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Scholarship 2015

Physical Education

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• The report in this folder is my entry for Scholarship Physical Education.

• This work presented for assessment is my own.

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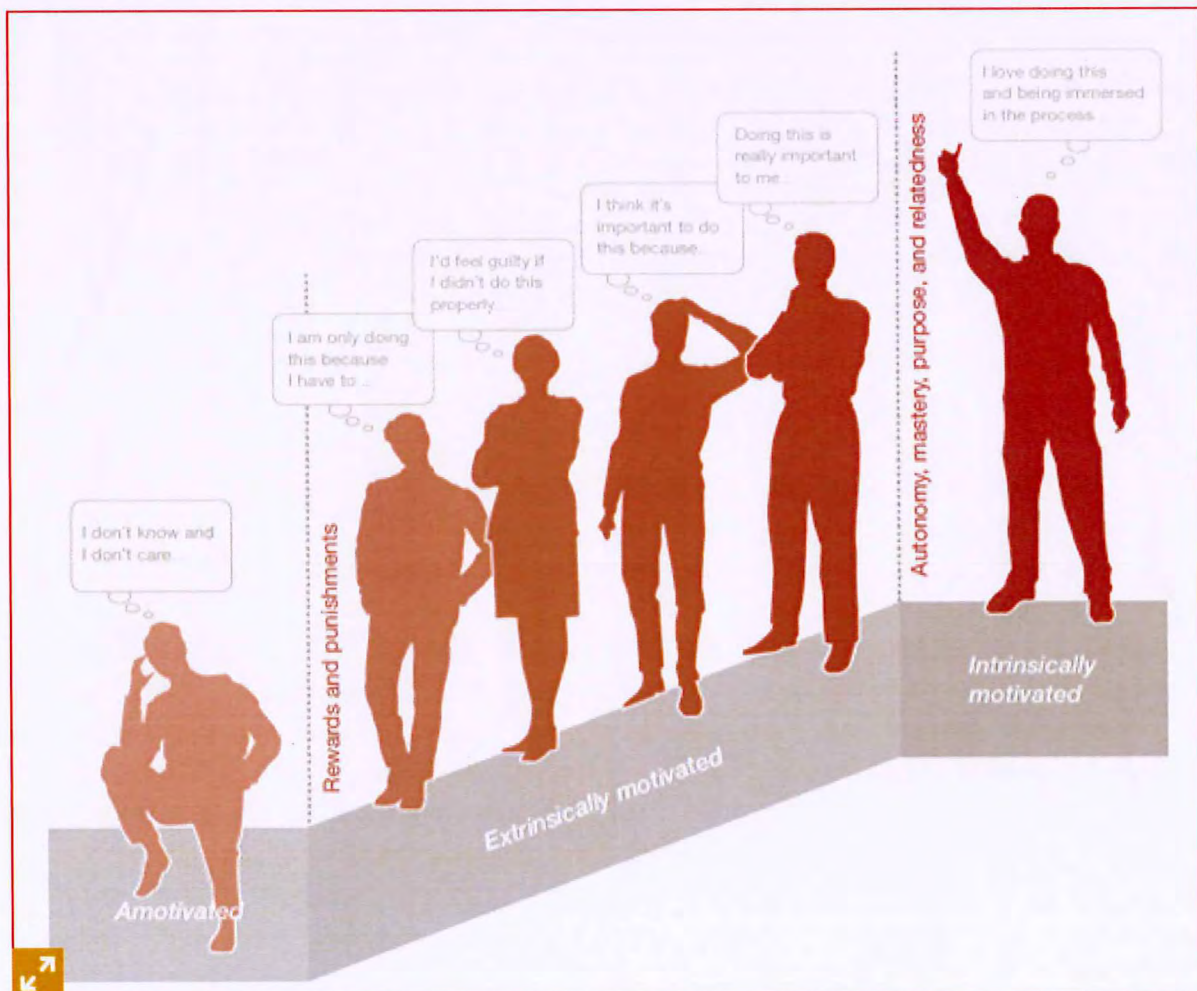
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THE DOMINATION OF EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION... DRIVING US TO PHYSICAL INACTIVITY



1.

Introduction

2.

