De Bourdeaudhuij, 2011; Metzler, 2005).

Health literacy

The last decade a considerable interest has been given to the concept of health literacy as a way of developing public health and enabling people using skills and capacities to achieve a greater control over factors that shape health (see e.g. Nutbeam, 2000; Nutbeam, 2008; St Leger, 2001). Health literacy is a composite term to depict different dimensions of health and a range of health education outcomes (Nutbeam, 2000; Nutbeam, 2008). Therefore, health literacy has been put forward as a valuable concept to develop and use in education in order to enable a learning that goes beyond the classroom, a learning that improves and supports everyday living, including the ability to make salutary healthy decisions (Abel, 2008).

The concept of health literacy can be described as consisting of five components: theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge, critical thinking, self-awareness, and citizenship (Paakkari & Paakkari, 2012; Paakkari, Tynjälä, & Kannas, 2010). The first component, *theoretical knowledge*, seeks to enable students to gain an understanding of different health issues and create links between them. Theoretical knowledge alone is not enough to make people change their health habits, but it is a substantial foundation for other components of health literacy (Paakkari & Paakkari, 2012). The second component, *practical knowledge*, includes the basic functional health-related skills. Practical knowledge is often based on experience and linked to daily life and can be understood as a competence or capability to do something, i.e., to put theoretical knowledge into

practice (ibid.). The third component, *critical thinking*, highlights the students' need to develop a competence through integrating theoretical and practical knowledge, the ability to generalize value, apply information, and argue for healthy choices and decisions (ibid.). The fourth component, *self-awareness*, involves the ability to self-reflect, become aware of one's strengths and weaknesses and recognize the physical and psychological messages that the body is sending. Self-awareness requires being able to link together and describe healthy topics from one's own personal perspectives and examine reasons for behaving and thinking in a particular way (ibid.). *Citizenship*, the fifth component, highlights the importance of students being able to understand their rights and responsibilities in society. It also involves the ability to act in an ethically – responsible way and take social responsibility and to consider health matters beyond their own perspective (ibid.).

Nutbeam (2000) advocates a three-layer hierarchical structure for health literacy, from basic/functional knowledge (handling everyday situations) to communicative/interactive literacy (applying information and using it in daily practice), to the level of critical literacy (the critical analysis of information/knowledge and the use of it). These levels of health literacy are put forward as building blocks of lifelong learning skills, competence behaviours, specific knowledge, as well as self-attributes (Nutbeam, 2000; St Leger, 2001). Enhancing people's health literacy involves finding out how to modify one's own personal and social conditions.

Schools as part of the health promotion field can represent a central context for developing of students' health literacy (Abel, 2008; Nutbeam, 2000). Schools can also work with combining health literacy and empowerment. The latter is called an action-oriented approach to health literacy, where students are

stimulated to reflect on different health matters from various points of view, such as personal health issues as well as health issues related to wider society (Paakkari & Paakkari, 2012).

The concept of health literacy has a lot in common with the assignment of the Swedish school subject Physical Education and Health. Swedish PE curricula advocate the building and developing of certain competencies in health, including interpersonal relationships and social responsibilities. The overriding aim is to teach students knowledge of physical health and how to maintain a physically active lifestyle in a lifelong perspective (GY, 2011).

A model based approach

A model based approach built on the assumptions of health literacy, emerge as one possible model design to support young people's knowledge of how health can be improved and maintained in everyday life, including the ability to make salutary healthy decisions (Abel, 2008). Thus educational research is required that examines health literacy as a learning outcome and ways of measuring these outcomes (Nutbeam, 2000; Nutbeam, 2008; Paakkari, Tynjälä, & Kannas, 2010; Paakkari & Paakkari, 2012; St Leger, 2001). In summary, this has led to the action-based case study described below.

The purpose of this action-based case study was to examine a teaching-learning model with the aim of developing health literacy among students as an educational outcome in PE. The more precise research questions were:

- In what way can a student task oriented interactive model develop students' health literacy?

- How can students' learning outcome be assessed by using the teaching-learning model?

Methods

This case study's methodology draws on educational action-based research. The purpose of action-based research in a school environment is to provide educational practitioners with new knowledge and a new understanding enabling them to improve educational practice or to resolve significant problems (Stringer, 2008). The teaching-learning model had as its theoretical framework the concept of health literacy, concentrating on four out of the five core components (theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge, critical thinking, and self-awareness). Due to time constraints, this study has not included the fifth component of health literacy, citizenship.

The design and realization of the teaching-learning model focused on the creation of a learning community through defined problem solving (experimental) tasks, group work and discussions where the pedagogical setting sought to enable an active processing of integrating knowledge in, through and about principals of aerobic condition (Arnold, 1979; Nutbeam, 2000). Furthermore, it encouraged reflections on personal meanings.

The model was organized around a student-task oriented laboratory interactive compendium based on seven theoretical and practical aerobic-conditioning lessons. Each lesson had a certain objective where students were given a task to investigate which encompassed basic functional facts (theoretical knowledge) and practical knowing (embodied experience). Furthermore the students were supposed to reflect and discuss the outcome of the "lab" (what had been

investigated and experienced). In total it consisted of six practical aerobic-conditioning labs and one daily physical activity lab. Added to these labs were one pre- and one post-questionnaire. The pre and post questionnaires included open and closed questions on the students' perceived aerobic condition, level of physical activity, and leisure-time habits, as well as actual knowledge of certain basic facts about aerobic conditioning. The students' reflections on their individual results and embodied experiences were documented in student reports (lab reports). For a complete description of the lesson content, see table 1.

Table 1. *Description of lab interactive compendium and lesson content*

Lesson 1	Aim: to inform the students of the basic knowledge of aerobic conditioning.	
	Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They received the laboratory interactive compendium and study material with information on the physiology of aerobic conditioning. Go through how to measure HR and explanation of how to use the Borg scale. 	Practical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They answered the questionnaire. Their first practical was a 2,000-meter running test. They measured their time and HR and estimated their perceived exertion according to the Borg scale.
Student task	Learn how to measure HR and estimate exertion whilst running. Documentation of time, HR, and perceived exertion.	
Lesson 2	Aim: to let the students experience heart rate variations in relation to different physical activities.	
	Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The oxidative system—respiratory and circulation process. The difference between aerobe and anaerobe exercise. 	Practical <p>Measured and documented HR during different phases of physical activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Static:</i> experience lactate and oxygen deficit. <i>Dynamic:</i> different aerobe exercises. <i>Arousal:</i> The mind's influence over HR.
Student task (written lab reports)	What happens to your heart rate when doing different exercises, and why? Documentation of personal reflections from participation: variations between the exercises and embodied experiences.	

Lesson 3	Aim: to let the students experience how it feels to run at a given HR at different intervals.	
	Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits of aerobic conditioning in daily living. • Go through the advantages of interval running according to the development of aerobic conditioning. 	Practical <p>Three different types of interval running: 60:30, 70:20, and 40:20, with their running tempo adjusted to a given HR. Repeated three times. Estimation of perceived exertion according to the Borg scale.</p>
Student task	<p>How does your body react to the different interval sessions, and why?</p> <p>How did the perceived exertion feel physically?</p> <p>Group discussion about differences in speed when running with the same HR.</p>	
Lesson 4	Aim: to let students evaluate two types of exercises from an aerobe fitness point of view.	
	Theory <p>To trigger the oxidative system.</p>	Practical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 minutes of rock-and-roll dance. • Every five minutes measured HR and exertion according to the Borg scale. • The same procedure was repeated during twenty minutes of basketball.
Student task	<p>How did the two different exercises trigger the oxidative system, and why?</p> <p>What role does motivation play? Discussions about how the students experienced the activities and in relation to aerobe training.</p>	
Lesson 5	Aim: to check the students' understanding of what type of exercises promote aerobic conditioning.	
	Theory <p>What promotes aerobic conditioning?</p>	Practical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The class was divided into five groups. • Each group put together a 7 minute activity that should promote aerobic conditioning. • Each group presented its activity. The classmates tested the activities.
Student task	<p>As a group, put together a seven-minute activity that promotes aerobic conditioning. Present the activity and let your classmates try it. Evaluate the activities presented through group discussions and confer on to what extent the activities benefited aerobe fitness training.</p>	

Lesson 6 /student task	Aim: to let the students examine how physical activities of daily living influence aerobic conditioning.	
	Theory Go through daily physical activity. How much/“how little” triggers the oxidative system, e.g., active transportation (biking and walking).	Practical The daily fitness trial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document a 20 minute walk, measure HR and exertion according to the Borg scale. • Vacuum-clean your home and document how long the activity takes, HR, and exertion according to the Borg scale. • Avoid using elevators, escalators, and automatic doors for one day.
Student task (Written lab reports)	What activities trigger the oxidative system, and why? If it is not triggered, how come? What can you do in your daily life to improve your aerobic condition?	
Lesson 7	Aim: to evaluate and measure theoretical and practical knowledge as a result of the project period.	
	Theory Assessing theoretical and practical knowledge. Analysis of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time • HR • evaluated VO₂ • Perceived exertion according to the Borg scale. 	Practical Second 2,000-meter running test. Note <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time • HR • evaluated VO₂ • Perceived exertion according to the Borg scale.
Student task (Written lab reports)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify what has happened between the first and last lab (the analysis of the 2,000-meter running tests). - Explain the results according to relevant theories and your practical experiences acquired during the theme period. - Describe if you have or have not modified something in your daily life that has influenced your aerobic condition. 	

The subject matter content in the case study was adjusted to the knowledge requirements of the Swedish PE curriculum. The students should not only attain a physical competence of how to carry out a range of physical activities to ensure and/or promote their physical ability, but also develop their understanding of health. As stated by the curricula the student should be able to describe, discuss,

and evaluate different forms of physical activities and training with the help of “established theories” and in relation to various environmental settings (GY, 2011).

Participants

A strategic sample of one upper secondary school class (n= 32, 23 girls and 9 boys, 16 years of age) that was on a preparatory program (a social science program), from a medium-sized Swedish town, participated in the study. It was conducted within the framework of the students’ ordinary PE lesson time (one 70 minute long lesson/week) during a period of seven weeks. The students were part of the first author’s teaching assignment.

Procedure

At the start of the seven-week project period, the students received a compendium with a description of the different labs and the pre- and post-questionnaire. The students were also given the study material designed for the knowledge object in focus: the principles of aerobic condition (conceptual facts, established theories of the oxidative system, respiratory and circulation process, the physiology of aerobic conditioning as well as specific exercise advice). After reading the study material, the students tested their theoretical knowledge by using a computer-based knowledge test. This computer test was available to the students during the entire seven-week period. The test contained twenty-one questions on the study material. The test was self-correcting and was part of the educational event.

The students’ aerobic condition at the start of the study was assessed by way of a

2000-meter running test (see Table 1, lesson 1), which was also performed in the final lesson. Based on the students' results, their time, measured heart rate (HR), and perceived exertion according to the Borg scale (Borg, 1970) were documented as well as their embodied experience and experienced learning thereof.

Data analyses

Student reports were analyzed through a content analysis where the empirical data in the form of student reports were categorized in relation to the four chosen components of health literacy. Data from the questionnaires were analyzed with descriptive statistics and cross tabulations (chi-2 test) using IBM SPSS Statistics 21. The statistical level of significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Ethical considerations

The students were verbally informed of the purpose of the action-based study and that their participation during the ordinary PE – time was optional. Each gave their written consent in line with the Swedish recommendations of ethical conduct (codex.vr.se). All students in the class participated.

Results

Data from the students' reports, questionnaires, test results, as well as discussion notes taken during the classes, have been analyzed. The findings are structured according to the chosen components of health literacy (theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge, critical thinking, and self-awareness). The concluding discussion highlights aspects of Nutbeam's three-layer structure for health

literacy in relation to the aim of the model and the context of the specific educational setting.

Theoretical knowledge

The students' theoretical basic knowledge was measured by the post-questionnaire directly after the project period. Regardless of their previous knowledge, all students had improved their theoretical basic knowledge of what the concept aerobic conditioning consists of ($p=.034$). Four and a half months after the project period, the post questionnaire was repeated, revealing that 27 of the students had maintained their improved level of theoretical knowledge (five non respondents) and level of physical activity. In relation to physical activity level, self –reported level is often highly biased.

In the student reports after lesson 2 (see table 1), almost two-thirds of the students (18 of the 28 respondents) conveyed an understanding of why the HR differed between the various exercises. The students could also relate their results to relevant theories. Six of the students only partly showed an understanding, four did not write any lab report at all. In the summing lab reports after the final 2,000-meter test, all students could relate their findings/results to relevant theories conceptualized in the study material given in lesson 1.

In the computer-based knowledge test with an initial score of 21 (based on facts from the study material designed for this study), 72% of the students in the end of the period had 80% or more correct answers.

Practical knowledge

At the onset of the study ten of the 28 students who ran the 2,000-meter test had

a poor aerobic condition, 9 fairly well, and 7 good according to the jogging-test (based on the Cooper's [1968] investigation of oxygen uptake during running). The results from the second 2,000-meter running test showed that the students all ran faster for the final test than for the first. The students neither lowered their HR nor their perceived exertion according to the Borg scale. The results did not show any improvement in aerobic power among the students. After participating in the health based model, a majority, 24 out of 30 students (2 no respondents), reported having increased their level of physical activity or maintaining an already-high level of physical activity ($p=.001$). Nearly two-thirds ($n=17$) of the students noted that after four and a half months, the project period had influenced them to keep up their increased level of physical activity. Nine students with an already-high level of activity also maintained it over time.

In lesson 4 the students were given the task to evaluate two types of exercise from an aerobic fitness point of view (see table, lesson 4). Here students showed ability to reflect around aerobic-conditioning training and that it could be more than just cross-country running (which seemed to surprise them). It could also be, as some students said, “more fun” activities that trigger the oxidative system as well, like dancing, for example. After this lab, called the rock-and-roll dance lab, one student commented: I've got a heart rate of 200 but I'm still smiling, and according to the Borg scale, I'm at 14–15.

