

لماذا البعض ينضم والآخرون لا: الخبرات المتجسدة للطلاب الذكور في
التربية البدنية لمدرسة ثانوية في السعودية

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ثانوية في السعودية

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الملخص: بالاعتماد على مفاهيم بورديو حول جسدية الهايتوس والرأسمال الاجتماعي والرأسمال المادي، فإن الهدف من دراسة الحالة النوعية هذه هو تطوير فهم أفضل للتوجهات الجسدية للشباب السعودي التي تؤثر على خبراتهم في التربية البدنية. تشير الورقة إلى البيانات النوعية الناتجة عن الملاحظة وكذلك المقابلات شبه المنظمة مع ٢٧ فتى تتراوح أعمارهم بين ١٥ و ٢٠ عامًا. تم العثور على العائلة وأصدقاء الحي وأقرانهم في المدرسة من العوامل الأساسية في تشكيل مواقف الأولاد -تجاه، وأيضاً خبراتهم في- التربية البدنية. ويعتبر إنتاج وتحويل الرأسمال المادي إلى أشكال أخرى من الرأسمال (مثل الرأسمال الاجتماعي) ملحوظاً بين الطلاب الذين يتمتعون بمهارة بدنية، مما يساعدهم على كسب مكانة أكثر امتيازاً اجتماعياً وأكاديمياً. الطلاب الذين ليسوا ماهرين ويأتون من ظروف عائلية مقيدة (اجتماعية / مالية) هم أقل قدرة على تمييز أنفسهم وقد يتعرضون للتهميش. تجد هذه الورقة أن الجسم الرياضي للطلاب يعتبر مثالاً على القيمة الرمزية (الرأسمال) ويعطي وصفاً لكيفية إعادة إنتاج هذه الهياكل البدنية وهذه القيم.

الكلمات الدلالية: خبرات التلاميذ، الهايتوس، الرأسمال الاجتماعي، الرأسمال المادي التربية البدنية

Why Some join in and Others don't: Embodied Experiences of Male Students in Physical Education at a Saudi High School

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Abstract: Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of bodily habitus, social capital, and physical capital, the purpose of this qualitative case study is to develop a better understanding of Saudi youth bodily dispositions that influence their experiences in physical education. The paper reports on qualitative data generated by observation as well as semi-structured interviews with 27 boys between the ages of 15 and 20. Family, neighborhood friends and peers have been found to be essential factors in shaping boys' attitudes towards and experiences in PE. The production and conversion of physical capital to other forms of capital (e.g. social capital) is notable among students who are physically skillful, helping them to earn a more socially and academically privileged status. Students who are not skillful and come from constraining family circumstances (social/financial) are less able to distinguish themselves and may experience marginalization. This paper finds that a student's sporting body is considered as an example of symbolic value (capital) and gives an account of how such bodies, and such values, are (re) produced.

Keywords: Students' experiences; habitus; social capital; physical capital; physical education

Introduction

This paper investigates male students' experiences in physical education (PE) at an urban high school in the city of Makkah, Saudi Arabia. In Saudi Arabia, high school PE is technically a mandatory class that occurs once a week for a period of 45 minutes at the time of this research. Another factor that may seem strange is that regardless of the degree of participation or skill achieved, no students are given a failing grade: all students pass the PE course and this grade is figured into the overall grade point average (GPA) (Al-Liheibi, 2008). But, curiously for non-Saudi readers, the school where I conducted my research was quite typical in this respect.

In Saudi schools, soccer is extremely popular sport culture, and it is the popular activity in PE classes (Al-Liheibi, 2008). He (2008) found that students who had access to a gym outside school had more positive attitudes towards PE than students who did not; furthermore, students who engaged in daily physical activities (PAs) outside of school had more positive attitudes than those who did PA randomly or not at all. Al-Aifan's (2000) survey revealed that some students lack the desire to participate, preferring to do something they perceive as more beneficial (i.e. homework). Regarding activity outside of school, he reported that such students preferred individual, technology-related activities such as computer games rather than PA. As long ago as 1994, Rabaan found that Saudi parents were reluctant for their sons to participate in sports because they were concerned about them doing poorly at school; the privileging of study over sport continues to some degree in Saudi, though there is a dearth of qualitative, sociological literature examining Saudi male high school students' experiences and identifying the social and cultural influences that affect their participation in PE.

