Life after sport?
Examining the transfer of
life skills following
withdrawal from sport

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Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas. Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed ……………………………………….. Date ………………………………….

Abstract

Researchers have found convincing data to suggest sport is a suitable environment for adolescents to develop intrapersonal and interpersonal life skills. However, as of yet, there is little evidence suggesting that young females transfer skills learnt in sport into other life domains, and whether females adolescents are able to retain the suggested life skills once they have withdrawn from sport. I sought to extend the literature on transferable skills from sport to other life domains by considering female adolescent perspectives after they have withdrawn from sport. My research was driven by three primary questions;

Do the perceived benefits associated with sport continue after withdrawal?

Are the perceived benefits associated with sport participation transferable across life domains?

Do different sport environments cause diverse life skills to develop?

Ten females aged 15 and 16 years old voluntarily attended formal semi structured interviews. Via inductive thematic analysis, three global themes emerged: 1) how skills are developed through sport 2) potential transferable skills and outcomes and 3) prevention of transferable skills. Through a qualitative methodological approach my results suggested experiential learning to be the most productive way of life skills development, and that in order for female youths to gain a range of life skills, the type, and environment of sport should vary, in particular female adolescents should be exposed to some form of competitive sport as the environment was reported by the girls to be the most conducive to life skills development, retention, and transfer. Ideas for future research conclude the study, such as, researchers may choose to explore a longer gap between participation and withdrawal, a more extensive break between the two may result in more reflection, and possible realisation of

more life skills. Researchers could also investigate an equivalent approach with male

adolescents to establish any comparisons between genders.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Researchers have shown that sports encourages the development of benefits such as social skills, healthy physical activity habits, and high self-esteem, helping to increase social stability, academic success, and mental well-being (Stryer, Tofler, & Lapchick, 1998). Researchers have not, however, established whether the aforementioned social, academic, and mental benefits continue after withdrawal from sport. If benefits such as high self-esteem and improved social skills endure, regardless of withdrawal, the purpose of taking part in sport may become clearer to young people, helping them to engage in sport with more enthusiasm and motivation.

My motivation to explore the subject of transferable skills after withdrawal comes from my personal experiences within youth sport. I enjoyed individual sports, particularly enjoying competing to county level in athletics, yet I disliked traditional team sports such as hockey and netball. Despite my dislike for team sports, the teachers would strongly encourage every female student to take part in traditional team sports, and if you were good, it was mandatory for you to play on the team. I did not understand why I should engage in a sport that I disliked, when it would be of little use to me once I left school. Five years on, I started understanding the potential skills that young people could develop through sport, and I started to reflect on skills and characteristics I believed I had established during those dreaded hockey lessons; skills such as determination, commitment, and responsibility. I began to wonder: those skills that originated in sports lessons; did they continue to evolve and endure after I withdrew from team sports? Or, did the skills I learnt in my school sports days disappear the moment I put down that hockey stick? I also started to reflect on the varied experiences that girls have of their sports lessons. As an 'athletics girl', did I develop alternate skills to the hockey girls? Did the girls who were on teams learn different skills to

the girls who were not on teams? Do the experiences we have in sports affect how we handle experiences we have as adults?

Bailey (2006) stated that there is a high withdrawal from sport of females aged 15 and 16 years, notably a time when it is no longer compulsory in many secondary schools (Ntoumanis, Pensgaard, Martin, & Pipe, 2004). Yet it is unclear whether the benefits gained from taking part in sport are dependent on involvement, or whether they decline alongside participation.

Lerner et al. (2006) considered adolescence to be characterised by four developmental changes that transition a child into an adult: social, cognitive, biological, and psychological. The current thesis revolves around participants who are going through what the Western world often refers to as "adolescence". The period of adolescence is often thought to be the second decade of a person's life (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004). However, as the term adolescent is often thought of as a Western concept (Holland, 2012); the terms "young person" and "youth" were used interchangeably with adolescent. The United Nations defines a youth or young person as someone who is between the ages of 15 and 24 years old (UNESCO, 2013), though the UN pertain that young people are an heterogeneous group of individuals and can be dependent on variables such as religion and culture, and not necessarily purely dependent on biological age. As the age range of 15 to 16 years is within both concepts of youth/young person and adolescent, I have employed the terms "adolescent", "young person", and "youth" to represent participants aged 15 and 16 years, ages which are in line with various researchers (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004; Lerner et al. 2006; Holland, 2012) and The UN (UNESCO, 2013).

During adolescence, youths go through a stage of developing the skills and behaviours that they will need to possess in later life (Lerner et al. 2006) in order to become contributing members of society, and thrive in adulthood. Fox (1988) noted that through sport, young

people could experience characteristics that imitate challenges they could face in their adult life. For instance, competition, leadership skills, social competence, teamwork skills (Goldberg & Chandler 1992; McEwin, 1994), moral development, and a sense of belonging (Camp, 1990; Braddock, 1991; Hawkins, 1992; Gerber, 1996) are all aspects of sport that can reflect adult life. Though researchers have tentatively established the developmental skills that sport may offer, mere engagement does not necessarily guarantee that young people will continue to benefit once involvement ceases.

The World Health Organization defined life skills as "abilities for adaptive and positive behavior, that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life" (World Health Organization, 1997, p. 1), with Danish and Donohue (1995) noting that life skills can be physical, behavioural, and cognitive. Researchers have supported the use of sports as a context for promoting life skills (e.g., Danish, Fazio, Nellen, & Owens, 2002; Gould, Collins, Lauer, & Chung, 2007). Larson (2000) suggested that sport was beneficial to life development as it adheres to rules, requires effort over time, entails relationships with peers, provides opportunities for skills building and demonstrating competence, and involves relationships with non-familial adults (e.g., coaches).

Sport may also contribute to negative psychological outcomes due to problems with competitive mentality, psychological impacts of losing, and impact on psychological health with disorders such as anorexia athletica; leading to researchers criticising sport as an optimal developmental context (Coakley, 2011). The literature surrounding the topic of the negative psychological impact of sport has also largely focused on those who are actively engaging in sport, rather than exploring people who have withdrawn from sport to investigate whether negative psychological influences may endure withdrawal.

Research Questions

The research questions that drove this study were:

1. Do the perceived benefits associated with sport continue after withdrawal?

2. Are the perceived benefits associated with sport participation transferable across life domains?

3. Do different sport environments cause diverse life skills to develop?

Definition of Terms and Concepts

- **Youth/adolescent/young women** – my study employed the term youth and young women (UNESCO, 2013) and adolescent (Lerner et al., 2006) interchangeably. For the purpose of the study, the term represented females who were between the ages of 15 and 16 years at the time of data collection.

- **Competitive sport** - competitive sports are defined as those in which children compete against others officially for awards and sporting achievements.

- **Recreational sport** – recreational sports are those in which children practice regularly but do not compete against others for places and awards (Amac, Anastasio, Morwick, & Yi, 2002). For instance, children who play sport in school, but do not play on any team (within or outside of school).

- **Withdrawal from sport** – The current paper defines withdrawal from sport as any individual who removed themselves from organised sport between six months and one year ago.

- **Organised sport** – organised sport refers to sports that have official rules and regulations and a formal mode of play. For instance, hockey and swimming would be considered organised sport, whereas jogging would be referred to as physical activity.

Significance of the Study

Researchers have found convincing data to suggest sport could be a suitable environment for adolescents to develop intrapersonal and interpersonal life skills. However, there is little evidence suggesting that young females transfer skills learnt in sport into other life domains, and whether these female adolescents are able to retain the suggested life skills once they have withdrawn from sport. The majority of the researchers examined male and female participants, as a homogeneous group, who were actively engaged in sport. Additionally, previous research surrounding the teaching of life skills in sport is through programs that specifically target the development of life skills, which is unrealistic within the majority of sports lessons. I selected adolescents whose sporting experiences have not been designed to specifically address the potential development of life skills.

In this study, I explore the experiences of female adolescents who have withdrawn from organised sport in an effort to gain an understanding of their experiences of sport; whether they believe sport provided them with transferable skills; and if so, whether these young women have retained the life skills after withdrawal.

The conclusions of my study might enhance understanding of how female students perceive sport, and how they can use sport-derived life skills in other life domains. Findings may also provide a basis for further discussion and analysis of sport and physical education policy (i.e., should life skills be explicitly taught in physical education (PE) lessons?).

Purpose of the Study

My aims for the study were to explore whether young people who have withdrawn from sport believe that they can retain and apply positive skills developed in sport participation to a non-sport domains. In order to achieve this, I investigated the process of

transfer of positive outcomes from one life domain (e.g., sport) to another (e.g., a social setting) and examined whether competitive sport and recreational sport differ in terms of transferability of benefits once a child withdraws from organised sport.

I sought to extend the literature on transferable skills from sport to other life domains by considering female adolescent perspectives after they have withdrawn from sport. For instance, sport may indeed provide the foundations for life skills, but if these skills are only present whilst participating in sport, they are not transferable across time or domains and are potentially limited in terms of the development of the person. However, if I was to find evidence to suggest life skills learnt during sport become long-lasting outcomes specific to each individual that enhance and improve adult life, the rationale for young people to have access to sport becomes stronger.

My Role as a Researcher

Interpretive research begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher

(Denzin, 1989, p. 12)

As a qualitative researcher, I don't believe it is possible to remove my personal biases from the research, a point agreed of by various qualitative researchers (Scheurich, 1994; Mehra, 2001). Mehra (2002) noted:

Think about your topic, and ask yourself what do *you* believe in, not as a researcher but as a human being? Do you think it is possible to be totally unbiased about a topic, to have no opinions one way or the other?

When conducting research within the interpretive paradigm, researchers assume that personal views and experiences will to an extent, influence the study (Mehra, 2002). However, in order to ensure the research focuses more on the subject area than the researcher,

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certain measure can be taken. In order to make the study as credible as possible, I tried to achieve transparency in my study to ensure the readers could comprehend how I reached my conclusions. One method of allowing readers to assess the transparency of research is to ensure my experiences, feelings, and attitudes towards the subject area are made clear (Scheurich, 1994). The following subsection is a discussion surrounding my personal beliefs relating to the subject area of this study.

Unique Contribution

Ultimately, my interest in sport within the educational system and my experiences within sports lessons at school inspired this research. During my school years, as a female, I participated in most of the traditional female school sports teams such as netball, hockey, and athletics. My teachers pushed me to excel in all sports, despite only having an interest in athletics. Being on various sport teams during my school years gave me a defining label at school and, as I have since found out, many other schools. It seems that, in youths who are considered to be naturally athletically talented, the perception is that they should be on all teams and should enjoy all sports. Likewise, the young people who were not naturally talented, should dislike sport and not be on any team. This previous account is not that of peer reviewed research, but my experiences in school sport and conversations with members of the public. During my school years, teachers strongly encouraged certain pupils, including myself, to play sports at weekends, lunch hours and after school, regardless of whether we enjoyed the sport. This led to a resentment of sport, and made me wonder why teachers chose me to play, when there were girls in the year that would have loved the opportunity.

Once I left school, I became a qualified personal trainer and went to university to study equine and human sports science, taking a particular interest in coaching science and

strength and conditioning. During my final year at undergraduate university, we chose our dissertation subjects, I chose to research something I felt I was passionate about: are the majority of pupils at school forgotten about in order to excel the naturally gifted minority? I wanted to talk to people about their experiences during school sports in order to get an understanding of whether schools divide sport-talented and less talented pupils, and whether teachers place more attention on a particular group of students.

After finishing my undergraduate dissertation, it become apparent how much I had enjoyed not only studying the subject area, but also the process of research itself. I had not grown up within an academic family and my family did not push me to go to university, let alone follow a career in academia. When I realised I wanted to do a masters by research, I knew I was doing it because I felt I was passionate about youth sport psychology and the process of research itself. During the initial stages of my masters, I wanted the research to focus on youth sport at school, but the expanse of the subject area meant I needed to narrow down my ideas for my research question. Eventually, I used the findings of my undergraduate study to influence my research objectives: To explore whether young people who have withdrawn from sport believe that they can retain and apply positive skills developed in sport to non-sport domains. To explore the process of transfer of positive outcomes from one life domain (sport) to another (i.e., non-sport) and to examine whether competitive sport and recreational sport differ in terms of transferable benefits once a child withdraws from organised sport.

Epistemological Beliefs

Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted.

- Albert Einstein

Authors have written detailed descriptions regarding what they believe to be the difference between qualitative and quantitative beliefs (e.g., Corbetta, 2003; Maxwell, 1998). For instance, Corbetta suggested that qualitative research should be open and interactive, and observation should precede theory, whereas quantitative research is structured and theory will precede observation. However, not all authors agree on the finer details regarding qualitative research, Corbetta (2003) and Maxwell (1998) suggested that the beliefs that influence qualitative data should be adopted throughout all phases of the research. Crotty (1998) differed by suggesting that the beliefs should only influence the methodological phase. Personally, I believe that to carry out qualitative research is a result of one's epistemological beliefs, and these beliefs will, without doubt, influence the entire research process, from the selection of a subject area until the discussion. Therefore, this research is conducted within the interpretive paradigm; the majority of studies within the interpretive paradigm share similar beliefs regarding their epistemology and ontology. Regarding ontology, an interpretivist views reality as multiple and relative to each individual; people exist in their own realities and each human being is unique to their experiences and views of the world (Guba, 1978; Lincoln, & Guba, 1985). The interpretive belief concerning knowledge is that it is subjective to time and can change over time; knowledge is so much more than facts and numbers, and can be improved and altered throughout someone's life due to their personal experiences (Walsham, 2006; Wahyuni, 2012). The investigator and the object of investigation cannot be separated; the researchers' values are inherent in all phases of the research process (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

I decided to conduct qualitative research because of how I believe I have developed as a human being; I believe my experiences have been the source of my knowledge, and therefore, think the same of others. I want my research to embody what I feel represents the human mind; thoughts, feelings, experiences. To limit people to one reality would be to

assume everybody has the same thoughts, the same feelings, <u>and</u> the same culture (Wahyuni, 2012), which I feel is drastically oversimplifying how people live and think. Reality as we perceive it is not an objective truth but is rather a social construction with multiple realities (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011).

I did not hope for the research to make generalisable claims about transferable skills in sport (Sandelowski, 2004), nor did I feel the sample size was extensive enough to understand fully the thoughts and experiences of every female youth. That was not my aim for the research. My aim was to look into a small sample of female adolescents and gain an understanding of their experiences and beliefs, in a hope to add to the existing literature surrounding life skills in sport.

Description of Dissertation Chapters

Chapter one was an introduction of the thesis. The introduction aimed to give the reader an understanding of the personal reasons for carrying out the research, my epistemological beliefs, the studies purpose, and the significance of the study in the context of the subject area.

Chapter two is a review of the relevant literature. Throughout the review, I explore related areas of research to provide a background and present the array of research that pertains to the study. The literature review contains sections on withdrawal from sport in adolescence, the teaching of life skills in sports, researched transferable skills learnt during sport and the influential factors that contribute to the skills learnt by each individual such as dispositions and type of sport (competitive versus recreational). The chapter summary serves to provide a synopsis of the literature that gives context for the study.

Chapter three addresses the research design and methodology, the use of qualitative description, the procedure used to recruit the participants, details regarding the participants, sampling size and method. I then discuss data collection and analysis procedures, how I aimed to achieve trustworthiness of data, concluding with a discussion of ethical considerations.

Chapter four contains the qualitative data analysis and results. The chapter includes three global themes, subthemes and a selection of raw codes. I discuss each theme using direct quotes that best illustrate each one. I give the raw codes in order to present the reader with transparency of data in an effort to establish the trustworthiness of conclusions.

Chapter five of the study is a discussion of the findings as they pertained to the results of the research. The main body of chapter five encompasses a discussion on how my findings might affect the subject area, and if the findings agree with, or contradict previous research.

Chapter six consists of the key conclusions, including the context which best promotes transferability of life skills, such as experiential learning. It discusses the factors that influence the development and retention of life skills, (e.g. the type and environment of sport), and the awareness of life-skill development during sport participation and once withdrawal has taken place. The chapter concludes with limitations of the study, implications of the research for relevant audiences, suggestions for future research and closing thoughts of my study's findings.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Within chapter two I review the literature applicable to the study. I investigate the areas of research that help to provide the reader with background information for the current study. The chapter contains sections on withdrawal from sport in adolescence, the teaching of life skills in sports, researched transferable skills learnt during sport, and the influential factors that contribute to the skills learnt by each individual such as dispositions and type of sport (competitive versus recreational). I then present a summary of the research to conclude the chapter.

Inevitability of Withdrawal from Sports

Lerner et al. (2006) characterised adolescence by four developmental changes that a child experiences during their transition into adulthood: social, cognitive, biological, and psychological. Adolescence is used frequently throughout my study, and, though a primarily western concept, adolescence is thought to be the second decade of a person's life (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004). Researchers consider it an inevitability that some adolescents will withdraw from sport due to busy lives, a lack of interest, and other activities becoming more important (Petlichkoff, 1993) as well as negative experiences such as lack of fun, coach conflicts, and lack of playing time (see Weiss & Williams, 2004 for a review). When females reach the age of 15 and 16 years, sport is no longer compulsory in British schools (Spray, 2000) resulting in many students ceasing participation (Ntoumanis et al., 2004). Previous authors have found that females start to become dissatisfied with sport in school around age 12/13 years, and then drop out all together when given the choice at age 15/16 years. At this age, sport becomes optional and there is a noticeable decrease in participation which is much more evident in females than in males (Deacon, 2001; Grunbaum et al. 2004; Spence, Mandigo, Poon, &

Mummery, 2001). For example, Spence et al. found that after 15 years of age, female participation declines more than male participation, with males fifty percent more likely to engage in sport than females.

During adolescence, not only does each year come with greater challenges such as school exams and the importance of being socially accepted, the number of contexts that are important to an individual can increase (e.g., work, social, sporting, and other extra-curricular activities: Danish & Nellen, 1997). These increasing activities can often result in a former interest being neglected. For instance, an individual who is aged 15 or 16 may be undertaking their GSCEs or looking to increase the amount of study time for upcoming A levels. This increase in academic study may result in previous sporting activities being neglected or stopped altogether, prompting a common reason (Spence et al., 2001) to withdraw during the 15–16 year age range.

If drop-out is a certainty among some adolescents, in particular females, then the importance of transferable skills comes to the forefront. Authors have found associations between implementing life skills into sports sessions and psychological and physiological benefits, although there are limited research designs exploring if such benefits continue to exist once an adolescent has withdrawn from sport. The possibility of transferable skills continuing after withdrawal makes the idea of implementing life skills into sports sessions more appealing to both adolescents and to coaches and teachers.

What is a Life Skill?

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands, challenges, and stress of everyday life (WHO, 1997). Danish and Donohue (1995) considered life skills to be those that help us to succeed in the

environment we live in; a life skill may be subjective to the individual, depending on his or her environment. The same authors break life skills down into four main categories: behavioural (e.g. communication skills), cognitive (e.g. managing negative thoughts), interpersonal (e.g. respect for others) and intrapersonal (e.g. goal setting). Gould and Carson (2008) attempted to bring together multiple definitions by stating that life skills were "internal personal assets, characteristics and skills, such as goal setting, emotional control, self-esteem, and hard-work ethic that can be facilitated or developed in sport and are transferred for use in non-sport settings" (p.60). Cognitive well-being related outcomes are also an important aspect of life skill development. Concepts such as self-esteem and self-confidence are positive outcomes of life skills development. Self-esteem is defined confidence in one's worth (Branden, 1994) Danish et al. (1992a) defined self-confidence as feeling of trust in one's abilities, qualities, and judgement.

Life Skills in Sports

Researchers have demonstrated parallels between skills developed in sport and skills that can be beneficial to life outside sport. Many of the skills needed in sport can be likened to skills needed in life outside of sport (Goudas, 2010); performing under pressure, handling success and failure (personal and against others), goal setting, and communication skills are just a few examples of the variety of life skills found in sporting environments. Danish, Forneris, and Wallace (2005) reported an apparent similarity between the mental skills required for successful sporting performance and successful performance in other life domains. Danish, Petitpas, and Hale (1992) noted that sport emphasises training and performance, as does work and school. Danish, Petitpas, and Hale (1993) and Fox (1992) recognised that sport could be an influential factor when developing adolescents' perceived competence and life skill outcome, self-esteem. Danish and Hale (1981) also stated that life

skills are learnt through a similar method to sports skills: through demonstration, modelling, and practice. Gomes and Marques (2013) added to Danish and Hales' insight by reflecting that the learning of life skills does not take place due to natural development; "life skills do not arise simply from having enough contact with different situations and challenges across the lifespan" (p.5), they require learning and continual development, similar to sports-based skills.

Researchers have correlated sport participation and life skills, including goal setting (e.g. Papacharisis, Goudas, Danish & Theodorakis, 2005); initiative, leadership, and teamwork (e.g., Hansen, Larson & Dworkin, 2003); enhanced dispositional outcomes such as self-esteem (e.g., Smith, Smoll & Curtis, 1979; Smoll, Smith, Barnett & Everett, 1993); moral development and character (e.g., Bredemeier & Shields, 1986; Miller, Bredemeier & Shields, 1997); and personal obligation (e.g., Hellison & Cutforth, 1997). Although researchers have helped to develop an awareness of the potential life skills available in sport, they have not focused on whether the skills and dispositions have successfully transferred into the lives of adolescents beyond sport (Gould & Carson, 2008) or whether the adolescents retain the outcomes once they withdraw from sport. Furthermore, the results of previous studies have inconsistencies. For instance, although some researchers suggest that sport provides a context in which life skills can be developed, others have suggested that the atmosphere and environment of sport can induce negative behaviour and anti-social values in youths (Coakley, 2011).