Renowned philosopher Aristotle said, “The energy of the mind is the essence of life”; such ‘energy’ could relate to motivation, hence evoking the importance of having reliable forces in our life that drive us to our goals. However, I believe that this “energy of the mind” is becoming far too extrinsically dominated and prone to materialistic influences. This idea serves as the pinnacle of my argument, which outlines what I believe to be causing this extrinsic shift, and how it is leading to physical inactivity within New Zealand. In support of this process I will be examining physical activity trends within New Zealand. The first is the issue of masculinity within sport and physical activity and the second is the level of Asian physical inactivity, finally I will explore the culture of winning and its impact on participation rates. I have chosen these areas as I believe they have the most significant impact on New Zealand society. To assist with the examination of the cause and effect of physical inactivity rates I will be exploring my findings, views and beliefs using Deci and Ryan’s Self Determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). This piece of psychology research investigates the motivations and qualities needed for psychological wellbeing. It suggests that in order to grow as human beings and feel part of society we need three basic facets: **Competence** in the ability to complete a task successfully, **Autonomy** is the need to feel autonomous over our actions as opposed to feeling controlled or compelled to act in a particular way and **Relatedness** which explores how we relate to those around us and society. In all aspects of my report I will be challenging assumptions, questioning societal ‘norms’ and identifying groups that are more advantaged than others. I will also seek to link my personal experiences to my ideas, and how it has altered or affected my opinions and perspectives. To aid the process I assisted the P.E. scholarship group to write and conduct a school wide survey (see appendices for full report) to generate statistics to help explore this topic.

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Physical activity is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2014) as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. Our national guidelines around physical activity state that adults should engage in

at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most if not all days of the week (Ministry of Health, 2010). Research has suggested that our country is failing to meet these guidelines, as we are ranked in the top 10 of most inactive countries in the world (WHO Inactivity Stats, 2010). The other guideline around physical activity is that we should “view movement as an opportunity, not an inconvenience”; interestingly, this ties right into my main idea around extrinsic motivation, and how it can affect overall activity levels.

6.

I will split this topic into the physical and mental aspects of motivation. In terms of the physical, I will discuss the prominent stereotypes around masculinity in our society, and how they discourage both men and women from taking part in sport or physical activity. I will also evaluate the misconceptions/stereotypes around race, and how it is a growing problem in our increasingly diverse culture. I have chosen to explore these areas because of my belief that despite having a strong desire to partake in physical activity, some groups are being held back by an even stronger, purely extrinsic motivation to ‘fit in’ and not be judged by society. In essence, what it is to be a real kiwi man.

7.

The mental side of motivation will evaluate what constitutes success for the individual, families and society when engaging in sport or physical activity. In essence, is sport too competitive to be truly enjoyed by all? Also what are the consequences of societal or parental pressures towards achieving success, and how can it take the love out of sport or physical activity? I chose these aspects of motivation as from being around high performance sport I have witnessed many different philosophies and constructs around success. I also know numerous people who dropped out of sport completely, due to their love of sport being lost through excessive parental and societal pressure.

8.

Physical Factors affecting motivation

Masculinity

Here in New Zealand it could be argued that we have built up an incredibly materialistic, superficial stereotype of what it is to be a 'real' man. Key assumptions are that only real men play sport and that the attributes that are valued in this hegemonic hierarchy are: being muscular, dominant, assertive, respected and tough (Collins & Jackson, 2007). Characters like Richie McCaw and Sonny Bill Williams are constantly elevated by society as being the ideal man, created and sold to us by the media's portrayal of them, rather than their actual character. New Zealand schools also inadvertently propagate this view of what it is to be a man. I entered Westlake Boys' High School as a small year 9 to be greeted by senior muscular boys from the school's 1st XV rugby players who appeared to always be on stage, receiving a disproportionate amount of praise and adulation compared to other groups, prompting the idea that this is what it means to be a man. As well as this, our sports institute programme is dominated by the hegemonic value of traditional commonwealth sports e.g. rugby, hockey and football and I would question if this traditional approach meets the needs of all our students within the school? All of these sports require a physicality and ability to front up as a 'man' when representing the sport. This clearly advantages those students who are athletic and strong, but fails to take into consideration two major groups: exceptionally talented students of so called 'minor' sports, and skilled young athletes who due to the maturation process lack the physicality needed to enter the top teams.