Drawing on Bourdieu's (1984, 1986) concepts of (bodily) habitus, social capital, and physical capital, the analysis focuses on the relationship between these students' participation in PE and their own bodies, and the interplay of social and cultural dimensions in their lives. The students' experiences are explored from their own points of view and their experiences are located within the larger framework of bodily habitus to understand both the enabling and constraining factors that shed light on why few

students actually fully participate in PE while many do not engage in PE classes despite the fact they are mandatory. The boys' responses provide insights into the experiences, beliefs, behaviors, and everyday routines that shape their bodies and their inclinations to participating in PE.

Theoretical Framework

Habitus

Bourdieu (1984) defined habitus as schemes of structured and structuring dispositions that lead to certain practices, tendencies and actions. Habitus, according to Bourdieu, influences the development of the body, shaping levels of participation in exercise as well as ordinary movement, including gait and even posture. In his 1984 ethnographic study, Bourdieu observed that people who share similar living conditions develop a similar bodily habitus. He believed that habitus begins to mould us in early childhood, as we interact with family members and other social groups in our schools, neighborhoods, and circle of friends (1984). Each family's life and practices evolve from the way past generations lived, and habitus becomes structured by both personal histories and the larger social contexts in which families live (Bourdieu, 1977). He defines the early experiences as:

social pathway for people to live their lives, in which the habitus could be taken as a subjective and not individualistic system of internalized compositions, methods of perception, notion and action that is common for each member of the same class and forms the prerequisite for all objectification and admiration (1977, p. 78).

Bourdieu described habitus as an internalization of the social world, which shapes a person's actions, thoughts and feelings based on experience. Habitus affects every aspect of human embodiment, and the way people experience PA reveals the innermost dispositions of the habitus. In this paper, habitus refers to the bodily dispositions that used to explain why some boys to get involved in PE and others to sit on the sidelines; these dispositions arise out of the interplay of social, cultural and economic factors which shape people's reactions to familiar conditions, with a sense of

what is comfortable (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010). Each habitus positions people differently in social relations, gives them cultural skills, and inclines them toward certain educational practices and other cultural resources or activities, which are converted into different benefits (and possibly disadvantages) as people move through the world (Bourdieu, 1986).

Capital

According to Bourdieu (1986), the concept of capital provided a perspective on the ways in which a person's resources are privileged, marginalized, traded, or acquired within a given (social) field. Embodiment is an aspect of cultural capital that is also referred to as "physical capital" (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007, p.371). Shilling (2003) acknowledged physical capital as the "social formation of bodies by individuals through sporting, leisure and other activities in ways which express a class location and which are accorded symbolic value" (p.654). Dagkas and Stathi (2007) contended that the production of physical capital referred to the development of bodies in ways that were recognized as possessing value in the social field; essentially, physical capital is translated via bodily participation in leisure, sports, and PAs into other forms of capital. Shilling (2003) argued that physical capital is a way of modelling the body according to socially valued standards. In this research, physical capital is a concept that is being converted into social capital through sporting prowess and its effect on social roles and social and academic networks (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007).

For Bourdieu, "The volume of social capital possessed by a given agent...depends on the size of the network of connections that he can effectively mobilize" (1986, p. 249); this amounts to "the profits of membership" (Bourdieu, 1984). In this study, the dimensions of social capital include networks of peers, friends, and traditional background, in addition to the expertise, knowledge, and capabilities that young people possess and discover from being a member of a certain social class (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007). These are important conceptual considerations for the present study as it explores the connection between Saudi male adolescents' experiences and their body dispositions in PE.

Students' Experiences Related to PE

McDevitt and Ormrod (2002) argued that children begin their schooling with differences in knowledge, skills, and perceptions formulated in their families, neighborhoods and among peers. Kirk (2005) stated that the family is a prime unit of support for children's experiences in sports, particularly in the community context; more broadly, family is the primary institution of children's socialization. Family traditions and social techniques prescribe certain sports, which can lead to privileges for those who participate in them (Lee et al., 2009). Inequalities in the practice of sport are not only financial but are also linked to subtle forms of differentiation that are taken as natural attributes of individuals (ibid).

In British study for boys' secondary school suggested that higher socio-economic status is linked with greater involvement in PA (Duncan, et al., 2002). Furthermore, a variety of studies from Canada (Flack, 2009), America (Wilson, 2002), and Britain (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007) suggested that adolescents from low socio-economic backgrounds were less physically active, while higher educational attainment and family income were associated with greater involvement in PA. In contrast, Latin American studies from Brazil and Bolivia reported that children from low socio-economic class backgrounds were more physically active than those in higher social classes (Andrade et al., 1997; Kemper et al. 1996). Duncan et al. (2002b), having reviewed Bourdieu's theory, stated that the variation in PA between those of high and low socio-economic status might result from their differing habitus.

