

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF JAPANESE FEMALE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF GENDER ON THEIR CAREERS

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Abstract

This study examined how Japanese female primary school teachers who have continued to study physical education (PE) perceive gender consciousness. The other, more important, purpose of this study was to demonstrate factors that enhance teachers' commitment to study PE and their development processes and its effect on their teaching careers. Using a semi-structured interview, qualitative data were collected from 14 female primary school teachers who have worked as PE chiefs. Data were analysed using the modified-grounded theory approach. As for gender consciousness, participants thought their physical strength limits them as they age; this often prompts them to resign as PE chiefs. However, they did not think that difficulties arise from gender consciousness in the continued study of PE. As for their teaching careers, this study demonstrated development processes focusing on factors generating continuation of PE study and the influence of each factor on each generation. In conclusion, providing opportunities that could promote factors to prompt teacher development in each generation is important for increasing the number of female teachers who study PE in primary schools in Japan.

Introduction

Currently, occupation of primary school teacher seems to stimulate females' social progress because Japan's politics promote equal hiring of females and males. For females to obtain a position and continue working as a teacher is relatively easy because some benefits, such as childcare leave, help female teachers work and maintain a household (Sasa et al., 2010).

However, relatively frequent studies report that female PE teachers in middle and high schools in Japan have negative images of their positions. Some studies, of female PE teachers in junior and senior high schools, explain that female PE teachers have more difficulties than teachers in other subjects. Female PE teachers frequently resigned from PE teaching because of the overwhelming responsibilities of housework, childcare, work from club activities, PE teaching and so on (Itani, 2009; Sasa et al., 2011). Sasa et al. (2010) reported that employment of female PE teachers is less than that of male PE teachers, and many schools have only one female PE teacher. For these reasons, in some cases, they changed from PE to another subject (Itani, 2009; Sasa et al., 2011). Because the research about female PE teachers having difficulties in continuing their work is uncommon in international literature, it can be said that these situation of Japanese female PE teachers is only within Japan.

Focusing on primary school teachers on PE teaching, the percentage of female primary school teachers in Japan is 62.4% (Ministry of Education, 2014). Meanwhile, many female primary school teachers seem to face

challenges in teaching physical education (PE). Kadomoto et al. (2010) demonstrated that concerns exist about females'—more than males'—difficulties in teaching PE in primary schools, especially concerns about activity teaching and teaching skills to individual children. Those primary school teachers in Japan required to teach all subjects feel a lack of knowledge, teaching materials and methods for activity skills. In contrast, teachers who are not involved in PE said that they do not have confidence to teach PE to children and complain their lack of knowledge, however, a teacher who is not only a classroom teacher but also a PE specialist plays an active role in changing quality of PE lesson and create effective PE lessons (Decorby et al., 2005). In addition, specialist teachers involved in PE have less difficulty than general teachers because they are actively involved in teaching PE, relate well to their PE specialty or they have worked as a PE chief (Kadomoto et al., 2010).

This study focuses on PE chiefs, who also may be referred to in the literature as Head of Department. PE chiefs are teachers who play a central role in teaching PE at a school. Their main jobs are, for example, providing suggestions about PE teaching to other teachers and preparing an annual PE plan and teaching materials. Besides that, they manage all school sports events and participate in various training programs. Their experience as PE chiefs provides many opportunities involving activities relating to PE and PE training. Therefore, the experiences as PE chiefs provide many opportunities involving activities relating PE and PE training.

However, among primary school teachers who participated in the study by Kadomoto et al. (2010), the percentage of female teachers whose specialty was PE or who had experience of PE chiefs was approximately 20%; the percentage of males was 70%. Additionally, in Shiga prefecture, the percentage of male PE chiefs is 86%, while the percentage of females is 14% (Teaching Committee on Shiga). Although teaching positions are adequate and even privileged for females, the number of female specialty PE teachers decrease (Sasa et al., 2010). These facts demonstrate gender bias in male PE chief appointment in Japan. Indeed, this situation as a problem of 'gender subculture' which represents gender gap problem (Itani, 2003).