My belief is that our desire to be masculine and win at all costs is changing our motivations towards structured sport. This could provide an explanation for the Active Stats of 2013/14 for New Zealand (Sport New Zealand, 2015) showing that between 2008 and 2013, sports club membership has decreased by 2%, whereas gym memberships have increased by 3%, with males being the main group



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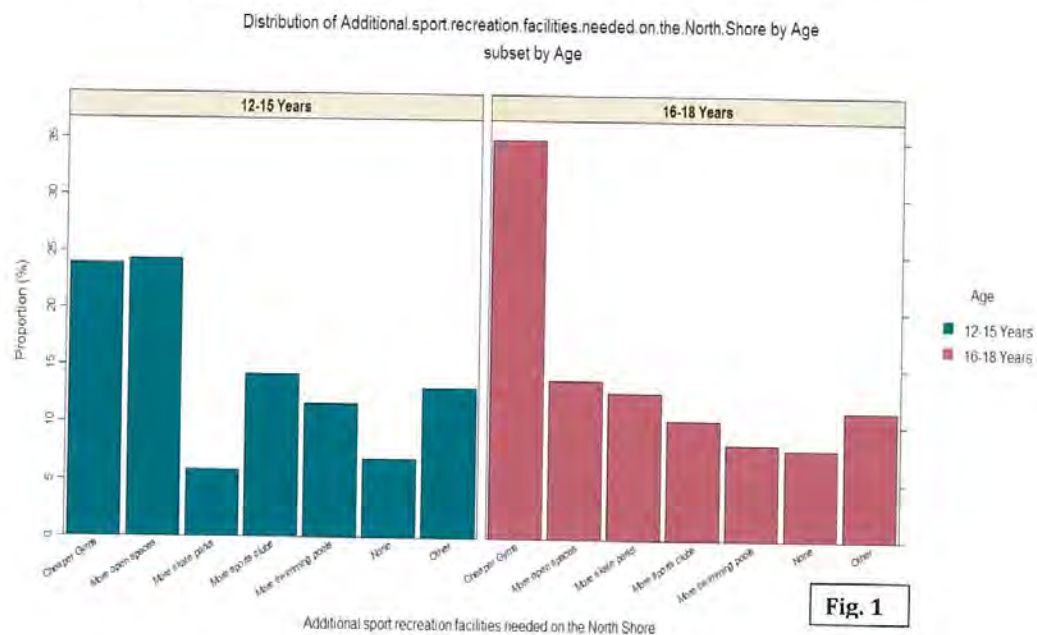
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influencing these changes. This statistic could reflect the growing perception of what society has deemed as the perfect masculine body type on our motivation behind exercise. The statistic below (fig.1) is taken from a survey of students, and reveals that as students get older the desire to use gyms to develop physique increases. I evaluated these results in more depth and asked friends who all suggested that looking good and meeting the expectation of a strong, masculine male was very important to them to feel part of both peer groups and society in general.



Referring to Deci and Ryan's theory of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985) it could be argued that the power of this hegemonic masculinity within both the North Shore and New Zealand is challenging the individual's ability to enjoy the feelings of competence about their physical activity. It also could be removing the ability to make autonomous decisions about what they choose to do; finally, many students and people in society may find it difficult to find a sense of purpose or relatedness. In essence they just don't fit in, and I believe this could explain why many people are becoming more and more inactive.

Asian inactivity

Research suggests (Sport New Zealand, 2015) that the Asian population within New Zealand is by far the most inactive ethnicity (fig.2): the NZ active stats of 2013/14 reveal that a mere 68.1% of Asian adults exercised only once in a 7 day period. This is considerably lower than the national average of 74.0%. A Harbour Sport report states that in 2009 only 37.8% of the Asian population were meeting the recommendations for physical activity of 5 x 30 minutes a week, compared to the 48.2% of New Zealand's overall population.

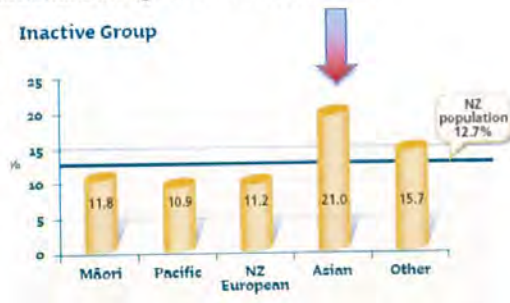


Fig. 2

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These trends are mirrored in the survey, (fig.3) where Asian students' weekly physical activity averages are significantly lower than other ethnicities, with the majority of Asian students exercising mostly between 1-2 sessions per week.