In American studies, social influences, including the support of family and friends (or lack thereof) significantly influence levels of engagement in PE and PA. (Sallis et al., 1999; Schaffer, 2004; Allison et al., 2005; Dwyer et al., 2006; Smith, 2009). The influence of peers is recognized as important in either facilitating or constraining PE participation, affecting students' thoughts, behaviors and achievements (Smith, 2009; Schaffer, 2004). In school-based PE, lower skilled students were more likely to avoid participating when they felt judged or criticized by peers, an alienating experience (Portman, 1995). PE-based sports practices are associated with competition and bodily skills; low levels of these skills cause some boys to be marginalized (Garrett

& Wrench, 2011; Azzarito, 2004). For example, Allender et al. (2006) found that participation in sport and PA in the UK was influenced by what was offered in class, by a lack of competence, and an over-emphasis on competition. In Sweden, Redelius et al. (2009) found that symbolic capital resulted from performing PAs well and being a disciplined, friendly student who enjoyed PE. Redelius et al. (2009) argued that PE students with a lack of capital (e.g. those whose family do not hold the material resources to let them participate in sport) and those who are not physically active during leisure time. In a Canadian study, Jachyra (2014) defines *physical cultural capital* as a conceptual tool specific to HPE experiences at a Toronto boys' school: boys who have obtained high physical-cultural capital outside of PE seize physical-cultural capital in PE as a function of distinction, power, privilege and domination over boys with low physical-cultural capital who are thus subordinated/marginalized.

Evans (2004) proposed that one's embodied dispositions can act as capital and be "perceived as abilities when defined relationally with a reference to attitudes, values and mores prevailing within a discursive field" (p.100). Hay (2008) concluded that a student's access to the suitable relational bond of the (social) field was an essential transaction condition for representing their corporeal, dispositional and attitudinal resources as capital in the field. Students who operated confidently in the physical and hence seized the field, generating valued capital, were situated close to the teacher and had advantaged access to the relational bond of the field. In contrast, 'low ability' students had constrained access to this relational bond, critical for ability realization, and as such had limited opportunities to absorb institutional cultural capital. Only competitive (male) students had legitimate access to these cultural opportunities using a structure of social capital in which the realization of a student's characteristics could be recognized (Hay, 2008). Many students, in the absence of such capital, and probably already at an educational disadvantage, start marginalized in the field (Hay, 2008) and are thus possible to be rendered low ability.

Drawing on both theoretical concepts and the literature reviewed above, this paper aims to redress this lack of research attention in a small, qualitative way, investigating how social and cultural influences structure boys' bodily dispositions in

PE context. Hence, this article presents a qualitative case study exploring male Saudi students' experiences in PE in order to develop a better understanding of how their bodily dispositions affects their participation.

Methodology

A case study methodology was chosen because it allows replication and extension of individual cases (Bonoma, 1985); that is, an individual case such as the urban high school selected for this study can be used for independent corroboration of specific propositions that help to perceive patterns more easily and eliminate issues, allowing the researcher to draw a more complete theoretical picture. This case study allows for a thorough, contextual and comprehensive description (Yin, 2009) of a common problem in Saudi boys' schools.

The interview questions focused on how and why students participate in, describe, and make sense of particular elements of their lives related to PE. Why do some male Saudi students participate in high school PE class while others do not, and how do social influences (i.e. families, neighborhoods, and peers) affect their participation? These questions of "how" and "why" will help uncover boys' lifestyles in relation to their bodily habitus and the ways these intersections shape their participation in PE. As such, this study can be described as an "intrinsic case study" (Stake, 2005) which is defined as "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case" (Stake, 1995, p. xi). The focus is on the case itself (i.e. investigate a student having difficulty) since the case displays a unique or unusual situation (Creswell, 2013).

The study's findings are meant to improve participation in PE by providing insights in the Saudi context. Despite the culturally-specific conditions in which this research was carried out, it may still have applications in other countries interested in why male teenagers avoid PE participation. Regarding concern about lack of youth involvement in PE, this research will provide any form of feedback or an anonymized summary will be provided to the school authorities that can be applied elsewhere. Thus, the descriptions of data throughout this research do not claim generalizability. Nonetheless, readers are invited to make connections between elements of the study and their own experience. While I study Saudi boys, my findings may be useful to those

in other countries studying the issues influencing boys' participation in PE at school and sport after the school day ends.