During the following lesson (see table, lesson 5), the students were asked to examine and give examples of exercises that promoted aerobic condition. Four out of the five groups in the class succeeded with this task. Through the discussion in the end of the lesson, the group that had failed in finding relevant physical activities got the opportunity to rethink and attained an understanding of why their proposed activity promoted anaerobe fitness and not the sought-for

aerobic fitness.

In relation to the daily physical activity task, 24 of the 32 students (3 non respondents) experienced no difference when comparing performed daily physical activities and ordinary everyday living, although four of the students felt more energetic after engaging in the daily physical activities (see lesson 6, Table 1). One did not reflect at all on this matter.

Critical thinking

After the daily physical activity lab (see Table 1, lesson 6), twenty-four of the students explained and tried to critically examine in their reports what they could do to improve their physical fitness through daily activities. Three experienced that they already had a high daily physically activity level and stated that they did not need to modify anything. Two did not write any reflections at all. Below are some examples that the students suggested in order to improve their own daily physical activity level:

- Biking back and forth to school every day, even in the winter.
- Getting off the bus a couple of stops earlier.
- Never using elevators, escalators, or automatic doors.
- Walking the dog more often.

In the student reports written after the last 2,000-meter test, a majority of the students showed aspects of critical analysis in terms of trying to evaluate and value how and what influenced their aerobic condition. Below are some examples:

I ran faster the second time; my HR was higher, and according to the Borg

scale, it was heavier, so my aerobic fitness level hasn't increased. But I wanted to beat my first time, so I felt more motivated. (Girl)

I've exercised a lot more than usual during the practical period, but for the last running test, I had a throat infection that probably influenced the results. (Girl)

I've not exercised more than usual during this practical period, so it isn't any surprise that my aerobic fitness level didn't increase. (Boy)

Self-awareness

During the group discussion after the interval training lab (see Table 1, lesson 3), the students showed an awareness of their own aerobic capacity level. They demonstrated an ability to reflect on factors influencing aerobic capacity and their own need or not for fitness training. Below are some comments from the discussion:

D ran a lot faster than me; he's got a stronger heart than me, so his heart doesn't have to beat as often as mine. That means that he is a lot fitter than me.

I had to increase the running tempo a lot to reach a pulse of 170, but that isn't any surprise; I'm quite fit because I exercise almost every day.

The lab reports that the students wrote after the second 2000-meter running test indicated that out of thirty-two student reports, twenty-seven described the principles of aerobic condition and could put them in relation to their aerobic condition during the practical period. Nineteen of the students could discuss and evaluate the relation between their test results and link these to relevant theories, as required in the assessment criteria for reaching the higher grading levels

regarding this specific knowledge area in the PE curricula.

Discussion

This case study has made a contribution to the request of developing health based models in PE. The findings show that a majority of the students participating in the examined teaching learning model developed aspects of health literacy. This development and the educational outcome are shown through the comparison of the results in the pre- and post questionnaires, and in the student reports. The learning outcomes are all in line with the knowledge requirements for Swedish PE. On one hand it is possible to claim that the examined model accomplished its mission, but on the other hand less is known of how the model works in relation to other knowledge areas, or together with other teachers. The case study can be seen as a first effort of implementing a health based teaching- learning model with health literacy as theoretical framework.

The model's strength is its' design and structure supporting the process of developing health literacy among students. The experimental design asked the students for more than performing different sport activities, it engaged and challenged the students to react and reflect not only over the outcomes of the activity, but also over possible choices. And as Lau, Liem, & Nie (2008) state, interactive task-oriented assignments can be ways for students to become more motivated to learn.

The pedagogical setting for the model has been inspired by Nutbeam's suggested hierarchical structure for three levels of knowledge: basic/functional literacy, communicative/interactive literacy, and critical literacy (Nutbeam, 2000). Working with these different forms and levels of knowledge enabled an active

processing of learning: the student's not only acted (performed an activity), but also reacted on the outcome and reflected over how and why. The four components of health literacy (Paakkari et al., 2012) that the model was built on were useful when assessing and evaluating students' learning outcomes. There were some difficulties with separating (categorizing) learning outcomes of critical thinking from self-awareness. Nevertheless, from the students' lab reports and the class discussions a capability of both self-reflection and reflective thinking emerged among the students. Due to time constraints, the fifth component of health literacy, citizenship, was not given any consideration in this action-based study, but this is an important component in relation to student's ability to analyze e.g. more structural barriers in regard to health and health promotion.

It can be claimed that this teaching-learning model helped empower the students to reason about how to make healthy decisions. The entire project period was task oriented and the students' reflections, in the student reports as well as their answers in the questionnaires and test, indicate an improved understanding of the knowledge objective in focus. The subject matter content became more than a transmission of facts. The students' capacity to use and document theoretical and practical physical health information was increased. The model also created a learning environment through the sharing of reflections and experiences in the discussions. In the long run, and with another or a wider focus, this may have the potential to also involve young people's awareness of structural barriers to health.

The teacher's overall experience of working with this teaching-learning model was that a majority of the students felt engaged in their learning of (physical) health. The interactive design of the teaching learning model enabled the teacher

to take on the role of a tutor. The implementation of the model was part of a normal lesson period and no further resources, besides the construction of the model and the presence/engagement of the teacher were at hand. When the class verbally evaluated the research period on aerobic conditioning, questions were asked about the strengths and weaknesses of the model. A majority of the students reported feeling engaged in their health promotion and experiencing ways of working with their understanding of the principles of aerobic condition. A majority also felt that they had acquired knowledge of why and how aerobic conditioning can be achieved. Some complained about having to write lab reports not only in other subjects but in PE as well. To work with model-based design for developing teaching strategies and learning processes in health is in line with what, for example, Haerens et al. (2011) and Metzler (2005) advocate. With the small amount of time given to PE in Swedish upper secondary schools, ways to support students' health literacy have to be evaluated. And as Paakkari et al. (2012) note, students become informed about health from numerous sources with the risk of obtaining fragmented pictures of health unless they are able to critically create links between different pieces. This model has the potential to point out some of those links.

One weakness of the methodology chosen was, beside its limitation as a case study, that the students were not used to write about learning processes in PE. Another weakness could be the influence of teacher behavior on intervention outcomes (Donnelly & Lambourne, 2011). As the chosen method for the case study was an action-based study, this has not been reflected upon as a weakness. There has been no control group/ class, and therefore the study design is more in line with an uncontrolled intervention study. Due to the design of this study with its inherent limitations any other conclusions beyond the presented results cannot be drawn. It is also important to keep in mind that the improved and maintained

self-reported levels of physical activity is indeed a subjective measurement and should not be compared with results from objective, less biased methods.

Conclusion

This teaching-learning model implemented in one upper secondary class contributed successfully to the process of developing aspects of health literacy among the student group in focus. Furthermore it was possible to assess learning outcomes regarding the targeted knowledge object. This study indicates that one way to support students' learning of health literacy is to use model based teaching built on assumptions that involves learning in, through and about different dimensions of the knowledge object in focus (Arnold, 1979). The use of models can also challenge teachers' strategies and teaching objectives. Due to the design of this study with its inherent limitations any other conclusions beyond presented results cannot be drawn.

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Business as Usual—or a Joint Effort for Development?

About teaching methods in Swedish PEH Curriculum 1962-2011

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Abstract

In 2012, the Swedish School Inspectorate (SSI, 2012) commented on the lack of variation in teaching methods in Swedish PEH. A literature review about teaching methods in Sweden and internationally revealed that the situation is more or less the same in a lot of countries. Thus, the critical question becomes: Why are there so few examples of variation of teaching methods? The directives of teaching methods and student-centred methods especially were studied in the national curriculums for compulsory school from 1962 to 2011. Bernstein's (1996) theory of pedagogic discourses was used as a theoretical framework. Four themes were found within the analysis:

Teaching method is i) about the organization of students ii) about students' self-activity and creativity iii) a negotiation between teachers and students iv) about students' individual learning.

A process from directives on student-centred methods to directives of student influence on planning is described. It is argued that the students' limited experience with alternative content and methods, together with PEH teachers' lack of knowledge, experience and in-service training on didactical issues is preserving the current situation. A joint effort for development is needed to provide the teachers with the necessary didactical tools to be able to carry through the intentions of the curriculum.

Keywords: PEH, curriculum, teaching methods

Introduction

After an inspection of the school subject Physical Education and Health (SSI, 2012) the Swedish School Inspectorate [SSI] commented on the lack of variation in teaching methods. SSI stated that in order to enable the students to reach the objectives of the subject, the PEH teachers need to vary their teaching methods and use learner-centred methods more often (SSI, 2012). Furthermore, the inspectors found that teachers who actually did vary their teaching methods also communicated the objectives of the lessons to the students to a greater extent, were more successful in connecting the students to the content and adapted the teaching to the student's experiences. According to the SSI, this chain of planning, or didactical reasoning is indicative of a more individualized teaching (SSI, 2012).

The inspectors' findings are consistent with those of a recent study on teaching methods (Karlefors & Larsson, 2014) and hence, raise the question why are there so few examples of variation of teaching methods in Swedish PEH?

Teaching methods give the answer to the didactical question How; how is teaching to be carried through so that a specific object (why) can be reached with a specific content (what) for a student or for a group of students? Lundgren (1979) argues that it is not relevant to divide the three questions from each other in a concrete learning situation. However, in research they are often divided and studied separately (Lundgren, 1979).

Swedish research on teaching methods is rather sparse. Recent Swedish studies investigate what content is used in Swedish PEH (Ekberg, 2009; Londos, 2010; Sandahl, 2005). There are studies that show the difficulties teachers have communicating objectives of their teaching (Larsson & Redelius, 2004; Lundvall

& Meckbach, 2004; SSI 2010, 2012), but no studies were found that directly focused on teaching methods. Research on teaching methods in PEH is more common internationally, especially research on the Spectrum of Teaching Styles (Mosston & Ashworth, 2002) (henceforth called the Spectrum). The Spectrum was developed in the 1960s when there was a growing interest of the How-question (Sundberg, 2005), but the Spectrum is hardly known or used in Sweden (Annerstedt, 2007).

The aim in this article is to explore and discuss the lack of varied teaching methods in Swedish PEH, with a focus on student centred methods. The discussion is based on an analysis of the national curricula for compulsory school between 1962 and 2011, focusing on the directives on teaching methods and particularly the directives regarding student-centred methods.

Background

The cradle of PEH was the establishment of the Gymnastiska Centralinstitutet (The Central Institute of Gymnastics—today the Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences) in Stockholm 1813. This Institution trained teachers in Ling gymnastics, which was the dominant content in PEH at that time and for the next 150 years. The three didactical questions, including the objective (why), the content (what), and the method (how), were closely connected during the era of the Ling gymnastics. The movements were supposed to be developed from the construction of the human body; they were described with a unique terminology and the same movements were performed by the whole group on command from the teacher (Falk, 1916; Isling, 1988; Kirk, 2001; Lindroth, 1993). Ling gymnastics was seen to be a method for fostering discipline and order for the students. To be able to manage classes of 100 to 150 students, the students were

divided into smaller groups, led by an older student—a monitor—and the teaching shifted between the teacher and the monitors. This method was also called the Lancaster method (Isling, 1973; 1988). The presence of the monitors left some space for the student's self-activity as the teacher could not manage all the students all the time (Isling, 1988). By the end of the 19th century, new directives stated that the teaching methods should change to class teaching. The students should be organized into smaller units, classes, which were instructed by one teacher. This meant that all students were supposed to learn the same content in the same amount of time by following the teacher's directives. The teacher was seen to "own" the knowledge that was to be transmitted to the students. With the introduction of the class method, the students became passive and mimicking listeners, and the teaching turned into "a method of lecturing steered in detail" (Isling, 1988, p. 190).

The shift away in Sweden from an agrarian to an industrialized society was accompanied by demands for new competencies for workers and mass education was seen to be the means that could provide these competencies among the growing generation. The students needed to be trained more individually on the basis of their abilities and development. Instead of learning by passive listening, the child should preferably learn by being active (Isling, 1988; Lundgren, 1979). The educational content needed to change from religious texts to a content that was useful both for the individual and for society. The teaching methods should take the content, the development of the child, as well as theories on learning into consideration. Individualized methods were demanded. Self-activity was recommended referring to a situation where the students work by themselves or in smaller groups, on tasks provided by the teacher (U 1919). However, the subject of Gymnastics with play and sport (*gymnastik med lek och idrott*), as PEH was called at this time (Blom & Lindroth, 1995), was not part of this shift

in methods. Ling Gymnastics, with a clear command method of teaching, was still dominating the subject and it continued to be that way until the introduction of the compulsory elementary school in 1962. At that time, sport activities replaced Ling Gymnastics as the main content in the subject. According to Lindroth (1993), the introduction of the curriculum for compulsory school in 1962 meant that a gymnastics hegemony was replaced by a sport hegemony. Kirk (2010) has called this a shift from PEH as the id² of gymnastics to PEH as the id² of sport techniques.

The voluntary club sport developed in Sweden during the first half of the 20th century. Olofsson (2007) stresses that club sport and the compulsory school subject PEH have had a lot in common over the years, starting with the introduction of sport in the name of the subject 'Gymnastics with Play and Sport' (U 1919). Public interest in sport increased after the 1912 Olympic Summer Games in Stockholm (Lindroth, 1993) and soon after that, the first school sport clubs were established (Lundqvist-Wanneberg & Sandahl, 2002). The School Sport Federation membership peaked in the 1960s, but their popularity decreased at the same time as voluntary club sport developed after-school activities for children and youth.

