

27 | UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CRITIQUE

Research Critique on “Stereotypical Views of Beauty and Boys Still Not Letting Girls Play: A Student-Centered Curriculum for Young Girls Through an After-School Activist Approach”

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This article explained young women and their physical activity (PA) levels in school due to them feeling uncomfortable, unsafe, or unprotected. As well as these young women feeling very vulnerable at such a young age based on what their parents say and vocalizing their worries about their daughters in physical education (PE) class. It affects these girls when boys tell them they can’t participate because they are girls, or they are not good enough. This article goes along with the stereotype that if a girl is pretty, they have nothing else to offer besides their looks, which is very deflating.

Purpose: The purpose of this research was to explore how a student-centered curriculum engaged female participants in critical analysis of the “female ideal” and to identify any PA barriers girls face.

Methods: The participants were nine female students that were fifth and sixth graders, and two female coaches who acted as the researchers. Participants met up to twice a week in an after-school program where the student-centered curriculum was held. Data collected consisted of researcher and participant journals, field notes, and semi-structured interviews. Trustworthiness and credibility were established through extended engagement, member checks, peer review, and negative case analysis.

Results: As a result, several girls fail to take part in PA sessions as they experience discomfort and they experience feelings of unsafety, and lack of protection. Moreover, boys prevent girls from playing during PE and PA classes. The researchers see the need to make girls feel more comfortable and

encourage them to participate in PA and PE sessions. The researchers also identify other key factors that could play a vital role in influencing girls to participate in PA and PE sessions, including the use of the media. The media could play a significant role in eliminating or reducing the existing stereotypes by representing girls' bodies as more ideal for participating in both PA and PE spaces.

Conclusion: The primary themes that were discussed and analyzed in the study that could significantly affect the participation of girls in PA and programs were boys acting as a barrier to girl's physical participation in afterschool programs and the physical body appearance and structure of girls that could possibly prevent them from participating in certain physical activities. The researchers see the need to make girls feel more comfortable and encourage them to participate in PA and PE sessions.

Critique: The article tried to prove that female participation in PA and PE is problematic due to the involvement of males yet fall short in validity in terms or sample size, age, diversity, location, region, and the focus of their purpose. The sample size was only 9 participants and would be expected to represent all female students in the world. Age is an issue because of the 9 they were all in fifth or sixth Grade 9-12 years old. The age diversity alone would not represent their own school let alone region, state, or country. Diversity was an issue because it was stated most were Latinx and that isn't accurate to the representation of all female students in the school, state, country, or world, with Latinx individuals only accounting for roughly 16% of the population in the United States of America. The location was an urban school in southern California, United States. That is an issue because the sample doesn't include different geological regions or types of areas other than urban. The article is problematic with its focus due to being too vague whether its purpose was intended to discuss the problem at a city, state, country, or global scale. The article did bring to light a serious potential solvable problem, but just tried to solve it with methods that weren't refined enough or a sample size large enough.

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