Research Sample

Interviews were conducted between November and December 2012 in a male secondary public school in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. The social class of the students is reflected in the professions of their fathers. Students have fathers who are employed in the military, police, or public administration, and university graduates are typical of the middle to low-middle echelon in the government sector (Students 3, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27). Their fathers hold mostly high school diploma and few with baccalaureate. Students whose parents are retired received two sources of income: a) the retirement wage, and b) the social guarantee wage (Students 1, 6, 9, 14, 22, 26). Fathers/family who were retired from one job continued to run a business, one as a real estate broker (Students 2, and 15), one as a contractor (student 10) and another as a shopkeeper (Student 8). Students' single parenting family are (Students 10, 17, and 20). All students relied on family financially, and for transport, and recreational activities. Generally, came from families whose fathers are the sole earners.

The locations where students live are primarily inhabited by families who have been living together in neighborhoods for a long period of time. In terms of a group of actors who share the same interests, social experiences and traditions, that students lived in the same neighborhood, for example, students (8, 9, and 20) and (14, 19, and 22) were very close relatives; their fathers were retired soldiers and their mothers stayed home and were illiterate. Most students live in neighborhoods that lack parks, soccer fields, playgrounds, sidewalks, and community centers in which a variety of social and sports activities are not organized.

The school is located in a government building that has a full range of equipment and supplies were not available for PE during the time of the research. The school yard was large, and it accommodated the volleyball, basketball, and handball fields; besides the yard, there was an artificial grass area used to play soccer. There was only equipment for soccer. No balls, nets, or other equipment was available for volleyball, basketball, or handball despite the dedicated field and court space for these sports.

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Research Process

Data was collected during an observation period of three weeks, following which interviews were conducted. During the observation period, I sat in a corner of the soccer field and observed but did not interrupt PE classes. A sampling approach was used to allow me to select students for interview by observing them and inviting those who represented a wide range of skill and participation levels, establishing rapport over time. This ensured that less-skilled students were selected along with medium- and top-performing students. The rationale was to “intentionally select individuals and sites to understand the central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p.204).

The parents of each participant signed letters of consent which informed them of the purpose of the study and the type of questions that would be asked during interviews. To ensure privacy, interviews took place in a private room in the school’s resource center during school hours. To protect anonymity, codes were allocated to each student. For the purpose of this paper, I use some quotes that belong to the students who participated in the PE class (Students 1, 3, 4, 11, 12, 13, 16, and 27) and students who rarely participated or took no part at all in PE (Students 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 17,18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26).

Data Analysis Procedures

Using a thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006), I first familiarized myself with each transcribed interview, so I read and re-read, highlighted the data using initial codes and ideas related to the enabling and constraining conditions identified in the literature review. Second step was to attach the initial ideas and codes to the text in order to identify sub-themes in the data. Third, organizing codes and sub-themes into specific major themes and reviewing these themes to ensure that the concepts and codes were coherent with the text as well as the identified themes. Fourth, each theme based on the sub-themes in the texts was given a specific name. Finally, organizing and regrouping the data according to anticipated themes in relation to literature reviewed, as well as emerging themes in relation to the research questions, were essential components of the analysis and coding.

Results and Analysis

During the interviews, students frequently mentioned their soccer sport experiences outside the school context; these informal sporting experiences were more important to them than PE at school. This study finds that Islamic traditions play no role on their participation in PE. In this school, while all students attend class as required, they do not all participate. Once students showed up at the soccer field, some did not take part in the activities – they did their homework by the sidelines, or watched the others play, and the PE teacher did not force them to participate. The teacher I observed was not effective in enabling the students to achieve the goals of the PE lessons and this in consistence with some students who lament that the teacher does not “teach” or structure PE activities (Al-Aifan, 2000; Al-Liheibi, 2008; Smith, 2009). Overall, the teaching style appeared to shape a disinclination to participate (i.e. soccer skills were not taught, and students were not encouraged). This certainly limited the potential of PE and could negatively influence students’ engagement.