No Swedish research has focused particularly on teaching methods in PEH, but there are research and evaluations that indirectly touch upon the issue. The national evaluation of PEH showed that group as well as individual work is a fairly common method, while project work is not so common (SNAE, 2004). The students feel that they can have some influence over the content and their own pace for learning. Discussions and reflections are seldom used, and the students are seldom asked questions about their learning experiences (SNAE, 2005). Karlefors (2002) found that two-subject teachers use more student-centred

methods than single-subject teachers. A study of local PEH plans showed that teaching methods were defined by the activities (Larsson, 2004), as if methods are self-evident. Regarding student influence, Lundvall and Meckbach (2004) argued that students' participation in the planning and realization of the lessons might conserve the subject's sport content. They concluded that even if the student centred approach is not fully developed in Swedish PEH, the students have more influence over their learning in PEH today than they did some decades ago.

Teaching methods are a more common topic in international research, particularly research that focuses on the Spectrum (Byra, 2006; Goldberger, Ashworth, & Byra, 2012; Sicila-Camacho & Brown, 2008). The research questions deal with the learning outcomes of the use of different styles (Byra, 2006), the students' perceptions of different styles (Cothran & Kulinna, 2006; Morgan, Kingston, & Sproule, 2005; Salvara et al., 2005; Sanchez, Byra, & Wallhead, 2012), and what styles are used by PEH teachers (Jaakola & Watt, 2011; Kulinna & Cothran, 2003). In general, the reproductive styles are most frequently used (Byra, 2000, 2009; Cothran & Kulinna, 2006; Jaakola & Watt, 2011). Kirk, who merged the eleven styles to five methods (Kirk et al, 1996), has argued that the domination of reproductive and teacher-centred methods is connected with the content of sport activities (Kirk, 2010). Another explanation is that teachers favour class control over learning (Cothran & Kulinna, 2006). The use of student-centred methods differs from country to country (Cothran et al., 2005). Some researchers (Metzler, 1983., Williams, 1996) are according to Chatoupi (2010) critical of the Spectrum of teaching styles. The critique mainly concerns an overemphasis on teacher behaviour (Metzler, 1983), an ignorance of the context of learning and students' different learning styles (Williams, 1996 in Chatoupi, 2010). A more recent critique emphasizes that the styles limits the

teacher's didactical considerations (Sicilia-Camacho & Brown, 2008).

Aim, Theoretical Framework and Method

The aim of this paper is to explore the lack of varied teaching methods in elementary schools, with a focus on student-centred methods, by analysing the directives in the curriculum for compulsory school from 1962 to 2011.

The theoretical frame of the paper draws on Bernstein's (2004) discussion of pedagogic discourses. Bernstein argues that a pedagogic discourse is formed out of two discourses: an instructional discourse, which transmits different kinds of specialized skills, and a regulative discourse, which transmits values. These two discourses are merged into the pedagogic discourse. The regulative discourse is the dominant discourse that is embedded in the instructional discourse. The Swedish national curriculum can act as an example, as it is divided into two parts. One part deals with the more general directives, such as the values that Swedish education is supposed to be based on: equity, democracy, social inclusion and can be identified as the regulative discourse. Another part is subject-matter oriented and can be identified as the instructional discourse.

The content of pedagogic discourse is, according to Bernstein (1996), elaborated in a recontextualizing field. In this field, the curriculum writers select what knowledge, subject matter content, values, and so on will be transmitted in a school subject. When the curriculum has been implemented in schools, the teachers transfer the curriculum text to their educational situations on the secondary field. The result of this transfer is not always in line with the aims of the curriculum. There are many examples of discontinuity between the recontextualizing field and the secondary field, between what is stated in the

curriculum and what is actually happening in the gym (Ekberg, 2009; Karlefors, 2012; Londos, 2010; Lundvall & Meckbach, 2008; Sandahl, 2005).

Another theory considered in this article is Mosston and Ashworth's (2002) Spectrum. They categorized eleven different teaching styles. Within a style, it is the decision making between teacher and student that distinguishes the styles from each other. Six of them were teacher-centred and reproductive and five were productive and student-centred. Kirk et al. (1996) synthesized the eleven teaching-styles into five methods, three reproductive and teacher-centred methods (direct method, task-based method, and reciprocal method) and two student-centred and productive ones (guided discovery and problem solving). These concepts are used to categorize different methods in this paper. When the direct method is used, the teacher makes all the decisions regarding the teaching-learning process by him or herself. This method is mainly used for skill acquisition. In the most student-centred method, as the guided discovery or the problem solving method, the teacher leaves some of the decisions to the student. The student learns through experience, discussions, and reflection.

The curriculum texts are analysed on the basis of these two theories. Text dealing with values and social control is defined as the regulative discourse, while text dealing with subject matter is defined as instructional discourse. Henceforth, the different concepts in the curriculum documents that are linked to the didactical "How-question" are included under the umbrella-term "teaching method." First, the text on teaching methods in the general part of the curriculum and the regulative discourse is primarily identified, analysed, and interpreted with the help of the adapted spectrum theory. Second, the same process is carried through for the national curriculum of PEH, the instructional discourse.

The curricula studied are all called curriculum for compulsory school followed by the year of implementation. The abbreviation of the studied curricula are (Lgr 62), (Lgr 69), (Lgr 80), (Lpo 94), and (Lgr 2011).

Results

A first important finding is that there is no consistency in the use of concepts in the different curricula. In fact, the teaching method concept is hardly used at all. Furthermore, the use of concepts changes over time. In the first curriculum, Lgr 62, the teachers' planning of the "How-question" is called "forms of teaching" while the student's action is called "ways of working." Together, they form a method that is identified as "planned teaching." This planned teaching can refer to a lecture or an examination (or test) given by the teacher or the instruction and the content of the lesson (Lgr 1962, p. 57).

Four different themes regarding teaching methods have been identified: (i) the teaching method is about the organization of students (Lgr 62 and Lgr 1969); (ii) the teaching method is about students' self-activity and creativity (supplement to Lgr 69; Benjaminsson, Ingevik & Ljunggren, 1975); (iii) the teaching method is a negotiation between teachers and students (Lgr 1980); and (iv) the teaching method is about student's individual learning (Lgr 2011 and Lpo 94).

Referring to the organization of the Swedish curriculum; the findings from the general part mainly dealing with the regulative discourse are presented before the subject matter curriculum, which mainly deals with the instructional discourse.

Teaching method is about the organization of students

The national curriculum (Lgr 62 and Lgr 69) separates the teachers' and the students' work when addressing teaching methods. Lgr 62 states that from the teacher's perspective, there are a number of ways to teach a class based on how the students are organized.

a) Teaching the whole class: The teacher teaches the same content to the whole class at the same time and in the same way. This method can be called direct or command method (Kirk et al., 1996).

b) Group teaching: The class is preferably divided into two groups and the teacher is teaching and mentoring the two groups separately while the students are working by themselves on a task or solving a problem set by the teacher. This method can be called a task-based method in Kirk et al.'s (1996) terminology.

c) Individual teaching refers to a situation when the teacher is instructing a single student. This is a kind of direct method. Individualization means that the students will get different tasks to work with, either individually or in small groups depending on their ability and skill; a self-activity method that represents a more student-governed work similar to the reciprocal method (Kirk et al., 1996). In Lgr 69, the methods are reduced to two: collective and individualized teaching (p. 57). Interestingly, the choice of method does not seem to be based on the aims of the curriculum in question or the contextual situation. The choice of method is rather to be based on the students' age, ability, level of development, the character of the subject, the class size, or other frame factors.

Furthermore, the curriculum highlights some important principles for teaching influencing the regulative discourse: Motivation, Activity, Concreteness,

Individualization, and Collaboration (Motivation, Aktivitet, Konkretion, Individualisering och Samarbete or MAKIS). The principles of activity and individualization are considered easier to carry through in subjects like PEH, art, and music, since they are considered to allow space for creativity, improvisation, and self-activity. Activity and individualization might affect the instructional discourse in these subjects more specifically.

The curriculum does not offer any general recommendation on teaching methods. Instead, the teachers need to select methods based on their own experiences of what method suits them and the context. “It is important that the teacher develops a personal way of teaching based on personal experiences (Lgr 62, p. 57; Lgr 69, p. 57).” No method is a priori better than the other.

In 1962, the name of the subject was Gymnastics, and the content that is described in the curriculum has to a great extent its counterpart within club sports, such as gymnastics, track and field, and ball games. The content progresses from elementary to secondary grade. Each activity is followed by instruction about the aims and some didactical considerations, such as directives on methods that are mainly teacher-centred but also self-activity and improvisation, adapted to each grade level. In Lgr 69, these instructions are reduced. In order to take advantage of the students’ need and joy for movement, self-activity, either in groups or individually, is recommended. The curriculum also discusses the benefit of school sport clubs. Emphasis is placed on the main motive for taking part in school sports, which is to participate, not to win (Lgr 62 and 69).

Teaching method is about students' self-activity and creativity

In 1975, a supplement of Lgr 69 was published with the title “Self-activity and creativity in gymnastics” (Benjaminsson, Ingevik, & Ljunggren, 1975). This supplement - part of the instructional discourse - introduced the concepts “deductive” or “direct teaching method” and “inductive” or “indirect teaching method.” The deductive method is defined as the “traditional” teaching, a teacher-centred method. The inductive method is described as a more student-centred method. According to the directives, the latter method allows the students to acquire valuable experience and knowledge through solving problems and tasks set by the teacher. Examples are provided on how to use the method with different kinds of content. Here, teaching gymnastics is based on the theory of Laban gymnastics. Ball games are described as a natural form of self-activity and creativity, with a recommendation to invite students to discuss and decide the rules of the game. The supplement also describes how to develop the students’ imagination and ability to improvise—an example of the guided discovery method (Kirk et al., 1996). The aim with indirect methods is to motivate the students, through discussions and hands-on activities such as laboratory activities, to find answers to given tasks or problems. Working with such tasks and problems is expected to facilitate experiences in the students from which they can learn things, without focusing on the right or wrong answer.

The self-activity and creativity supplement of 1969 is an extraordinary exception from other curriculum texts, as they are examples of student-centred productive methods (Kirk et al., 1996). The advocacy of this method is, according to the curriculum, that every student and group of students can create their own activities using their own bodies and their imagination. They can relate their own experiences of learning to the objective. However, this method was never really rooted in PEH. According to Kirk (2010), the indirect methods were initially

advocated by UK female PE teachers, but they were not accepted by male physical education advocates, and thus, they disappeared. Arguably, the same happened within the Swedish context.

Teaching Method is a negotiation between teachers and students

After 11 years, a new curriculum was implemented in 1980. The regulative discourse of the new curriculum (Lgr 80) states that learning is an active process and only hard work leads to educational goals. The definition of teaching method is: “The method used to achieve a goal, for instance by acquiring or teaching different knowledge and skills” (Lgr 80, p. 48). The curriculum states that different forms of teaching methods have advantages and disadvantages depending on the content, aims, and/or the material available. What method to use in a specific situation is supposed to be discussed and decided through negotiations between the students and the teacher. The curriculum stipulates that staff and a group of students are to work in units (arbetsenheter) that can form a small “school in the school” to enhance the quality of the education and give the students experience with “practical democracy” (p. 43).

Just as in the former curriculum, the organization of the students is the stimulus for varied teaching methods. Student-centred methods are recommended, arguably as students learn best when they can investigate, solve problems, and make their own conclusions in collaboration with the teacher. The methods, however, are not exemplified, and, importantly, they are not concretely described as in the supplement of Lgr 69. The importance of an active and supportive teacher through the whole process is stressed though.

The instructional discourse is affected by the name change from gymnastics to

sport. Ten different elements of content are presented, and the majority of the elements have a counterpart in club sport (e.g., gymnastics, track and field, ballgames, swimming, skiing, skating). The students are supposed to take part in the planning, realization, and evaluation of the subject. Through this participation, the students are to be prepared to take their own initiatives and be aware of classmates' different abilities in physical activity. The teacher is to introduce the students to voluntary club sport and outdoor organizations, and the directives on school sport no longer feature. The students' influence is directed toward their participation in the planning and decision-making process of their education broadly as a method to foster for democracy, rather than on the didactical process (regarding, e.g., selection, sequencing, and so on).

Teaching Method is About Students' Individual Learning

The implementation of the next curriculum (Lpo 94) represented a paradigm shift in Swedish education. The Swedish school system changed from a centralized system governed by detailed rules to a decentralized system governed by goals and results. The decisions about how to achieve the goals, and what content and methods to choose, is for the teachers and the students to decide. The regulative discourse emphasizes that the Swedish school system is based on democratic values, and it is established that the teaching methods are to be democratic (Lgr 2011). The students are expected to take responsibility for their own education. The head teacher has the responsibility to ensure that a variety of methods is used (Lgr 2011).

In the first version of the 1994 curriculum, the concept "transfer knowledge" is used when describing the remit of Swedish schooling. However, after a revision in the year 2000, the remit was changed to "promote learning." This change

assumes a shift in teachers' choice of methods to more student-centred methods. The teachers' obligation when planning the lessons is to involve students in the planning process just as in Lgr 80, but they are also required to expose students to varied methods for learning. Students are expected to take personal responsibility for their own education as an exercise in practical democracy. Teachers and students have a joint responsibility to facilitate achievement of the aims. Even parents are to be involved in this process, and the teachers should prepare students and parents for this responsibility: "A prerequisite for pupils, parents, and their guardians to be able to use their right to exercise influence is that the individual school is clear in specifying its goals, content and working forms" (Lgr 2011).

The instructional discourse is affected by another name change to Sport and Health (Lgr 2011; Lpo 94), indicating that health is considered to be an important part of the content. It is stated that all subjects are equally responsible for the education and fostering of the students, meaning that PEH is no longer only a subject for physical activity. The central content is organized into three different domains: "movement," "health and lifestyle," and "outdoor education and open air activities." None of them are directly associated with sport activities even though sport activities can be seen to be a part of the "movement" domain. One example of the objectives is that the student is expected to be able to develop knowledge in planning, carrying through, and valuing different fitness activities for personal use.