The majority of researchers who have suggested that sport encourages negative outcomes have focused on moral development (Gould & Carson, 2008). Researchers have explored how participants of various sports compare to non-participants of any sport in their moral attributes; the results often report the participants showing no higher level of moral development (Coakley, 2011). In sports such as male contact sports, the participants often

exhibit lower levels of moral reasoning and character development than youths with no participation in sport (see Shields & Bredemeier, 2001; Weiss & Smith, 2002 for a review), weakening the argument that sports automatically builds character and positive character dispositions.

A key objective of my research was to explore whether young people who have withdrawn from sport believe that they can retain the positive skills developed in sport and apply them to non-sport domains. A possible indicator of whether female adolescents can retain transferable skills might be the conditions under which teachers and coaches deliver these skills. For instance, looking at moral development, many researchers support various claims that sport does not produce any enhancements to moral reasoning; however, some researchers suggest that youths can improve moral development under the right circumstances. Gibbons, Ebbeck, and Weiss (1995) explored moral judgment and pro-social behaviour in youths who participated in a fair-play training program and found that children who received the training had significantly higher levels of moral functioning than their untrained counterparts. Similar to many studies surrounding life skills in sport, the studies consisted of training the participants to specifically develop a life skill. In Gibbon et al.'s study it was the enhancement of moral development.

Research methods that deliberately aim to develop life skills (e.g. programs that look to develop goal setting) are not realistic for the majority of youths. Therefore a novel and potentially more realistic method of understanding life-skill development would be to employ adolescents who have participated in sport that does not look to deliberately encourage development of these skills. By implementing a methodology (see chapter 3) that does not set out to encourage life-skill development, the findings may be more realistic.

Life skills and the development of sport transfer programs

In order for something to be a life skill, there has to be the ability for it to transfer to other situations than the one in which the skill was taught (Danish, Petitas & Hale, 1993; Gould & Carson 2008). The increased interest in life-skills training has led researchers to analyse the efficacy of these programs in young people. Examining the implementation of life skills within physical edcuation and sport sessions have provided promising results (Goudas, Dermitzaki, Leondari, & Danish, 2006; Goudas & Giannoudis, 2008). Three categories can classify these programs: programs that teach life skills in classroom settings using sport metaphors; programs that teach life skills in youth sport settings *in addition* to sport skills; and programs that teach life skills within the practice of physical education and sport *at the same time* as teaching physical skills. Currently, there are no studies examining whether life skills endure after the transition away from the activity that could have developed the skill.

According to Goudas (2010), the first program to utilise sport for the development of life skills was the Going for the Goal program (GOAL) (Danish et al. 1992a,1992b), based on the Life Development Intervention (Danish, Petitas & Hale, 1993). The aim of GOAL was to the design a program that teaches personal control and self-confidence in order to make better life decisions and ultimately become better citizens. A key aspect of GOAL was its utilisation of older graduates; the program implemented graduates of the program to teach the young students in order to provide the student with a positive role model. Thus far, there have only been four studies that looked at the effectiveness of the GOAL program: O'Hearn and Gatz (1999; 2002), Hodge, Cresswell, Sherburn, and Dugdale (1999) and Forneris, Danish, and Scott (2007). O'Hearn and Gatz conducted two studies with primarily Hispanic students (1999 and 2002). Within the 1999 study, skills that were emphasised were: setting positive realistic goals, anticipating and responding to barriers to goal attainment, and using social support to achieve the set goals. The findings suggested improved knowledge of the life skills

as well as the attainment of the goals set during the program. The study conducted in 2002 by

O'Hearn and Gatz, concluded with similar results but found problem-solving skills also

improved. Hodge et al. applied the GOAL program with at-risk youths in New Zealand,

finding that by applying the GOAL program the participants developed a positive change in

self-esteem and believed they had more intrinsic motivation for school work. Most recently,

Forneris et al. reported that participants in the GOAL program believed they had more

knowledge of setting goals, solving problems, and were more likely to seek social support.

A key criticism of GOAL is that it is a single-skilled program that focuses on goal

setting and does not look into the systematic development of other possible skills. The

emphasis on the development of one skill is common within the majority of life-skill

programs. More research is needed that does not hypothesise the development of one or two

skills, but applies an open-minded look into all potential life skills. Additionally, GOAL only

applies sport as a metaphor, not a learning environment; the program takes place within a

classroom and uses sports as examples instead of incorporating the development of life skills

into a sporting context. In order to rectify the absence of real sport, Danish, Fazio, Nellen and

Owens (2002) created an adapted version of GOAL that implemented workshops and clinics

in a sport setting, before and after actual sports practice, labelling it Sports United to Promote

Education and Recreation program (SUPER). The skills were relevant to sport, beneficial for

both sports performance and success in other life domains, with special effort applied to

stress the transferability of skills. Danish et al. (2002) reported the structuring of the program

involved three separate sets of activity: the teaching of physical skills of a specific sport; the

teaching of life skills related to sports in general; and the playing of sport.

Only four studies have explored the effectiveness of SUPER, with only one study

applying it in its full form (Brunelle, Danish,& Forneris, 2007), the other three have applied it

in an abbreviated version (Goudas et al. 2006; Goudas & Giannoudis, 2008; Papacharisis et

al. 2005). Brunelle et al. applied the complete form of SUPER and found improvements in adolescent pro-social values; the findings also found that the program had positive developments on the participant's empathic concern and social responsibility. Goudas et al. (2006) tested participants in sit-and-reach and push-up exercises; meanwhile, the participants were also taught life skills such as goal setting, and positive thinking in relation to the physical skills test. The findings of the Goudas et al. suggested improved gains on physical fitness, and gains on knowledge and self-belief concerning goal setting. A further two studies collected additional data from the participants in the Goudas study and found two months after the program. Kolovelonis, Goudas, Dimitriou, and Gerodimos (2006) implemented a questionnaire to assess whether the group participants who had taken part in the Goudas et al. study had developed any enhanced positive thinking and goal-setting skills. The results showed an increase in the participant's self-determination as well as an increase in student's self-efficacy, suggesting that the results of Goudas et al.'s study had been retained after two months, providing my study with promising support. The study conducted by Papacharisis et al. (2005) reported on an abbreviated form of SUPER. The study tested young athletes on sports skills associated with their particular sport (volleyball and football); after which the athletes were taught methods of goal setting in relation to the sport-skill tests, how to think positively about their goal, and how to solve problems that inhibit them from reaching their goal. The findings established that the athletes performed better in the sport-skill tests, while displaying greater knowledge and confidence in applying goal related life skills compared to a control group. Goudas and Giannoudis explored the effectiveness of a team-sports-based life-skills program using an abbreviated form of SUPER. The life skills that were emphasised were positive thinking, goal setting, and problem solving. The measures used to assess the program's effectiveness, were four sport-skills tests, knowledge about life skills, and beliefs about effective use of life skills. The findings established that the experimental participants

improved their scores on two of the four sports skills (basketball dribble and volleyball overhead-pass), improving their scores by 26.38% and 33.27%, respectively, whereas the percentage improvement for the control group on these two skills was only 1.26% and 6.62%, respectively. The experimental group also showed a significant increase in goal setting knowledge compared with the control group (33.8% increase and 10.6% decrease, respectively). The experimental group also scored significantly higher in self-belief tests compared to the control group (6.95% increase and 4.57% decrease, respectively).

When exploring the success of the program and the level to which students transferred the knowledge given to them through the programs, it could be considered important that participant beliefs are taken into account. Additionally, all literature that has examined the effectiveness of SUPER did not explore whether the participants went on to transfer the skills such as goal setting and positive thinking to other areas of their life outside of the program. Although there was a positive correlation between sport and life-skill development, the participants were aware of the testing procedure, possibly influencing the results. The lack of evaluation of the use of the skills after the program raises questions to whether the results were predictable due the students' knowledge of the program purpose.

Gould (2008) went further to develop a program specifically for students who were expectant applicants for team captainship: The Captains Leadership Development Program (CLDP). The life skills taught within this program were pertinent to future captains, such as leadership, communication, motivation of others, and team cohesion. Gould noted that the transferability of these skills from sport to other life settings were emphasised to the students. Despite the potential benefits of the program, it does not appear that Gould conducted any research on the program, and no other authors have established how effective CLDP might be. Thus, the ideology of the program is promising but there is limited evidence to suggest

the program would be successful in transferring leadership-related life skills to other life settings.

GOAL, SUPER, and CLDP are programs applicable to any sport, in line with programs from category three of the program classifications; sport specific programs that adapt life-skills teaching to one specific sport. Examples of these are: the Play It Smart program that relates to football; the Rugby Advantage Program consisting of workshops that teach general life skills adapted to rugby; and the First Tee program that teaches life skills to golfers. All above-mentioned programs show great potential for developing young athletes' life skills (Goudas, 2010). The First Tee program (Petlichkoff, 2001) is a deliberate life-skill development program delivered within a golfing context. The idea surrounding First Tee is to deliver instruction of golf and life skills in a combined fashion through methodical and progressive lessons. First Tee emphasises "interpersonal, self-management, goal setting, and advanced personal and interpersonal skills (e.g., making healthy choices and seeking social support)" (Weiss, Stuntz, Bhalla, Bolter & Price. 2013 p.217). The coaches that implement First Tee are trained and certified to do so by attending a variety of workshops that enable them to effectively teach the life skills in a youth-friendly manner.

Weiss, Bolter, Bhalla, and Price (2007) compared participants engaging in the First Tee program with a group of control youths in other organised activities on life-skill learning and developmental outcomes, and found that students taking part in First Tee achieved higher scores on life-skill transfer and psychological outcomes such as self-efficacy to resist peer pressure. Weiss et al. (2007) reported positive observations by parents and guardians in areas such as communication, confidence, responsibility, and social skills. More recently, Weiss et al. (2013) applied the First Tee program to explore its level of efficiency in delivering life skills through golf through focus groups and in-depth interviews. The questions explored subjects such as meeting people for the first time on and off the golf circuit, managing

emotions on the golf course and how management of emotions can be applied to other life settings, and showing respect on and off the golf course.

Weiss et al. (2013) reported positive findings regarding the transference of life skills and strategies for successful living; the results suggested that the adolescents who participated in the First Tee program learnt and retained strategies that assisted in meeting and getting to know people, respecting others, and handling negative emotions and thoughts both on and off the golf course. Furthermore, the youths put forward real life examples of when they had applied the strategies and skills in school, at home, with friends, and in public venues, providing evidence life skills can be transferred from sports contexts to other life domains.

The Play It Smart program was developed in 1998 for at-risk inner city high school football athletes with the aim to provide them with a mentor to support them academically, personally and athletically (VanGorden, Cornelius & Petitpas, 2010). The mentors helped the youths to identify the skills learnt in football and apply them to academic preparation, relationships, and planning their future. Additionally, the youths took part in a community program, taking on tasks such as tutoring younger people, reading to young children, and assisting the elderly. The success of the program would be measured by improvement in grade averages, increased involvement in community service activities, the development of life skills, and attitudes towards health and career achievement. Results have established that the program has been successful with grade increases and improved athletic performance (Petitpas, Van Raalte, Cornelius & Presbrey, 2004). VanGorden et al. reported participants recognising the contribution Play It Smart had in helping them become all round individuals; academically, athletically, and personally. Hard work, working cooperatively with others, and preserving when difficulties arose were examples of life skills Play It Smart graduates developed and applied to life areas outside football.

VanGorden et al. (2010) and Weiss et al. (2013) accessed the stories of the athletes to gain an understanding about how the program affected them, something a simple grade point average could not tell us. However, it should be noted that the program was specifically designed to teach life skills. A key limitation of many life-skills programs is that the participants are in an environment that is focused on the implementation of life skills. Participants are taught specific life skills by trained adults; therefore, the programs are designed in such a way to create optimal conditions for developing transferable life skills. The structure implemented within previous programs would be much different from the structure of a generic school or club sports lesson.

Therefore the subject area needed an approach that emphasised life-skill development through generic sports structures. As will be seen in chapter three, I recruit participants who have participated in non-specific sports lessons that did not emphasise life-skill development, filling a noticeable gap in the literature.

During the review of the literature, it became evident that the majority of the studies did not examine whether the participants maintained the life skills after sport withdrawal. There is a special need for an evaluation of how life skills track over time after sport participation ends. More specifically, there is a need to establish whether transferable skills can endure withdrawal and whether life skills developed through sport can transfer to non-sport settings. Throughout the study, I gained an insight into youth perceptions of whether life skills have endured withdrawal and how they have been transferred into other life domains.

Life skills associated with sport participation

Psychological development

It is a common conception that sport can promote positive outcomes such as self-confidence, self-esteem, communication skills, leadership skills, and problem solving (Fox, 1999). The literature surrounding the psychological effects of sport on female youth has received mixed reviews, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Researchers have concluded that sport is associated with negative psychological behaviour such as low intrinsic motivation*,* low self-esteem, low self-confidence due to the competitive nature of sport (Martens, 1993; Wankel & Kreisel, 1985), and increased stress and social exclusion (Larson, Hansen & Moneta, 2006). Due to the aforementioned associations with sport and negative behaviour, the question has been raised regarding the value of sport participation.

Perceptions of self-esteem

Self-esteem has profound consequences for every aspect of our existence

(Branden, 1994, p. 5)

Authors (e.g., Donaldson & Ronan 2006; Smoll, Smith, Barnet & Everett, 1993) have noted the opportunity for sport to increase an individual's self-esteem. Sport provides the ability to achieve goals, receive support from peers and influential adults, and provides a sense of belonging, all of which may attribute to a youth feeling positive emotions about their self-esteem. Donaldson and Ronan conducted a study on 203 adolescents and found that increased sports participation resulted in a positive relationship with areas of emotional and behavioural well-being, their self-concept in particular. The results also suggested that children who increased their perceptions of sport related competencies showed considerably fewer emotional and behavioural problems than children of whom external standards considered competent at sport (e.g., teacher rating, sporting achievements). Although

Donaldson's results suggest a strong relationship between sport and self-concept, the study collected shallow data from questionnaires and did not address the possible effect withdrawing from sport may have on the participants increased well-being.

Though various studies have found an association between sport and increased negative psychological behaviour, analysis of the research suggests that the type of sport played to be of particular relevancy when determining positive or negative implications. For example, a study by Segrave and Hastad (1982) found that as a whole, organised sport participants engage in less anti-social behaviour. However, physically aggressive sport participants were found to be significantly more likely to engage in anti-social acts than participants who engaged in less physical sports. Female adolescents are unlikely to play such sports, making the claims that sport can increase negative psychological behaviour in female youths, to an extent, unjustified.

Reduction in negative psychological behaviour

The moral value of exercises and sports far outweigh the physical value

(Plato, 1920, p.46)

An interesting finding by previous authors (e.g. Coakley, 2011) has been the potential for sport to reduce negative psychological behaviour in adolescents; however, researchers have yet to establish whether the reductions continue after withdrawal. Reductions in stress and anxiety (Cameron & Hudson, 1986) and a reduction in depression (Byrne & Byrne 1993; Folkins & Sime 1981) are some of the common positive psychological outcomes.

A study discussed in Fraser-Thomas, Côté and Deakin (2005) (the original study was not published) showed that children in grade 5 in America enjoyed their day more if it included sport. The study was relatively small, involving eleven participants randomly selected, the participants were instructed to record all of their activities during a period of two

days and rate their enjoyment for these activities under the categories of 'no fun', 'some fun', and 'lots of fun'. Those who participated in some kind of sport during these two days (N=5), reported that 45% of their day as 'lots of fun'; youths who participated in no sport (N=6) reported that only 8% of their day was as 'lots of fun'. Though the sample size was relatively small, and thus, lacks in generalisability, the results showed significant evidence that youth who participate in sport, experience more happiness during their day than those that do not. However, no follow up was done to consider what may happen if the child was to withdraw from sport. In an attempt to fill this gap within the literature, I looked to gain an insight into whether children consider themselves happier when they were actively engaged in sport, or if participation in sport causes an on-going level of general happiness.

Social development

Researchers (e.g. Fox, 1988) have claimed that sport has naturally occurring situations that mimic everyday social interactions, helping to promote social development in youth. Miller, Melnick, Barnes, Sabo and Farrell (2007) stated that the public nature of sport means that both appropriate and inappropriate behaviour are on show, not only enabling teachers to assess how children are developing socially, but also teaching children that behaviour such as violence and cheating are immoral. The research surrounding pro-social behaviour is equivocal, with the results of previous studies claiming mixed reviews (Kleiber & Roberts 1981). Reddiford (1981) stated that pro-social behaviour does not necessarily improve when participating in sport and Beller and Stoll (1995) have claimed that behaviour actually worsens due to participation. Findings surrounding social development agree that sport can have positive and negative effects on behaviour depending on how the sport is structured and presented; if successful, then sport can positively affect behaviour and can combat anti-social and criminal behaviours in youth (Morris, Sallybanks, Willis & Makkai, 2003). It is when teachers carry out activities inappropriately that sport has an adverse effect on adolescent

behaviour. The most influential studies that contribute to the current paper are authors who have conducted research in school-based programs (Wandzilak, Carroll & Ansorge, 1988). School intervention studies have produced generally positive results, including improvements in moral reasoning (Romance, Weiss & Bockoven, 1986), fair play, sportsmanship (Gibbons, Ebbeck, & Weiss, 1995), and personal responsibility (Hellison, 1998). The most promising context for the development of social skills is when teachers emphasise how to deal with social situations that arise through sport by allowing the student to ask questions and then exhibiting appropriate responses, and by allowing adolescents to deal with conflict in a suitable manner (Ewing, Gano-Overway, Branta, & Seefeldt, 2002).

What Can Affect the Relationship between Sport and Life Skills?

> Sport can provide a wonderful forum for youth to learn about themselves and to acquire skills that can assist them throughout life, or it can create a negative environment that may have a detrimental effect on participants' self-esteem, confidence, and physical self-efficacy.

> (Petitpas, Cornelius, Van Raalte, & Jones, 2005, p.76)

Taking part in regular sports sessions potentially enhances physical skills, improves health and fitness, increases self-esteem, teaches teamwork and responsibility, and can promote educational achievement (Stryer, Tofler & Lapchick, 1998). However, researchers have also supported the belief that the relationship between development and sport participation is dependent on multiple factors; simply playing sport is not enough to issue a positive effect (Petitpas et al. 2005).

The production of positive developmental outcomes is reliant on factors such as the type of sport played (Côté & Fraser-Thomas, 2007), the attitude of peers and coaches (Horn,

2008; Kay & Spaaij, 2011), meanings given to sport and personal sport experiences (Fine, 1987; Guest & Schneider, 2003), and social relationships formed in connection with sport participation (Miller, Melnick, Barnes, Farrell & Sabo, 2005; Petitpas, Cornelius & Van Raalte, 2008). An example by Jones and Lavallee (2009a) suggested that parents can influence life skills by instilling certain aspects of sport. The study by Jones and Lavallee consisted of an in-depth interview with one participant who reported that organisational skills were developed due to her parents' encouragement to plan tournament schedules and to fill in entry forms herself. Psychological influences such as the conditions surrounding sport, individual sporting experiences, social relationships formed during sports sessions, and the way a youth might go about integrating in sport are all examples of how contingent the relationship can be (Côté & Fraser-Thomas, 2007; Donnelly, Darnell, Wells, & Coakley, 2007; Miller et al., 2005; Petitpas et al., 2008; Trulson, 1986). The cultural, situational, and relational contexts can alter the outcomes of sport (Coalter, 2007; Holt & Sehn, 2008). By teaching non-violence, the respect for team members and opposition, an understanding of self-control in conflict, and the confidence to take part in physical activity, sport can help to reduce 'at-risk' behaviour and reduce acts of aggression and violence (Trulson). Conversely, without implementing pro-social values onto the sporting environment, participation will have either no effect on child development, or will increase the likelihood of aggressive and violent acts. If coaches and teachers do not take into account the contingent factors of transferable skills, the likelihood of female adolescents learning transferable skills within sport is limited, and thus the continuation of life skills after withdrawal may by non-existent. Thus far, researchers have not investigated how female youths perceive life skills, and what may restrict their development. Hoping to clarify the gap in the literature, I sought to gain an insight into what female adolescents believe restricts the learning and implementing of transferable life skills from organised sport to other life domains.

Character disposition, environment, and situational factors influencing transferable skills

The paper by Jones and Lavallee (2009a) explored perceived life-skill development and participation in sport. The study noted that youth development is an abstract process due to its occurrence over time and within the thoughts and feelings of an individual. Thus, it is hard to observe and measure any developments in life skills. Consequently, adults are unaware of any sort of development until the adolescent demonstrates either a positive or a negative outcome. The majority of research surrounding youth development has been quantitative, and has concentrated on the outcomes rather than the developmental process itself. Jones and Lavallee carried out a qualitative study designed around in-depth experiences of one individual and their experiences in sport. Discussion of participant ideas, thoughts, experiences, and opinions allowed for an understanding of how one youth perceived the development of life skills.