Participants’ Experiences Related to PE

The early social experiences of most boys are shaped by their families, their neighborhood and friends. Participants linked their interest in soccer to these influences:

“I got involved in the community soccer team since I was a kid. I and my neighborhoods friends played on the soccer field after the adult men finished their game or sometimes played before they came to the soccer field.” (Student 11)

I have been played soccer since I was little kid with my brothers and some neighborhood friends. My father was a soccer player and he loved soccer. I remembered he took us (me and my brothers) to the soccer field and tried to let us run with the ball and shoot at goals. He watched us and really taught us how to play soccer.” (Student 12)

“I have played soccer in my neighborhood since I was a kid with my friends and my relatives. My father used to play on this soccer field. When I reached the third

intermediate grade, I joined the community team, playing almost every day.” (Student 16)

Thus, family members and neighborhood friends, play a key social role in introducing children to sports at a young age, influencing the boys’ choice of friends and preferred sport. The habitus calls us to consider practices “as engendered and regulated by fundamental dispositions that are internalized primarily through early socialization” (Swartz, 1997, p.104). The students quoted above had internalized this familial-cultural dimension of sport to such an extent that becoming involved in soccer was completely natural to them; from an early age, their social experience was contributing to the formation of their bodily habitus. Ultimately, they embodied the urban soccer setting because of the dynamic relationship between the location of opportunities to play and the body as reflected in their dispositions (Bourdieu, 1984). By the time students reach high school, they have already acquired their bodily dispositions. Receiving support and enthusiasm from fathers as students 4, 12, and 13 did clearly enabled these boys to participate – and to enjoy participating:

“One time I said to my father, ‘I want to play’, and he said, ‘Ok, if you need money take it from my pocket.’ This is when we want to rent a soccer grassed court.” (Student 12)

“In the evening, my father left his car key with me, so I could drive to my soccer team if they couldn’t stop by [and pick me up].” (Student 13)

“My father supports me and lets me become a soccer player of Alwehda football club.” (Student 4)

These boys were granted the freedom and encouragement to play soccer by their fathers, spending time in organized outdoor activity. Students 4, 12, and 13 implied that they were subject to their fathers’ choices and values, indicating the family habitus. If fathers support participation, there is a greater likelihood of boys’ participation in PE. Consistent with Bourdieu (1997), the above quotes illustrate how students’ bodies become structured by family culture, and their involvement in social situations/social

practice deeply shape their disposition toward action in a particular social setting. The enabling condition of social support was essential in shaping boys' experiences in PE.

Playing with or receiving encouragement from peers/classmates is influential in maintaining or increasing participation in PE:

“Sometimes in the PE class, I feel down if the teammates are not keen to play or if there is not encouragement between us. This may lead us to get defeated. Definitely my classmates are the soul of the soccer team in the PE.” (Student 11)

“I meet my friends in the school, in the PE class, and I play, have fun with them.” (Student 16)

These positive PE experiences are linked to benefits regarding students' body. Some of these benefits include developing soccer skills, leisure time while socializing with peers:

“For me PE is to gain more skills and tactics in soccer in collaboration with friends. Also, I am looking to have a good healthy body.” (Student 27)

“PE class is my favored time in school because I love soccer and I like to have fun with my friends.” (Student 1)

“Learn skills, gain physical fitness, and ultimately being active are important characteristics to me, so I like to be participant in PE.” (Student 13)

This finding aligns with previous studies that has indicated that boys link their enjoyment of playing with their friends as a key factor encouraging their involvement in both PE and more informal PAs (Smith, 2009; Schaffer, 2004). Illustrating Bourdieu's (1986) notion of social capital, which is indelibly linked with bodily dispositions, students' social relations and attachments to their peers have been developed around the soccer ball, and through these experiences, students develop social relationships and a disposition toward social interaction concentrated on soccer.

These students are motivated to entertain, to develop physical skills, and to feel good about their bodies. As discussed by Bourdieu (1984), the habitus, as related to the

body, is “shaped by life’s opportunities and constraints... , it generates a set of ‘choices’ constituting life-styles” (p. 175). Here, the students’ bodily disposition relies on the availability opportunities offered; that is, their perspectives and dispositions with regards to wellbeing are dependent upon their constraints and opportunities (Bourdieu, 1984).

The exchange value of physical capital in participant students

The students who performed well in soccer during the PE class and the school league are those who were able to convert physical capital to social capital. Some participants sought to use their physical capital as a means of expanding their social network in order to convert physical capital to social capital in terms of relationships with teachers and even students sitting on the bench watching them.