Brief Remarks

Normell (2008) characterizes the shift of aims in the national curriculum over time as a shift "from obedience to responsibility." This shift indicates that the

teacher's traditional work has also changed. The idea of a superordinate classroom teacher who transmits knowledge to passive students (Isling, 1988) is replaced by an idea of a teacher that has a more reserved, but still important, position as a facilitator of learning. This is a teacher who shares responsibility for the students' learning with the students and the parents. Didactical issues are a concern for teachers and students and parents alike. The teaching methods are supposed to have changed from one, teacher-centred method, to a variation of methods that support the learning of different objectives and content.

There have been considerable changes in the pedagogic discourse in the national curriculum over the time studied. In sum, these changes are that the national curriculum stipulates a move:

- from PEH seen as a subject of activity to being seen as a subject of knowledge;
- from classroom teaching to individualization and self-activity;
- from organizing a class in smaller groups to facilitate learning for the individual student;
- from separating teachers' and students' work and responsibilities to a shared responsibility in the effort to help students reach the objectives;
- from teacher autonomy to parents' and students' rights to be involved in planning and decisions; and lastly
- from student-centred methods as problem solving and improvisation for improved learning to the student participation in planning of content and methods leading to a variation of methods adapted to the individual student's abilities and needs.

However, both Swedish and international research report that there is a discrepancy between the curriculum text on the recontextualised field, where the curriculum is formulated, and the implementation of the curriculum on the

secondary field, to use Bernstein's (1996) concepts. This discrepancy includes the critique from SSI (2012) on the lack of variation of teaching methods.

Discussion

The point of departure for this paper is a notification from SSI (2012) that there is little or no variation of teaching methods in a number of observed lessons in PEH. Furthermore, ball games are dominating the content and the objectives are blurred (SSI 2010, 2012). Student-centred methods and student influence is rare (SSI 2010, 2012). We have studied what is stated about teaching methods in the curricula for compulsory school from 1962 until 2011 in order to find a possible explanation for this situation. The current curriculum, Lgr 2011, does not give any clear instructions regarding methods but it emphasizes the importance of student participation and a shared responsibility between teachers and students regarding planning. The content has changed from activities connected to different sports to be organized in domains. SSI stresses that clear and specified goals and content and methods are a necessary prerequisite for a meaningful joint-planning process to take place. The student influence in the planning is supposed to affect the use of teaching methods. However, the inspection shows that a contrary development has occurred (SSI, 2010, 2012). Many teachers do not know what teaching methods to use in order to involve the students in the planning and how to individualize the teaching (SSI, 2010, 2012). We have concluded that interest in teaching methods in the Swedish educational context has been low, so the teachers cannot find any support from discussions or research. It is also reasonable to believe that teaching methods is not a dominant content at teacher education. PEH preservice students are more interested in performing sport than discussing the didactical issues connected to teaching (Larsson, 2009).

One explanation for this lack of interest might be the gradual change in the idea about teachers' work, from teaching a class to mentoring individual students. The students' responsibility for their own learning and the task of organizing learning might have caused a move of teachers' work away from the teaching-learning process and didactical considerations thus, teachers' pedagogical influence has been weakened (Lundvall & Meckbach, 2004).

Another possible explanation takes its point of departure from the military heritage and Ling gymnastics (Lindroth, 2004). PEH was taught by a direct method for a long time, and that method might have been uncritically reproduced over the years. Even the influence from voluntary club sport might contribute to this situation. During the curriculum analysis, we have seen how voluntary club sport has been introduced step-by-step into schools, replacing the less competitive-focused school sport. One argument against that development, i.e., sport coaches' lack of pedagogical competence, was already raised at the beginning of the 21st century (Lundqvist-Wanneberg & Sandahl, 2002). Today parents and adolescents work as coaches for children at this age level might reproduce the image of the coach as the boss who is transmitting knowledge (Cassidy, Potrac, & Jones, 2004) through a one-way process (Horn, 2008), similar to the classroom teacher (Isling, 1988). As almost 90% of the Swedish children and youth have experience of voluntary club sport, a reasonable outcome of a joint planning is that PEH as an id2 of sport technique (Kirk, 2010) or the "looks-like- culture" (Larsson & Karlefors, 2014; Ward & Quennerstedt, 2014) is strengthened.

SSI (2010, 2012) noted that PEH teachers are isolated, their didactical toolbox is quite empty, they lack support from the head teachers, the teachers are very seldom involved in in-service education, and the subject is seldom part of the

quality work in schools. There are many areas and reasons for development. What chance do PEH teachers have to change their didactical considerations away from the current “looks-like- culture”, toward the pedagogic discourse as it is outlined in the curriculum? Under the current situation, the chance is very little. Olofsson (2007) showed that PEH and voluntary club sport have had a lot in common over the years. The Swedish Sports Confederation (RF) has for many years supported the demand for more instructional hours in PEH. Maybe this is the time for another joint action to argue for the need of didactical and pedagogical improvement for PEH teachers to overcome the criticized shortcomings.

No matter how many inspections SSI makes, resources such as money and time are also needed to strengthen PEH teachers’ possibilities to carry through the pedagogic discourse. The PEH teachers cannot do this by themselves. The “looks-like- culture” is too embedded and too strong for them alone to challenge. However, with a joint effort from PEH teachers, researchers, teacher educators, and sport organizations, it might be possible to make politicians and administrators aware of the situation and see the necessity of prioritizing an improvement of the subjects of physical education and health.

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The Role of Motivational Climate in Multicultural Sport Classes

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Abstract

This study explored the association of ethnic-cultural identity salience with perceived motivational climate and achievement goals in multicultural sport classes. Questionnaires evaluating ethnic-cultural identity salience, perceived motivational climate and achievement goals were completed by high school students attending a sport school (n=66). Correlation and multiple regression analyses revealed that performance-oriented motivational climate was positively linked with lack of interaction and fringe dimensions of ethnic-cultural identity salience. In contrast, mastery-oriented motivational climate was inversely associated with these subscales. The present findings provide more support for the integrative role of sport in presence of mastery-oriented motivational climates and endorse future intervention studies that highlight mastery environments and task orientation achievement goals. These are of importance in order to foster integration and favourable acculturation patterns as well as mutual understanding and respect among all individuals in multicultural societies.

Keywords: Immigrant youth, Ethnic-Cultural identity, Integration, Sweden

The Role of Motivational climate in Multicultural Sport Classes

Emergence of culturally plural societies and immigration is a worldwide occurrence, which involves millions of people and most countries (United Nations, 2013). Many European countries, including Sweden, have been faced with this phenomenon. Approximately 100,000 immigrants arrive in Sweden annually making up around two million out of the nine million people in Sweden (Johansson-Heinö, 2011). Adaptive acculturation of these immigrants, therefore, is fundamental in creating a socially, politically and economically healthy society. Sport and physical education have long been viewed as effective tools for socialization in every community around the globe (Eitzen & Sage, 2003). Sport participation leads to promotion of social values and morals as well as provides opportunities for cooperation and socialization (Rudd, 2005; Wuest & Lombardo, 1994). Moreover, Sport participation often entails equal opportunity environments that are free of discrimination and prejudice, which can promote social integration amongst the migrants (Coakley, 2009).

Nevertheless, there have been only a limited number of studies that have investigated the integrative role of sport and even a fewer number have been done in education settings such as schools (Ito et al., 2011; Kouli & Papaioannou, 2009; Krouwel et al., 2006; Rosenberg et al., 2003; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009; Walseth & Fasting, 2004; Walseth, 2008). Among these, several studies have demonstrated the integrative role of sport across an assorted range of nations, ethnicities and participants (Ito et al., 2011; Rosenberg et al., 2003; Walseth & Fasting, 2004). However, there have also been some contrary findings. Walseth (2008) conducted research on second-generation migrant female athletes; the results indicated that some of the participants felt marginalized and failed to socially integrate due to difference in culture and socioeconomic background. In a study done in Netherlands, it was found that

sport could increase the inter-cultural conflicts by magnifying the tensions through verbal and physical violence at the matches (Krouwel et al., 2006). Thus, it appears that participation in sport does not necessarily lead to integration and that there are other factors that can manipulate the effects of sport as an integrative tool.

A review of the current literature on integrative role of sport revealed possible causes for the inconsistency in previous research. Hatzigeorgiadis, Morela, Elbe, Kouli and Sanchez (2013) pointed out the lack of a consistent theoretical background and the instruments used in the different studies as well as the cultural differences and sample size. Moreover, they emphasized that most of the studies had used qualitative methods which although can provide a more thorough insight into the sport experiences of the individuals, they lack the power to make conclusions about the general population. It was also underlined that the environmental factors, which could influence the outcome of sport participation for migrants, have not been fully investigated (Hatzigeorgiadis et al., 2013).

The present study was designed with the aim of studying the relationship between motivational climate and ethnic-cultural identity of adolescents in a multicultural context in particular within the school setting. Research has demonstrated that minority groups, particularly migrant children and adolescents, have a lower rate of participating in sport activities and sport clubs in general and are especially at risk of being physically inactive compared to native children (Singh, Yu, Siahpash, & Kogan, 2008). Mandatory educational organizations such as schools, therefore, may be the only place where these youngsters are participating in sport activities.

A leading theoretical approach pertinent to the subject of integration is Berry's two-dimensional model for acculturation (Berry, 1980, 1997; Berry & Sam, 2013). In contrast to other models of cultural group relations in plural societies, which are based on the assumption that societies consist of one dominant society with marginalized minority groups, this model proposed that acculturation was a two dimensional process which included the individuals' links both to their cultures of origin and to their societies of settlement (Berry, 2011). These links could be manifested in the following ways: Assimilation happened when there was little interest in maintenance of the original culture combined with a preference for interacting with the larger society. Separation or lack of interaction occurred when cultural maintenance was pursued while involvement with others was avoided. Marginalization or fringe ensued when neither cultural maintenance nor interaction with others was practiced. Integration existed when both cultural maintenance and involvement with the larger society was desired (Berry, 1997). This theoretical approach, therefore, not only considered the first generation immigrants, but also second and third generation ethno-cultural groups as well as individuals with mixed ethnical backgrounds who may differ in exhibiting links to their cultural and ethnical heritage. Research on this theory has proposed that those with an integrative profile have the most effective psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes (Berry et al., 2006). Based on this conceptual framework, Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) developed the ethnic-cultural identity salience where ethnic identity described the individuals' attributes towards their original ethnicity while cultural identity represented their emotions and attitudes toward the larger culture they live in. The concept of Ethnic identity salience was defined as the extent to which people held their own cultural background to be of significance. Cultural identity salience, instead, was described as the degree to which individuals considered the larger culture to be important (Ting-Toomey et al. 2000). In addition, Ting-Toomey and colleagues

identified two dimensions for each individual salience. Sense of belonging to a group and feelings of being marginalized or fringe were the dimensions of ethnic identity salience. Feeling of belonging was portrayed as sense of ethnic recognition and the degree to which the individuals were committed to their ethnic group. Fringe, on the other hand, was indicative of low ethnic identity and reflected the individuals feeling of confusion about their ethnicity. The dimensions of cultural identity were assimilation and lack of interaction or separation. Assimilation demonstrated a strong cultural identity and referred to the individuals' ties with the dominant culture. Lack of interaction or separation was an indication of a low cultural identity and illustrated the individuals disinterest in the dominant culture (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000).

Social cognitive approaches have identified two distinct cognitive schemas, which influence individuals' decisions and behaviour in achievement contexts (Nicholls, 1989; Roberts et al., 2007). These two distinct schemas were task or ego- involved goal orientations. Even though these orientations were not to be viewed as traits but as dynamic schemes that were subject to change over time, they had some stability and were inclined to endure (Roberts & Treasure, 2012). When the individual's goal was to achieve mastery at a task rather than demonstrating normative ability, the individual was task-oriented. This individual therefore, would exhibit perseverance and effort in achieving challenging tasks (Nicholls, 1989; Roberts & Treasure, 2012). Ego-oriented individuals, on the other hand, strived to avoid inability, demonstrated normative behaviour or compared their achievement with others. These individuals therefore, were inclined to approach tasks with a competitive perspective in order to establish superiority over others. Moreover, when possible they employed minimum efforts to accomplish tasks (Roberts & Treasure, 2012). In addition, the outcomes of goal orientations have been observed outside of achievement

itself. Ego-orientation has been linked with presence of aggressive behaviour in response to another aggressive behaviour (Papaioannou, 1997), whereas task orientation has been associated with morality (Lemyre, Ommundsen, & Roberts, 2000; Roberts & Treasure, 2012).

From an environmental perspective, achievement goal theory identified motivational climate of the sport as an influencing factor on the individuals' experience as well as on the socio-moral outcomes of sport participation (Ames, 1992a; Nicholls, 1989). Achievement goal theory further explained that the context in which the sport took place could be either performance oriented where the participants were led to strive for superiority over others and normative goals were promoted; or mastery-oriented where the individuals were encouraged to commit to the learning of the task at hand with self-referencing criteria (Roberts & Treasure, 2012). Studies have shown that performance-oriented climates are associated with the view that sport should be a competitive environment where social status, popularity and superiority are promoted (Papaioannou & MacDonald, 1993; Walling & Duda, 1995). Mastery- oriented climates, on the other hand, have been linked with promotion of self-esteem, and cooperation as well as prosocial behaviours and social responsibility (Ommundsen & Roberts, 1999; Ommundsen et al., 1998). There is evidence that the motivational climate could moderate the individuals' goal-orientations and that individuals adapted their goal orientations according to the motivational climate (Roberts & Treasure, 2012).

Adolescence (ages 13-17) has been found to be a particularly important phase in the development of socio-moral constructs as well as formation of individual and ethnic identity and several studies in this age group have supported the belief that mastery-oriented (task-oriented) climates enhanced prosocial behaviours and

ego-oriented climates positively predicted antisocial actions (Ommundsen et al., 2003; Roberts & Treasure, 2012; Sage & Kavussanu, 2008; Travers, Bohnert & Randall, 2013).