Jones and Lavallee (2009a) subjected the findings to interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The results showed that the development of life skills came about through a combination of processes, such as the skills she was born with (her dispositions), parental influences, the environment, the unique structure of different sports, and the situational requirements of the sport environment. An interesting outcome of the study was that the participant felt her natural dispositions played an important role in which transferable life skill she developed, emphasising she was born with certain characteristics that were developed and refined due to her participation in tennis. On the other hand, the participant noted that if the situation required, one developed skills that could go against ones' natural personality:

Being in a situation that goes against my personality means I have developed skills that I would not have. Had I been in situations all my life where I had not had to face

up to aspects of my personality then I would not have developed the skills to deal with

it. (p.11)

The quote from Jones and Lavallee (2009a) illustrates the point that if the participant
were not required to deal with certain situations, particular life skills would not have had the
opportunity to develop. The quote also noted that the skills learnt in each sport are a
reflection of the experiences, environment, and requirements of each individual sport,
implying not every youth and athlete will develop identical life skills. The key elements of
the potential development of life skills through sports participation appeared to be the
disposition, environment (both sporting and family) and situational experiences of the
participant.

Though a single case study, there are elements of Jones and Lavallee's (2009a) study
that are not dissimilar to the research I carried out. The participants in both the Jones and
Lavallee study and the current paper are both female, no longer participate in sport and
though Jones and Lavallee's participant was 22 years, and the participants of my study are
15–16 years, the participants are not of different generations. With these similarities in mind,
it may be interesting to see if the findings of the present study are comparable to the results of
Jones and Lavallee.

Does the Type of Sport Participation Affect the Life Skills that are Developed?

Competitive sport participation is said to give children the opportunity to understand,
at a young age, the healthy aspects of a competitive environment (Landers-Potts & Grant,
1999). The National Curriculum in Britain emphasises that children should be able to take
part in competitive situations in the hope that life skills such as mental determination,
outwitting opponents, learning to cope with disappointment, the ability to reflect on and

improve their own performance, and understanding the nature of success might develop. Certain researchers and members of the educational system state that benefits such as increased self-esteem, better grades, and understanding the nature of competition are only present in competitive sport and they are in support of equal opportunity to participate in sporting competitions (Broughton, 1992; Camp, 1990; Coyle, 1995; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1992).

Researchers suggest that that competition reduces pro-social behaviour and increases aggression (Coalter, 1996), particularly when losing (Sagar, Boardley, & Kavussanu, 2011). Mutz and Baur (2009) and Hedstrom and Gould (2004) provided the argument that adults such as coaches and parents will have a large influence on whether the youth picks up pro-social or anti-social behaviour. Structuring competitive sport in a way that emphasises traits such as determination, persistence and teamwork, rather than a 'winning at all costs' mentality, is unlikely to increase anti-social behaviour.

I aim to establish whether the female youths perceived coaches to influence the transferable skills they acquire; how relevant they felt competitive sport is to their day-to-day life; why competitive sport might have influenced life-skill development in a way recreational sport does not; and what it is about a competitive atmosphere that may have helped or hindered life-skill development.

The Transferability of Life Skills Assumption

As noted in recent papers (Gould & Carson, 2008; Holland, 2012), a vital gap in the life-skills literature is the application, transference, and retention of life skills to other life settings. Thus far, papers have found correlations between sport and the development of life skills, but have lacked exploration of whether students in life skills programs have gone on to apply and transfer the skills after withdrawal (such as Gould et al., 2006; Hodge et al., 1999;

Brunelle et al., 2007). A paper by Martinek, Schilling, and Johnson (2001) is a good example of why such research is needed. The study by Martinek et al. was part of a program helping to provide after-school sports, with positive life skills, to young people who had a history of poor grades and behavioural problems in a hope of increasing their grades and improving behavioural problems. The data collection consisted of interviews and journals written by mentors and coaches, and the findings suggested that grade averages increased and the level of effort applied in the classroom improved. However, a key part of the study was the development of specific life skills that could be related back to classroom behaviour such as goal setting, self-control, respect for others, and caring for others; yet the majority of children (63%) did not apply the specific life skills learnt. The findings of Martinek et al. noted that though the development of life skills may be a possibility with sport, the ability to transfer the skills remains unknown. While these findings do not imply that the ability for skills to transfer from sport to other life settings is unrealistic; the research does indicate that transfer is not automatic and more focus on how life skills transfer to other life settings is needed.

I sought to look into how female youths believe they have applied skills learnt in sport into other life settings based on their experiences and beliefs. The participant's sports lessons were not designed specifically to promote life skills. Additionally, the participants will have engaged in a range of sports at different levels, following different teachers and coaches, giving the study a more realistic outcome than studies that have implemented sports with the sole intention of teaching and applying life skills.

Summary

Researchers consider it an inevitability that certain youths will withdraw from sport due to busy lives, a lack of interest, or other activities becoming more important (Petlichkoff, 1996) as well as negative experiences such as lack of fun, coach conflicts, and lack of playing

time (see Weiss & Williams, 2004 for a review). If withdrawal is inevitable in some cases, schools must focus on implementing the potential transferable skills into sports sessions while either the child's interest is still there, or while sport is still mandatory. Researchers have found convincing data to suggest sport is a suitable environment to encourage the development of life skills and life skill outcomes such as self-esteem. Thus far, there is little evidence suggesting that young females apply skills learnt in sport in other life domains, and whether female adolescents are able to retain the suggested life skills once they have withdrawn from sport. Almost all available research takes place while youths are actively engaged in sport and provides limited information about how one develops his or her personal and social skills after withdrawal from sport. Therefore, the research objectives that drove my study were three-fold: To explore whether young people who have withdrawn from sport believe that they have transferred positive skills from sport to non-sport domains. To explore the process of transfer of positive outcomes from one life domain (sport) to another (i.e., non-sport) and to examine whether competitive sport and recreational sport differ in terms of transferability of benefits once a child withdraws from organised sport.

Chapter 3. Methodology

In this chapter, I outline the methodology of the thesis, attending to the potential benefits as well as problems and limitations of the chosen research design and strategy. The last section of this chapter also deals with ethical issues relevant to the research process. The research objectives that drove this study were as follows; to explore whether young people who have withdrawn from sport believe that they have transferred positive skills from sport to non-sport domains. To explore the possible process of transfer of positive outcomes from one life domain (sport) to another (i.e., non-sport) and to examine whether competitive sport and recreational sport differ in terms of transferability of benefits once a female adolescent withdraws from organised sport.

Chapter three encompasses the research design and methodology, the use of qualitative description, the procedure used to recruit the participants, details regarding the participants, sampling size and method. I then discuss data collection and analytic procedures, how I aimed to achieve trustworthiness of data, finalising with a discussion of ethical considerations.

Qualitative Description

Qualitative description offers the research process a straight description of an experience. Qualitative differs from other qualitative methodologies in that the analytical process and presentation of the data stays close to the surface of the data. When looking into definitions and descriptions of qualitative description, it seemed to be the least burdened by the use of pre-existing theoretical content, and could include a high portion of un-theorised data (Lowenberg, 1993) which coincided with my research objectives. Thorne, Reimer-Kirkham, and MacDonald-Emes (1997) critically refer to qualitative description as 'the

crudest form of enquiry' (p.170), Sandelowski noted that this definition may have resulted in qualitative researchers backing away from using a methodological approach similar to that of qualitative inquiry and instead claimed to have employed an approach that may be considered more credible, such as ethnography or grounded theory (Sandelowski, 2000). Sandelowski noted that no methodological approach to qualitative research is weak or strong, less valuable, or less scientific, "but rather more or less useful or appropriate in relation to certain purposes" (p.335) and I believe qualitative description is the most appropriate approach to my study. Qualitative description presents the facts from exactly the informants' points of view. Furthermore, it is a way of gaining a first insight into the informants' views of a particular, narrow topic (Neergaard, Andersen, Olesen and Sondergaard, 2009). Neergard et al. noted that qualitative description is an ideal methodological choice for a small interview study where the aim is to gain preliminary insight into a specific topic. The purpose of the current thesis was to gain insight to the thoughts and feelings of female adolescents concerning sport participation.

Recruitment and Sampling

In order to recruit participants, I first devised a criteria basis in which the participants would need to meet. The first criterion was that the participants were female. The second criterion was that the participants were aged between 15 and 16 years old. The third criterion was that the participants had to have taken part in an organised sport for a minimum of 3 years. The fourth and final criterion was that the participants must have withdrawn from sport between six months and one year ago. Sandelowski (2000) noted that practically any purposive sampling method can be employed within qualitative descriptive studies, though the one chosen should be appropriate to the specific research objectives. Sandelowski also noted that when conducting qualitative description, researchers may sample cases that follow

a combination of pre-selected variables (Trost, 1986). Therefore, my study followed a purposive approach of a homogeneous sample (one in which the researcher chooses participants who are alike) in that the participants were of a similar age, the same gender, and had all participated in sport for at least three years (Patton, 2001).

Following a meeting with the head teacher, I requested that either teachers or I hand out 200 consent letters to female students that matched the criteria of the study. On collection of the consent forms I sorted through to asses pupils who would be logistically convenient; therefore, the study had overtones of convenience sampling (Patton, 1990). I then contacted each individual and arranged to meet at the school on a Saturday morning at various times. I chose the participants school as a location as it made sense logistically for the adolescents (they were familiar with the environment), and it was more fuel-efficient than driving to separate houses and thereby decreasing fuel costs.

In conclusion, I recruited the participants for the study based on their age (15-16 years), gender (female), time participating actively in organised sport (a minimum of three years) and time since withdrawal (between six months and one year).

Sampling Size

When qualitative researchers decide to seek people out because of their age, sex or race, it is because they consider them good sources of information that will advance them toward an analytic goal and not because they wish to generalise to other persons of similar age, sex or race.

(Sandelowski, 2004 p.180)

The methodology selected and the topic under investigation determines the type of sampling employed, not the need to create generalisable findings. The sample of participants was not selected in order to give conclusions to every female adolescent, the study aimed to

gain an understanding of what a select number of female adolescents feel about organised

sport once they have withdrawn. The respondent sampling has been guided by the four

criteria mentioned earlier in the current chapter. Due to a high number of youths returning

their consent letters, I decided to choose participants from a variety of sports in order to

increase the range of potential answers and experiences. I chose six participants who had

withdrawn from sport to carry out the semi-structured interviews.

As the data collection began, I felt in order to develop the research further; aspects of

theoretical sampling should be employed. Theoretical sampling is a method that does not take

place at a definitive time during the research process, but reoccurs throughout the study; at

various times the researchers looks at which people may be worthwhile investigating in order

to develop and further understand the subject area (Coyne, 1997). Additionally, Sandelowski

(2000) noted that any form of purposive sampling as reported by Patton (1990) is agreeable

with qualitative description. In line with the objective of theoretical sampling, I decided to

conduct interviews with two youths who were actively engaged in sport in order to generate

comparisons to the primary participants (those who had withdrawn from sport) to explore the

differences in the awareness of life skills developed through sport engagement, bringing the

sample size to ten participants. After I had completed and coded all interviews, I felt I had

reached data saturation. Past researchers have supported the notion that saturation is an

inappropriate practice as the longer researchers examine, familiarise themselves, and analyse

their data, there will always be the potential for "the new to emerge", and data should be

completed when 'new' does not contribute to the investigation as it is thought of as counter-

productive (Dey, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Due to the time constraints of the study, it

would have been inappropriate to continue data analysis and data collection once new data

failed to bring valuable information to the study. However, in order to ensure I had collected

a sufficient amount of data but did not lose valuable time collecting excessive quantities of

data, I decided to conduct two more interviews. The interviews provided the research with useful quotes; however, I did not feel the collection of this new data shed any further light on the transferable skills females take from sport after withdrawal. The data collection ceased after the final two interviews bringing the final sample size to ten participants (see table 2 for a detailed description of the final ten participants).

Researchers have supported the use of smaller samples (<10), for example Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) analysed their data and established that of the thirty six codes developed for their study, thirty four were developed from their first six interviews, and thirty five were developed after twelve. Their conclusion was that for studies with a high level of homogeneity among the population "a sample of six interviews may be sufficient to enable development of meaningful themes and useful interpretations" (p.78).

Participants

I chose ten participants for the study, eight of whom had withdrawn from sport between six months and one year ago and two participants actively engaged in order for comparative results to be analysed (see table 2 for a detailed description of the participants). My relationship with the participants was not established prior to the study; all participants would have an equal level of familiarity with me, being the sole interviewer. A previous study by Ntoumanis et al. (2004) noted that the most standard age for withdrawal from sport is 15-16 years; in line with the findings by Ntoumanis et al. I chose participants ranging from 15-16 years. Below the age of 15 years, the likelihood of the participant engaging in sport for longer than three years might have significantly decreased, while above the age of 16 years females who had chosen to stay in sport may have been more likely to be at an elite level, potentially learning a different range of transferable skills. Participants in the 15-16 year age

group were able to recall their sports experiences, as well as the feelings those experiences evoked and the impact that the experiences may have had on other life domains.

The participants had to have withdrawn from sport between six months and one year prior to the interview. A longer time gap between withdrawal and interview the age of participation may have changed the transferable skills picked up, conducting the study immediately after withdrawal would have been counterproductive, as the effects sport might have on transferable skills may still be present, though there is no research to support this assumption and may warrant future studies to explore the length of time between withdrawal and data collection.

Table 1

Participant information table

Pseudo-nym	Age	School year	Previous sport	Reason for withdrawing	Reason for continuation (Negative comparison participant)
Alex	15	11	Netball	Decided not to take GSCE PE, and felt this would limit her chances of being able to take part competitively	N/A
Joey	16	11	Show Jumping	Combination of selling her horse and GCSE's	N/A
Becky	15	11	Athletics	School athletics ends in year 10 due to GCSE's dominating the summer term	N/A
Bella	15	10	Gymnast-ics	Considers gymnastics to be a young person's sport' and felt her performance was deteriorating (i.e., flexibility)	N/A
Clare	16	11	Karate	GCSE's	N/A
Emma	15	10	Hockey	GCSE's	N/A

Sarah	15	11	Hockey, netball and tennis	Injury	N/A
Jess	16	11	Hockey and netball	Parents influence, decided on an academic career and therefore wanted to focus on GCSE's	N/A
Alice (Neg)	15	10	Netball	N/A	Passion for sports, aims to play netball at university, considers it "part of her life"
Gemma (Neg)	16	11	Hockey and swimming	N/A	Never considered withdrawing, encouragement from parents.

Data Collection

When carrying out qualitative data collection, it is common for researchers to employ some or all of the following four methods; interviews (unstructured and semi-structured); observation (field notes); artifacts (visual materials); and documents (report cards, newsletters, and meeting agendas) (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 1998; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Patton, 2001) depending on the relation and appropriateness to the study. The combination of multiple sources brings multiple perspectives to the study, allows the researcher to understand more fully the experiences described, and increases

credibility of data (Erlandson et al.). It is common that different studies will need to use all or only certain forms of data collection. Within qualitative descriptive studies, data collection should be directed at collecting the 'who, what, and where of events or experiences' (Sandelowski, 2000, p.338) while staying true to the purposes of the research. The objective of the current research was to gain first-hand an insight into the thoughts and opinions of a select number of female adolescents. With this objective in mind, I felt the most suitable method for data collection was via interviews and field notes. In order to collect the field notes, I recorded the interviews using a Dictaphone, to allow myself to take notes during and immediately after the interviews.

Interviews

In line with the interpretive paradigm, associated methods are interviewing, observational techniques, as well as the analysis of documents (Halcomb & Andrew, 2005). The method of data collection should be that which best compliments the research objectives. In order to understand people's experiences it is imperative to let individuals tell you their stories in their own words (Smith & Sparkes, 2009). Qualitative interviewing is not necessarily suitable for all research studies; the need for such a method is dependent on the research question. Rubin and Rubin (2004) articulated the purpose for interviews very clearly:

> You do not need to conduct in-depth qualitative interviews to find out how frequently people wash their hair, watch a television program, or buy a particular product. These are matters that can appropriately be counted. But if you want to know what people think about personal hygiene, why they watch so much television, or whether they feel that they gain status by buying a particular product, then qualitative interviewing is the right approach. (p.2)

The point that Rubin and Rubin (2004) are making is that the method of data collection should complement the purpose of the research. Qualitative descriptive data-collection techniques often involve minimal to moderate open-ended individual interviews (Sandelowski, 2000) in order to gain a straight understanding from the studies participants. I wanted to explore whether adolescents believe that they can retain life skills developed in sport after withdrawal. As a researcher, I wanted to hear the participants' beliefs, experiences, and opinions. I purposefully chose not to elaborate on the purpose of the research or my own opinions of sport. A method such as a questionnaire would not capture that data I hoped to achieve. Interviews allow the researcher access to events they did not participate in, the subject reconstructs the event to allow the interviewer access to something they were not involved in, and via in-depth interviews we can access the thoughts and feelings of groups, cultures, and individuals we are not part of (Rubin & Rubin). Through interviews, I was able to experience how specific female adolescents perceive sport, life skills, and withdrawal of sport, enabling me to use the information to generate a better understanding of the subject area via the very people the topic is concerned with.

According to Côté, Salmela, Baria, and Russel (1993), the most widely used framework for qualitative inquiry into sport and exercise psychology research is the employment of an interview method followed by content analysis. Supporting this, Fontana and Frey (1994) reported that the interview is one of the most useful and powerful sources to understand and explore human experiences. As Seidman (1998) stated "it is a privilege to gather the stories of people through interviewing and to come to understand their experience through their stories" (p. xxi). My skills as an interviewer developed through research training carried out at Gloucester University, previous interview experience during my undergraduate degree, and discussion regarding interview techniques with my supervisor.

The actual interview process can vary depending on the information needed or wanted by the researcher. If a study requires defined and distinct answers, interview questions will often be set ahead of time, with the structure changing little throughout (Dunn, 2000). Alternatively, there are interviews that consist of a rough guideline of topics, which can change throughout the course of the interview eliciting a broad range of responses (Erlandson et al., 1993). When dealing with personal perspectives and unique experiences, employing semi-structured interviews is common. The questions are a rough guideline and can be determined or altered by the responses given by the participant (Dunn, 2000; Fontana & Frey, 1994). Choosing an interview format comprising of open-ended questions (with the capacity to change course if desired or needed) was logical as this format is most often relatable with producing idiosyncratic emotions (Hanin, 2003). Furthermore, Sandelowski (2000) noted that open-ended questions are most suitable when employing a qualitative descriptive approach, as they allow the participant to accurately describe their attitude or feelings regarding an experience.

When developing the content and design of the interviews, I used a mix of relevant literature from developmental and sport psychology, methodological sources on qualitative interviewing (Denzin & Lincoln 2000; Kvale, 1996; Mason, 1996; Patton, 2001) as well as drawing from previous interviewing experiences and advice given from thesis supervisors (see appendix D for the interview guide). My supervisor and I decide the first two participant interviews would act as pilot interviews. After completion of the first two interviews, I decided to amend the order of interview subjects but did not alter the content. Relevant data emerged from the first two interviews; therefore I grouped them with the other interviews in terms of data collection. I did not design the interviews to last a particular time; the interviews lasted between 45 and 70 minutes. The interviews took place at the school the girls attended, in order to provide a familiar environment where the girls felt comfortable, and

potentially able to discuss their experiences more openly. No repeat interviews were needed

as I felt comfortable concerning my understanding of the participant responses. Additionally,

transcripts were not sent back to the participants, due to research suggesting young people

can often not realising what they are disclosing, and will often retract statements (Krefting,

1990).

Field Notes

Field notes are the written accounts of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences,

and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting upon the data in a qualitative study

(Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). According to the definition of Schwandt: "field notes are a kind of

evidence on which inquirers base claims about meaning and understanding" (2001, p. 96).

Notes taken during or directly after an interview are thought to be a superior method of data

collection than audio recording alone (Fasick, 2001; Wengraf, 2001). Faswick reported that

although audiotapes enable an accurate recording of conversation, they do not capture the

thoughts and feelings of the researcher, which may be forgotten about when the time comes

to code the data.

The use of field notes in my study came about through experiences of past interviews.

As one can record the interview via audio equipment, it is often though beneficial to make

notes throughout the study to reflect on one's own thought processes that may come in use

when reaching further stages of the study such as data analysis, for instance preliminary

thoughts about themes that can emerge from the data early on (Jackson, 1990). Though

interviews are often the primary source of data collection in qualitative descriptive studies,

the implementation of other techniques such as observation (i.e., field notes), can be a

justified collection method to support the data collected during interviews (Sandelowski).

These notes can influence analysis by allowing the researcher to return theoretically to the interview at a much later stage (Jackson); the researcher can see how the early themes and thoughts developed throughout the interview process and can be a guide to the participants' body language and attitude during the interview that may be forgotten when analysing the data. Field notes can also provide the research with objectivity and a reduction in bias. By detailing exactly what I felt at the time, it prevented interpreting the data differently later when analysing the interviews.

Following similar data management steps to those seen in table 2, I reflected towards the end of the study that though the field notes did not add a great deal of extra detail to my study, I did use my field notes to write down thoughts I had during the interviews which altered the questions I asked other participants (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006).

Table 2

Data management step table (Halcomb & Davidson)

Step	Detail
Step 1	Audiotaping of interview and concurrent note taking
Step 2	Reflective journalising immediately after an interview
Step 3	Listening to the audiotape and amending/ revising field notes and observations
Step 4	Preliminary content analysis
Step 5	Secondary content analysis

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of organising data, of conjecture and verification, and of correction and modification (Morse, 1994). Qualitative research is a process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Stating the techniques utilised when discovering emergent themes from the data is necessary in order for the study to gain credibility among readers and fellow researchers. Essentially, being explicit about the techniques used to establish the emergent themes allows readers of research to assess the methodological choices used.

