



Navigating Gendered Terrain: A Critical Feminist Exploration of Women's Experiences with Classroom Management as Physical Education Teachers in Canada

Emma Lewis

Contact Author: el19ql@brocku.ca

Dept. of Kinesiology, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2S3A1

Dr. Nathan Hall

Dept. of Kinesiology, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2S3A1

Dr. Rob Millington

Dept. of Kinesiology, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2S3A1

Abstract

Background: Regardless of gender, many physical education (PE) teachers feel PE is a male-dominated /masculinized subject (Preece & Bullingham, 2020), which potentially casts female teachers as less competent in their profession and thus, less authoritative. Given such notions can reproduce socially, PE students' behaviour and level of respect for authority may fluctuate depending on their teachers' gender. This may be particularly apparent when considering classroom management (CM), a part of teaching significant to teachers and consequently the field of PE pedagogy. Gråstén & Kokkonen (2022) reported that among PE teachers, women scored themselves lower than men in perceived CM efficacy. Their data, however, was collected quantitatively and did not examine why such gender differences existed. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to qualitatively investigate women's experiences with CM, inquiring about how gender is perceived to impact difference in CM experiences amongst PE teachers.

Methodology: One-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of ten women PE teachers in Ontario, and a reflexive thematic analysis was conducted (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The theoretical basis for this study is centered around constructivism and critical feminism, as it provides insight into the lived experiences of women PE teachers in Canada, and the ways in which gender stereotypes and societal influences are perceived to impact gender differences in experience, institutionally and in the classroom.

Results: A reflexive thematic analysis revealed additional evidence regarding women PE teachers' experiences with CM and the perceived gender differences that exist. Furthermore, this study provides insight into what they view as contributors to and potential solutions for mitigating these gendered differences.

Significance: Analyzing these experiences along with what women PE teachers identified as contributors to and potential solutions for mitigating gendered differences through a critical feminist lens offers new insights to the field of PE pedagogy. This study can be used to further consider how PE teachers could be better informed and prepared to face such challenges.

Keywords: classroom management; gender; critical feminism; physical education



References

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