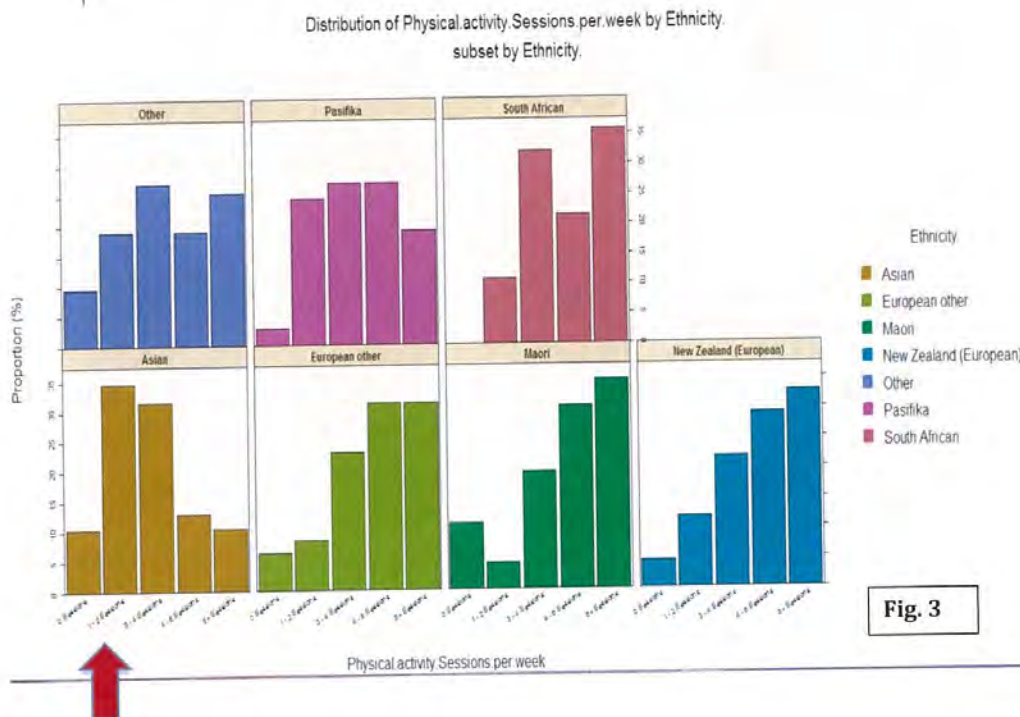


Fig. 3

The survey also revealed (fig. 4) that over 30% of Asian students do not partake in any sport activity at our school. Again compared to other ethnicities this is a significant figure and reflects national trends.