During discussions of analysis, authors refer to themes emerging. Taylor and Ussher, (2001) state that accounts of themes emerging, or being discovered, results in the researcher playing a passive role in identifying the data's themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) go on to suggest by using the language of 'theme's emerging', it may be misinterpreted to mean the themes reside in the data, and the individual analysing the data is merely an instrument to report such themes. I feel it is necessary to acknowledge my unique role in the data analysis when I discuss themes emerging from the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted an important facet of naturalistic inquiry in that the knower and the known are intertwined, the inquirer and the object of inquiry influence and impact one another, and my analytic conclusions of the data will reflect my unique relationship with that participants. Additionally, within interpretive studies, the instrument of analysis is the researcher, and analysis will be subjected to their unique view, opinions, and interpretations. The themes that were developed did not do so in a passive manner. During the data analysis I actively coded the data into specific themes and the themes emerged due to my unique interpretation of the data; "if themes reside anywhere, they reside in our heads from our thinking about our data and creating links as we understand them (Ely, Vinz, Downing & Anzul, 1997, p.205-206).

To analyse the meaning, structure, and essence of the participants' experiences, a thematic line-by-line analysis of the interview data was completed (Van Manen, 1997).

Interpretive studies generally develop theories or patterns from the data in a continual fashion throughout the research process (Creswell, 2003); my analysis of the data took a primarily inductive approach, enabling the themes to strongly link with the data (Patton, 1990). Braun and Clarke (2006) noted this was due to the ability to code the data "without the trying to fit the data into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher's analytic preconceptions" (p. 13). An inductive data-analysis technique is also coherent with qualitative descriptive studies, as noted by Sandelowski (2000). Though the analysis was largely inductive, overtones of deductive analysis were present due to previous literature informing the interview guide, which would in turn influence the data.

The initial phase of data analysis was the coding. Codes are thought to be "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998, p.63). Coding involves reading the interview transcripts multiple times, and manually sorting proposed quotes into different codes. To begin with, I highlighted particularly repetitive phrases and coded each phrase with the label of 'reoccurring', while phrases that were thought to be significant were highlighted and coded with the label of 'high order code'. I then placed quotes thought to be of interest and with some relevance to the study, into a plain envelope and gave the envelope a title that encompassed said quotes. Envelopes were used as a personal method in order to acknowledge each step of the the coding process. Any quotes I considered too similar to be given a separate envelope were joined together. After I had sorted all of the quotes that I felt had direct relevance to the study, any quotes that were not necessarily relevant to the research question were put into a miscellaneous envelope in case of a future need for them. During qualitative descriptive studies, researchers can continuously interact with the data and should understand the importance of constantly modifying the treatment of data (Sandelowski, 2000). Though particular quotes may not have relevance at a particular time, it is important to

keep the data in case modifications cause previously irrelevant data to become pertinent to the study.

Once I had completed coding, the next phase involved sorting the codes into sub-themes. I developed the sub-themes by looking repeatedly at which codes could be associated to one another, and grouping them into a bigger envelope. Once I felt content I had placed all codes into fitting groups, I went about giving each group a name that I felt embraced all of the codes. The final phase of data analysis came when I sorted the sub-themes into larger, global themes. The process was similar to that of the second phase, grouping together subthemes that I felt were related to one another. During this final phase, the subthemes that I had placed together changed frequently until I was satisfied that they could be associated to each other, resulting in three final global themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Sandelowski, 2000) to be discussed in chapter four.

Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data

When examining the scientific reliability or validity of qualitative research, researchers often agree that qualitative research does not scientifically or statistically hold up against quantitative studies (Maggs-Rapport, 2001). Quantitative researchers view studies that are not applicable to large populations (a main facet of external validity) as having little or no use to researchers. Qualitative findings are not empirically generalisable, are subjective to external influences, and embrace the ontological assumption of multiple realities. My aim for this research was to understand the views and feelings of adolescents in the culture of sport, and the method must reflect this. As specified by Elliot (1995) qualitative research lends itself to understanding participants' perspectives. The uniqueness of the study and unlikeliness of the study being replicable to a high degree was to be expected. However, there

are ways that researchers within the naturalistic paradigm can help to maintain a level of trustworthiness that will ensure credibility of the study.

Qualitative researchers often think that qualitative studies should answer to a completely different set of rules and regulations than qualitative data (Koch & Harrington, 1998; Sandelowski, 1986) due to different epistemological and ontological assumptions, as well as the completely separate missions and agendas (Parker, 2012) that motivate the research. The following criteria given to qualitative studies have been widely cited in social science methodologies (e.g., Bryman, 2012; Kalof, Dan & Dietz, 2008): credibility, which parallels internal validity; transferability, which resembles external validity; confirmability, which resembles objectivity; and dependability, which parallels reliability.

Checklist

During the final stages of the study, in order to provide explicit and comprehensive reporting of the study and to ensure I had covered all stages of research, I applied Tong, Peter, Sainsbury, and Craig's (2007) 32-item checklist (table 3); although I modified the checklist to include the page number of where I state each factor. I will refer to the checklist throughout the next few pages to demonstrate how it helps to ensure trustworthiness of data concerning credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability.

Table 3

Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative studies (COREQ): 32-item checklist (Tong et al. 2007)

Domain 1: Research Team and reflexivity	Example	Page number
Personal Characteristics		

1	Interviewer/facilitator	Which Author/s conducted the interview or focus group?	p.43
2	Credentials	What were the researcher's credentials? E.G. PhD, MD	p.8
3	Occupation	What was their occupation at the time of the study?	p.8
4	Gender	Was the researcher male or female?	p.7
5	Experience and training	What experience or training did the researcher have?	p.8
	Relationship with participants		
6	Relationship established	Was the relationship established prior to study commencement?	p.39
7	Participant knowledge of the interviewer	What did the participants know about the researcher? E.g., personal goals, reasons for doing the research	p.39
8	Interviewer characteristics	What characteristics were reported about the interviewer/facilitator? E.g., Bias, assumptions, reasons and interests in the research topic	p.7/8

Domain 2: Study design

	Theoretical framework		
9	Methodological orientation and theory	What methodological orientation was stated to underpin the study? E.g., grounded theory, discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenology, content analysis	p.34
	Participant selection		
10	Sampling	How were participants selected? E.g., purposive, convenience, consecutive	p.36
11	Method of approach	How were participants approached? E.g., face-to-face, telephone, mail, email	p.36
12	Sample size	How many participants were in the study?	p.38
13	Non-participation	How many people refused to participate or dropped out? Reasons?	N/A
	Setting		
14	Setting of data collection	Where was the data collected? E.g., home, workplace	p.44
15	Presence of non-participants	Was anyone else present besides the participants and researchers?	p.57
16	Description of sample	What are the important characteristics of the sample? E.g., demographic data, date	p.36

	Data collection		
17	Interview guide	Were questions, prompts, guides provided by the authors? Was a pilot needed?	p.44
18	Repeat interviews	Were repeat interviews carried out? If yes, how many?	p.44
19	Audio/visual recording	Did the research use audio or visual recording to collect the data?	p.42
20	Field notes	Were field notes made during and/or after the interview or focus group?	p.44
21	Duration	What was the duration of the interviews or focus groups?	p.44
22	Data saturation	Was data saturation discussed?	p.38
23	Transcripts returned	Were transcripts returned to participants for comment and/or corrections?	p.44

	Domain 3: Analysis and findings		
	Data analysis		
24	Number of data coders	How many data coders coded the data?	p.47
25	Description of the coding tree	Did authors provide a description of the coding tree?	p.49

26	Derivation of themes	Were themes identified in advance or derived from data?	p.47
27	Software	What software if applicable was used to manage the data?	NA
28	Participant checking	Did participants provide feedback on the findings?	NA
	Reporting		
29	Quotations presented?	Were participant quotations presented to illustrate themes/findings? Were quotation identified? E.g., participant number	Chapter 4.
30	Data and findings consistent	Was there consistency between the data presented and the findings?	p.60
31	Clarity of major themes	Were major themes clearly presented in the findings?	p.60
32	Clarity of minor themes	Is there a description of diverse cases or discussion of minor themes	p.59

Credibility

Credibility refers to the lack of researcher bias; to what extent the findings reflect the focus of the inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and the level of internal consistency within the study (Guba, 1981). Qualitative description accepts a level of subjectivity, in the sense that the researcher will call upon their own experiences, influencing interpretation and

conclusions of data. Making personal experiences known to the reader increases the studies credibility (Sandelowski, 2000). Qualitative researchers refer to the process as reflexivity; reflexivity ensures the researcher has assessed how the influence of their background, perceptions, subject interests and thoughts may influence the qualitative research processes (Ruby, 1980). Within the introduction, I discussed my unique contribution to the study and my epistemological beliefs, enabling the reader to understand how my personal experiences and views have influenced the study.

Further to reflexivity, member checking is also a widely-cited method used to increase credibility. Member checking consists of continuously checking with the participants that the data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are clear, and avoids the researcher misunderstanding or misinterpreting the data given via the participants (Krefting, 1990). As I researcher I chose to paraphrase the participants responses during the interview, to ensure I was interpreting their answers correctly. I felt paraphrasing was enough to ensure credibility, and did not feel returning the transcripts at a later date was necessary. Saturation of interviews was also carried out (interviews were carried out until no new data was being collected). Returning to the interview transcripts and field notes also repeatedly encouraged accurate coding and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Transferability

In positivistic approaches to research, transferability refers to the whether the study might possess generalisable findings or the external validity of the study (Gasson, 2004). This creates challenges in qualitative research due to the situational uniqueness; the sample size is most often small and particular and will not be easy to relate to larger or alternate groups, causing difficulty in transferring conclusions to other contexts. While it is certain that the data from a qualitative study is not reproducible, it is not impossible to apply a qualitative study in a different setting (Wahyuni, 2012). Wahyuni noted that application of a qualitative

study is possible through making clear certain aspects of the study; by providing sufficient information about the researcher, the research context, and the researcher-participant relationship. I have noted the aforementioned aspects within table 3. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that, provided the researcher has addressed all aforementioned aspects of the study, transferability is more the responsibility of the person wanting to transfer the findings to another situation or population than that of the researcher of the original study.

Confirmability

As previously mentioned, two key qualities of working within the interpretive paradigm are the presence of subjectivity within the research and the view that the researcher will bring a unique perspective to the topic in question. Confirmability is to what degree the findings can be established or agreed upon by others (Rolfe, 2006). I addressed confirmability by completing a table of quotes, codes, subthemes, and global themes, compromising of the inclusion criteria for each stage of analysis (Appendix D). The table presents my thought processes during each stage of analysis in a hope to ensure understanding of how I reached each code, subtheme and my three final global themes.

Dependability

Dependability concludes the ways of providing a qualitative study with as much trustworthiness as possible and parallels reliability when researching in the positivistic paradigm. As Marshall and Rossman (1999) noted, due to the subjectivity and uniqueness of qualitative work, guaranteeing reliability is problematic. Ensuring that the processes used within the research are clear and appropriate is what ensures dependability. Stringer (2004) stated that a researcher achieves dependability "through an inquiry audit whereby details of the research process including processes for defining the research problem, collecting and

analysing data, and constructing reports are made available to participants and other audiences" (p.59).

The methods used in qualitative inquiry are nearly always exclusive to the original study, meaning as there is no uniform way of analysing naturalistic data the researcher must state the exact procedure used to gather, analyse, and interpret data. Such information will allow the reader to assess to what degree the study is repeatable or, alternatively, to what degree the findings may be unique to the original context (Kielhofner, 1982). In order to achieve dependability I stated the procedure used for the collection and analysis of the data within the current chapter under the titles Data Collection and Data Analysis found on pages 41 and 46 respectively, additionally I have provided a coding tree (Appendix D) to clarify each stage of analysis.

Ethical Considerations

When studies involve human participants in the social sciences, an ethics committee must give approval before the commencement of any data collection. An ethics committee at the University of Gloucestershire granted the research approval on 31st May 2013. The participants indicated their consent to use the interviews for research and educational purpose by checking the appropriate box on the consent form (see Appendix B). In order to protect the participants identity and adhere to confidentiality regulations, pseudonyms were used as well as the altering of any geographical statements that may reveal the school used in the study. When conducting the interviews, a third person (a member of staff at the participants' school) was in sight; however, they were not close enough to hear any of the participant responses, to ensure the participants felt they could speak freely and openly.

When interviewing children, a key issue that could have been problematic was the emergence of sensitive or harmful information, such as information that the youth was planning to harm themselves or someone else. As I have previously discussed, an advantage of interviews is the emergence of unexpected data as this can lead to greater depth of information and can provide research with unpredicted directions. Accurately predicting all potential responses is impossible, leading to researchers being cautious when eliciting personal opinions and experiences from children. In order to collect quality data, the interviewer often aims to create a comfortable environment for the participants in order to develop a rapport in the hopes that the interviewee will talk more freely. Rice and Ezzy (1999) noted that, during in-depth interviews specifically, participants are away from their peers and family and are more likely to disclose sensitive information to the researcher; ethically this concern intensified due to the participants being under 18 years. There was the risk that the youth may perceive the interview as an opportunity to discuss a personal problem or issue. This can often be the case when a young person talks to someone they consider an 'outsider' and there is no regular contact and so, in their mind, is void of any repercussions. Kirk (2007) has discussed the risks of blurring boundaries and confidentiality as there is always the potential risk that a young person may disclose information that they are 'at risk'. When discussing confidentiality in the ethics application, it was noted that any information given during the interview thought to be harmful to the child or anyone else would be disclosed to an appropriate adult more adapt at dealing with the situation than myself.

Chapter 4. Results

This chapter includes three global themes, the subthemes and a selection of raw codes. I use the term 'raw code' to define the initial codes that came from participant quotations that went on to make up subthemes. I discus each subtheme by providing select raw codes that best illustrate each theme, I then give examples of raw codes in order to present the reader with transparency of data in an effort to establish the trustworthiness of conclusions. The chapter concludes with a short discussion on negative comparison interviews that looked at participants who were actively engaged in sport.

Three global themes emerged from inductive thematic analysis of the transferability of female youth sport related to transferred skills from sport to non-sport domains: 1) how skills are developed through sport, 2) potential transferable skills and outcomes, and 3) prevention of transferable skills.

The theme of *how skills are developed through sport* emerged through participant reflections of how they perceived sport to be most beneficial, and the ways in which sport has developed their individual personalities through experiences and the environment. *Potential transferable skills and outcomes* reflected the specific skills that the girls believed they had picked up from sport, either consciously or sub-consciously. During the beginning of each interview, each participant reported the same generic responses as to why sport is mandatory; the non-team participant responses were general and basic, while the team sport students gave a greater sense of individuality to their answers. As the interviews were ending, the participants had a greater awareness of how sport is applicable to life, and hence gave more enthusiastic answers and reported a greater sense of understanding and enthusiasm to sport. The theme of *prevention of transferable skills* illustrated the possibility for influencing factors to affect whether the youths developed transferable skills. Key influences were

teachers, type of sport (i.e., team or individual), and the environment of a sport (i.e.,

competitive or recreational). It also emerged that the youths could develop negative

transferable outcomes, for instance by teachers limiting progression the girls believed ability

must be fixed, and transferred this outlook to other areas of their lives.

Table 4

A coding tree of the global themes and their corresponding subthemes (see appendix

D for a more detailed coding tree)

How Skills Are Developed Through Sport

Sport and personality

Experiences that effect transferable

skills

Social surroundings,

Meaning to the individual

The need for achievement and

progression

Potential Transferable Skills and Outcomes

Mentality

Confidence

Wellbeing

Transferable skills relatable to life

Learning to cope with…

Difficult situations

Prevention of Transferable Skills

Teachers
Limited options within sports lessons

I will now discuss each global theme and name the respective subthemes, while discussing a selection of subthemes in greater depth and when appropriate select raw codes that helped the selected subthemes to emerge.

How Skills are Developed Through Sport

I asked a serious of generic questions to the participants regarding how they felt sport had helped to develop them as individuals. The global theme that emerged included subthemes in which the focus was on how sports and experiences in sport might help the individual to develop psychologically. Five subthemes emerged: sport and personality, experiences that affect transferable skills, social surroundings, meaning to the individual, and the need for achievement and progression. I will now discuss the example subthemes in greater depth whilst providing a selection of raw codes and the inclusion criteria for each subtheme.

Sport and personality

The subtheme of sport and personality emerged through the following raw codes: sport enhancing personality traits, traits influencing sport, how sports alter personality, developing the individual, and overcoming personality barriers. The inclusion criteria for the

subtheme were codes that involved how sport can affect or develop an individual's personality.

A key code to emerge from the data was *developing the individual*. This code emerged through quotes that suggested participants felt sport had developed their character. For instance, Jess spoke about her belief that her personality had changed due to situations occurring through sport, and that it was unlikely her withdrawal from sport would cause her personality to revert back to her pre-sport days:

> *I think leaving sport will mean I don't experience those situations as regularly, so maybe I won't be as used to them as I used to be. But those situations have changed and developed my personality, and I don't think you can really go back to who you were before. [Jess]*

A point emphasised here by Jess, and among other participants, was that sport had had an irreversible influence on their personalities, regardless of withdrawal. For instance Bella spoke of how her participation in gymnastics had encouraged her to become competitive and determined, and how this aspect of her personality had been instilled in her due to her gym experiences:

> *Q: Do you think your time participating in gym influenced any personality traits?*
>
> *A: What do you mean?*
>
> *Q: Rather than looking at skills relevant to life, has sport influenced your actual personality, or character in any way?*
>
> *A: Um, I think it's probably made me quite competitive and maybe quite a determined person.*
>
> *Q: How so?*

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A: Well I've experienced what it's like to win and to do well, so I want that in all aspects of my life. I don't really settle for doing average, I'm determined to do my best at everything and I think that's something my gym teacher's helped to instil in me. I think I'm also quite self-reliant, the coaches always said to us 'we can give you all the help you want, but when you're on the mat it comes down to you. How you've prepared and how focused you are.' So as a person now, I'm very much like, 'ok if I want this, I need to do what it takes to achieve it'. I don't like to rely on anyone else.[Bella]

From Bella we can see that she believed her experiences in gym moulded and shaped her characteristics, such as being determined, or learning to rely on other people.

Experiences that affect transferable skills

When analysing the data, a key subtheme to emerge was the need for participants to experience a variety of different situations in order to pick up a wide range of transferable skills. For instance, competitive sport contained different experiences to recreational sport and participants would learn alternative transferable skills depending on which type of sport they participated in. The inclusion criteria for this subtheme were codes that involved quotes discussing experiences and their impact on transferable skills.

The subtheme *experiences that affect transferable skills* contained the following raw codes: competitive sport experiences, competitive vs. recreational sport experiences, School sport vs. non-school sport experiences, team and non-team sport experiences, sports experiences, preparation experiences, and equal experience opportunities.

Q: So teachers never discuss how sport is applicable to life?

Well they say like, sport is good for teamwork, but then we go and do chest passes for an hour. So we just think, that was a waste of time. They can't just say 'sport is good

for teamwork, or communication skills, and then not following it up by using that skill in the lesson. If they want us to see sport can be relevant, we need to, almost experience that aspect of sport. That would be like a maths teacher saying 'maths is useful when you go food shopping' but then not giving us an example and letting us try the sum. [Bella]

Throughout the interviews, the participants who appeared to be the most confident and engaging were those that had participated either on a school team, or on a team or sport outside of school, although this is merely an observation, and the answers reflect that of a similar outcome. The participants who had only participated in sport due to school guidelines gave less direct answers; they repeatedly using the word 'like' and 'you know', appearing to need assurance their answers were ok, and appeared less socially confident during the interview, needing a greater number of social queues, and giving less eye contact.

The code *equal experience opportunities* emerged through quotes that suggested participants felt experiences depended on athletic ability. Throughout the interview, Emma, a participant who had reached team and county level hockey, referred to instances and situations that took place during county training and competitive environments, situations the non-team girls did not have access too such as socialising with a variety of people and learning how to lose gracefully. The absence of these situations appear to cause limited diversity in the non-team sessions, causing their answers to become repetitive and stagnated based purely on sports specific skills. For instance, Emma noted how teachers did not give the non-team students attention, and their lessons lacked progression or goals: *"I feel sorry for the girls who aren't on teams, because they just kind of get ignored and don't get any aims or challenges, so they don't really try?" [Emma].*

Joey, a participant who was not involved in team sessions, supported Emma's quote by believing that team members received more attention from teachers, which deprived her from valuable experiences:

A: I mean, obviously, there are girls that are on the teams and they love sport, but that's like less than half the year and they get all the attention.

Q: What do you mean they get all the attention?

A: Well the teachers are always giving the team girls goals, and cool drills, and they get to go to other schools and compete. We just do the same thing every lesson. [Joey]

Social surroundings

The subtheme of social surroundings reflected codes that involved a focus external to the individual. The subtheme consists of the following codes: barriers due to males in sport, mixing with others, support, blame, community, and reading body language.

The code barriers due to *males in sport* occurred through quotes that reflected how participants felt intimidated by males, and how sport could potentially help to reduce these feelings. During the interviews, some of the girls expressed concerning opinions of how they view the opposite sex in sport, and how this had influenced how they view males in the work place and in relationships. The barriers relating to the opposite sex included intimidation, appearance, power, and culture. The non-mixing of genders was perceived by some participants to increase the risk of females viewing males as the dominant and more powerful sex outside of sports. Clare spoke about how she saw boys as the more powerful gender in sport as well as in relationships and the work place, and she believed this was due to teachers separating them in school sports:

You're always separated from the boys because they're more powerful, […] then not only in the work place, but in the future when you're in relationships and stuff, it

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could lead you to thinking that, because in the physical things, like sports you've always been taught that they're more powerful, you have to accept that in relationships. […] Everyone always told you that they were the more powerful one and you just accept that and do what they say. [Clare]

Clare also believed that if schools gave girls the opportunity to play male-dominated sports, such as rugby and football, the culture surrounding sport and its male dominance would fade, leaving girls more encouraged to participate in sports that are considered male dominated.