Case studies of female PE teachers frequently state that continuation of teaching PE is difficult for females. But what are primary school teachers' views on continuing their PE study? Investigation of actual conditions is required for comparison to studies on junior and high school teachers. Furthermore, strengthening the knowledge of female primary school PE teachers can solve problems and overcome difficulties. However, no studies focus on female PE teachers' continuation in primary schools. Therefore, a study focusing on female primary school teachers who continued PE study can offer new viewpoints for PE teacher education in Japan especially, Female teachers are encouraged simply to have a positive attitude in order to improve and develop high-quality PE in Japan. Hence, the purpose of this study is to demonstrate how female primary school teachers have experienced development in continuing to study PE.

Teachers' development and significant purpose

As for studies of teacher's development, the provision of more and better continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers is argued as the solution to a range of education's ills (Armour & Duncombe, 2004; Day, 2004; Armour & Yelling, 2007). Guskey (2002) points out that teachers' continuous development is prompted by diverse factors such as support from colleagues, change of teachers' practical skills, realization of children's learning outcome and change of teachers' knowledge and beliefs. In addition,

Cleake and Hollingworth (2002) mention that factors such as external information and resources, practical specialty, learning outcome, teachers' knowledge and beliefs are involved. Similarly, Armour and Duncombe (2004) define PE teacher's development as CPD in physical education (PE-CPD). Wang and Ha (2008) assembled from a review of literatures that PE teacher development is encouraged by personal factors and contextual factors. Personal factors include perception, beliefs and psychological disposition, contextual factors include culture, support from principal, collegial and students, and work place conditions. These two factors are important keys to enhance teacher development (Wang and Ha, 2008). Yomoda et al. (2013) observed that the workplace environment and learning opportunities—for example, support from colleagues, opportunities for training programs, teachers' belief in PE and reflection on practices—interact in a study that adopted the modified-grounded theory approach and focused on primary school teachers committed to PE. At this point, Bechtel and O'Sullivan (2007) reported that teacher's belief concerning PE and collaborative learning with colleagues and supports from principals have an influence on changing teacher's lesson practices. However, few researches focusing on CPD of female primary school teachers who are committed in PE.

Therefore, this study aims to examine how female primary school teachers perceive difficulties of continuation arising due to their gender in the first section, and to explore how their past and present experiences and subjective perspectives affect their development process in the second section. This study's special feature is the second purpose.

Methodology and Research Design

Participants and Data Collection

From Shiga prefecture's public schools, 14 female primary school teachers volunteered to participate in this study (details in Table 1). These participants were chosen by purposive sampling, meaning by selection of participants who can contribute plentiful and meaningful content important to the study purpose. Therefore, participants were expected to recall much information from their experience (Merriam, 1998; Bechtel & O'Sullivan, 2007). The study defines female teachers who study PE as teachers who evidence a commitment to PE as follows: experience as a PE chief; managed a training program and city PE activities; officer for the primary school PE union; have worked in a PE demonstration school.

Data were collected through semi-structured, individual interviews, conducted from July 2014 to September 2014. Each teacher signed an informed-consent form. Interviews consisted of open-ended questions and were recorded with a digital voice recorder and then transcribed to text data. Afterward, participants checked the text data to confirm and/or modify it. The details are shown in Table 2.

Methods of Data Analysis

First, to determine whether female PE primary teachers perceive difficulties of continuation arising from their gender, the study describes interview data of 14 participants from question 2: 'Do you think there is any trouble

concerning continuation as PE chief and continued PE study for a female teacher?'

Second, to explore how female PE primary school teachers experience development processes as CPD, text data analysis adopted the Modified-Grounded Theory Approach (M-GTA) that Kinoshita (2003) advocated. Grounded Theory Approach is theoretical analysis based on qualitative data by continuous and comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The reason for using M-GTA is that M-GTA is a concretely demonstrated analysis procedure, adequate for the interview method (Kinoshita, 2003).