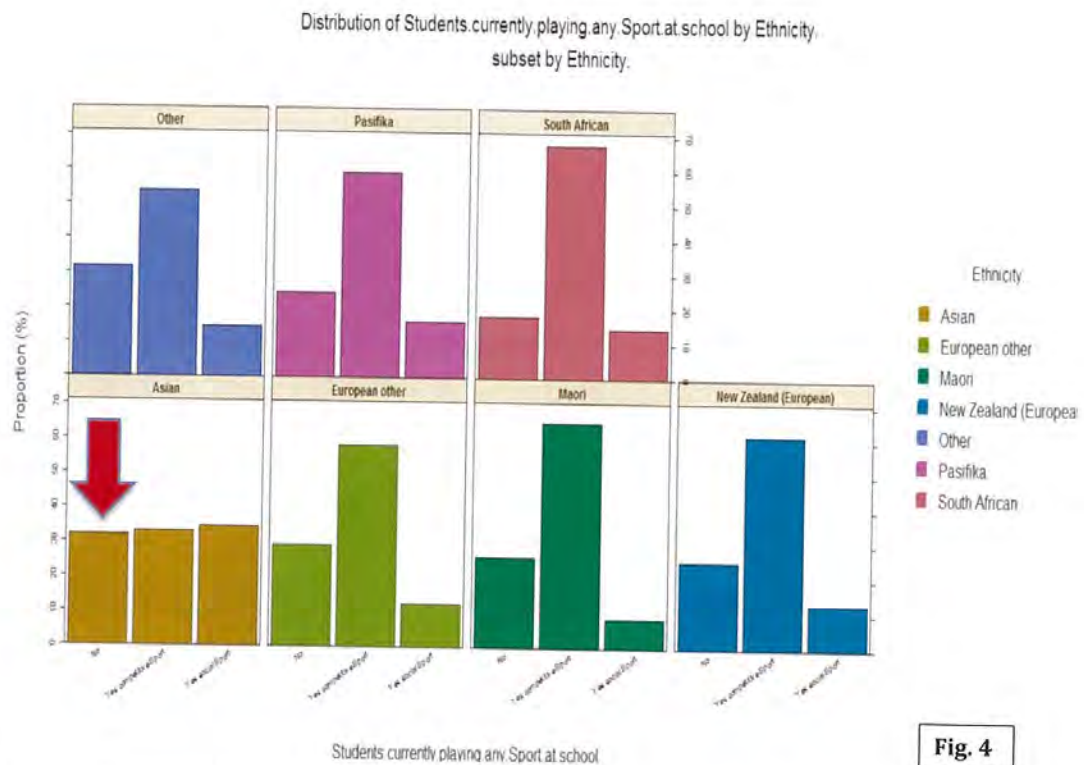
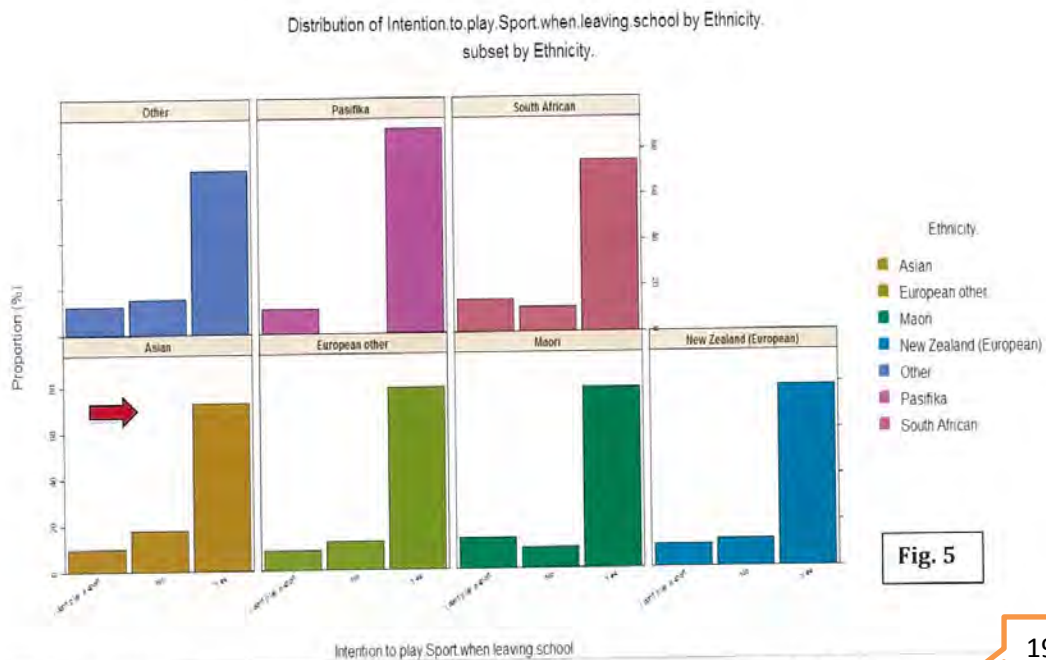


Fig. 4

The most destructive assumption around Asian inactivity in our society is that they simply do not value exercise, and that they would rather study or play music. The NZ activity stats (Sport New Zealand, 2015) reveal what is in fact quite the opposite. In a survey of interest in trying a new activity, 60.8% of Asians indicated that they would be willing to try a new sport. This suggests that the current environment within New Zealand is not providing the necessary stimulus to promote Asian physical activity rates.

Additionally, the survey (fig. 5) reveals that despite being far more inactive, the proportion of Asians that say that they intend to play a sport when they leave school is similar to all other ethnicities.



19

It could be suggested that the role of masculinity and what is valued in our hegemonic male dominated culture is negatively impacting male Asian students within our school. Speaking to Asian friends, they feel they are being marginalised as they struggle to adapt to this masculine culture, always reinforced through media stereotypes. Constant images of big, strong, kiwi men in any media piece involving big rugby hits or manly exploits are likely to have a negative effect on young Asian men. Linking back self-determination theory, this means that a lot of Asians are likely to have a nominal sense of relatedness, and therefore it could be argued that they have minimal motivation to participate in group activities, or to simply be active at all.