I think if girls were taught more male dominated sports in the same way guys are taught there wouldn't be the whole, butch idea of a female sports player because then if all girls did it then they would just be used to it. [Clare]

Alex, a participant who attended an all-girls school, discussed how she found communicating with boys quite difficult due to her lack of interaction with them, and reasoned that sport could be used to "take away that barrier":

I think, like, taking part with boys made them less intimidating. Like when you do communicate with boys, it's quite awkward, because you're not with them all the time so it's a bit more, you have to think about how to act around them. […]. When you're playing sport you're not thinking about hair or what you look like, it takes away that sort of worried side of what do they think of you, because at the end of the day you both smell and look disgusting. So, I don't know, it takes away that barrier of like, awkwardness, because again, you've got something in common and you can talk so it makes it more natural. [Alex]

Meaning to the individual

At the start of the interviews, the participants did not perceive sport as being applicable in their everyday life, other than contributing to a healthy lifestyle. The reasons they gave for why we do sports came across as generic and unspecific in the majority of the participants, answers such as "to stop us getting fat", "as something you use to stay fit and healthy" and "to help us look after our body" were the most common responses to "what do we learn from sport". While these responses were academically correct, they lacked any knowledge of how sports skills might transfer to other life domains. They also lacked any uniqueness of how sport helps us as individuals. The subtheme of *meaning to the individual* consisted of the following codes: purpose, relevant skills, meaning, effort (effort and meaning), and what's the point? The codes that comprised the subtheme reflected the need for sport to be identifiable to each individual.

The code *relevant skills* consisted of quotes that connected sport with either the need for it to be relevant to other life domains or the queried how participants viewed sport as being relevant to other life domains. From the analysis of the data, the overall structure of the lessons appeared to be focused on sports-specific skills. This could be seen as positive for the team members with regards to achieving success; however, the non-team members struggled to comprehend why they were practising a skill they didn't believe was relevant to their lives. It also appeared that there was no emphasis on generic fitness, or the 'basics' of keeping fit.

> *[…]I think one of the things they miss out on is teaching you basic skills like, teaching you how to run so you don't tire yourself out, you know, how to exercise properly so you don't get stiff. They didn't teach us the basics and then we went into these games, which is all good fun, but it's kind of, they miss the basics so we struggle. [Jess]*

Jess also discussed the absence of generic fitness skills by noting teachers did not teach the girls how to use the school's gym equipment:

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Q: Do you go in the gym at all?

A: We have one but I think, like, we're not taught how to use most of the stuff in there. Which I think is weird. It's not like we're going to out and play a rounders games or whatever when we leave, or in the middle of the day on our own. You want to go to the gym or you want to go running so all these things that you would do to keep fit and healthy you're not taught which is a really weird thing. [Jess]

Jess felt that she would never play rounders in the future, so did not understand why so much focus was given to the traditional sports over skills more relevant to everyday life, such as generic fitness skills. Sarah felt the reason the teacher's emphasised team sports over basic fitness was to increase the schools chance at winning matches or competitions in the hope of improving the school's reputation; *"the teachers are competitive when they're watching our games, they, it's like, they're only doing it so the school get a better name because they've won". [Sarah]*

The need for achievement and progression

Four raw codes made up the subtheme need for achievement and progression: achievement (existence and absence), inability to see progression, goals, and visible accomplishments. The codes reflected the need to feel accomplishment and success in sport, in order for positive psychological outcomes to appear.

The code *achievement* (existence and absence) consisted of quotes reflecting how achievement influences the participant's view of sports. For instance, Alex suggested that the inability to feel achievement caused low motivation levels*: "It was hard to feel motivated to do anything because we never achieved anything" [Alex]*.

However, the presence of achievement appeared to positively influence motivation. Becky noted that when she saw improvement and progress, it motivated her to continue to

practising: *"You can see your progress and how well you're doing so by the end of the lesson you know that you've, like your serves have improved, so it motivates you to keep practising"* *[Becky]*. The quotes suggest that the ability for the participants to see achievement was integral for the girls to see sport as a worthwhile activity.

The code *goals* consisted of quotes that reflect the participants' desire for lessons to include goals or aims, both sport-specific and transferable. During the interviews the girls consistently brought up the need for lessons to incorporate goals in order to see progression and gain a sense of achievement. Emma also noted that goals provided a focus to the lessons: *"It's important there are goals and aims, it gives us focus so when the lessons finished we feel like we've achieved something"[Emma]*. Alternatively, Alex believed that the lack of progression in non-team lessons caused limited motivation and enthusiasm to play. When asked how the lack of progression affected Alex's view of sport, she responded: *"we didn't ever get goals or anything; it was hard to feel motivated to do anything because we never achieved anything"* *[Alex]*.

Emma supported Alex's belief, reporting that the lack of any real goals in the non-team sessions could be the reason why the girls who did not play in the teams applied less effort. *"I feel sorry for the girls who aren't on teams, because they just kind of get ignored and don't get any aims or challenges, so they don't really try?"* *[Emma]*

Emma and Becky, the two more competitive participants who regularly competed on teams, found that because they could see improvement or progress in their performance they were motivated to keep playing. Emma appeared to talk about her progress passionately, and felt in order to make progress one should be given goals and challenges: *"If you're on a team, you have constant goals, like improving your goal statistics or making quicker passes, we're always progressing, and it's going to helps us to stay motivated"*. *[Emma]*

Potential Transferable Skills and Outcomes

Each participant discussed how experiences in sport could be generalised to environments outside of sport. However, some of the participants needed more examples to prompt them than others in order to elicit these responses. The majority of participants seemed to be unaware at first that any experience in sport might be transferable to another situation unrelated to sport. I gave a personal example of how an experience in sport had influenced a situation outside of sport. Once I gave an example, the participants seemed to be 'awoken' as to what experiences have affected them.

Six subthemes made up the global theme potential transferable skills and outcomes: mentality, confidence, mental well-being, transferable skills relatable to life, learning to cope, and difficult situations. The subthemes included outcomes and skills that were created or developed through sport, and are transferable to contexts outside of sport.

Mentality

The subtheme mentality consisted of codes that involved a focus on the individual's mind-set due to sport. The codes are as follows: positive attitude, rationalism, positive self-esteem, and protection of self-esteem.

The code *positive attitude* included quotes that reflected how sport provided the participants with a positive attitude and how this influenced future situations. A quote that best displays this came from Alex who discussed how if she lost in sport, she decided not to come away feeling defeated but to learn from the situation and think what could have been improved upon. An attitude she believed she has applied to other life domains since withdrawing from sport:

> *I think that there can be a positive to every situation, but it depends on your outlook. I could've looked at a lost game and think 'well that was a waste of time' but I came*

away and thought, now, what can I take from that and improve. […] So I got some

mock GCSE's back, and I got lower than I was hoping, but instead of thinking you

know, I suck. I thought, where did I go wrong, how can I improve. [Alex]

Joey spoke of how her time in show jumping had kept her grounded about what was within her control concerning winning, and how it helped her control her stress levels:

Q: If you look back on your time show jumping, would you say it taught you anything that might be relevant to your everyday life?

A: I think the main thing with horses is how grounded they keep you. You can be the best rider in the world, if your horse is having a bad day, or even if it just gets the stride wrong into a fence and knocks a pole, that's four penalties, which could knock you back ten places, which has nothing to do with your skills as a ride. So it's really a sport that teaches you not everything is always going to go right and you can't let that stress you out. [Joey]

The code *rationalism* consisted of quotes that reflect how sport can enhance a participant's rationalisation. During the interviews a couple of the participants spoke about how sport had made them more resilient to losing, judgment, being watching, and completing a task. The reason for this code is that the participants did not just speak about coping or dealing with the negative aspects of sport, they spoke about how sport participation had influenced their mentality. For instance, Jess spoke about losing, and believed if she could "knock that on the chin", what could she not knock on the chin? I then asked her whether she felt sport had created that part of her personality, or whether she was born with it, to which she replied:

I think I was born with it, but it was shown through that, that I am resilient because of sport, because you don't really know you are until something happens and you have to show certain sides of yourself that you didn't realise existed. [Jess]

Confidence

The subtheme *confidence* arose through codes that encompassed the improvement of an individual's perceived confidence in a variety of situations due to their participation in sport. Four codes consisted of the subtheme confidence: self-confidence, social confidence, confidence at failing, and potential for sport to increase confidence when interacting with boys. Situations where the girls specifically felt confidence had transferred were new social environments, a fear of failing and being self-assured in day-to-day activities such as presenting work. Participants continually noted throughout the interviews that sport had given them a sense of self-confidence, whether that was having the ability to stand up to people in positions of authority or having the ability to converse with strangers. During the initial stages of each interview, only a couple of the girls perceived sports as transferable to their everyday life, with only one (Emma) quoting how sport had given her the confidence to become socially competent in diverse situations. The other girls only believed sport to have helped them in other life domains after they had the chance sit down and think about how sport had helped them.

When analysing the data, it became apparent that the majority of the girls felt that sport had, in some way, helped to improve their confidence. The situational occurrence of the confidence 'boost' differed with each participant, whether the context was social, goal-orientated, or developing confidence when participating in something individually, the girls not only acknowledged that sport had had this affect, but they appeared to understand how this will help in situations outside of sport.

The code *self-confidence* emerged through quotes that described participants acknowledging sport had enhanced their assurance in themselves. The girls who had competed on teams or outside-of-school sports were more aware of this benefit than the participants who had not taken part in team sports. In particular, one participant noted she was a keen sprinter, and that even though she disliked individual sports, she participated in sprinting because she enjoyed it, and felt in turn this was going to increase her confidence in other areas:

Well I guess I like those sports [sprinting, running], and I want to do them. Which I think like, it's helped me become more confident to go out and do something on my own, and not worry about other people watching. I think it's going to help with like, university and jobs and stuff as well, I think having to do things like sprinting on my own is going to give my confidence a boost so when I have to do a task at work on my own or a presentation at university, it won't be so scary. [Becky]

The girls indicated in different words that they saw sport as a particularly judging environment; in the above quote, Becky talks of doing something on her own and this has enabled her not to worry when people watch her.

Clare also spoke of the self-confidence that karate had given her. Clare believed by participating in karate, she became less vulnerable, and was in turn more self-assured in intimidating environments:

Q: Which experiences in karate helped to develop your self-confidence?

A: I don't think it really was one specific experience, I just think learning how to defend yourself, it gives you this feeling of knowing you're not weak. I think it's quite specific to karate, but I can walk around on my own, or feel comfortable I a strange place because I feel like I'm not vulnerable. [Clare]

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Well-being

Two raw codes made up the subtheme *wellbeing*: reduction in anti-social behaviour and stress relief. The codes reflected the participants' belief that sport had a positive impact on their emotional state.

The code *reduction in anti-social behaviour* consisted of quotes that illustrated the girls' belief that sport helped to teach them the correct manner in which to conduct themselves. For instance, Emma believed that experiences in sport influenced her behaviour when confronting a situation or person:

> *So a couple of weeks ago this girl did something that upset me, and instead of just marching over and shouting at her, I thought back to hockey and how shouting didn't solve arguments or help us win games, so I just asked to speak to her quietly and we sorted it out. [Emma]*

Emma contributed that her aversion to shouting was due to her experiences in sport. Emma perceived there to be little point in getting angry as this would not help her to score points or win the game, and went on to use this logic outside of sport, noting that shouting at someone "doesn't solve anything".

Sarah opened up in a similar way concerning how sport helped her to avoid confrontational situations:

> *A: In sport, you can ask the umpire why they made a certain call, and in tennis, you can ask to challenge, like if a linesman calls it out, you can ask the opposing linesman, and if the other disagrees you can take the point again. But you have to stay polite, you can't get aggressive, and if you do, it doesn't solve anything.*

> *Q: So you've taken that away from sport?*

A: Yeah, I understand that getting angry won't solve anything, and if I disagree with somebody, it's better to talk to them nicely about it. And like you said earlier, about sport enhancing or creating that, it's good because I think I was born with this impulse to stand up for myself and like [pauses] not let people take advantage of me. But playing sport, I think it's developed how I deal with that impulse, I still stand up for myself but at the right times and in the right manner. [Sarah]

Sarah believed sport helped her nurture her impulse to stand up for herself, developing it into a positive characteristic of her personality. Sarah also reflected on her time playing sport and noted *"I've seen people get angry and shout at people when we've played a hockey match and it doesn't help. Shouting at somebody isn't going to help and you just get in trouble" [Sarah].* The aforementioned quotes do not link directly to the physical act of playing sport; however, they existed purely because of the situations sport can create.

Transferable skills relatable to life

Thirteen raw codes make up the subtheme *transferable skills relatable to life*: social competence, potential to see transfer, realistic expectations, ability to adapt, leadership, teamwork, responsibility, planning, hard work, doing your best, physical skills, consequences, and judgment of appearances. The codes included in this criterion were skills that the participants believed directly transferable to other life domains outside of sport. I will only discuss a selection of the raw codes, though more information surrounding each code can be found in appendix D.

A prominent transferable life skill that appeared in the majority of interviews was *social competence*. The girls believed sport had provided them with opportunities that improved their ability to socialise. For instance, Bella believed her engagement in gymnastics

had provided her the opportunity to mix with a wide range of people, and because of this, Bella considered being better at socialising with girls from other schools:

Q: What kind of people did you mix with at gymnastics?

A: There was all sorts, there were girls from different years, different schools, girls from state and private, a few boys. It was kind of a mixed bag of people!

Q: Has that influenced how you mix with people?

A: I think I am more confident around people, especially people I'm not around all the time. The girls at school only really mix with other girls at school so when we go to parties and stuff ,they're a bit awkward. [Bella]

The participants recognised sport as an opportunity to develop their social competence and socialise with strangers – from different schools, different ages, and different abilities. For the team members, sport acted as a gateway into the do's and don'ts of social behaviour as well as how to conduct yourself with officials and coaches. Again, those students who had been part of a team, or a sport outside of school, appeared more aware of this transferable skill and, as an observation, were more comfortable talking to a stranger (the interviewer) during the discussion. The inclusion criteria for *social competence* included quotes that discuss the participants' belief of sport improving their capability to socialise with a variety of people in various environments.

The code *realistic expectations* consisted of quotes that discussed how sport had taught participants to have realistic expectations concerning competing or achievements. The girls appeared to acknowledge that their efforts might not result in success, and that being rewarded was not always in their control:

My tennis coach really pushed that sometimes sport can be down to a bit of luck, like whether the ball was in or out can be down to a tiny difference in space, like a gust of

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wind could take it further and land it out. She also always told us the other girl might

be a more powerful player, or get more help from the school. […] I guess it's made

me a bit more aware of what I can control and what I can't. [Sarah]

From the above quote we can see that Sarah learnt to accept what was within her control and what was not during her years engaging in sport; having now withdrawn from participation, she recognises how that outlook has influenced her day-to-day life.

Joey spoke of how her time show jumping had kept her grounded about what was within her control concerning winning:

Q: If you look back on your time show jumping, would you say it taught you anything

that might be relevant to your everyday life?

A: I think the main thing with horses is how grounded they keep you. You can be the

best rider in the world, if your horse is having a bad day, or even if it just gets the

stride wrong into a fence and knocks a pole, that's four penalties, which could knock

you back ten places, which has nothing to do with your skills as a ride. So it's really a

sport that teaches you not everything is always going to go right and you can't let that

stress you out. [Joey, repeated quote]

Learning to Cope

The subtheme *learning to cope* comprised of codes that included negative situations and the ways in which sport had given the girls' a coping mechanism. The codes that make up this subtheme are non-verbal feedback, failure, coping with people watching, and judgment.

The code *non-verbal feedback* consisted of quotes that reflected the girls' belief that teachers were communicating opinions of talent through their actions. For instance, Clare

believed that by teachers putting pupils into a certain sports group, the teachers were implying that certain pupils could not be successful at the sport:

A: You're automatically put in the 'can't do it group'. So then you don't bother trying because you've been told, not actually verbally told, but like, shown, that you can't do it, so there's no point trying. I guess it does teach you not to worry too much about other people's opinions though, I think because of how teachers act around you in sport, like not paying you any attention; it gives you a tough skin.

Q: Which might help in the future?

A: Well maybe, because you might get a boss who doesn't wrap you in cotton wool, and is quite negative and the experience in sport, of teachers being quite like, showing you you're not worth their attention, it's going to have prepared you. [Clare]

The code *judgment* consisted of quotes in which the girls discussed their ability to cope with the judgmental environment of sport. Interestingly, the majority of quotes included reference to how this aspect of sport is transferable to other life domains. For example, Alex spoke of how sport had prepared her for instances where she felt she was being judged or watched: *"I've been places where I feel like people are watching me, or judging me and, it's not that I like it or anything, but at least it's not, at least I've been in that place before".[Alex]*

Conversely, Alex also talked about how sport had negatively affected her. Alex related when teachers placed her in a non-team group to being criticised:

I think you get used to criticism and being told you're not doing something right, or like, even being put in the 'non-team' group, is like their giving you unspoken feedback, like you're not good enough for this group. So it teaches you to accept

others are going to judge you and stuff and you have to either work hard to change

their view or you need to just get over it. [Alex]

Alex initially talks about how sport is a judgmental environment, and how it could

hypothetically create feelings of low self-esteem ("you're not good enough"). However, Alex

goes on to discuss how this taught her to prepare for other life events where she may be

judged, turning a potentially negative outlook into an attitude that is constructive to

maintaining a sense of self-esteem by learning from the experience and making it applicable

to situations outside sport.

Difficult situations

Three raw codes made up the subtheme difficult situations; difficult situations,

pressure and losing. Each code involved adverse or potentially negative situations and the

way sport had influenced how the participant dealt with it. The girls discussed that sport

provided a safe environment due to the presence of the teachers and umpires.

During the interviews, the girls spoke about how participation in sport accustomed

them to dealing with pressure. For instance, Bella spoke about how gymnastics was a high

pressure environment, and was used to performing under a lot of pressure, Bella believed this

prepared her for her GCSEs:

Q: Can you think of any other aspects of gym that are relatable to your everyday life

now?

A: Um. I think I'm probably quite good when it comes to being under a lot of

pressure. For example, at the moment I've got my GCSEs, choosing A levels, and I

think I can like, remain unstressed, because in gym we were constantly in this type of

high-pressured environment so now, it's like it's not new to me so I know I can cope.

[Bella]

The code losing consisted of quotes that discussed how sport could be an effective way to learn how to cope with losing in a positive manner. During Sarah's interview, she spoke of how sport had helped her to acknowledge that losing may not be down to ability or how hard you try:

We always have team competitions in science lessons, and I'm not very academic so I don't really ever win. But I was, or am really sporty, and I can still lose, so I know you can lose even if you tried your hardest and it doesn't mean you're a loser it just means that particular day, you didn't perform good. [Sarah]

Clare discussed how she felt teachers should allow all the girls the chance to experience competing, and in turn losing, suggesting that by not letting the girls experience failure they were being prevented from knowing how to cope with losing or failing:

There's going to be times when you're going to have to fail, and you're going to have to take responsibility, I love karate, but you can't really fail at it? You're not going to know the sense of failure and know how to cope with it if you've never been given the chance to fail. [Clare]

Prevention of Transferable Skills

During various stages of each interview, each participant spoke indirectly about influences that might have contributed to why they had not developed certain life skills. Two key explanations the participant gave were teachers and limited options within sports lessons. The girls also spoke of how skills or outcomes in sport, had not automatically been positive, causing a third subtheme to emerge; *negative outcomes of sport*. All three subthemes reflected how individuals are either prevented from picking up transferable skills or how they developed negative transferable skills.

Teachers

Two codes made up the subtheme *how teachers affect transferable skills*: teacher attention, and teachers and competition. The inclusion criteria for the subtheme were codes that included the ways in which teachers may limit or impact transferable skills. Both codes included the ways in which teachers may limit or affect transferable skills. For instance, Alex discussed her belief that teachers could implement skills that are more meaningful during lessons in order to maximise motivation and provide the pupils with the ability to achieve something:

> *I think for example in hockey when they just give us pointless lessons, that would be a good time to say, ok you don't have a match coming up, so the aim of this lesson is to communicate with a team member and discuss tactics and stuff. Then at least it would be a bit more meaningful, and we would be more motivated, because we would see a benefit coming out of it, and it would give us something to achieve. [Alex]*

Excluding the county athlete (Emma), the participants reported that teachers based lessons on the development of sport-specific skills, and suffered from any sense of transferable skills such as communication, decision-making, or teamwork. The comments on this theme were twofold, firstly having been made aware of the possible transferability of sport; the girls seemed to reflect that had the teachers carried out less sports-specific sessions and told them the benefit of taking part, they would have been more motivated to take part:

> *Make it less specific, rather than learning just about a skill related to that sport, do less pressure stuff, like teamwork games, and having to make quick decisions. That way it would be more fun to the people who are not on teams. [Becky]*

The code *teacher attention* consisted of quotes that discussed the priority of the teachers' attention during sports lessons. Alex reflected that during her time participating in school sport, the teachers *"paid attention to the people who were really good at sport and*

gave less attention to those who weren't on the teams" [Alex]. The girls further believed that sporting ability was a fixed structure, and perceived this to be due to teachers continually focusing on team players and only a select students being picked for activities such as GSCE PE, teams, inter-house competitions and leaders of the inter-house sport:

> *When they're picking captains they'll purposefully pick the people that either attend an outside county club to be like the leaders of the teams, and that's a bit like, I don't know, degrading almost. Like then their definitely not picking you because they know you can't do it, and it's quite obvious then, that you're not as good. And in inter-house, there's the all-star team which play the winners of inter-house and that's like the best people from each house, and normally it's automatically the people that do GSCE [PE]. [Clare]*

The participants felt that teachers should try to make more clear how sport can benefit them in situations outside of sports, in order to increase motivation and so they can get more out of sport while at school. During the analysis of the data, the awareness of sport influencing how they dealt with situations external to sport appeared limited. The participants seemed to be unaware that sport had the potential to transfer skills and hence become relevant to other aspects of their lives. It was not until the girls sat down and thought about their experiences that they expressed how sport might have helped prepare them for life after school, and in domains such as self-confidence and social competence.