Through the reproduction of physical capital as a form of bodily skills, the boys use their enhanced social status to obtain help with their studies from pupils of a higher academic standard. Also, some participants get invited to play with teachers once or twice a week at evening soccer games at school arranged by math and physics teachers. These students develop a close relationship with the teachers, which in turn provides benefits, such as extra lessons to increase their academic standing. As some students stated:

“Every Monday and Tuesday some teachers invited me and some students to play soccer at the school in the evening. It is good to have this opportunity to be closer and build relationship with teachers in the school.” (Student 3)

“After school, teachers of library, physics, science, and math invite me and some students to play soccer together. I think this is helpful to break the border between teachers and student and to let us ask for more feedback, especially at examination time.” (Student 11)

“Participation in soccer helps me to know more friends from other classes ...It is good to socialize together to help each other study at the school.” (Student 12)

For these student participants, their sporting skills privileged them as dominant students: they were able to access, acquire, mobilize and convert physical capital into social and even academic capital. This finding is consistent with Shilling's (2003) observation that physical capital can be transformed into different forms of capital, a transformation seen by Harker et al. (1990) as capital existing within a "system of exchange" (p.13). Further, it illustrates Hay's (2008) statement that transferring capital to the PE context is vital, in that the appreciation process "tended to depend on what a student already possessed rather than what the field and the teachers operating within it could provide students with to develop their abilities" (p. 262). These social and cultural forms of support have been found to be essential in shaping boys' experiences in PE. The actions and expectations of students in PE at this school are likely to have an influential impact on the nature of their participation that transforms into valued symbolic capital of various forms. This normative ideal of embodiment leads them to develop a bodily disposition of frequent practice and results in a high-status position in PE which may lead to additional academic coaching and success. While the previous section discussed participating students' experiences in PE, the following section examines non-participants' experiences and inclinations towards PE in an effort to understand their bodily dispositions.

Non-Participants' Experiences Related to PE

A lack of parental support of various kinds was a barrier to participation in sport for some students. The following students commented on the lack of financial support for membership to private clubs or the absence of encouragement and support for engagement in sports:

"Once I asked my father to register me in the sport club, but he refused. He told me, 'I cannot take you there and get you back home'; secondly, 'I don't have time for this.' The transportation is a bit difficult and the club is bit far." (Student 15)

"My father doesn't encourage me, he even doesn't know anything about soccer (laughing)...I asked him to register me in a private sport

club to learn swimming and to play with friends, but he refused; he just said, focus on your study.” (Student 9)

“Once my friends asked me to join them by registering in the sport club to practice sports and swim. I was disappointed when my family refused to let me join the club.” (Student 8)

Most non-participants indicated that family members did not encourage them to be physically active and showed no interest in sporting activities. These students had to submit to the dominant expectations of their fathers, which limited their opportunities to adopt a physically active lifestyle. Saudi family influence can thus act as a significant barrier to participation in sport and this study confirms the studies on this point (Dwyer et al., 2006; Sallis et al., 1999; Rabaan,1994). This means that because they cannot join private clubs where they could acquire soccer skills or other sport skills, they do not feel able to join in the school PE classes, which do not actually teach sporting/soccer skills. Thus, they are not gaining the skills outside school that would enable competent participation in PE class

Although a lack of neighborhood soccer pitches affected some non-participant students, they nevertheless reported enjoying doing other activities outside school with their friends, such as walking together wearing the *thawb*¹ or even watching soccer in the community local teams.

“I like walking. I always walk and talk with my friend and sometimes we go for long walks.” (Student 14)

“I exercise every day by walking from home to school and from school to home. I see it as a form of physical exercise, and it is enough for me. I do not need to play soccer in PE.” (Student 10)

“I like walking as a form of sport. Me and my friends walk far distances like from *Alzaher* (neighborhood name) district to *Alhamrah*

¹ A traditional clothing for males which would not be suitable for running or other sporting activity and expected to be worn in public.

(neighborhood name) district. I believe this is my sort of sport...Sometimes I watch and cheer my community team when they play against other community teams.” (Student 2)

For boys of this age group to walk and is the thawb usually worn in public and does limit sporting movement, this was insufficient exercise for them. The non-participants lived in communities in which there were no soccer fields. This shortage of facilities, as a constrained socio-environmental factor, also influenced students’ broader activity behaviors (Allison et al., 2005). They did not learn or develop the necessary soccer skills to do well in PE as adolescents compared to boys who played outside of the school environment. Access to a soccer field or sport club to practice or play outside of school factored into Al-Liheibi (2008)’s study, which indicated that the students who had time outside of school to practice PAs had more positive attitudes toward PE in school.

Illustrating the effect of family structure on their activities, preferences and dispositions, the non-participating students 10, 17, and 20 live in single-parent families with the mother as the sole parent. This finding is consistent with Wright et al.’s (2003) study who showed that changes in household structure could affect children’s interests and activities. The impact of the father’s absence on students from families with limited experiences of PE is often an increased responsibility for younger siblings and/or a lack of financial support for structured PA (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007). Students who experienced such constraints on their social and economic capital were less likely to be physically active outside school and/or to participate in PE at school. These embodied dispositions are the result of capital that can be shaped through exercise and are to great extent influenced by family context.