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This alienation of a community raises the questions as to whether it is the Asian community who needs to change to meet the prevailing culture within New Zealand. This Healthism belief or approach appears to be the prevailing view within our community, with the suggestion that it is the individual's and Asian community's responsibility to remain active. Clearly engaging the Asian community is a collective responsibility, and as a nation we must embrace differences and meet the needs of individual groups or minorities, rather than just expecting them to conform to the Kiwi way of life.

23

Mental Factors affecting motivation

Striving for success

Striving for success and a winning culture is a fascinating part of our NZ psyche. However, how one might define success plays a prominent role in sport, as society is constantly sending the message that success is solely about winning and being the best athlete. Negatively though, excess desire to be 'successful' can lead to young athletes burning out and losing love for their game; this is a major contributor towards the 70% of children that drop out of sport between the ages of 13-17 (Stay and Play Sport New Zealand, 2014). Recently I was at a school sports seminar where Craig Harrison, director of Athlete Development at AUT Millennium Sport Institute, discussed the issues facing an overly competitive sports system. He cited athlete burn out, stress in young teenagers, chronic injuries and ultimately the loss of love for sport and being active as the net result of this pressure to be the best.

24

It could be argued that schools are discouraging people from staying active due to over-valuing success. This desire to be the number one is also evident in our Physical Education programme, as every year 9 and 10 is ranked from 1st to 450th within each cohort. I would suggest that this level of microscopic examination is an extrinsic barrier to individuals' feelings of competence and ability to relate to others. As part of my report I interviewed a friend who is a year 13 student, asking him about the school ranking system.

The following is a transcript of his replies:

Q: What ranking did you get in year 10 P.E?

A: 352nd or something ridiculous (laughs)

Q: How did that make you feel? Did it matter to you?

A: Yeah in all honestly I actually felt pretty horrible. Like I already knew I sucked at P.E, I didn't need somebody else to tell me.

Q: Did you take P.E the following year?

A: Nope.

Q: Do you currently play any sport or do any physical activities?

A: Na, way too uncoordinated (laughs again)

25

This is a perfect example of what can happen when an individual lacks the feeling of competence, which is listed as one of Deci and Ryan's requirements for motivation. Sport New Zealand places a heavy emphasis on the need for organisations to build feelings of self-efficacy and suggest that if adolescents feel as if they are not good enough, they quit.

26

The extrinsic factor of excessive parental pressure and the desire for their children to win at all costs is also a huge concern within New Zealand. Research (Weiss, 2004) suggests that children who suffer excessive parental pressure to succeed will eventually drop out. A recent NZ Herald article tells the tale of an under 8's rugby game (Ponsonby vs. Waitemata) that had to be called off due to parents storming the field (Herald on Sunday, 2013). Perhaps the most significant statement of the report was made by the club president of the Waitemata Rugby club Mr. Mallabar, who said: "I wanted to get a sign for the field reminding parents the game was for children and was not a World Cup match". This is a sad indictment of the growing trend of parents who place winning at the epicentre of their children's sport experiences, at a time when fun, friendship and enjoyment should be the priority.

27

The survey statistic supports this theory. When asked if they thought parents play a significant role in their physical activity experiences, very few suggested that parents 'always' do provide a positive role. Perhaps more significantly many respondents suggested that parents 'never' play a positive role. Interestingly, Maori and Pasifika groups were an anomaly with just over 50% suggesting that their parents 'always' played an an important role in their physical activity experiences (fig.6). This undoubtably would be an area worth exploring in greater depth for Physical Ecuacion Scholarship students in 2016.

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Distribution of Belief that parents play an important role in physical activity experiences by Ethnicity, subset by Ethnicity.