Limited options within sports lessons

Two codes made up the subtheme; choice and a lack of variety. Both codes reflected how restricting experiences through limited options could influence transferable skills.

The code *choice* consisted of quotes that described how girls were unable to choose the sport they played, causing decreased motivation and limited experiences. The interviews

reflected that the girls felt there was little choice in sport and they would be happier if teachers had provided a greater variety of options; primarily having more say in which sports they do and how teachers structure sports lessons:

> *It's obvious we don't like hockey, so surely it would be better to let us choose to an extent, than forcing you to do something you're not good at. You watch people who are good and doing advanced stuff and you just have to do some pointless exercises that are actually never going to be useful. I think we would enjoy sport more if we had a choice of what we could do, rather than being forced to take part in something we don't like. [Becky]*

The theme choice also came across in a quote by Sarah:

> *I think giving people more options, rather than being like today we're playing football, when most of the girls don't want to play football it's just, it's really set. If they said 'we've got the option of tennis, netball and football today', then it would be, people would go for what they actually wanted to play rather than what they had to play. [Sarah]*

The girls believed that teachers and coaches should give students a choice regarding what sport they participate in. The young women believed more choice would result in participating in a sport they enjoy, increasing their effort output and potentially enhancing the possible transferable skills.

Negative Comparison Results

In order to increase transparency of results, I carried out two interviews with students who were actively participating in sports teams and events. I conducted the interviews in the same manner as the primary interviews, merely changing the questions to reflect the

awareness of transferable skills while a youth is actively engaged in sport. Key contradictions within the two sets of interviews were the awareness the girls had of the potential transferable skills. The girls who were actively engaged in sport did not perceive there to be many relatable skills between sport and other life domains. For instance, Gemma believed that sport had not helped to develop any skills that had been relevant to other life settings:

Q: Can you think of a situation in other life settings where you might have used a skill that you were taught or developed in sport?

A: Um, not really, I don't really think about stuff in sport helping me in other parts of my life. Should I? [laughs]

Q: No, there's not a right or wrong way to look at sport.

A: Well then I've never really thought about sport as something more than just sport skills. [Gemma]

Alice had similar views to Gemma, believing that sport requires different skills to other life environments. When asked if she could think of any skills that may be needed in both sport and outside settings, Alice spoke of losing, but quickly retracted her thoughts, noting that losing comes in "different forms", and dealing with losing in sport versus losing in other life events would require different skills:

[…] like losing a game. That might help when you lose at something else? But even so, like, losing a match and losing a, I don't know, maybe a job interview, surely there different forms of losing, and they've happened for different reasons, so I don't think sport can directly translate into life. And if it can, I've never purposefully known about it. [Alice]

However, similar to the primary set of participants, the girls in this round of interviews did reflect the possibility of such skills during the closing stages of the interviews.

I think because I'm so actively involved in sport, I've never really stepped back and looked at it in any other way than the lessons are to improve me as a player. I'm thinking of taking a gap year after my A levels and go to Africa, so maybe when I've had some time off, I'll be able to like, reflect. But I think even in the last twenty minutes I'm more open to the idea that netball might be helping me in more ways than just to make me a better netball player. [Alice]

The differences between the two sets of data suggest transferable skills do not lessen after withdrawal; on the contrary, females may be more aware of transferable skills once they have had time to reflect on their time participating in sport.

Chapter 5. Discussion

Previous research surrounding life skills has primarily focused on the correlation between sport and the development of skills that can transfer from sport to other life domains (Goudas, 2010). Although past researchers have found promising results suggesting sport skills can potentially transfer between life settings, the literature has lacked exploration of whether youths go on to apply the skills to other life domains (Goudas & Giannoudis, 2008). Additionally, researchers have focused on students taking part in programs actively encouraging the development of life skills and are therefore actively engaging in sport. The methodologies of previous life-skill literature has mainly followed a quantitative approach, and lacked an in-depth understanding of youth perception of life-skill development in generic school and club sports lessons. Employing a qualitative methodology, I identified whether a sample of female adolescents who had withdrawn from sport activity believed that they developed life skills during their time in sport, whether they felt they had retained the life skills, and the ways in which they felt they applied the life skills outside of sport. I believe that my results draw particular attention to the potential need for adolescent girls to experience a variety of opportunities in order to develop a wide range of skills and the increase in awareness of life skills post sport participation.

The research questions that drove this study were; Do the perceived benefits associated with sport continue after withdrawal? Are the perceived benefits associated with sport participation transferable across life domains? Do different sport environments cause diverse life skills to develop?

Do the Perceived Benefits Associated with Sport Continue After Withdrawal?

A key objective of the study was to explore whether young people who have withdrawn from sport believe that they have transferred positive skills from sport to non-sport domains. My findings suggest similar results to those of Jones and Lavallee (2009a), who noted the importance of experiential learning. The girls believed the retention of life skills depended on the situations in which they were developed, (e.g. the participants developed the skill naturally through experiences created by sport). Once the youths understood and applied the skill repeatedly, they believed it became a trait of the individual rather than a generic skill. Additionally, no one explicitly taught the girls any life skill or forced generic personality traits to develop; the girls appeared to pick up the skills unconsciously due to situational requirements. For example, Jess spoke of potential failure causing her to be aware of her resilience; no one had told Jess that she needed to increase her resilience to losing. The skills that were reported to have developed were dependent on the environment; Jones and Lavallee attributed this to Bourdieu's (1990) concept of habitus, in which the individual develops certain traits and ways of thinking in response to exposure of the environments. An example of Bourdieu's concept was seen when Emma discussed her social confidence increasing due to her participation on a team sport; she believed this had resulted in her being a more naturally sociable person. Therefore, by needing to meet the requirements of her environment, her personality had altered indefinitely, suggesting certain benefits of sport may have the potential to outlast actual participation.

My findings suggest that participants were more likely to retain and apply life skills to multiple life domains if the skills were originally developed through situational requirement rather than instructor-based learning. Gass (1985) reported similar conclusions, stating that the conditions that best facilitate the transfer of life skills were those that emulated life-like situations. Gass noted that participants should learn the skills in an environment similar to those that would occur in the individuals' future and opportunities for participants to practice

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transfer while still in the program should be provided. Jones and Lavallee (2009a) reached similar results, finding that experiential learning was an integral process in the development of life skills. The Jones and Lavallee study involved in-depth interviews with a single female, aged 22 years, an age range not far from the participants in my study. The authors revealed that the participant did not believe she needed anyone to explicitly tell or teach her which skills to learn and found they had developed unconsciously, only realising their existence after the events of initial development.

Throughout analysis, I came across statements that supported the natural development of life skills, contradicting claims made by Gomes and Marques (2013) who reported that "life skills do not arise simply from having enough contact with different situations and challenges across the lifespan" (p.5). I found that the participants developed life skills solely due to the contact with a variety of situations and challenges. It is important to remember that the participants in my study were not actively engaging in a life-skill development program; the skills that developed did so naturally due to the exposure of a variety of experiences and environments. This is particularly true concerning the psychological life skill outcomes such as self-esteem and self-confidence, which appeared to develop due to repetitive exposure to undesirable situations such as performing a skill in front of others or learning how to handle failure. By developing the life skills and outcomes in a natural life-like environment, the participants believed they had retained and applied the skills in a range of life settings after withdrawal from sport participation.

In order to limit the extent of life-skill research, researchers have purposefully attempted to explore the specific life skills most needed by today's youth (Jones & Lavallee 2009b; Gould et al. 2006; Gould et al. 2007). Gould et al. (2006) found that failure to take personal responsibility for one's actions, and lack of motivation and work ethic were two areas that young people most needed to develop. Interestingly, my results suggest that sport

may have helped to develop these specific traits in those interviewed. The participants spoke of consequences of one's actions, the need to be more motivated to achieve success and the ability to work hard in order to achieve goals. Additionally, Gould et al. (2007) conducted a study involving high school athletes regarding concerns and life skills needed by today's school athletes: skills such as learning to deal with increased pressure and expectations; counteracting inappropriate attitudes and expectations about winning and the meaning of success. Again, I found that the participants believed that by participating in sport the aforementioned life skills had developed, specifically attitudes concerning winning and losing, and learning to deal with increased pressure and expectations. When compared to the findings of Gould et al. (2007), my results suggest that it is possible that adults are doing more to teach young people how to deal with the pressures of sport. However, bearing in mind the majority of the participants spoke of natural learning, rather than instructor-based learning, the findings may be coincidental and further investigation should be considered.

An interesting finding was the involvement of older peers, and the participants learning and copying their behaviour in lessons. Emma spoke of her time in county hockey and learning from her elders, and saw the beneficial outcomes. She went on to suggest schools should mix years in order for the younger girls to emulate the older girls' behaviour. We can relate the emulation of others through observation back to the social cognitive theory where observation of others allows individuals to progress their knowledge and skills quickly by information conveyed through demonstration. Learning by observation enables the individual to avoid the repetitive process of learning by negative consequences (Bandura, 1986). Bandura, (1986) and Rosenthal and Zimmerman (1978) noted that modelling could be one of the best ways of transferring values, attitudes, and patterns of thoughts and behaviour. Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, and Nataro (2002) also noted that influential role models exposed to young people for a substantial amount of time could have a positive influence on

development. The participant who appeared to have developed the highest number of life skills (i.e., social competence, consequences of one's actions, pro-social values, and responsibility for one's actions) was the only member that spoke of being allowed to train with older peers. My findings, which positively associate mixed age groups with the potential development of life skills, supports the hypothesis that allowing students the opportunity to participate with youths from older years creates potential for the transferable skills relating to attitude and behaviour to develop faster than by learning from their own action and consequence. By establishing the skills quicker, the possibility of the individual retaining the skill might increase. However, due to the small sample size of the study, the ability for mixed age groups to develop life skills faster warrants further investigation, and cannot be generalised to a wider population.

Another aspect that this research highlighted was the awareness the adolescents had of sports needing to be relevant to their everyday life. Though the girls did not seem consciously aware of technical skills learnt through sport, all participants agreed that if sport were to be more relevant they would get more enjoyment from taking part; this could be a positive side effect of implementing transferable skills into sports lessons. A possible hypothesis might be that if young women were to find sport more enjoyable, participation into adulthood may increase, causing the high withdrawal rates to decline. Previous authors established that enjoyment is the highest motivator to take part in organised sport. Other motives for participating have been largely concerned with positive developmental outcomes such as skill development and enjoyment, or with social interaction. Young people look for opportunities in sport that incorporate challenges, a sense of fun, and activities that help to increase their self-esteem and confidence (Weiss & Williams, 2004). Having fun has been widely noted among researchers as a key reason for sport participation; however, enjoyment is subjective to many facets such as gender, ethnicity, and personality. My findings appear to reflect the

participants need for achievement and progression, suggesting the feeling of accomplishment is what the participants enjoyed. Dismore and Bailey (2009) concluded similar results. They conducted a comparative study of primary and secondary school children's understanding of fun; the results indicated that although younger children considered fun to derive from hedonistic influences, such as excitement, the older children (aged 13–17 years) equated fun to achievement and satisfaction. The majority of participants in my study who appeared to have developed a greater number of transferable skills were the competitive players, where achievement and satisfaction were more frequently spoken of. From the competitive participants I saw a clearer understanding of intrapersonal skills such as handling success and failure, goal setting, and coping under pressure; skills which continued after withdrawal. When achievement and progression existed within sports, the participants appeared to enjoy the sport more, increasing voluntary participation as well as believing there was an increase in the number and depth of skills learnt. When progression and achievement was absent in sport the girls struggled to comprehend why they were taking part, limiting voluntary participation and thus limiting the development of life skills. By actively encouraging the participants to take part in competitive sport, where progression and achievement are common facets, the girls were more likely to find enjoyment in sport, increasing participation and possibly increasing the development of life skills.

My findings indicate that the girls believed they had successfully developed and retained the life skills they learnt if the sport had been meaningful to them: by participating in an activity that was relevant to their day-to-day life, the participants believed they would pick up transferable skills without teachers forcing such skills on them via unnatural methods. Kokkonen, Liukkonen, and Watt (2010) support the association of sport and relevancy, linking the theory sense of coherence with youth sport. Sense of coherence comprises of comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness. Comprehensibility refers to one's

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cognitive control over ones environment, which ideally has structure, and is consistent and understandable. Manageability, the view that to overcome obstacles in life one needs sufficient resources and meaningfulness, involves looking at how life emotionally makes sense and the ability to decide which areas of life are worth dedicating time and effort. I found that the participants in the study who perceived sport to be enjoyable appeared less willing to withdraw, reported fewer negative psychological outcomes and reported a greater number of life skills. The girls who did not associate sport to be meaningful appeared to withdraw from sport with less hesitation, gained fewer transferable skills and increased negative outcomes. Despite the interesting thoughts regarding how a sense of coherence may link in with youth sports, Kokkonen et al. was the first to study whether the two are associated, despite earlier researchers such as Bronikowski and Bronikowska (2009) associating similar concepts with sport, and at the time of writing no studies have explored sense of coherence and transferable skills in sport. In order to gain more trust in this area of research, exploration of the relationship between sense of coherence, sport, and life skills should be undertaken.

It is possible to deduce from my findings that participants believed developing the skills via a method that is meaningful and unique encourages life skills to endure withdrawal. The girls believed that providing students with extrinsic goals allowed them to gain a sense of accomplishment while also seeing progression in their performance. These two features, the participants believed, were integral to sport participation. Through achievement of extrinsic goals, the participants appeared to develop and retain life skill outcomes such as self-confidence and self-esteem, at the same time increasing the enjoyment of the activity. A side effect of achievement, and in turn enjoyment, may be a drop in withdrawal rates in female adolescents, though this is purely observation, and warrants further investigation.

Are the Perceived Benefits Associated with Sport Participation Transferable Across Life Domains?

Concerning the specific life skills reported by the participants, my findings indicate that the girls believed sport improved or developed life skills such as responsibility, social competence, ability to handle pressure, mentality to handle winning and losing, work ethos, preparation techniques, stress release techniques and maintaining dispositions that the environment requires (e.g. staying calm). Additionally, the participants believed the development and practice of life skills in a sporting context had prepared them for applying the skill in multiple domains; the participants saw sport as practice environment for future situations. My findings are in line with other studies (Goudas, et al., 2006; Goudas & Giannoudis, 2008; Papacharisis et al., 2005) who employed an abbreviated form of SUPER and found results such as increased social interest and social responsibility, enhanced sports skills, and enhanced knowledge and confidence when applying life skills. A point of discussion, in my view, is the individuality of life skills. Various studies have chosen to either explore which life skills are most needed by the youth of today or have picked a small number of life skills to develop (e.g. GOAL emphasises life skills that surround goal setting). However, the participants in my study all reported unique life skills that varied with each individual. The life skills needed by each individual appeared subjective to various facets; the life skills the participants discussed depended on hobbies, career aims, family life, and academic aims. Studies concerning the relationship between life skills and sport should try to not focus on specific skills or limit participants to a particular skill, but allow for unique skills to emerge from adolescents.

An interesting finding was the possibility for sports to empower the participants to feel confident communicating and interacting with men. My findings indicate that the girls who played some form of sport alongside boys believed they were happy and confident when

socialising with them; however, the girls who had no experience playing sport with boys were more likely to feel intimidated. The girls noted how, within sport lessons, genders had been spilt since a young age; they had grown up believing boys were the more dominant sex and felt this related to their place in relationships and the workplace. Cornelißen and Pfeifer (2007) concluded similar results finding that it is more beneficial for girls to participate in sports as it strengthens their position when competing with boys in the classroom and theoretically strengthening their position in a male dominated environment, such as the work place. The participants who spoke of interacting with male adolescents during sport perceived it to have transferred in various ways. The girls noted that through interactions with boys in sport, they felt more comfortable competing against them in the classroom and also believed it would be reflected in future environments such as the workplace. Additionally, the girls felt experience engaging with males in sport would prove beneficial in a relationship context. My findings also indicate that a greater number of life skills, such as responsibility and determination, would be achieved had the girls had access to male-dominated sports such as rugby and football. Furthermore, by restricting females to certain sports, the participants felt teachers were promoting the culture that sport is for men. Researchers could look to explore the effects of females training with men with regards to their views of males and the potential development of life skills.

My findings did not associate previous sport participation to increase academic performance; however, the girls did signify that external skills unrelated to cognitive development might have a positive effect on their grades, (e.g. the ability to cope under pressure, having a routine to prepare for stressful events such as an exam, and the attitude of doing your best). The majority of girls in the study were about to take, or in the midst of taking, their GCSEs, and they believed that skills relating to achieving good grades were learnt during their time in sports, and continue to be present despite withdrawal. Researchers

who have investigated this link have almost unanimously agreed that a positive relationship exists between intellectual functioning and physical activity. Findings from Sallis, McKenzie, Kolody, Lewis, Marshall and Rosengard (1999); Marsh and Kleitman, (2002); Darling, Caldwell and Smith (2005); Eccles and Barber (1999); and Shephard (1997) have all suggested sport participation can have a positive effect on academic pursuits.

There have been many presumptions (although unproven) as to why sport may improve academic performance. Such theories include increased energy derived from fitness, productive diversion resulting from time away from classroom, reduced disruptive behaviour, improved cognitive functioning as a result of increased cerebral blood flow or improvement of brain neurotransmitters, and a relationship between motor and mental skills and increased self-esteem (Etnier, Salazar, Landers, Petruzzello, Han, & Nowell, 1997). Sallis et al. (1999) noted that much the research suggesting a correlational link between academic performance and sport were founded on weak research designs, limiting any potential strong evidence to suggest a positive causal relationship between the two. However, there have been some indicative findings that suggest short term and sustained exercise programs resulted in small gains in reaction time, perception, and memory (Etnier et al.).

Although I did not set out to explore the potential relationship between sports and academic performance, suggestions were made by the participants that indicated life skills developed through sport participation had possible positive effects on grades. My findings are in no way conclusive, the girls merely believed that the skills developed in sport may help to enhance their grades. I cannot irrefutably prove the grades were improved, or that they were improved due to the influence of possible life skills reported by the participants. However, it may be possible to suggest the girls felt more confident with academic subjects due to life skills developed through sport participation. Intrapersonal skills such as goal setting, work ethos, handling failure, handling stressful situations, and determination were believed to

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contribute to a better relationship with school work, and would help to increase grades. Rees and Sabia (2010) argued similar findings. claiming that through participating in sport, children experience increased student motivation, instilled self-discipline and persistence, and enhancement of school community, all of which are transferable skills that may increase one's ability for academic performance. An original finding may be that the participants who engaged in competitive sport felt they were more accustomed to pressured situations and might excel better when preparing for important exams such as GCSEs. The girls believed that due to their frequent exposure to stressful environments, they had learnt or developed a coping mechanism that was unique to them, such as going out the night before to unwind or systematic breathing techniques. The participants spoke of how girls who did not compete wouldn't know how they should prepare, and that the lack of exposure may result in lower grades.

Though my findings may not be novel in the suggestion that sport might help to improve academic performance, the methodological approach has proven to be. Thus far, all studies examining whether sport can improve academic development have implemented a program design that is deliberately aimed at improving academic performance (e.g. students engage in sport where goal setting is emphasised by coaches) and many have emphasised a physiological approach. The participants took part in sports lessons that were in no way associated to my study, or designed to enhance academic performance, and the findings look at how life skills such as confidence and preparation techniques (e.g. goal setting) might help to improve academic performance.

Another interesting finding was the belief that sport participation had provided the girls with emotional stability due to sport enabling the youths to learn to cope with stress and anxiety. Previous studies have reported lower stress and anxiety levels in people who participate in sport, (De Moor, Beem, Stubbe, Bloomama, & Geus, 2006; Farmer, Locke,

Moscicki, Dannenberg, Larson, & Radloff, 1988), however previous studies have been theoretical, looked at people who are currently engaging in sport or physical activity, and are not gender specific.

One transferable outcome of sport that the participants believed to endure withdrawal was the reduction of negative psychological behaviours via conscious actions. The participants spoke of ways in which sport had taught them to deal with such emotions through repetition of strategies such as breathing and completing a physical task. Furthermore, the young women believed that sport teaches youths how anti-social behaviour, such as shouting and violence, is futile and will not lead to any positive outcomes.