The student non-participants (passive students) in the PE class strongly identified PE with alternative values, including a chance to do homework, study for exams, talk with friends, and have fun watching students playing.

“PE is a rest from study. I just sit and watch others play, it is entertaining.” (Student 19)

“This PE class is like leisure. I sometimes invest it in doing homework, studying for exams, and most of the time I chat with my classmates.”

(Student 14)

“I love PE class. I converse with my classmates. It is like leisure time.”

(Student 7)

“PE is a conversation time with students who do not participate or those who come from other classes. We all feel comfortable to converse in PE class. Sometimes, I am stressed because high school has many subjects to focus on especially because I am in the second grade.”

(Student 8)

One explanation for those who do not participate or stop participating is that these particular students value education and tend to seek as many learning opportunities as possible. For example, students who value core academic subjects, such as math and science, view PE as a marginal subject. Students have strong interest in science because the qualified teachers, available laboratory, and materials add appeal to the sciences field. Some non-participants (i.e., Students 6, 7, 10, 15, 21, and 24) prefer studying and do homework in PE class in order to gain academic standing, which was also noted in Al-Aifan (2000)’s survey results. These students state:

“Students come to school to gain knowledge and increase their learning, but playing soccer in PE class is something that can be pursued outside of the school day.” (Student 21)

“For me, it is not necessary to be a participant in PE class because you might be active outside school, but in school, it is important to participate in activities and competitions related to the sciences and literacy.” (Student 10)

For these students, the acquisition of knowledge, skills, performance, and competency as cultural capital presupposes the investment of time devoted to learning or training (Bourdieu, 1986). However, other non-participants are less interested in studying in the PE class. Students 10, and 21 sometimes do homework or study for exams, and other students chat in PE class as if hanging out on the streets (i.e., Students

2, 5, 8, 9, 14, 18, 19, 25, and 26). Thus, factors besides academic achievement influence their disinterest in PE.

Another factors some students cited that negative experiences in previous school PE classes continue to be a barrier to participating. Most non-participants came from an intermediate school in which there was no school field that was comfortably spacious to practice or play soccer, basketball, and handball. These schools are actually residential buildings that are rented for schooling. In addition, three of the students mentioned that no PE classes were available in their previous intermediate school. In this respect, students' experiences in intermediate PE were a critical condition influencing their non-participation in PE once they got to high school: they did not develop the required skills or physical capital to play/compete with peers in PE when they finally attend a school with a soccer field.

Furthermore, some students recalled, how badly their PE teachers and principals/deputies treated them in previous schools during their high secondary, intermediate and elementary schools where they prevented students from wearing sporting clothes underneath the thawb or came to PE class not wearing sports clothes, they are banned attending PE, after which the student hated the PE class. These constrained conditions have acquired through their previous experiences account for their body dispositions inhibiting students' participation in PE at the current high school. The analysis shows that early influences on the students' bodily dispositions may influence their inclination to participate or opt out of PE; this in turn will have consequences for their wellbeing now and in the future.

Marginalized students in PE class

Interviews with non-participants show that students who controlled the game (displaying physical capital) were in positions to marginalize those who lacked sporting skills:

“Some students coming to the soccer field already play on the same team, and they are stronger than the other groups. I once joined them, but I only watched them. No one paid attention or passed the ball to me.” (Student 24)

“In the first two weeks of this term, I participated. Then I quit because I got bored; no one passed the ball.” (Student 25)

Bourdieu (1984) found that people in positions of power could marshal valued forms of capital in comparison to those in less privileged positions. Some non-participants felt under pressure in PE:

“I am not good at playing soccer in school because it is a required skill.” (Student 20)

“I would like to participate in the PE class, but it is tough because my classmates are skillful, and they want students like them.” (Student 21)

“In this school, students like to play soccer during PE classes. I feel no one wants me join their team because I am not such a good player. Thus, I stop participating and enjoy watching students play soccer and some students impressed me by their skills.” (Student 17)

“I cannot imagine I am really fit in playing soccer in PE because there are students who play well. Most of the time I stand – I don’t know what to do.” (Student 26)

These responses align with Allender et al.’s (2006) finding that participation in PE was influenced by what was offered in the Saudi context (always soccer) that is required ability, and competition. For these students, a lack of physical skills can lead to marginalization and lower levels of social participation (Portman, 1995; Azzarito, 2004). Ultimately, this lack of physical capital could expand the gap between a student and his classmates, decreasing his social networking capacity. Struggling to participate in PE is painful for the students I studied. Feeling unfit playing soccer during the class fostered a feeling that they could not keep up with others physically; they felt their bodies could not perform as well other boys’ bodies did. This indicates how student involvement in PA is fashioned by capital that is the result of a combination of socio-economic status, schooling routines and available resources (Lee et al., 2009).