Based on the theoretical model of acculturation provided by Berry (1997) and Nicholls' achievement goal theory (1989), Kouli and Papaioannou (2009) hypothesized that ego-orientation would have a positive relationship with lack of desire to interact with members of other cultures. Additionally, task-orientation approach would lead to collaboration of resources and, therefore, positively associated with assimilation (Kouli & Papaioannou, 2009). Their research, which involved a large scale study of 1305 adolescence in 68 physical education class in Greece, supported these hypotheses; ego-orientation maximized the feelings of fringe and lack of interaction while task-orientation facilitate cross-cultural interaction. When students adopted task-oriented goals, they were more likely to internalize values of others and integrate them with their own beliefs in order to create a mutually respective learning environment (Kouli & Papaioannou, 2009). Elbe et al. (2013) continued this line of research by investigating the relationship between integration and motivational climate in youth sport in Spain and Greece and their findings provide more support for the above hypothesis. They also found that task (mastery)-oriented climates were linked to adaptive integrative profiles (Elbe et al., 2013).

Sweden, similar to many other countries in Europe, has become a multicultural society. This phenomenon was even more enhanced after joining the European Union in 1995. 22 % of the population in Sweden has an immigrant background representing 200 different cultures. It is estimated that approximately 100,000 people with different languages, religions and cultures, immigrate to Sweden annually. Swedish immigration policies, however, have focused solely on

assimilation of migrants and assisting with employment and language (Johansson-Heinö, 2011). Thus the immigrant population is struggling to integrate fully in the face of policies that try to objectify and control the foreign culture present in Sweden (Rizvi, 2009).

Having this context in mind and following the recommendation of Hatzigeorgiadis et al., (2013), the present cross-sectional study was designed to further investigate the integrative role of motivational climate and achievement goal orientations in sport and exercise within a multicultural context. The ethnic-cultural identity salience of Swedish students attending a sport-oriented middle school was examined as a function of the motivational climate of their respective sports as well as their own achievement goal orientations. Based on the literature addressed above, it was hypothesized that

- mastery-oriented motivational climate would predict a positive integrative profile for the participants. Participants that perceive the climate as mastery-oriented are more likely to have higher scores on ethnic belonging and assimilation dimension of the ethnic/cultural identity salience.
- performance-oriented climates, on the other hand, would predict a negative integrative profile. Participants who perceive the environment as performance-oriented are, therefore, more likely to feel confused about their ethnic belonging as well as demonstrate a disinterest in interacting with individuals from different ethno-cultural groups.

Method

A cross sectional study design was followed. The measurements were taken at one point for each class during a two-day period. The measurements were

collected by the participants' teacher and the researcher was not present in data collection. This was done due to the school's regulations. The researcher met with the teacher and explained the procedure thoroughly and each questionnaire was discussed in length in order to clarify any concerns.

Participants and procedure

Participants were 66 middle school (grundskola) students between the ages of 13-16 (mean age= 14.83, SD=.76). The participants included 40 boys and 26 girls in 4 different classes in one school. Students were asked to define their ethnicity in their own words and their answers fell into 3 categories, 40 Swedish, 9 Swedish and other ethnicities and 17 other ethnicities.

The school was a sport-oriented middle school and was located in the city of Malmö in the province of Skåne. The participants were recruited by establishing contact with the Malmö school board who referred the researcher to this particular school. One teacher agreed to assist with the project. Announcements regarding the general purpose of the study were posted on the school website and bulletin boards and parents were asked to contact the teacher if they had any questions.

Students read and signed an informed consent, stating the general purpose and their voluntary participation, before completing a series of anonymous questionnaires. All students were insured of the confidentiality of their responses. The participating teacher conducted the data collection by handing out the questionnaires at appropriate times. Students worked quietly on their own, but could ask questions and communicate privately with the teacher.

Instruments - Ethnic/cultural identity salience

Students responded to the Ethnic/Cultural Identity Salience Questionnaire as customized by Kouli and Papaioannou (2009) for this particular age group. This questionnaire was first developed by Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) and has been used in various studies (Kouli, 2004; Kouli & Papaionnou, 2009; Morela et al., 2013, in press). The questionnaire assessed two dimensions of ethnic identity, ethnic belonging which consisted of five items (e.g. “the values of my ethnic groups determine my life”) and feelings of fringe (6 items, e.g. “I often feel bad that I belong to the ethnic group I do”). The questionnaire also assessed the two dimensions of cultural identity, assimilation, which included 6 items (e.g. “I usually go by the overall value of Swedish culture”) and lack of interaction with other ethnic groups (7 items, e.g. “I avoid activities with individuals from other ethnic groups”). Responses to each item were indicated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). Results from a previous study (Hatzigeorgiadis, 2011) have shown satisfactory internal consistency ($\alpha=.89-.95$).

Ethnic/Cultural Salience was developed and validated as an English instrument; therefore a translation procedure was necessary for adaption to a Swedish setting (Gudmundsson, 2009; Sousa & Rojjanasrirat, 2011). The original English version of the Ethnic/Cultural identity was translated to Swedish and then back-translated by two bilingual individuals. Subsequently, the original was compared to the back-translated versions and differences were discussed. Minor corrections were made, but overall a good agreement was shown between the original and back-translated versions.

Perceived motivational climate

Perceived Motivational Climate in Sport Questionnaire-2 (PMCSQ-2) was applied to evaluate the motivational climate (Newton, Duda, & Yin, 2000). The PMCSQ-2 measured two dimensions of athletes' perceived coach-created motivational climate: mastery and performance oriented climates.

Items in the PMCSQ-2 represented these two dimensions as well as three underlying subscales for each dimension. For the purpose of this study only the two main dimensions were considered. The mastery scale consists of 17 items that measured cooperative learning, important roles and effort and improvement (e.g., "...the coach encourages players to help each other"). The performance scale included 16 items and measured punishment for mistakes, unequal recognition and intra-team rivalry (e.g., "...the coach praises players only when they outplay team-mates"). The responses were set up on a 5-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Previous research with the PMCSQ-2 has supported the instruments validity and reliability (e.g., Newton et al., 2000). The Swedish version of this questionnaire has been translated by Stenling (2010) and has shown adequate internal consistency ($\alpha=0.87$) (Stenling, 2010).

Task and ego orientation

The Task and Ego orientation in Sport Questionnaire (TEOSQ) (Duda & Nicholls, 1989; Duda & Nicholls, 1992) was used. This questionnaire assessed the individuals' task orientation with seven items (e.g. "I learn a new skill and it makes me want to practice more.") and ego orientation with six items (e.g. "Others mess up and I don't."). Responses to each item are indicated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

Duda and Whitehead (1998) have provided evidence for the reliability of the TEOSQ (Task Cronbach $\alpha=.81-.86$ and Ego Cronbach $\alpha=.79-.90$). In this study a Swedish version of the TEOSQ, available at the Centre for Sport and Health Research at Halmstad University College was used. This version has been used by students and has provided evidence of acceptable internal consistency (Gestranius, 2008; Wallin-Tornberg, 2003).

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive and correlational analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 22. The four continuous variables were group centred at their means (Pallant, 2013) and four hierarchical multiple regression analyses were completed to examine the main effect and analyse the degree of predictability of ethnicity, gender, motivational climate and individuals' goal orientations on each individual dimension of the ethnic/cultural identity salience. Moreover, the interaction effects of motivational climate and individual task and ego orientations on the ethnic/cultural dimensions were examined using hierarchical multiple regression and two-way ANOVA.

Results

Internal Reliability of the Instruments

Internal reliability of all the instruments were analysed and presented as follow: Ethnic-cultural identity salience revealed a lower internal reliability than previous research (Hatzigeorgiadis, 2011). The overall alpha value, however, indicated an acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha=.71$). The Cronbach's Alpha values for each dimension were: ethnic belonging ($\alpha=.58$), Fringe ($\alpha=.45$), lack of interaction ($\alpha=.63$) and assimilation ($\alpha=.74$). This result was inline with

previous research (Elbe et al., 2013) who found lower alpha values for the dimension of ethnic belonging and fringe. The Cronbach's Alpha values for PMCSQ-2 were, mastery ($\alpha=.88$) and performance ($\alpha=.85$) with an overall value of ($\alpha=.73$). The TEOSQ alpha values also demonstrated sufficient internal validity. The Cronbach's alpha values for this study were, an overall alpha of ($\alpha=.73$), ego ($\alpha=.81$) and task ($\alpha=.82$).

Table 1.

Pearson correlations for all participants

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Ethnic Belonging								
2. Lack of Interaction	-0.006							
3. Fringe	-0.062	.439**						
4. Assimilation	.261*	0.194	0.09					
5. Perceived Performance Motivational Climate	0.05	.318*	.289*	0.023				
6. Perceived Mastery Motivational Climate	-0.067	-.282*	-.268*	-0.247	-.361**			
7. Task Orientation	-0.215	-0.196	-.282*	-0.122	-0.034	.345**		
8. Ego Orientation	-0.002	-0.127	-0.027	-0.079	0.053	-.266*	-0.046	

* $p<.05$.

** $p<.01$.

Correlations

Descriptive statistics revealed that majority of students identify themselves as Swedish (60.6%) and that the sample was mainly composed of boys (60.6%). Pearson correlation for the relationships between all variables was examined and presented in table 1. For all participants, ethnic belonging had a low but significant correlation with assimilation ($r=.26$, $p<.05$) and fringe had a high correlation with lack of interaction ($r=.44$, $p<.01$). Performance-oriented motivational climate had relatively high correlations with both fringe ($r=.29$, $p<$

.05) and lack of interaction ($r=.32$, $p<.05$). Moreover, mastery-oriented motivational climate was negatively correlated with both fringe ($r=-.27$, $p<.05$) and lack of interaction ($r=-.28$, $p<.05$). Task orientation also demonstrated a negative moderate correlation with fringe ($r=-.28$, $p<.05$). No significant correlation was observed between mastery-oriented motivational climate and the dimensions of ethnic belonging and assimilation.

Table 2. Summary of hierarchical multiple regression analysis

Predictor Variables	Outcome Variables							
	Ethnic Belonging		Assimilation		Lack of Interaction		Fringe	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Perceived Motivational Climate-Mastery	0.063	0.184	0.263	0.16	-0.25	0.32	0.067	0.03
Perceived Motivational Climate-Performance	0.105	0.155	-0.04	0.082	*	0.12	0.254	0.086
Task Orientation	-0.214	0.094	0.037	0.027	-0.189	0.04	0.324	0.08
Ego Orientation	-0.052	0.022	-0.12	0.044	0.234	0.088	-0.05	0.068
Variable Interactions								
Task Orientation X Mastery Climate	0.287	0.038	0.046	0.097	-0.01	0.05	0.042	0.089
Task Orientation X Performance Climate	0.312	0.017	0.202	0.072	-0.102	0.035	-0.18	0.077
Ego Orientation X Mastery Climate	0.366	0.029	0.171	0.068	0.096	0.067	0.002	0.028
Ego Orientation X Performance Climate	0.352	0.082	0.327	0.013	-0.049	0.03	0.03	0.02

Note: * $p<0.05$.

Regression Analyses

A series of assumption tests were conducted to examine normality, linearity, homoscedasticity and independence of residuals. Next, four hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed to test the degree to which perceived motivational climate and individual goal orientations and their interaction could predict the dimensions of ethnic-cultural identity. The beta values are depicted in table 3. The result revealed a significant prediction for ethnic belonging, $F(8,48)=2.4$, $p<.05$, $R^2=.17$. As it is depicted in table 2, only an interaction of the independent variables were significant contributors to the prediction. To further illustrate the impact of mastery-oriented motivational climate on different dimensions of ethnic-cultural identity, as measured by individual achievement goal orientations, a two-way ANOVA analysis was conducted. The plots are presented in figure 1 (next page). None of the other regression yielded significant predictors for assimilation, fringe and lack of interaction dimensions of the ethnic-cultural identity. The F values are as follows: for assimilation $F(8,48)=1.4$, $p=.21$, $R^2=.06$; for fringe $F(8,48)=1.6$, $p=.14$, $R^2=.08$; for lack of interaction $F(8,47)=2.0$, $p=.07$, $R^2=.12$.

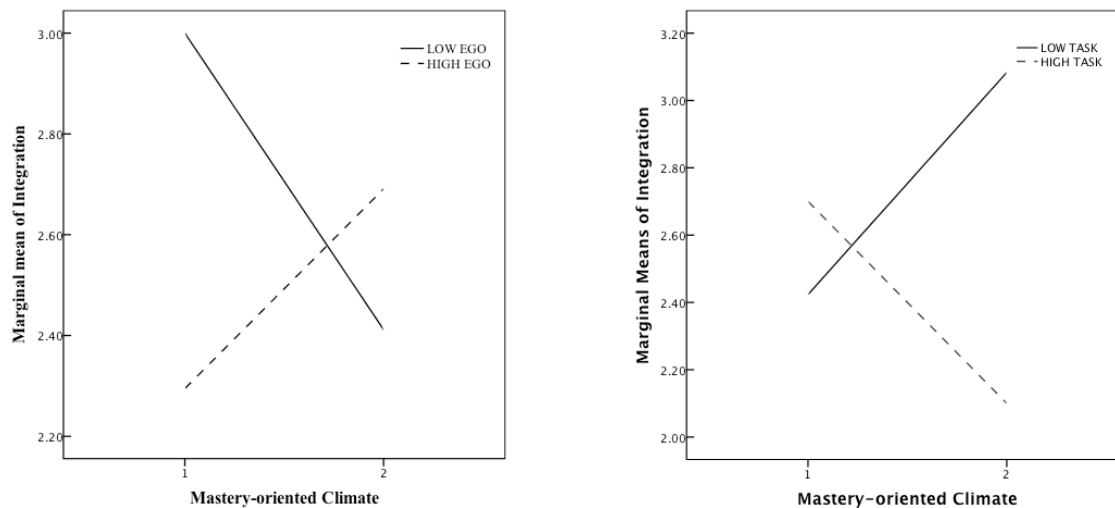


Figure 1. The interaction effect of mastery-oriented motivational climate on different dimensions of ethnic-cultural identity, as measured by individual achievement goal orientations.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between motivational climate and integration of adolescents attending a sport school in the multicultural setting of Sweden and to gain further understanding into the possible integrative role of sport participation for migrant youth. Two hypotheses were formulated to differentiate between different aspects of acculturation. The findings of this study supported the second hypothesis suggesting a positive correlation between performance-oriented environments and lack of interaction and feelings of fringe. The first hypothesis, which questioned the relationship between mastery-oriented climates and ethnic belonging and assimilation dimensions of acculturation, was only partially supported by the findings, an inverse correlation emerged between lack of interaction and feelings of fringe and mastery-oriented climates. Moreover, an interaction effect was found suggesting that mastery-oriented motivational climates can be particularly

effective for individuals with high ego-oriented and low task-oriented achievement goals.