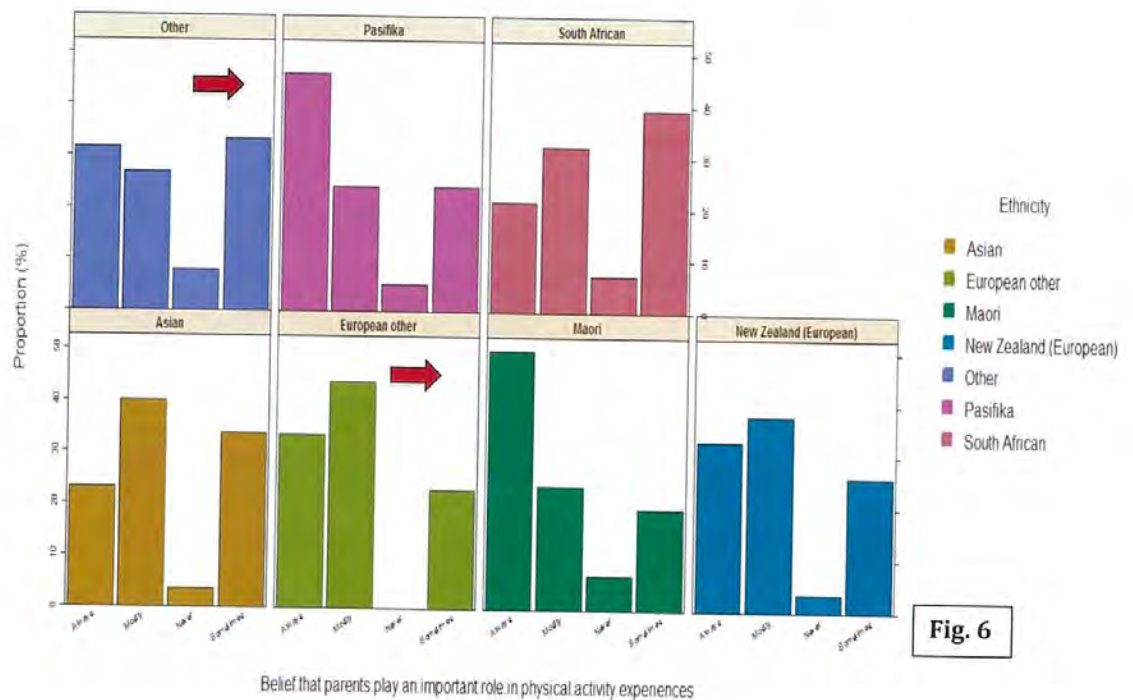


Fig. 6

Discussion

Throughout this report I have explored many extrinsic barriers that impact an individual's desire to engage in sport and physical activity. The use of Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) has shown that for many of our country's young people, it is clear that they are not fulfilling the needs for Competence, Autonomy and Relatedness. The use of this psychology model has highlighted the importance of the individuals 'competence' or self-efficacy as one of the many keys to addressing our national inactivity issues. As such I believe that all organisations including clubs and schools must create opportunities for our young people to experience success through physical activity, if we want to improve overall activity rates. Clearly as a nation we still wish to achieve success on the national sporting stage, and there must be structures to promote and support these athletes to reach their potential. However, whilst winning is a natural part of sport, surely we must instill a passion and love for the joy of movement if we want our society to be life-long participants in sport and physical activity. This will only happen if each and every young person experiences feelings of competence from a young age. Also, parents need education around the importance of supporting their children in sport and physical activity regardless of their ability; unfortunately, it would appear that many of our parents meet their own feelings of 'competence' through their children's success. As previously mentioned, Maori and Pasifika parents who are highlighted as positive influences on their children may hold a key to this issue. For our Asian community, their sense of 'relatedness' must surely be addressed if we want New Zealand to become a fully inclusive society. As a community, we must dismantle the Healthism approach that suggests it is an issue for them solely if we are to see an improvement around physical inactivity rates. In fact, throughout this process of writing this report I have changed my opinion from agreeing with the concept of Healthism to disagreeing with it, i.e. I now believe that it is the responsibility of the government and us as a society to ensure we are a healthy, active nation, rather than it being solely reliant on the individual. The issue around masculinity and what it means to be a man is an issue that has far reaching consequences both within sport and physical activity. The messages that pervade our screen and social media every day is something that will be hard control or even regulate.

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However it is clear that for many young men, they believe that they do not measure up to what it is to be a man and therefore disengage from sport and physical activity. The use of individual interviews, school surveys and national statistics has been an important part of my project. It has shown that what young people want from their physical activity experiences differentiates from those provided by dominant hegemonic administrators and overly demanding parents.

32

Conclusion

My report set out to explore the many extrinsic barriers that impact our sport and physical activity experiences within New Zealand. The use of Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) has provided a framework to explore this topic area, and has helped me identify the importance of individual 'competence' when exploring physical activity engagement. Only once young people begin to experience self-efficacy in physical movement will we see improved levels of participation in sports and other activities. As a result, individuals will feel connected to others and gain a sense of 'relatedness'. I guess the message is therefore very clear in that people who enjoy control over others, whether it be schools, clubs or parents, must ensure that they listen to young children and meet their individual needs. Only then will we be able to truly satisfy the Hauora for future generations (Durie, 1994).

33

Overall Judgement

This report has been graded to be at Scholarship level.