Researchers have previously suggested sport can reduce anti-social behaviour; however, the studies have often been program-led to purposefully reduce crime through life-skill development, employed participants who had previously been associated with criminal or anti-social behaviour, and were not gender specific. For instance, a program led in America labelled Kansas City Night Hoops, produced a 25% decrease in crime (Wilkins, 1997, p.60). Though basketball was implemented as a gateway for making contact with the adolescents, the program included educational components which sought to develop employment skills, self-esteem, and communication skills (Deane, 1998). Deane additionally adds that while sport played a central role in the program, sport alone could not have achieved a similar outcome, and must be complemented by developmental aspects. Jones and Offord (1989) explored whether participation in non-school activities, such as sport, could reduce anti-social behaviour in children from low-income households. Although no improvements were seen in school performance or home behaviour, statistically significant changes occurred in anti-social behaviour outside of home and school, such as reduced vandalism. I found evidence to suggest by experiencing the consequences of anti-social behaviour in sport, the participants developed other methods of communicating their feelings

in other life settings. The girls believed that sport had provided them with the knowledge that anger did not solve problems, and understood the importance of staying calm in an emotional or hostile situation. The exposure to socially hostile environments taught the participants the best way to respond. Ewing et al. (2002) reported similar findings, suggesting that by allowing adolescents to deal with conflict in a suitable manner, they learnt how to react in future circumstances. My findings contradict those of Booth-Kewley and Friedman (1987) and Haslam (2011) who reported that type A behaviour (negative personality traits such as aggression) is a stable personality trait and therefore, it cannot be modified. Though I am not disputing that type A characteristics may always be present in an individual, my findings do suggest that these characteristics can be modified or altered providing the individual has access to an environment that supports such behaviour modifications. The participants reported to retain the outcome between six months to one year after participation; however, the results may conclude otherwise if a researcher was to conduct interviews after a more substantial gap between sport withdrawal and data collection, giving direction to future research. I also found evidence that challenges competitive sport producing anti-social behaviour. Interestingly, my findings do not support those of Wankel and Kreisel (1985) and Martens (1993) who reported that competitive sport increases negative behaviour. On the contrary, the participants believed that engagement in competitive sport had taught them how to cope with confrontational situations in a safe environment, promoting pro-social values outside of sport.

Sport could reduce anti-social behaviour among certain female adolescents without a program designed to diminish such behaviour. The participants involved were not known to be predisposed to any anti-social or criminal behaviour, unlike similar studies investigating the correlation between sport and anti-social behaviour. My sample size limits the generalisability of this finding, although future researchers could explore the relationship

between sport and anti-social behaviour on a larger scale by increasing the number of participants.

The participants who engaged in competitive sport reported more successful interpersonal life skills such as respecting others (e.g. the umpire), communicating difficult subjects with peers, and learning to competently meet and interact with girls and adults they had never met. These interpersonal skills appeared to have been successfully transferred and applied to other life settings with the girls discussing how they have since implemented these skills outside of sport. For example, Emma spoke of a disagreement with classmates (outside of sport) and applied knowledge learnt from sport to handle the situation in a peaceful manner, while Sarah spoke of how exposure to new social environments within sport has encouraged her to become more confident when interacting with new people.

Forneris, Camire, and Trudel (2012) found that when examining how a range of groups (e.g. athletes, parents, coaches) view the possible relationship between life skills and sport, athletes had lower expectations that sport could help to develop skills that would be valuable in other life settings, but had greater expectations of sport teaching them how to set and attain goals. Contrary to my findings, Forneris et al. found that athletes believed that when teaching sport, adults should pay attention, in particular, to goal-setting skills compared to other life skills and values such as fairness, loyalty, honesty and respect. The participants within my study believed that more rounded skills such as social skills, self-confidence, and commitment were equally important to more sports-related skills such as goal setting. However, Forneris et al. do state that athletes may be developing a narrow view of the life skills that are potentially available in sport participation, a finding that supports the negative comparison results. The participants who were actively engaging in sport at the time of data collection did not seem aware of the potential life skills available from sport, leading to the

hypothesis that more may need to be done to encourage athlete awareness of possible life-skill participation.

In my view, it is important that the findings of my study might draw attention to the awareness that the participants had of the development and transfer of life skills when they were actively engaged in organised sport. The participants believed they had limited awareness of the developing life skills while they were engaging in sport, and didn't acknowledge whether transfer to other life settings was taking place. The realisation of the transfer of skills happened after participation had ended and, in some cases, during the interview itself, calling previous research that has explored the development and application of life skills into question. For instance, studies such as O'Hearn and Gatz (1999; 2000), Hodge et al. (1999) and Forneris et al. (2007) employed youth who were actively engaged in sport; therefore, the results suggesting the development of life skills may have been underestimated. If data had been collected after withdrawal from sport, or a length of time after the program had been completed, the results may have been different (e.g. awareness of more life skills having developed and/or greater knowledge of transferability).

Do Different Sport Environments Cause Diverse Life Skills to Develop?

Previous researchers' findings support the belief that the relationship between development and sport participation is dependent on multiple factors; simply participating in sport is not enough to issue a positive effect. In order for young people to implement transferable skills and continue using them after sport withdrawal, teachers and coaches should take a number of variables into consideration. Researchers have found that factors such as the type of sport played, sports exclusively supported with fees paid by parents, attitude of peers and coaches, and parental support influence whether positive developmental

outcomes are enhanced (Fraser-Thomas, Côté & Deakin, 2005). My findings suggest similar results: the young women believed that teachers and type of sport played were central influences in the development of life skills and positive psychological outcomes. For instance, Clare believed that by teachers limiting what sports they had access too, the girls were prevented from learning a greater number of life skills. In line with past research (Horn, 2008) a key finding of my study was the influence that teachers had on the development of beneficial life skills in students. The participants spoke of how teachers' and coaches' priorities were to win, rather than looking to develop the young women as individuals. Gould and Carson (2008) reported a similar key reason as to why sport might not be a productive activity for positive youth development; it can be predisposed to adult domination. The adults base the activity on what they want to achieve, and do not allow the adolescents to be involved in the decision-making process of how sport is conducted. The system contradicts current research in youth development, which maintains that young people should take responsibility of activities in order for the developmental benefits of sport to be achieved (Larson & Walker, 2005). Novel findings of my study were the participants' visions of how more youth involvement could benefit life-skill development. For instance, Clare believed having access to male-dominated sports such as football and rugby would help to reduce feelings of intimidation and possibly prevent female adolescents becoming intimidated by males in other life settings such as career and relationships. Emma believed giving every student access to individual sports would help to increase intrapersonal skills such as self-confidence and self-motivation, skills she did not believe were particularly emphasised in team sports. Researchers who have impressed the importance for youths to have a voice in the way sport is conducted (Larson & Walker) are of a similar attitude, while my study appears to contribute to the literature by finding that female adolescents might be aware of how responsibility may positively impact learning of life skills in sport.

McDonald, Côté, Eys, and Deakin (2011) claimed that ego-orientated climates are most common among competitive and team sports. Smith (2007) noted that an ego climate is part of goal setting ideology, and it occurs when the athlete concentrates on the most ideal personal performance rather than learning of skills and task performance (task-orientated). Previous researchers have suggested that ego-orientated environments are the strongest predictor of negative psychological experiences (Coakley, 2011). My findings suggest differently, concerning a select few female adolescents. A key finding of my study has been the need for an extensive range of experiences in order for the participants to come away from sport with diverse life skills. For instance, the girls believed that individual sports may develop youth self-confidence, while team sports may develop youth social competence. Thus, it could be unjustified to prevent the young women from having access to a variety of sporting environments (e.g. competitive) because of the possible negative experiences that might occur should school and clubs structure the activity incorrectly.

I hope the findings of my study might draw attention to the apparent restriction of competitive sport. The participants who had experience of competitive play referred to life skills that the recreational athletes did not. Although this may be coincidental, I believe the finding should be further explored. The participants who spoke of playing competitively referred to skills such as increased social competence, awareness of commitment, having realistic expectations of success, and being comfortable under pressure. Despite past researcher claims (Coakley, 2011), the girls in my study who participated in competitive sport spoke of the reduction in aggressive tendencies, giving support to research carried out by Coalter (1996) and Sagar et al. (2011) who noted the importance of individualisation in sports lessons to reduce negatives outcomes. Coalter (1996) suggested a sports program should implement planned developmental experiences in line with the requirements of the environment, signifying the aims of sport may need to be altered to suit certain individuals.

For instance, when structuring sport programs for at-risk youth, the developmental outcomes could focus on respect and responsibility, a program structured for youth preparing to leave school, or emphasise characteristics future employers might consider desirable, such as leadership and management skills. Goudas et al. (2006) emphasised it is the experience of the individual that is influential in positive youth development.

A valid argument from today's adults in sport is that time is limited, particularly in schools, making the individualisation of sport unrealistic. However my findings could provide a middle ground: if schools were to promote a wider range of sports (individual/team) and environments (competitive/recreational) then there might be a greater chance that sport would meet student specific needs, thereby enhancing the quality of lessons, the number of life skills developed, and in turn the probability that young women will apply and transfer those life skills elsewhere. However, these thoughts surrounding individualisation are observational, and further investigation is needed to establish any potential benefits of increasing the range of sports and sporting environments.

The research surrounding competitive sport has received mixed results, yet to my knowledge there has been no study to compare how life skills developed in recreational and competitive sport may differ. Currently, the studies have either emphasised participants involved in non-competitive sport (O'Hearn & Gatz, 1999 & 2000; Forneris et al., 2007; Brunelle et al., 2007; Goudas et al., 2006; Goudas & Giannoudis, 2008; Papacharisis et al., 2005) or athletes who participate in competitive environments (Jones & Lavallee, 2009b); no study has gained insight into whether one or the other may offer higher psychological and physiological benefits to adolescents. The participants noted that through competitive sport they developed skills such as determination and perseverance, and through recreational sport, stress release techniques and the knowledge of adapting to the environment (i.e., when to work hard and when to relax). Wankel and Kreisel (1985) and Martens (1993) reported

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competitive sport prompted feelings of low self-esteem and low self-confidence, however my results suggest the participants who had previously competed in sport appeared to be more confident throughout the interviews and appeared to have higher feelings of self-esteem compared to those had not competed.

The participants who had engaged in competitive sport spoke frequently of extrinsic goals set by coaches and teachers. Past researchers have disputed that psychological well-being is linked with the pursuit of intrinsic goals (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999); however, the competitive sport participants appeared more confident, less unsure of their answers and spoke positively of their time of sport. Chatzisarantis, Hagger, Biddle, Smith, and Wang, (2003) and Vansteenkiste and Deci (2003) found evidence to the contrary, stating that recreational athletes participate due to the achievement of intrinsic goals, whereas competitive sport supports the need for extrinsic goals, which can often produce negative psychological outcomes such as an over-riding desire to win. Ryan and Deci (2000) hypothesised that in order to produce intrinsic motivation, three psychological needs must be met: self-determination, competence, and relatedness. Self-determination refers to the desire to initiate and regulate one's own actions. Competence refers to the need to produce behavioural outcomes and to understand production of these behavioural outcomes. Relatedness refers to the need to have satisfactory relationships with others and with the social order in general (Deci & Ryan, 1990). However, my results suggest the three innate psychological needs were more common, and appeared stronger within the participants who were encouraged by extrinsic goals. A suggested side effect of self-determination, competence, and relatedness (life skills emphasised in competitive sport) appeared to be engagement in activities and environments that could be seen as challenging or intimidating (e.g. mixing in larger social groups). For instance, by receiving and achieving extrinsic goals, the young women reported that they were more competent in their social capabilities and

believed themselves to be more likely to engage in challenging social interactions outside of sport. Bandura (1986) suggested a similar hypothesis, reporting that people tend to avoid activities and situations they believe surpass their coping capabilities, while readily undertake challenging activities and select social environments they perceive themselves capable of handling. Bandura went on to note that any factor that might influence a person's chosen environment could have a substantial effect on personal development due to the social influences functioning in the surroundings that are selected, and continue to develop certain competencies, values, and interests long after the decisional determinant has rendered its initiating effect. Therefore, apparent inconsequential determinants, such as extrinsic goals set during sports lessons, can initiate selective associations that produce major and lasting personal changes.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

Review of main findings and their position in current body of research

In conclusion, through a qualitative methodological approach my findings indicate that, upon reflection, the participants believed life skills developed through their involvement in sport. The participants believed life skills had transferred unknowingly to other areas of their life such as social and academic environments after withdrawal from sport. Results suggest that choosing to withdraw from organised sport does not necessarily affect life-skill retention and ability to apply transferable skills to everyday life. The results suggest experiential learning to be the most productive way of life-skills development, and that in order to gain a range of life skills the type and environment of sport should vary. In particular, the participants reported exposure to some form of competitive sport to be the most conducive to life-skill development, retention, and transfer. The participants had limited awareness of developing the life skills while they were engaging in sport. Realisation of the skills happened after participation had ended and, in some cases, in the interview itself, questioning the results of previous studies who examined youth actively engaged in sport. The study positions itself well into the current body of literature as it complements the growing area of life skills in sport, while separating itself in its key methodology not being intervention based.

Implications for practice and policy

I hope to draw attention to the apparent restriction of competitive sport. The participants who had experience of competitive play referred to a greater number of intrapersonal and interpersonal life skills, appeared to be more socially confident than their non-competitive counterparts, and spoke more of their enjoyment of organised sport. The

study's findings suggest youth sport, in particular in schools, should strive to include a form of competitive sport for every female youth.

A conclusive finding was the influential factors that attributed to life-skill development; alternate skills were developed depending on the environment and type of sport. If schools were to promote a wider range of sports (individual/team) and environments (competitive/recreational) then there might be a greater chance that sport would meet student-specific needs, thereby enhancing the quality of lessons, the number of life skills developed, and the probability that young women will apply and transfer those life skills into other life domains.

The findings of the study suggest that reflection seems to be important to facilitate transfer. A key implication for practice may be to ensure adults give girls a chance to reflect on their sports lessons to promote awareness of life skill development.

Implications on researcher bias

Though qualitative studies do not attempt to suggest objectivity is possible, the current study sought to make the reader as aware as possible of the researchers' experiences and the methodologies employed to allow the reader to judge if bias has inappropriately influenced the research. Bias may have influenced the research due to the personal reasons for conducting the study. In order to limit bias occurring I did not discuss my views with the participants or the purpose for carrying out the study. In reflection my purpose for doing the research may have introduced research bias, which should be made aware to the reader.

Reflection on the research process

Any experience is a learning curve. Hindsight allows us to reflect on what we could do differently and what we did well. A key change I would have made would be to interview

the participants in slightly more depth. The answers they gave answered the research questions; however I could have probed further into some statements to understand more about the participant's experiences. If I was to carry out similar research in the future I would hope to have increased my interview technique and retrieve more in-depth answers.

Implications for Future Research

Although many researchers have previously reported the negative outcomes of competitive sport, my findings indicate that competitive sport may be more beneficial than recreational sport in terms of life skills and enjoyment. The findings of the current study could warrant further research into competitive sport participation.

The awareness of transferability of skills increased as the interviews took place. A selection of the girls believed that since leaving sport, they had time to reflect on its purpose and considered sport to be more relevant to their outside lives compared to when they were actively engaging in sport. As previous studies have examined life-skills development and transfer whilst the youth is actively engaged in sport, their results may be questionable and justify further investigation into life skills after withdrawal.

Researchers may choose to explore a longer gap between participation and withdrawal: a more extensive break between the two may result in more reflection and possible realisation of more life skills. An equivalent approach with male adolescents to establish any comparisons between genders could also be investigated. Concerning sample size, I chose to conduct interviews with ten participants. Previous authors have defended a small sample size; however, researchers may consider increasing the sample size to in order to increase the generalisiability of a similar study. Additionally a longitudinal approach may be warranted to investigate adolescent views of transferable skills during sport participation, for example after

a short space of time after withdrawal and again once the individual/s reach adult life, to establish how transferable skills develop over time and whether they contribute to possible life decisions such as university degree or career.

The questions asked within the interviews were broad concerning the girls' experiences in sport and I did not elaborate on the specific research questions of the study. A possible approach to future research may be to ask specific questions about life skills in sport. However, an interview involving such detailed questions may influence what the participants say and may lead the participants to think there is a right or wrong answer.

As previously noted within the paper, the majority of research surrounding life skills has been conducted with participants engaging in a program specifically designed to promote the development of life skills. My findings suggest experiential learning to be the most effective skill development method; therefore, future researchers could examine how effective experiential learning might be with adolescents who are actively engaged in organised sport compared with the more common instructor-based sport-development programs.

Limitations of the study

I did not hope to make generalisable claims about all female adolescents. I selected ten female adolescents that matched the criteria of the research design; the results are not applicable to every female adolescent. My results are based on the opinions and experiences of ten specific female adolescents, whom will have unique views and experiences, therefore, my findings would be impossible to replicate. Though the study lacks generalizability, the results may provide the subject area with previously unknown findings and generate future

research. The participants were from the same school which may have biased the results

surrounding sport in school.

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Appendix A: Parental/guardian consent form

Principle Investigator	Research Supervisor
Felicity Hayball Masters by Research Student Faculty of Applied Sciences, University of Gloucestershire Oxstalls Campus, Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester, GL2 9HW fhayball@connect.glos.ac.uk, Tel: 01242 715200	Dr Martin Jones Senior Lecturer in Sport & Exercise Psychology Faculty of Applied Sciences, University of Gloucestershire Oxstalls Campus, Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester, GL2 9HW mjones2@glos.ac.uk , Tel: 01242 715200

Dear Parent,

We are sport psychology researchers at the University of Gloucestershire. We would like to invite your child to take part in a research study. The study is voluntary and your child will only be included if you provide your permission. The purpose of this study is to explore youth sport experiences and how skills learnt in sport can transfer to other life domains.

We would like to invite your child to complete one interview. The interview will last around one hour and can take place outside of school hours at a location of your choosing. The questions will involve non-invasive questions about their self-confidence in a number of areas such as academia, sport, and their social life. Your child can choose not to answer any questions and can leave the interview at any time. The Interviews with children will be conducted in a public place or within the line of sight of a third party for the safety of both the researcher and the participant, I am also fully CRB checked to conduct interviews with under 18 year olds.

We will keep all data private and secret. We will keep data in a locked office and only the research team will have access to the data. We will keep data for five years after the study has finished. After five years, we will destroy the data. Once we have finished the study we will present the results at conferences and publish in an academic journal. When we publish the results, no participant will be identifiable by name.

By allowing your child to take part in this study, you may help coaches and scholars develop their skills. There are no known risks associated with taking part in this study.

The University of Gloucestershire faculty research ethics panel has approved this study. If you have any concerns or further questions and would like to speak to someone within the panel, please contact Adam Hart. Adam is the Vice chair of the Faculty Research Ethics Panel (FREP). His email address is ahart@glos.ac.uk and his number is +44 (0)1242 714670, Adam has no direct involvement in the study.

If you would be happy for your child to participate in this study, please read and sign the informed consent form and return it together with the completed questionnaires.

Many thanks

Felicity Hayball BSc (Hons)

Informed Consent Form

Principal Investigator	Felicity Hayball Masters by Research Student Faculty of Applied Sciences, University of Gloucestershire Oxstalls Campus, Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester, GL2 9HW mjones2@glos.ac.uk, Tel: 01242 715200		
Research Supervisor	Dr Martin Jones Senior Lecturer in Sport & Exercise Psychology Faculty of Applied Sciences, University of Gloucestershire Oxstalls Campus, Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester, GL2 9HW jparker@glos.ac.uk , Tel: 01242 715200		
I understand I have been asked for my child to participate in a research study		Yes	No
I Have read and received a copy of the attached information letter		Yes	No
I understand the benefits and risks involved if my child takes part in this research study		Yes	No
I understand that I am free contact the research team to take the opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study		Yes	No
I understand that my child is free to refuse participation, or to withdraw from the study at any time, without consequence, and that my child's information will be withdrawn at my request		Yes	No
I understand that the research team will keep the data confidential		Yes	No

I am happy for my child to take part in this study:

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Contact number: _____

Email: _____

Appendix B: Participant consent form

Principal Investigator	Research Supervisor
Felicity Hayball	Dr Martin Jones
Masters by Research Student	Senior Lecturer in Sport & Exercise Psychology
Faculty of Applied Sciences, University of Gloucestershire	Faculty of Applied Sciences, University of Gloucestershire
Oxstalls Campus, Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester, GL2 9HW	Oxstalls Campus, Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester, GL2 9HW
fhayball@connect.glos.ac.uk , Tel: 01242 715200	mjones2@glos.ac.uk , Tel: 01242 715200

Hello,

I am a sport psychology researcher at the University of Gloucestershire. I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. The study is voluntary and you will only be included if you provide your permission. The purpose of this study is to explore youth sport experiences and how skills learnt in sport may transfer to other life domains.

Your involvement in the study, if you choose to volunteer, will be to participate in one interview, and possible follow up questions. The interview will last around one hour and can take place outside of school hours at a location you feel comfortable, in the presence of a third party. The questions will involve non-invasive questions about your self-confidence in a number of areas such as academia, sport, and social life. You can choose not to answer any questions and can leave the interview at any time.

We will keep data in a locked office, and only the research team will have access to the data. We will keep data for five years after the study has finished. After five years, the data will be destroyed. Once we have finished the study we will present the results at conferences and it may be published in an academic journal. When we publish the results, no participant will be identifiable by name or location.

By taking part in this study, you may help coaches and scholars develop their skills. There are no known risks associated with taking part in this study.

The University of Gloucestershire faculty research ethics panel has approved this study. Should you have any concerns or further questions and would like to speak to someone within the panel, please contact Adam Hart. Adam is the Vice chair of the Faculty Research Ethics Panel (FREP). His email address is ahart@glos.ac.uk and his number is +44 (0)1242 714670, Adam has no direct involvement in the study.

If you would like to participate in this study, please read and sign the informed consent form and return it with the completed questionnaires.