Discussion

This study finds significant differences in the experiences of participants and non-participants, and the way their advantages in playing soccer outside school are manifested in the PE class. Clearly, boys participating in soccer outside of the school context were afforded additional forms of capital, as Jachyra (2014) proposed. In Saudi Arabia, sporting culture (soccer) seems to be transmitted via family networks (principally fathers), nurtured by schools and peers, and is possibly best defined as habitus in the *plural* sense of the word, taking into account historical and social dimensions (Birchwood et al., 2008). Family backing for soccer culture enables some students to learn to play the game, inconspicuously modifying their bodily schema (Wacquant, 1992). The resulting sporting skill is an indicator of the resources the students obtained via their families and the way students employed, invested and acquired symbolic (capital) in both school-based PE and outside of school, where in turn they are more likely to participate.

This study is consistent with Bourdieu's (1984) notion that early socialization plays a key role in children and young people continuing to reproduce their bodily dispositions; these are durable and transposable as students convey them from one setting to the next (e.g. from home/neighborhood to school). For example, students benefit from soccer fields in their neighborhoods or in private clubs and are in turn more likely to participate in PE. This illustrates Bourdieu's (1990) observation that individuals are most likely to encounter and pursue experiences that confirm their habitus. By contrast, the student non-participants entered a PE field that lay outside their bodily/lifestyle experience (Redelius et al., 2009; Hay, 2008). They were thus exposed to experiences that could disrupt their habitus as they began to question their physical and social competency and their families' unfamiliarity with/support for sport/PA. In other words, the students' bodily dispositions that they are socialized toward are a function of their family practices, which may conflict with that required by PE classes in high school. Boys who do not participate described a constraining condition that included a lack of fatherly support and/or parental refusal to allow them to play with neighborhood friends or join a private sports club. The family structure is

highly influential in limiting or fostering boys' opportunities to engage in PA (Wright et al., 2003; Dagkas & Stathi, 2007).

This study found that physical capital appears to be a symbolic value associated with sporting skills required for PE in this research, body performance in soccer. Students with more physical capital are able to access increased opportunities to attain, accumulate and convert this capital, which in turn enables these students to position their status using PE-specific power (Evans, 2004). Value in the high school PE context is linked with skillful sporting bodies (Shilling, 2003), and emphasizes the enduring importance of corporeal performance. Thus, in order to participate, boys need to adapt to the PE culture by possessing specific bodily dispositions with a taste for sporting culture and specific physical skills. However, as this study showed, some boys may lack these dispositions for reasons which are beyond their control. In any case, they are left at a disadvantage in physical, social and academic capital, and there are implications for their future wellbeing in terms of the role of PAs. By participating in the school soccer league and PE classes, the student participants have the opportunity that assist them developing their social networks (as they enjoy displaying high body performance skills), that let them obtain status in the PE as demonstrating the right abilities, which is consistent with (Redelius et al., 2009; Shilling, 2003).

Given the socio-demographic characteristics related to the students' parental occupational and educational background, the findings suggest that Saudi boys' participation and their relation to their own bodily habitus are fashioned by the conditions of existence inherent in a given milieu. Eight middle echelon students participated in PE and played soccer outside school (Students 1, 3, 4, 11, 12, 13, 16, and 27). Their fathers (mostly hold high school diploma), who practiced sport themselves and wanted their sons to participate in PE, and in a soccer league at school, plus play soccer in the community. In contrast, fourteen low-middle echelon boys (with parents of lower educational attainment) showed no interest in sport/PA; they preferred talking or doing homework in PE class (Students 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22, and 26). Finally, five other non-participants whose fathers held high educational qualifications (Students 18, 21, 23, 24, and 25) showed no interest in participating in

PE and were also less physically active outside school; they study during PE because they are concerned about their academic competency as the most important indicator of cultural capital. It's clear that parental encouragement is vital, and that family incomes that allow for private club memberships may help, but it could indicate that the social class impact on these boys is to be a less influence on their levels of PE and PAs.

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