The candidate has constructed a logically structured report, communicated clearly, coherently and convincingly with relevant referenced evidence. The candidate has adopted a format that included research, presented a range of ideas, challenged assumptions and made substantiated conclusions. A critical perspective was present throughout the report and the candidate consistently applied and interconnected appropriate issues, theories, practices and learning experience. The candidate has applied a theoretical basis to the report and questioned and challenged issues, theories and practices with insight and perception. Included relevant and cohesive judgements, this was evident for example through conclusions around likely future outcomes in relation to their selected focus. PE underlying concepts were well understood and accurately applied.

Annotations

1. Introduction clearly outlines what the candidate will be examining, articulating precisely the selected focus for the critical evaluation, the position taken and theoretical underpinnings.
2. Candidate has started with an interesting and relevant quote that captures the attention of the reader and sets the scene for the report.
3. Argument is introduced early in the opening paragraph with respect to the opening quote.
4. The key focus of what the candidate intends to examine within their report is clearly articulated.
5. Key critical thinking processes are acknowledged by the candidate identifying that they will critique key assumptions, societal norms and groups who maybe advantaged or disadvantaged.
6. Quotes and statistics are directly linked back to the overriding focus of the report.
7. Articulates personal belief as a form of a hypothesis that will be questioned and challenged.
8. Critical perspective is demonstrated via the use of high level questions.
9. Candidate explicitly identifies key assumptions pertaining to the selected issue and interconnects them with a high level concept (Hegemony in this case).
10. Own experience is used to specifically substantiate a judgement. This is an effective use of own experience examples, particularly when it is also interconnected with other forms of data or referenced information.
11. 'hegemonic value' : utilisation of this high level concept adds to the sophistication of the examination.
12. Candidate demonstrates critical thinking by exploring how the concept of masculinity and hegemony advantages and disadvantages different groups of people.
13. Candidate substantiates beliefs with referenced evidence.
14. Candidate extrapolates the meaning of the referenced statistics by making a judgement about what the data indicates.
15. Use of primary empirical evidence is utilised to further support the discussion, this is a beneficial source of data because as it is created by the candidate it can target any areas identified to help substantiate judgments or evaluations.
16. Integration of a theory assists the candidate to draw conclusions that are insightful and cohesive with evidence and data.
17. Candidate once again integrates own evidence with national recognised source of data.

18. The meaning and relevance of data is clearly discussed with a critical perspective. Interpretations of the findings are perceptive and logical.
19. Candidate extrapolates impacts of findings and then synthesises further high level ideas around socio-cultural influences.
20. Candidate synthesises the Self-Determination theory with findings. This theory was identified at the beginning of the report as key lens through which they will be exploring their topic, so the regular reference to the theory is important.
21. This paragraph makes cohesive judgements and conclusions with a future focus.
22. Accurate use of a high level concept (Healthism). Could have unpacked this in more depth along with the candidate's reference around 'collective responsibility' and its connection to the underlying concept of Health Promotion.
23. A new line of discussion is clearly identified with the use of headings and sub-headings.
24. Demonstration of a critical perspective with the framing of a hypothesis that the candidate unpacks and supports with evidence.
25. Candidate integrates their research with the theoretical concept Deci and Ryan's Self Determination Theory.
26. Although the candidate is indirectly referring to elements of the underlying concept of Hauora they do not specifically unpack its relevance and relation to the topic, which would have strengthened the work.
27. Critical perspective is demonstrated as the candidate extrapolates research findings to make a judgement around the impact of parental pressure.
28. Candidate has made a future focussed comment related to valid future directions of research. The candidate has signalled their view not to unpack this area in more depth, despite its relevance and clear link to the overarching focus of the report. Depth is favoured over breadth, however if statistics, quotes or information are included it is favourable to critically evaluate and examine them.
29. Candidate formulates a cohesive judgement, that is cohesive with prior examination and evidence, which is future focussed.
30. Candidate synthesises key theories and ideas by bringing together concepts previously discussed in a logical and concise discussion. As a result of their synthesis they have formulated new perspectives around the impacts on Asian communities.
31. Candidate reflects on their journey through their examination of the topic and discusses their shift in thinking. They substantiate this with reference to key Physical Education concepts and socio-cultural influences.
32. A judgement with a strong critical perspective that could have been extrapolated to suggest likely future impacts.
33. A concise conclusion that articulates key findings of the report and concludes with key messages that have surfaced through the candidate's examination.