Despite the small sample size and the exploratory nature of this study, the results were aligned with several other research studies: Kouli and Papaioannou's (2009) study on motivational climate in the physical education context, Elbe's and colleagues' (2013) study on motivational climate in a team sport context and Morela et al.'s study (2013), which investigated the integrative role of team sports. Previous research has also established that mastery-oriented motivational climates could result in optimizing the positive responses such as well-being, cooperation and morality (Lemyre et al., 2000; Ommundsen & Roberts, 2007; Roberts & Treasure, 2012). The findings of the current study, therefore, supported the notion that mastery-oriented environments foster mutual understanding and respect for all individuals regardless of their ethnicity and facilitate the aims of multicultural education (Kouli & Papaioannou, 2009).

In addition, the result of this study depicted a positive correlation between the dimensions of lack of interaction and fringe of ethnic-cultural identity and a perceived performance-oriented environment. This was supported by previous research, which suggested that intergroup comparisons of normative values and socialization processes could influence the ethnic-cultural identity salience of individuals (Berry et al., 1989; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). Performance-oriented motivational climates have been linked to higher emphasis on social evaluations and comparisons, maladaptive achievement behaviour such as cheating and aggression and pursuit of normative outcomes (Papaioannou, 1997; Roberts & Treasure, 2012). It is, therefore, understood that a high emphasis on performance goals can be detrimental to the aims of integration of the immigrant youth in a multicultural context.

Two interesting findings emerged from this research. One was the lack of any significant relationship between ethnic belonging and assimilation dimensions of the ethnic-cultural identity (the integrative aspects) and perceived motivational environment. There could be many explanations for this lack of significant outcome, but it might be explained within the context of Swedish culture and its immigration policies. The Swedish Sports Confederation has had an all-inclusive policy, which has stated that all individuals, regardless of their nationality, ethnic origins or religion are welcome to join any sports organization of their own choice (Riksidrottsförbundet [RF], 2009). However, several studies have shown that despite such proactive policies, the Swedish sports organizations have been struggling with adapting to new cultures and different thinking and learning styles (Lundvall, 2009). Moreover, there has been a lack of ethnic representation among the organizers; and coaches have often lacked the skills and awareness to meet and understand participants from non-Swedish backgrounds (Fundberg, 2012). Furthermore, at a national policy level, it has been suggested that, for the most part, the emphasis of the integration policy in Sweden has been on assisting immigrants with language and employment (Johansson-Heinö, 2011). The outcome of the Swedish immigration policies, therefore, has been acceptance of different people from different cultures and ethnic origins, which has resulted in co-habitation, but not necessarily integration.

The other noteworthy finding was the negative interaction effect of mastery-oriented climate and ethnic belonging dimension for the two categories of high task-oriented and low ego-oriented participants. This finding was incongruent with the current knowledge regarding the mastery-oriented motivational climate and acculturation, which suggests that mastery-oriented environments can enhance integration of individuals, that is increase ethnic belonging as well as assimilation (Kouli & Papaioannou, 2009). Once again, this result can be

interpreted within the Swedish immigration policies and culture. It has been suggested that Sweden is considered to be a post-racial utopia where ethnicity as a category is irrelevant and obsolete and there is a reluctance to talk about ethnicities in Swedish culture as a whole (Hübinette & Tigervall, 2009). The high task-oriented and low ego-oriented individuals, therefore, could have interpreted the questions about ethnicity and culture as discriminatory, especially in a mastery-oriented climate where cooperation is emphasized. This avoidance to recognize ethnic identity of different ethno-cultural groups, however, can lead to the marginalization of minority groups in the society. In such societies, various minority groups remain on the margin of the dominant society unless they fully assimilate as indistinguishable components of the mainstream culture, which may be an impossible task due to a difference in appearance, language or religion (Berry, 2011). Both of these acculturation strategies (marginalization and assimilation) are maladaptive and can lead to dysfunctional social as well as psychological behaviours and attitudes (Berry et al., 2006).

Berry (2011) argued that integration was a two way process, which necessitated the non-dominant groups to embrace the basic values of their new culture, while simultaneously, required the dominant group to make mutual accommodations such as adapting national institutions (i.e. education, leisure and sports organizations, labour) to better fulfil the needs of all groups in this new multicultural society, equally and without prejudice (Berry, 2011). Furthermore, research has indicated that adapting an integrative profile, by both the minority and dominant cultures, would result in the most optimal psychological and sociological adaptation patterns which would enhance both the individuals' and the society's well-being (Berry et al., 2006). The results of this study indicated that, despite Swedish national policies, the second phase of integration has not yet been fully consummated. Education and sport organizations as well as

national policy makers need to create an environment where cultural dialogue and communication is possible, where individuals can fully understand and explore their own ethnicities as well as others'. In order to implement effective policies and reinforce their execution, the gap between theories and practical interventions needs to be eliminated which in turn would result in theory-driven interventions (Biddle & Fuchs, 2009). Past work in educational settings has demonstrated that short, but effective, training sessions could result in significant and enduring changes in the teaching and interaction styles of educators (Reeve, 1998). Hence, training of coaches, teachers and other sport professionals is essential to foster knowledge and understanding of optimal motivational climate for sport and physical activity. Educators and sport professionals need to enhance mastery-oriented climates by emphasizing the development of empathic, appreciative and communicative responses in youth. In such climates, adolescents develop skills to recognize and appreciate others' perceptions as well as learn to collaborate together for common objectives rather than against one another for mutually exclusive goals (Orlick, 2006); only then will the process of integration be fully accomplished and multiculturalism realized.

Limitations of the present study and recommendations

The main limitation of the current study may be associated with the sample. First, the overall sample is small ($n=66$) in comparison with other studies. For example Kouli and Papaioannou's (2009) sample size was 1305. Studies of Elbe et al (2013) and Morela et al. (2013), however, had 120 and 87 participants respectively, which is only slightly higher than the present study's sample size. Nevertheless, despite some significant findings, the current study's sample size may have been too small for other significant findings to be detected. The cross-sectional design of the study is another limitation. Acculturation is a dynamic

process and both the dominant and non-dominant members of the society continuously adapt and re-adapt their assumptions in presence of different factors in the society (Berry, 2001). Cross-sectional study design, therefore, may not be the optimal method in investigating this phenomenon. Despite this shortcoming, the present study and previous cross-sectional studies have been able to highlight significant variables and influencing factors in the process of acculturation. As a result, future research should concentrate on examining the longitudinal effects of such factors, as well as different interventions, on the process of acculturation. Another major issue was the sample randomization. Although Malmö is considered a cosmopolitan city in Sweden with inhabitants from many different backgrounds and ethnic origins, the sample was chosen from one single school and, therefore, may not be representative of the general population under investigation (Swedish Youth 13-16 attending sport secondary schools). There may have been variables specific to the sample school that could have affected the result, such as the teachers' attitudes, class dynamics and the overall school philosophy. Future research should concentrate on investigating larger samples from various schools in different cities in order to create a more accurate picture of the relationship between the variables under investigation. Furthermore, the composition of the sample could have also contributed to emergence of the outcomes. Possible differences in perception of the motivational climate, and its integrative role, between people who identify with one ethnicity (dominant or non-dominant) and individuals with two different ethnicities could exist. As the prevalence of individuals with multiple ethnicities increases, research in this area could provide valuable insight to the process of acculturation and possibly offer solutions for the successful integration of the whole society.

Due to the exploratory nature of the current study and its small sample size, the authors were unable to explore the orthogonality of the task and ego orientations.

Literature on sport and exercise has demonstrated that task and ego orientations are independent of each other and individuals can be high or low in both task and ego orientations, or low in one and high in the other (Lemyre, Roberts, & Ommundsen, 2000; Nichols, 1989; Roberts & Treasure, 2012). Therefore, further research on adaptive and maladaptive combinations of task and ego orientations and their effects on ethnic and cultural identity of individuals could provide significant information regarding the process of acculturation and could further assist educational and governmental organizations in initiating policies and programs that nurture more adaptive combinations of achievement goal orientations.

Another limitation of the study may be the validity of the instruments used, particularly, the ethnic/cultural identity salience. The internal consistency of this instrument's subscales in the present study was lower than the desired level. Despite showing marginal internal consistency these subscales were retained for further analysis, in accordance with previous research that indicated there is no definite level for acceptable or unacceptable alpha levels and measures with low internal consistency might still be useful (Cronbach, 1951; Schmitt, 1996). Nevertheless it is important to note that previous studies in this area have mostly focused on qualitative research methods and the ethnic/cultural identity salience is a relatively new instrument. Its validity and reliability, therefore, should be tested in different populations in various countries. More importantly, the items in the questionnaire should be investigated more thoroughly in order for the questionnaire to be appropriate for each specific age group.

Finally, it is important to note that even though a large population of youth in Sweden participates in sports and are members of various clubs and sport schools, the majority of the population attend regular schools and are not

members of sports organizations. This is especially true for immigrant population since their accessibility to sport and exercise is hindered by various barriers such as language, dress code, unfamiliarity with the activities and cultural constraints (Coakley, 2009; Taylor & Toohey, 1998, Walseth, 2008). However, almost all adolescents, immigrant or not, attend schools and physical education classes. Therefore, physical education classes can be the most advantageous environment to facilitate integration, enhance understanding and communication between cultures and ultimately increase enjoyment of physical activity and overall well-being. School programs have the unique ability to offer continuous, low-cost guidance to a large number of adolescents. Moreover, the parents can be involved through meetings and educational materials can be sent to the families. This is an area that still remains unexplored and its potentials, within the integrations and multiculturalism context, are unexploited. Examining the effects of implementing such policies in schools could offer more insight into different stages of integration. The phenomenon of immigration and creation of plural societies are significant issues at present times and will continue to be more important in the future. As Sweden becomes more and more ethnically diverse, and first, second or third generation migrants become an integral part of the society, the issue of integration becomes crucial to the future of political, economical and psychosocial health of the society.

Conclusion

The findings demonstrated that mastery-oriented motivational climate was associated with an adaptive integrative profile. Mastery-oriented climate was inversely linked to lack of interaction and fringe, therefore, associated with integrative attributes of both ethnic and cultural identity. Moreover, an interaction effect was found depicting the positive integrative influence of

mastery-oriented motivational climates for individuals with high ego-oriented and low task-oriented achievement goals. However, the lack of positive association between mastery-oriented climates and ethnic belonging and assimilation dimensions of ethnic/cultural identity salience as well as the interaction effect of individual achievement goal orientation indicated that there is still more to be done in order to achieve full integration. Overall, these findings suggest the need to reassess the performance-oriented motivational climates in sports settings and schools by promotion of mastery-oriented environments and training of the educators and sport specialists. Furthermore, the current findings, along with previous research on Swedish immigration policies and their implications in the society, advocate that if integration is to be fully achieved, more emphasis is needed in construction of environments where young individuals are motivated to communicate, cooperate, explore cultural beliefs and form meaningful relationships with one another.

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Gender Equality and Sport — an Equation difficult to solve?

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Abstract

The Scandinavian countries are seen around the world as role models of gender equality. However, this is not the case for sport. Even though the percentage of female athletes has increased, women are still underrepresented and do not occupy positions of power in sports organizations. This study is based on a survey of representatives of local sport clubs who sought funding to implement projects within the framework of sport for all; Idrottslyftet (The Lift for Sport). The aim was to examine how sports federations' work with The Lift for Sport was perceived at the club level by male and female project managers and differences in their views on the effect The Lift for Sport had for girls and boys. A web survey of 480 respondents revealed that female project managers have stronger beliefs, compared to male project managers, that The Lift for Sport is important in promoting gender equality in sport at the general and local levels. Both female and male project managers believed that continued governmental financial support is important for the future recruitment of boys and girls to local sport clubs and for encouraging them to continue participating. Finally, the study indicates that female project managers are more engaged in gender-oriented issues than male project managers.

Keywords: equal opportunity plans, participation, sport policy, sports clubs, sport for all, project managers

Introduction

In many Western countries, and particularly in Scandinavia, the present political climate favours policy interventions in the area of gender equality in sport (Svender, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012). One explanation for the gender parity interventions may be the political, egalitarian ideology underpinning the Scandinavian welfare states that can be linked to the framework of sport for all (Skille, 2011). According to the European Council (1975), everyone shall have the right to participate in sport, and it is the government's obligation to cooperate with external organizations to develop sport for all. The Swedish Sports Confederation (SSC), generally referred to as the Swedish sports movement, is an independent, non-governmental organization. It has by tradition an "implicit contract" with the state of Sweden (Norberg, 2004), meaning that the government has consciously limited its control, and the SSC has accepted social responsibility and a certain amount of government influence (Bergsgard & Norberg, 2010; Fahlén, Eliasson, & Wickman, 2014). Therefore, sport receives governmental funding in exchange for activities that are open to all and organised in such a way that boys and girls are brought up to be good and democratic citizens (Österlind & Wright, 2012). In 2011, the SSC revised its equal opportunity plan, originally written in 2005, and has since been working towards reaching gender equality by 2017. The overall goal is that women and men should have the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities at all levels, in all areas. Furthermore, women and men should have equal influence in decision-making and advisory bodies. This means that, at all decision-making and advisory levels, men and women should be represented by at least 40% (Riksidrottsförbundet, n.d.).