Many thanks

Felicity Hayball BSc (Hons)

Informed Consent Form

Principal Investigator	Felicity Hayball Masters by Research Student Faculty of Applied Sciences, University of Gloucestershire Oxstalls Campus, Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester, GL2 9HW fhayball@connect.glos.ac.uk, Tel: 01242 715200		
Research Supervisor	Dr Martin Jones Senior Lecturer in Sport & Exercise Psychology Faculty of Applied Sciences, University of Gloucestershire Oxstalls Campus, Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester, GL2 9HW mjones2@glos.ac.uk, Tel: 01242 715200		
I understand that I have been asked to participate in a research study		Yes	No
I have read and received a copy of the attached information letter		Yes	No
I understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study		Yes	No
I understand that I am free contact the research team to take the opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study		Yes	No
I understand that I am free to refuse participation, or to withdraw from the study at any time, without consequence, and that my information will be withdrawn at my request		Yes	No
I understand the data is confidential, and who will have access to the information		Yes	No
Do you take part in sport?		Yes	No
If yes, what sport/s do you participate?			
If yes, is it A) competitively or B) recreationally		A	B
If no, did you use to take part in sport (either recreationally or competitively)?		Yes	No

I wish to take part in this study:

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Parent's signature   _____
(If under 18 years)

Date: _____

Contact number: _____

Email: _____

Appendix C: Rough guide for interviews

I devised the following themes as a rough guide for the interview. The interviews were semi-structured and did not follow a particular format. If the participant went off topic, but I found what they were saying relevant, I was happy to go along with the conversation.

Themes

1. History of sport e.g. sports played, duration (in years), level of competition (if played competitively

2. General feelings towards sport

3. Perceptions of sport

4. Why play sport e.g. personal reasons, health, appearance

5. Reasons for withdrawing

6. Benefits of sport

7. Competitive / recreational

8. School sports

9. What sport (in general) teaches

10. Areas of sport that remind us of life

Appendix D: Coding tree

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
I think Karate really developed me as a person, making me more confident and learning to keep trying if you can't do something.	Clare	A quote describing how a participant believed participation in sport directly altered their personality or character traits.	Sports enhancing traits	Sport and personality (Inclusion Criteria: Codes that involved how sport can impact or develop an individual's personality)	How Skills are developed through sport (Inclusion Criteria: Subthemes in which the focus was on how sports, and experiences in sport helped the individual to develop psychologically)
With hockey, because I'm so competitive like, I've got that desire to score the goal […]I like knowing it's in my power to win or lose. Like, hockey is quite black and white, either you score the most or you don't. I think I'm quite, determined, and I don't like it when something is taken out of my hands.	Emma	A quote detailing how the participants felt their traits dictated which sport they had participated in	Traits enhancing sport		
I think, like, trying my hardest for example, was already there [in my personality] and sport enhanced it, or made it come through	Clare	Quotes that demonstrated a participant felt sport had enhanced or heightened a characteristic, but not created a personality trait.	How sport alters personality		

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
I think leaving sport will mean I don't experience those situations as regularly, so maybe I won't be as used to them as I used to be. But those situations have changed and developed my personality, and I don't think you can really go back to who you were before.	Jess	Quotes that suggested participants felt sport had developed them as an individual, rather than developing a specific trait.	Developing the individual		
I was shy before sport. I didn't really mix. I didn't like to rely on people. Sport helped me, like I said, learn to trust and rely on people, like it helped to overcome this barrier I had with people. And now, I communicate with people better.	Sarah	Quotes that suggested a pre-existing personality trait, that the participant believed to be negative or detrimental, which sport helped to overcome	Overcoming personality barriers		
I think they both have good and bad things about them. I think, like, it is good to be able to go out there and do something fun, but then when it's a competition you have to be serious. So it teaches you when is the time for fun and when it's the time to focus and work hard, which is going to come into all different areas of life.	Becky	Quotes that compare how experiences in competitive sport and recreational sport differ	Competitive vs. recreational sport ex.	Experiences that affect transferable skills (Inclusion Criteria: Codes that involved quotes discussing experiences and their impact on transferable skills	

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
I think experiences in competitive sport, they don't happen because the teachers says right, today we're going to learn how to be confident talking to people we don't know, it's more that sport provides that to happen, you have to do it so you learn how to be confident at it. It's less forced.	Alex	Quotes that describe the experiences participants feel they had in solely competitive sport	Competitive sports experiences		
I think I took a lot away from karate that I can go on and take into life. I don't think I realised how much can be used in life when I was still doing it, but you stop doing it and then like you come across a situation and you look back and think, that experience is going to help me now. […] School sport was more learning to deal with judgment and negative experiences.	Clare	Quotes that compared how participants feel experiences differ within school sport and sports outside of school	School sport vs. non-school sport ex.		

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
I think the girls who aren't on any teams were pushed harder and took it more seriously they would benefit more. I feel sorry for the girls who aren't on teams, because they just kind of get ignored and don't get any aims or challenges, so they don't really try. If you're on a team, you have constant goals, like improving your goal statistics or making quicker passes, which helps us to stay motivated. I also think they miss out on, like the sense of community	Emma	Quotes that compared how participants feel experiences differ within team sports sessions and non-team sports sessions within the school environment	Team and non-team sport ex.		
I think leaving sport will mean I don't experience those situations as regularly, so maybe I won't be as used to them as I used to be. But those situations have changed and developed my personality, and I don't think you can really go back to who you were before.	Jess	Quotes that reflected what experiences sport had given them, without specifying the type of sport (e.g., competitive /recreational /team/non-team/school sport	Sports experiences		

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
[Sport] prepares you for experiences outside of sport and school, and gives you ways of dealing with different situations.	Alex	Quotes that illustrated how experiences within sport can prepare an individual for coping with situations outside of sport	Preparation experiences		
I get that they're better at those sports than us, and they deserve to be on like a first team, but they get so much attention given to them, and they get a much better experience of sport. I think everyone should get that experience. […] I took away the importance of knowing you can achieve something. Having your friends cheer you across the finish line, regardless of your placing, it's such an amazing feeling, you feel so good about yourself, and it's unfair that not everyone gets that sense of, like, pride and stuff	Becky	Quotes that suggested participants felt experiences depended on athletic ability	Equal experience opportunities		

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
[on playing sport with boys] Maybe they would be less intimidating. like I think socialising with them is pretty scary, so it might help to get rid of that first initial, like scariness	Jess	Quotes that reflected how participants felt intimidated by males, and how sport could potentially help to reduce these feelings	Barriers in gender	Social surroundings (Inclusion Criteria: Codes that involved a focus external to the individual)	
It helps you learn to socialise. I do quite a lot of sport outside school, on the county and stuff, and I have to get on with people who I'm not around very much. I think that's why I'm better at getting on with people I don't really know, better than the other girls who aren't in outside teams	Emma	Quotes demonstrating how participation in sport has improved social skills	Social skills		
The feeling of scoring a goal is amazing, then turning round to see all your friends coming over to give you a high fine and hug you, it's like this feeling of support	Emma	Quotes describing a connection with sport and a sense of support	Support		

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
Having sport etiquette, helps you to like, well, not be a bad sport. Like if you lose, you say well done and stuff to the other team so it helps when something doesn't go right at school or something, you don't blame it on someone you just get on with it.	Sarah	Quotes that connected sport with blame, either positively or negatively	Blame		
I think I like the idea that it's a team community, not just with players but with coaches and stuff, you've got something in common with them, so you become closer with them so you make friends and stuff.	Emma	Quotes that gave the idea of how sport can provide the participant with a sense of community and the positive outcomes of this aspect of sport	Community		
I think it's a good way of learning peoples signals, and thinking ahead? Like, if say, I stepped into the centre circle with my left foot, I was going to pass to a particular position, and likewise if I set up a chest pass or an overhead throw. So you learn to pick up minor details and makes you more alert	Alex	The quotes that encompass this code reflected how the participants felt understanding people's body language had improved due to situations occurring through sport	Body language		

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
Give a purpose to the lessons so you feel like you're achieving something rather than just, like doing it for the point of, it's a sports lesson and you have to fill it up.	Alex	Quotes that illustrated the need for sports lessons to have a clear purpose. Quotes detailing the need for purpose was often associated with motivation to participate	Purpose	Meaning to the individual (Inclusion Criteria: codes that reflected the need for sport to be identifiable to each individual)	
I think it's more relevant than I thought. It's not just about physical fitness, it's about creating a situation where you can learn skills for life by doing this. Rather than, this is a hockey skill, this is a netball skill, and you're not going to need it ever again.	Emma	Quotes that connected sport with either the need for it to be relevant to other life domains or the how participants viewed sport has relevant to other life domains	Relevant skills		

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
The teachers obviously don't want to take us to any games so it would've been a good time to say, ok you don't have a match coming up, so the aim of this lesson is to communicate with a team member and discuss tactics and stuff. Then at least it would be a bit more meaningful, and we would be more motivated, because we would see a benefit coming out of it, and It would give us something to achieve.	Alex	The quotes for this criteria discussed how participants felt sport was or should be meaningful to their lives in areas other than specifically sport	Meaning		
[talking about if sport had more relevance] You would put more effort in and actually try, because if it's not something that's important to you then you don't bother. But if it could made into something meaningful, you more likely too, well it'll motivate you more and it would make you want to commit more to it, and put in more effort.	Clare	Quotes that associated the significance of what was learnt in sport was with the amount of effort exerted.	Effort (effort and meaning)		

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
We never use the skills in school, we'll never use them after school, so why are we learning them?	Jess	The quotes for this criteria involved participants describing lessons as useless to their lives	Pointless		
It was hard to feel motivated to do anything because we never achieved anything	Alex	Quotes reflecting how achievement influences the participant's view of sports	Achievement (existence and absence of)	Need for achievement and progression (Inclusion Criteria: codes that reflected the need to feel accomplishment and success in order to participate enthusiastically)	
You have maths and you learn then skills and you develop them, like physics, chemistry, and stuff, it progressively gets harder. In karate, you grade every 3 months and you go up a belt, so you're always progressing and achieving something. PE sort of, it's the same skills again and again, there's no progression as such, it's this is netball, we have to do it.	Clare	Quotes that described a lack of progression in sports lessons, either through sport specific skills of transferable skills	Inability to see Progression		

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
We have different aims […] its important there are goals and aims, it gives us focus so when the lesson finished we feel like we've achieved something	Emma	Quotes that reflect the participants want for lessons that include goals or aims, both sport specific and transferable	Goals		
Looking back I think sport was the first time I remember seeing myself obviously improve at something. So I think it switched something in my head that made me realise I can improve if I keep practising which is still a part of me today.	Alex	These quotes involved the participant need to 'see' improvement, this could be a sub conscious or a conscious thought	Visible accomplishments		
I think that not there can be a positive to every situation, but it depends on your outlook. I could of looked at a lost game and think 'well that was a waste of time' but I came away and though, now, what can I take from that and improve. […] So I got some mock GCSE's back, and I got lower than I was hoping, but instead of thinking you know, I suck. I thought, where did I go wrong, how can I improve.	Alex	This raw code included quotes that reflected how sport provided the participants with a positive attitude to transferable situations	Positive attitude	Mentality (Inclusion Criteria: codes that involved a focus on the individual's mind-set due to sport)	Potential transferable outcomes and skills (Inclusion Criteria: Subthemes that included outcomes and skills that were created or developed through sport, and are transferable to contexts outside of sport)

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
Sport makes you stronger in that sense […] it makes you stronger mentally	Jess	Quotes that reflect how sport can enhance a participants rationalism	Rationalism		
When you finish doing sports you always feel, like, revived and feel better about everything, kind of, feel a bit more, like you always feel better than if you hadn't done it. It leaves you with this feeling of like, I can do that, it makes you feel good about yourself and what you've just achieved.	Becky	Quotes that reflected participants feeling better about themselves due to engaging in sport	Positive self esteem		
I also think they [girls who dislike sport] worry about what they look like, and protect their self-esteem by not trying too hard.	Sarah	Quotes that discussed limiting participation or effort in sport in order to protect their image or self-esteem	Protection of self esteem		
[talking about karate] It gave me the confidence that if I put in the effort, then I could defeat anything.	Clare	Quotes that described participants acknowledging sport had enhanced their self-confidence	Self confidence	Confidence (Inclusion Criteria: codes that encompassed an individual's perceived confidence in a variety of situations improving due to their participation in sport)	

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
I'm more confident socialising as well. Before I would really panic around strangers, like not random people. Friends of friends or friends brother and sisters, I wouldn't speak to them. Then during team days, if we were competing against another school they would come to lunch hall after the game for an hour and you had to mix, like I mixed with these total strangers. Now when I met someone I don't know, I'm more confident to start up a conversation.	Emma	Quotes that discussed how participation in sport improved the girls confidence when socialising	Social confidence		
I think it made me see everyone struggles with something, so I think I'm a bit more confident at doing stuff I might not be good at	Alex	Quotes that illustrated how participants felt they were more comfortable to fail at something, or to try a new skill because of experiences they overcame in sports	Confidence at failing		
Maybe if we had played football or hockey with them [boys], we would be, I don't know, more confident around them, and feel like its ok to challenge them. Even when I go running, I feel like I can't run with a guy because he must be better than me.	Jess	Quotes that show participants could see potential for sport to increase confidence around boys.	Potential for sport to increase Confidence when interacting with boys		

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
So a couple of weeks ago this girl did something that upset me, and instead of just marching over and shouting at her, I thought, like in hockey, that wouldn't solve anything, so I just asked to speak to her quietly and we sorted it out. […] You know that if you get angry at the girl it's not going to help you win.	Emma	Quotes that illustrated sport taught participants anti-social behaviour was not a successful cause of action when dealing with situations	Reduction in anti-social behaviour	Wellbeing: (Inclusion Criteria: codes that reflected the participants belief that sport had a positive impact on their emotional state)	
I think I've always seen sport as a way to get our, not aggression, but like, more, if you feel angry or annoyed at someone or something. Going and hitting a hockey ball or tennis ball really helped	Sarah	These quotes had to discuss how sport provided a form of stress release through participation or how sport has taught participants to relieve stress through doing a sporting action.	Stress relief		
They're saying less girls want to do sport with boys, so they don't go and put you with the boys. but I think they should because, like you said linking it back to life, we're going to be with people who we might not like and might not like the same things and we're going to have to do it anyway.	Jess	Quotes that discussed participants understanding of how sport could transfer to other life domains	Potential to see transfer	Transferable skills relatable to life (Inclusion Criteria: codes included in this criterion were skills that the participants believed directly transferable to other life domains outside of sport)	

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
My tennis coach really pushed that sometimes sport can be down to a bit of luck, like whether the ball was in or out can be down to a tiny difference in space, like a gust of wind could take it further and land it out. She also always told us the other girl might be a more powerful player, or get more help from the school.[…] I guess it's made me a bit more aware of what I can control and what I can't.	Sarah	Quotes that discussed how sport had taught participants to have realistic expectations with regards to competing or achievements	Realistic expectations		
If people want me to be competitive, I'll be competitive, if it's just for fun, I'll play for fun. I'll adapt to the situation. And thinking about what you said earlier about the relevance of sport, I think that could be an example, I've learnt to adapt to any situation like competitive or recreational. Like, if someone's upset and needs comforting, I'll adapt to that situation and help, so ye I guess sport does relate to life and teachers should point that out and make us aware of that.	Jess	Quotes that discuss how sport engagement taught participants to adapt to changing situations	Adapting		

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
There's always a leadership role, they change who leads warm ups and stuff so you've got the chance to look after the whole group, so you've got the experience that if you have to look after a team in a job you'd have that like, you'd of done it before in a similar way.	Clare	Quotes that discussed how leadership was implemented in their sport. The participant did not have to be consciously aware of this as a transferable skill	Leadership		
I think I am more confident around people, especially people I'm not around all the time. The girls at school only really mix with other girls at school so when we go to parties and stuff their a bit awkward.	Bella	Quotes that discuss the participants' belief of sport improving their capability to socialise with people in various environments	Social Competence		
[putting teamwork in a context other than sport] Well, we recently did a presentation and there was four of us, and one of the girls was convinced she would bring our mark down, and one of the boys was like, well I want a good mark so, you know, started being rude to her. So I sort of turned to them and said this was a group effort and whether we did well or not was how we worked together, which I think came from how the sports teachers make sure we play as a team.	Jess	Quotes that discussed how teamwork was implemented in their sport. The participant did not have to be consciously aware of this as a transferable skill	Teamwork		

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Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
If the whole team was always dropping out for a party or to go out with friends, obviously it wouldn't be beneficial for the other team players, the teachers are always saying if we don't show up for some reason then we're letting everybody down. I think having to make a commitment gives us an idea of responsibility. Like we can't just pick and choose when we're going to do something.	Jess	Quotes that suggested participants learnt a sense of responsibility and commitment through participating in sport	Responsibility		
I think planning would be a good one [skill], it all helps you to keep calm and lets you focus more on the event. I think that's important in life, the whole planning aspect. If you plan and prepare for a situation you have a better chance of it going well	Becky	These quotes included participants views on how planning is needed within sport, and that this can be a transferable skill	Planning		
Without karate I might not of realised if you want something, you have to work hard for it	Clare	Quotes that reflected how sport instilled the mind set of hard work in the participant	Hard work		

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
So it's who I am now, I always try my hardest, like with my GSCE's or when I apply for uni [university], it's ultimately the uni's decision whether they accept me over someone else, so as long as I've done my best, that's all there is.	Sarah	Quotes that suggested sport participation taught the girls to always do their best, as some circumstances are out of their control	Doing your best		
It's also changed how I am with keeping fit, because I'm so used to being active and stuff I think I always will be. If I hadn't ever taken part in sports, I doubt I would do running and stuff now.	Jess	Quotes that illustrated how participation in sport affected the girls view and knowledge of physical activity	Physical skills		
I think also it prepares you, so you that pick up how one thing can have consequences. So if I mess up a pass, it could lead to the other team getting the ball, which could lead them to scoring which could lead them to winning. So I know that my actions have consequences. Like if I was to shout at an umpire, there would be consequences	Alex	Quotes that include participants discussing how engaging in sport helped them to learn about how their actions have repercussions	Consequences		

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
It helps to break that, first stage where you judge someone on their looks. Like, with sport you look at how well they play and you learn it's not about looks, the ugliest guy can be the best hockey player and you need him on your team, and then when he's on your team you start to get along with him. If it wasn't for sport then you would probably just pass him over because he's not good looking.	Emma	Quotes that discuss how sport helped the girls to overcome appearance as a way of judging people	Judgment of appearances		
You're automatically put in the 'can't do it group'. So then you don't bother trying because you've been told, not actually verbally told, but like, shown, that you can't do it, so there's no point trying	Clare	Quotes that reflected the girls awareness of being given feedback through actions	Non-verbal feedback	Learning to Cope (Inclusion Criteria: codes that included negative situations and the ways in which sport had taught a coping mechanism)	
There is going to be times when you're going to have to fail, and you're going to have to take responsibility, I love karate, but you can't really fail at it?	Clare	Quotes that discuss dealing with failure in a sporting context	Failure		

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
I've been places where I feel like people are watching me, or judging me and, it's not that I like it or anything, but at least it's not, at least I've been in that place before	Alex	Quotes in which the girls discussed how sport has helped them overcome an insecurity of people watching them	Coping with people watching		
I think you get used to criticism and being told you're not doing something right, or like, even being put in the 'non team' group, is like their giving you un spoken feedback, like you're not good enough for this group. So it teaches you to accept others are going to judge you and stuff and you have to either work hard to change their view or you need to just get over it.	Alex	Quotes in which the girls discussed the judgmental environment of sport. The majority of quotes included reference to how this aspect of sport is transferable to other life domains	Judgment		
[Sport] allows you to deal with certain situations from a young age in, sort of, a controlled environment. There are teachers around you so nothing is going to get out of hand. It's a 'safe place' [laughs] to deal with all sorts of different things.	Emma	Quotes that suggested the participants felt sport had enabled them to cope with difficult situations	Difficult situations	Difficult situations (Inclusion Criteria: codes involving adverse situations and the way sport had influenced how the participant dealt with it)	

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
If there was less pressure from the school I would of liked to continue [with sport], but it's a fairly all or nothing environment	Jess	Quotes that suggested the pressure the girls faced to take part in sports	Pressure		
We always have team competitions in science lessons, and I'm not very academic so I don't really ever win. But I was, or am really sporty, and I can still lose, so I know you can lose even if you tried your hardest and it doesn't mean you're a loser it just means that particular day, you didn't perform good.	Sarah	Quotes that discussed how sport can be an effective way to learn how to cope with losing in a positive manner	Losing		
They paid attention to the people who were really good at sport and gave less attention to those who weren't on the teams	Alex	Quotes that discussed the priority of the teachers attention during sports lessons	Teachers attention	How teachers affect transferable skills (Inclusion Criteria: codes that included the ways in which teachers may limit or impact transferable skills)	Prevention of transferable skills (Inclusion Criteria: subthemes that reflected how individuals are either prevented from picking up transferable skills or how they pick up negative transferable skills)

Best Quote	Participant and Transcript info	Inclusion criteria	Code	Subtheme	Global Theme
I think when it comes down to it, the teachers are more concerned with the school winning and its reputation than developing us as people.	Emma	Quotes that suggested the girls felt teachers were more concerned with winning	Teachers and competition		
If they [teachers] said 'we've got the option of tennis, netball and football today' then it would be [more enjoyable], people would go for what they actually wanted to play rather than what they had to play	Sarah	Quotes that describe how girls were unable to choose which sport they played	Choice	Limited options within sports lessons (Inclusion Criteria: codes that reflected how limiting experiences through limiting options can impact transferable skills)	
I want to try loads of new sports, like more swimming and football, stuff that we were never allowed to do in school	Alex	Quotes that describe how the school prevented a wide range of sports	A lack of Variety		