Gender has been a recurrent topic of discussion in the Swedish sports movement for several decades (Wickman, Karp, Eliasson, Fahlén, & Löfgren, 2012), and

today, nearly 44% of the sports participants in Sweden are women. However, even though the rules that govern sports are based on democratic principles, those making the decisions do not sufficiently represent the sports participants of Sweden. Much has been done to promote gender equality in sport; nonetheless, women constitute only 26% of the executives in National Sport Organizations (NSOs), while 43% of the executives in the district federations are women (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2012b). Based on these arguments, in Sweden as elsewhere, discrepancies exist between political statements, objectives and political realities. Male domination and its reproduction seem to be a pattern that is difficult to come to terms with (Wickman et al., 2012).

So, why does sport, as an institution, continue to create, recreate and preserve male domination? Efforts have been made at the policy level to achieve gender equality, but policies formulated centrally are seldom realized locally (Kempe-Bergman, 2014). This suggests that the politics and management of Swedish sports are, in most respects, shaped by gender hierarchies (Wickman et al., 2012). Additionally, research about responses to the gender equality projects in the Swedish sports movement is uncommon (Kempe-Bergman, 2014). According to Skille (2011), the process of policy implementation depends on the willingness and ability of the grass roots implementers, where “the goals of policy may be rejected for a variety of reasons or interpreted in particular ways” (van Meter & van Horn, 1975, p. 473). New members are socialized into the organization’s value system, and hegemonic gender meanings can be challenged and changed through interaction and action at the grass roots level (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008). Despite these facts, little is known about the ways in which male and female project managers at the club level give meaning to gender and how these meanings serve as catalysts of exclusion and inclusion. We argue here that what happens at the grass roots level is of importance for the gender equality

work done at all levels in the SSC.

The aim was to analyse how sports federations' work with the initiative called The Lift for Sport was perceived at the club level by male and female project managers and differences in their views on the effect The Lift for Sport had for girls and boys. We utilized data from a large-scale evaluation of a sport for all initiative, namely Idrottslyftet (The Lift for Sport), financed by the Swedish government, in which local sports clubs could apply for funding to promote increased participation and development for children and adolescents. The present manuscript focuses on the club-level implementers and their views on gender equality in children and adolescents. We relate our findings to 1) the overall goal in the SSC's equal opportunity plan, which stated that women and men should have the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities at all levels, in all areas (Riksidrottsförbundet, n.d.); and 2) the SSCs aim that equal opportunity plan should permeate throughout the Swedish sports movement at all levels, ensuring that all key actors know the plan and work proactively for a change (Riksidrottsförbundet, n.d.). These objectives are addressed using the following overarching research questions: Can male and female project managers be assumed to have equal or near equal views in issues concerning gender, or do they differ? If their views differ, in which cases do they differ? The article is structured as follows. First, we map the field of the gender political landscape within sports organizations. Then, we present the theoretical considerations and methodology applied in this study. Finally, we discuss the difficulties to decrease the gap between vision and practice in Swedish sports organizations according to gender equality and the results of the study.

Mapping the field — Gender equality in Scandinavian sports organizations

Since the 1950s, Scandinavian women have gained increasing access to sports that were formerly male-dominated (Pfister, 2010). Despite this trend, sports organizations are often places that still reproduce traditional gender roles and male privilege and dominance (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008; Cunningham & Sagas, 2008; Messner & Sabo, 1990). In organized sports in Sweden, as in most other Western countries, women are underrepresented in leadership positions, and the select few often hold positions of little authority and power. In other words, the proportion of women decreases as power and prestige increase (see, for example, Cunningham & Sagas, 2008; Hovden, 2010; Wicker, Breuer, & von Hanau, 2012; Åström, 2011).

Gender equality became an issue in Swedish sports organizations in the 1970s (Olofsson, 1989; Åström, 2011). Sweden, like other Scandinavian countries, is a welfare state based on values such as equality and solidarity, which aim to guarantee equal opportunities and reduce economic, gender and ethnic differences (Leira, 1992; Pfister, 2010). However, even though Swedish sports organizations have a long tradition of working towards greater gender equality (Ottesen et al., 2010) and Swedish sports leaders agree about the importance of working towards such equality (Pfister, 2010), several studies have indicated that a gendered hierarchy exists as the numbers of women decrease when the power of the position increases (Hovden, 2006; Åström, 2011). Further, the top levels are dominated by men with specific behaviour, characteristics and patterns, which in leadership studies most often are conceptualized as the “ideal leader” is defined in a general neutral manner but possesses characteristics that are typically seen in male leaders (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008; Pfister, 2006). Accordingly, one may speak about “political correctness” in the sense that equal opportunities among women and men exist, but only to a certain degree (Kvande,

1998). Because few previous studies exist that are specific to Sweden, we examined Norwegian and Danish studies for reference.

In a comparative study on the underrepresentation of females on executive boards in sport in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, Ottesen et al. (2010) found that underrepresentation may be linked to individual actors and organization-centred perspectives. The similarities and differences identified among Denmark, Norway and Sweden were explained by the existing gender policies in the society-at-large and the respective sports organizations. Ottesen et al. (2010) further argued that equal opportunity plans in Sweden and quota schemes in Norway have had an influence on attitudes towards equal gender opportunities at the national, regional and local levels in sports organizations, while this tendency is not as clear in Denmark, where no such political governance has been implemented.

In a qualitative study of Norwegian sports organizations, Hovden (2006) found that gender order is defined and diagnosed in paradoxical ways. She identified two rival representations mostly framed by middle-aged and older males, who interpret gender order as an issue outside the political responsibility of sports organizations, either as an individual “women’s problem” or a “time-lag problem” (cf. Börjesson, 1998). In this outside problem, the solution is often to “fix women” (cf. Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Svender, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012). According to Hovden (2006), these representations draw a picture of a gender political situation in which gender order is mostly handled as a political “non-issue” and male dominance as a power structure continues to exist in silence. In another qualitative study based on interviews with executive board members in Norwegian sports federations, Hovden (2010, p. 196) found that stereotyped notions of gender (e.g. women are more reluctant to make tough decisions and

female leaders lack sufficient strategic competence and are not familiar enough with the “rules of the game”) are an integral part of the dominant leadership discourses in sports organizations. Hovden (2006) argued that gender as a power relation is hidden or blurred; consequently, the dominant leadership discourses make women “prisoners” of gender. To put it differently, a circular argument is evident in these organizations, as seen in their policy documents, which declare they are for gender equality but, when scrutinized, claim that they cannot be unequal because of the beliefs stated in the policy documents. A discrepancy exists between theory and practice in which organizations passively avoid discrimination but simultaneously fail to proactively work for change (Kempe-Bergman, 2014; Wickman et al., 2012).

In another study based on the gender ratios in leading positions of Danish sports organizations, Pfister (2006) identified reasons for the existing gender hierarchy. The “leader ideal” in sport with a stronghold in sports organizations is that individuals must be willing and able to invest much time in voluntary work. According to Pfister (2006), this ideal seems to be one of the barriers preventing women’s advancement since women on average have greater problems reconciling their life with their work and also have less leisure time than men. Another barrier is the election system, as a lack of regulations referring to the duration of offices allows men to serve for many years. Even though Pfister (2006) found that more than half of the sports leaders in the study perceived equality as an important issue in sport in general, only a small percentage of these men and women were willing to invest time and energy in this issue.

In a study of gender hierarchies in Danish sports organizations, Pfister (2010) explored the opinions of senior-level sports officials about the role of women (and men) in their organizations, their explanations of gender hierarchies in

sports associations and their proposals for change. The results showed that the majority of male and female leaders explained gender hierarchy as a result of individual choices, neglecting the barriers anchored in the structure and the culture of organizations. At the same time, they did not consider it important to strive actively for a gender balance in leadership positions. On the other hand, there was a consensus that women are competent leaders and that it would be beneficial to organizations if more women took on leadership positions. Furthermore, Pfister (2010) argued that the major barrier hindering any increase in the number of women leaders in the Danish sports system was that gender equality was perceived as having been achieved. Participants considered gender hierarchies to be an outcome of individual decisions, and proactive measures were not, therefore, considered necessary.

Finally, some feminists have also drawn attention to the shortage of women in sports organizations that limit the ability of women to actually influence and shape the development of sport as a social practice (Walker & Bopp, 2011).

To sum up, gender equality has been an issue of concern for both the state and the sports movement of Sweden, and the SSC has routinely produced and communicated gender equality policies for more than three decades. Progress has been made, albeit on a modest scale. Despite long-term work at the national level, researchers have presented sharp illustrations of the challenges that complicate efforts to go from policy to practice, i.e. policies that are formulated centrally seldom are realized locally (Kempe-Bergman, 2014; Wickman et al., 2012). In that respect, they have shown that power and position are closely linked and the realization of gender equality often becomes problematic in different ways. Scandinavian and Swedish research has indicated problems related to attitudes; for example, gender equality is often seen as an irrelevant or

insignificant issue (Kempe-Bergman, 2014). Further, gender equality is constructed as something that either has already been achieved or is an outcome of individual decisions (Pfister, 2010), and gender is considered a “women’s problem” (Börjesson, 1998; Hovden, 2006) or a political “non-issue” (Hovden, 2006). While existing research contributes to a deeper understanding of gender equality issues in sports organizations, none of these studies looked specifically at how sports federations’ work with gender equality sport for all projects has been perceived at the club level by male and female project managers (cf. Svender, Larsson, & Redelius, 2012). Project managers have a central position at the local level and a significant role in the implementation process of sports projects. Thereby, their understanding of gender equality must be considered as they may affect the possibility of change, not only at the local level, as Skille (2011) reported, but in the sports movement as a whole. We argue that the implications of this study could lead to further knowledge about how male and female project managers understand gender equality and increase the possibility of a more effective implementation of SSC’s ambition according to equal opportunity plan.

The Swedish sports movement and The Lift for Sport

The Swedish sports model, based on common understanding, collaboration and corporatism between authorities and the sports movement, is dependent on the voluntary support of local leaders and public financial support, especially from local governments and the widely spread club system (Skille, 2011; Österlind & Wright, 2012). An estimated 600,000 Swedes hold one or more leadership positions in the Swedish sports movement; significantly, almost all of these leaders fulfil their duties as volunteers. These leaders are found on executive committees at various levels, as trainers, youth leaders, sports officials and team

leaders (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2012a). Sixty-nine NSO's in Sweden comprise 4,717,678 members of the SSC (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2012b), which can be compared to Sweden's total population of 9,660,000 inhabitants.

Between 2007 and 2011, the Swedish government added 50 million Euros per year to the annual SSC budget for a sport for all program. The Lift for Sport program was introduced with the explicit aim to engage more children and adolescents, especially those from underrepresented groups, in sports club activities. The program manifesto stated that all activities should be based on gender and class equality perspectives, permeated by the regular SSC's policy program, *Idrotten vill* (What Sports Want) (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2009). Between 2007 and 2012, approximately 86,000 local ventures in line with the ambition of The Lift for Sport were conducted in Swedish sports clubs. These were conducted by more than 50,000 sport clubs around the country and included more than 4,182,000 participants, of which 45% were girls (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2013).

Theoretical considerations

Data collection and analysis within this study were inspired by Connell's social theory of gender (Connell, 2005, 2008; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). His concept of hegemonic masculinity has emerged as one of the most influential strategies for conceptualizing the asymmetrical ordering of masculinity and femininity. With an interest in theorizing how gender difference is maintained, Connell highlighted the operation of power in governing the boundaries, which symbolically delineate masculinity and femininity. Norman (2010) investigated the analogy between hegemony theory and feminist research. Feminist cultural studies have suggested that sport maintains the ideology of male hegemony

through the continuous trivializing and marginalization of women in sport. Norman (2010) suggested that many of the inequalities suffered by women in sport are due to the hold that ideologies associated with male hegemony have on sport. As long as society continues to consent to the inferior role of women in sports, women will continue to suffer unequal representation leadership positions in sports and in sport as a whole (see also Walker & Bopp, 2011). In short, hegemonic masculinity serves to elevate and authorize mainstream forms of masculinity and subordinate and marginalize other forms of maleness as well as all things feminine (Parker & Curtner-Smith, 2012). Consequently, gender becomes “embedded” in organizations, i.e. it is anchored in structures, underlies processes and pervades the organization’s work and power, norms and culture (Pfister, 2006).

The present study has drawn on the concept of hegemonic masculinity, the body of gender equality research and the feminist critique of it, which has provided us with questions and, to some extent, analytic tools to explain gender differences among project managers’ views at the grass roots of Swedish sports organizations. This approach opens up the possibility of deciphering gendered power relations and enables an understanding of what actually happens at the local level due to the implementation of the SSC’s equal opportunity plan (Riksidrottsförbundet, n.d.).

Methodology

Findings are based on data collected from five NSO’s, namely, Swedish Budo and Martial Arts Federation (36,885 members), Swedish Floorball Federation (185,500 members), Swedish Gymnastics Federation (209,733 members), Swedish Ski Association (91,032 members) and Swedish Sports Organization for

the Disabled (33,000 members) (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2012b). SSC made the selection of NSO's for the purpose of a program evaluation carried out by six research groups at different universities in Sweden. National data indicates that the total number of members in the five federations in our study is 556,150 (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2012b), which is 12% of the 4,717,678 members in the 69 NSO's in Sweden. In the present study we utilized data from a large-scale evaluation of a four-year sport for all initiative financed by the Swedish government (Karp, Eliasson, Fahlén, Löfgren, & Wickman, 2012a, 2012b). We In particular, we analysed the answers to the 19 gender-related questions of the larger online survey constructed and distributed by the authors and the project group.

The respondents

The survey was web-based, anonymous and distributed via mail to project managers (n = 1,026) of local sports clubs in the five federations in our study, who had applied for funding to The Lift for Sport initiative during the project period (2007–2011). The responses to 1119 of the online survey questions, which related to gender, are the focus in this study. Of the 480 respondents (47% of total n), 42% were women (n = 204) and 58% were men (n = 276), which is assumed a fair representation of the gender ratio in the total group. The participants' ages range from 20 years to 83 years with a median age of 46. Within their sports clubs, they held positions as board or committee members, youth leaders or administrators.

We argue that, although the response rate was low, it is justified to use the data collected in our study since the target participants were accessed via mail (and not in person), and it can be assumed that some questionnaires did not reach the

project managers. Consequently, we have no reason to assume that non-response is systematic.

Data collection — Instrument and procedures

The questions of the greater online survey were developed in order to evaluate a four-year sport for all initiative, so psychometric properties are not available. To address our research question, we used 19 questions related to gender to determine how sports managers perceive the national Lift for Sport program (as related to the SSC's equal opportunity plan) and local projects to contribute to the encouragement of girls and boys to begin with sports as well as to continue with sports as they become older. A few questions also related to the sports managers' perceptions of how valuable the national program and local projects are in recruiting new sports leaders as well as how the national program and local projects have encouraged equality between males and females. A couple of examples of the questions asked are: "To what extent do you think the national programs have encouraged girls to do sport?" and "To what extent do you think that the local projects you have been involved in have contributed to the recruitment of female leaders?" In direct connection to each question, the respondents used an answering scale ranging from "very low extent" (1) to "very high extent" (5).

Data analysis

In the result section there are five groups of questions representing different contents. The first group of questions referred to how the national Lift for Sport program contributes to recruiting and keeping young members in sports. The second group of questions referred to how local projects contribute to recruiting

and keeping young members in sports. Further, the third group of questions referred to the recruitment of leaders, and the forth group to how the national program and local projects foster equality between males and females. The final block of questions referred to the importance of future sport for all initiatives for recruiting and retaining young members in sport.

The results for each category of questions are presented in tables with the mean scores (ranging from 1–5) for female and male respondents respectively (columns 2 and 3). A mean score of 1 suggests that the respondents reported very low relevance of the national Lift for Sport program and the local projects for a particular outcome, and a score of 5 represents a very high relevance. Since the main purpose is to study how the views differ between male and female project managers, we analyse the mean differences in scorings by independent samples t-tests. Such tests are useful when comparing differences in means between populations (see for instance Djurfeldt et al. (2010)). The score differences are statistically significant when p-values are equal or below 0.05. P-values are displayed in column 6. In column 4 and 5, the 95% confidence interval is presented as it provides information about how close the estimated mean difference is (95% probability) to the true mean difference in the population (see for instance Djurfeldt et al. (2010)).

Results

Recruiting and keeping young members as they grow older

National level

The first group of questions relates to how the national program known as The Lift for Sport enhanced the possibility of recruiting young members to sports clubs and encouraging them to continue with sports as they grow older.

Table1. The female and male project managers' views about the importance of The Lift for Sport program in general. Scale 1 (very low importance) to 5 (very high importance).

Questions	Male	Female	95% CI		p
	$\bar{(x)}$	(\bar{x})	LL	UL	
The national program's importance for girls to begin with sports.	3.6	3.8	-.01	.42	,067
The national program's importance for boys to begin with sports.	3.3	3.6	.01	.46	,044
The national program's importance for girls to continue sports as they become older.	3.5	3.9	.21	.64	,000
The national program's importance for boys to continue sports as they become older.	3.2	3.7	.19	.44	,000

Note: (\bar{x}) = mean values; LL = lower limit; UL=upper limit. P=p-value.

As shown in Table 1, project managers found the national program to contribute to the fostering of children's interest in sporting activities (scores range from \bar{x} = 3.2 to \bar{x} = 3.9); overall, the project managers scored slightly higher on questions that involved girls. On most questions, female project managers scored significantly higher than male project managers. More specifically, while the t-test indicated no difference between female and male project managers in their views of the national program's importance for girls to begin sports, female project managers scored significantly higher (\bar{x} = 3.6) than males (\bar{x} = 3.3) on the importance of the national programme for boys to begin sports. Likewise, the t-tests showed that female project managers scored significantly higher than male project managers on the importance of the national programme for the encouragement of both girls and boys to continue sports as they become older.

Local level

The second group of questions related to recruiting and retaining young members at the local level, in projects involving the project managers themselves.

Table 2. Female and male project managers' views about local projects. Scale 1 (very low extent) to 5 (very high extent).

Questions	Male	Female	95% CI		p
	$\overline{(x)}$	(\bar{x})	LL	UL	
The extent to which your local projects have focused on the recruitment of girls.	3.5	3.5	-.32	.45	.748
The extent to which your local projects have focused on the recruitment of boys.	2.6	2.4	-.55	.18	.318
The extent to which your local projects have attracted girls to become members of your sports club	3.6	3.8	-.04	.40	.116
The extent to which your local projects have attracted boys to become members of your sports club.	3.4	3.5	-.13	.35	.365
The extent to which your local projects have encouraged girls to continue sports as they become older.	3.4	3.9	.25	.72	.000
The extent to which your local projects have encouraged boys to continue sports as they become older.	3.3	3.5	.03	.55	.027

Note: (\bar{x}) = mean values; LL = lower limit; UL=upper limit. P=p-value.

First of all, the results in Table 2 show that project managers perceived local projects to contribute to the recruitment of young members into sports. The extent to which managers perceived this effect ranged from rather low ($\bar{x} = 2.4$) to rather high ($\bar{x} = 3.9$).

The only significant difference in the views between female and male project

managers referred to the extent to which local projects encouraged children to continue doing sports as they became older. Female project managers scored higher than male project managers for both girls (female score $\bar{x} = 3.9$ and male score $\bar{x} = 3.4$) and boys (female score $\bar{x} = 3.5$ and male score $\bar{x} = 3.3$).

Recruiting leaders

Local level

In this section, we present questions related to how the project managers perceived that their local projects led to the recruitment of sports leaders (Table 3). The result shows that female project managers scored significantly higher ($\bar{x} = 3.8$) than male project managers ($\bar{x} = 3.3$) that their local projects were important for the recruitment of female sports leaders.

Table 3. The female and male project managers' views about the importance of the local projects for the recruitment of sports leaders. Scale 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

Questions	Male	Female	95% CI		p
	(\bar{x})	(\bar{x})	LL	UL	
The extent to which your local projects have led to a larger number of female sports leaders being recruited.	3.3	3.8	.26	.77	.000
The extent to which your local projects have led to a larger number of male sports leaders being recruited.	3.3	3.4	-.10	.41	.160

Note: (\bar{x}) = mean values; LL = lower limit; UL=upper limit. p=p-value.

Fostering equality between the boys and girls

National and local levels

Questions that capture the extent to which project managers perceived the national program and/or local projects leading to fostering equality between men and women, were also analysed (Table 4). The t-tests show that female project managers scored significantly lower than their male counterparts in terms of their perceptions of how their local projects had encouraged equality between male and female (female \bar{x} = 2.8 and male \bar{x} = 3.2).

Table 4. The female and male project managers' views about equality between boys and girls. The scale of the first question ranged from 1 (low importance) to 5 (high importance). The scale of the second question ranged from 1 (no encouragement) to 5 (high encouragement).

Questions	Male	Female	95% CI		p
	(\bar{x})	(\bar{x})	LL	UL	
The national program's importance for equality between boys and girls within the Swedish sports movement.	3,2	3,4	-,02	,44	.077
The extent to which your local projects have encouraged equality between boys and girls.	3,2	2,8	-,50	-,10	.011

Note: (\bar{x}) = mean values; LL = lower limit; UL=upper limit. p=p-value.

Based on the findings in Table 4, male project managers believed to a greater extent than the female project managers that equality between males and females was of importance in the projects in their sports club. However, we do not know whether male and female respondents interpreted gender perspectives differently. The result could be an example of male project managers adhering to "political correctness" (Kvande, 1998) to avoid presenting themselves as irresponsible

when it comes to gender issues. Alternatively, the male project managers may actually have been involved in more projects with a gender perspective than their female counterparts.

The importance of future sport for all programs for recruiting and retaining young members in sport

Finally, some questions asked for the project managers' opinions on the importance of future national programs (Table 5). Overall, the perception among project managers was that national programs are rather important for recruiting children in sports clubs and for encouraging them to continue with sports as they grow older (scores ranged from $\bar{x} = 3.7$ to $\bar{x} = 4.4$). Female project managers considered future national programmes significantly more important (score $\bar{x} = 4.4$) for retaining girls' long-term interests in sporting activities than did the male counterparts (score $\bar{x} = 4.0$).

Table 5. The project managers' views about future similar national programs for the recruitment of children into sports. Scale 1 (very low importance) to 5 (very high importance).

Questions	Male	Female	95% CI		p
	(\bar{x})	(\bar{x})	LL	UL	
The importance of future similar national programs for the recruitment of girls to your club.	4.0	3.9	-.24	.22	.938
The importance of future similar national programs for the recruitment of boys to your club.	3.7	3.8	-.13	.37	.358
The importance of future similar national programs for encouraging girls to continue to do sports as they grow older.	4.0	4.4	1.0	.51	.004
The importance of future similar national programs for encouraging boys to continue to do sports as they grow older.	3.8	4.0	-.08	.40	.184

Note: (\bar{x}) = mean values; LL = lower limit; UL=upper limit. p=p-value.

Conclusion

In this article, the views on gender equality among female and male project managers at the sports club level were investigated. More precisely, it examined differences in project leaders' views on the effect The Lift for Sport project had on girls and boys. In accordance with earlier studies (see Hovden, 2006, 2010; Ottesen et al, 2010), both the male and female project managers' answers seem to reflect the general Swedish attitudes towards democracy and gender politics. In fact, the responses from both the male and female project managers reflect quite clearly the gender equality discourses and practices in both societies and sports organizations in the Nordic countries as discussed by, for example, Ottesen et al, (2010) and Hovden (2006, 2010). Further, following the "implicit contract" between the Swedish sports movement and the state (Norberg, 2004), the sports movement has a large space within which to act. In practice, this latitude means they never really have to risk negative effects of projects that do not meet established objectives and goals; gender-related projects are no exception.

Drawing on the data presented in the result section, a conclusion club managers have different views on gender equality in terms of boys and girls (see for example Table 1, 2, 3, and 5). However, we do not know whether male and female respondents interpreted gender perspectives differently. The result could be an example of male project managers adhering to "political correctness" (Kvande, 1998) to avoid presenting themselves as irresponsible when it comes to gender issues. Alternatively, the male project managers may actually have been involved in more projects with a gender perspective than their female counterparts. On the one hand, since Sweden has a long tradition of gender equality work, there is a potential risk that the respondents tend to give "politically correct" answers, even though they are guaranteed anonymity. On

the other hand, the fact that the funds from the national Lift for Sport program are earmarked to promote gender equality may combine with the long tradition of gender equality in the country have a positive effect on the project managers' views on equal opportunities in sports organizations. However, the results reveal a potential risk that a local sports club may develop a culture and an approach based exclusively on external funding to achieve gender equality instead of redistributing existing resources. According to Connell's social theory of gender (Connell, 2005, 2008; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) this would thus be an example of how gender is "embedded" in organizations and anchored in structures. What actually happens on local level is that sport continues to maintain gender differences and the ideology of male hegemony through the trivialization and marginalization of girls and women in sport.

Another interesting finding is that female project managers emphasized the importance of the project according to the recruitment of female leaders (presented in Table 3). This finding may be linked to what Börjesson (1998) described as a "women's problem"; specifically, the perception is that women are supposed to solve problems that concern women, in other words, the recruitment of female leaders. Additionally, the data material indicates that female project managers have stronger beliefs than male project managers that possible future Lift for Sport projects will be of importance for the continued recruitment of girls.

Despite the findings, the study has some limitations. One limitation is that we did not have access to the project reports and could not assess what the male and female project managers or the sports clubs have actually achieved in practice. Our reflections and interpretations are therefore completely based on the survey responses. Further, the questionnaire was sent via mail to the participants; thus, it

can be assumed that some did not respond due to technical reasons (e.g. they did not receive the mail). However, we did not have an opportunity to investigate this more thoroughly. Our response rate (47%) is below average, which is a limitation to our study, but we believe that the results provide interesting and rewarding facts about the project managers in this rather large Swedish sport for all initiative. It should also be noted that the findings are based on gender as a variable and not on a qualitative study of gender as a social relation.

Coming full circle to our earlier discussion, gender equality is on the political agenda as an issue of concern for both the state and the sports movement in Sweden and organizational, structural and societal pieces need to be set in place to decrease the gap between vision and practice. As project managers have important positions in local sport clubs, continued follow-up by gender statistics in combination with qualitative data could provide further knowledge on this finding. Additionally, this study indicates, albeit weakly, that differences might exist between the male and female project managers that may be worth investigating further. Overall, it can be said that the respondents expressed relatively little, or rather neutral, interest in how they estimated the importance of the issue of gender equality in relation to the program and project level. However, regarding government support for similar future projects, the respondents estimated gender equality more highly, which might be because they find it easier to take a positive attitude on possible future projects than to confront the strengths and weaknesses of their existing projects. Similar tendencies have been observed in other studies of sports organizations showing that sport leaders, in general, are positive to gender equality, but only a small percentage of both women and men are willing to invest time and energy in such projects (Pfister, 2010).

Finally, this research leaves many doors open to future research. Our hope is that this study will contribute to a further discussion within and without the sports sector to challenge guidelines and strategies about future directions to identify and combat situations and processes, which lead to the gendered imbalance of power.

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