For analysing with M-GTA, first of all, participants were divided into age-cohort groups (four teachers in their twenties, whose teaching experience was under 10 years, four teachers in their thirties, whose teaching experience was from 12 to 16 years; three teachers in their forties, whose teaching experience was approximately 20 years; and three teachers in their fifties, whose teaching careers spanned more than 30 years). Yamazaki (2012) defined the term *cohort* as a group that 'experienced the common events as contemporary'. In other words, group members faced the same events and problems at the same time, beyond individual diversity by generation. The reason for dividing female teachers into age cohorts is to determine the groups' similarities and differences in teacher development.

Procedure of M-GTA

Data were analysed based on answers from questions 3 to 5 in the interview (see Table 2). Development processes were classified into five perspectives as follows: 1) opportunities for physical education study, 2) enjoyment and trouble in PE study, role consciousness; 3) expectation of study continuation; 4) change in education perspectives and 5) knowledge and beliefs about teaching.

In the analysis procedure, the data was analysed through the manual thematic analysis made by Kinoshita. First, a teacher with diverse, abundant and concrete examples was selected from each cohort as the analysis focus person; parts of text data of the teacher obtained from each perspective were extracted as 'specific examples'. Next, 'concept' was generated from specific examples. Thirdly, 'definition' which suits those examples was represented. After these operations were completed, some examples from text data of other participants that are appropriate for generating 'definition of concept' were also gathered and added into the analysis worksheet (see Table 3). Lastly, when a new example was added, the concept and the definitions were modified as necessary after verification. This procedure was continued to theoretical saturation in order to generate concepts.

Besides that, the author discussed the data with two professors who are highly specialized in physical education, in order to enhance the validity and the added modifications (Merriam, 1998).

Table 1. *Participants' Details*

| Participants | Age | Years of teaching | Special License for PE | PE chief career (years) |
|--------------|-----|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| T1 | 25 | 3 | None | 2 |
| T2 | 28 | 6 | Done | 5 |
| T3 | 29 | 8 | Done | 3 |
| T4 | 29 | 8 | None | 3 |
| T5 | 33 | 12 | None | 8 |
| T6 | 36 | 10 | None | 3 |
| T7 | 37 | 13 | Done | 5 |
| T8 | 38 | 16 | Done | 10 |
| T9 | 41 | 18 | Done | 5 |
| T10 | 41 | 20 | Done | 5 |
| T11 | 43 | 21 | Done | 16 |
| T12 | 52 | 31 | None | 21 |
| T13 | 56 | 34 | Done | 9 |
| T14 | 56 | 34 | Done | 22 |

Table 2. *Interview Guide*

| |
|--|
| 1. Teaching career, age, PE chief career |
| 2. Perception about PE chief and PE study Do you think there is any trouble concerning continuation as PE chief and continued PE study for a female teacher like you? |
| 3. The work of PE chief (primary school PE union and charge of PE in attached school) and about PE study Why did you become interested in PE chief and become PE chief? How has your teaching perspective changed through your experience as PE chief and studying PE? Did you have any challenges or troubles as PE chief and in PE study? |
| 4. Continuation of PE chief and PE study What do you think about continuing as PE chief and studying PE? Did you have any trouble about continuing as PE chief and studying PE? |
| 5. PE teaching Do you have any challenge to teach PE? What do you cherish on teaching PE? What do you think the fascination of PE is? |

Table 3. *Example of analysis worksheet*

| Concept | Seeking PE lessons to improve children's mental development |
|---------------|--|
| Definition | They are seeking PE lessons that are not only achieve children's physical development, but also improve children's mental development. |
| Some examples | <p>When we teach PE, we use game forms as teaching materials. Therefore, in a game, some children win and some children lose. Then, children who lose the game will feel frustrated. But I want them to admire children who win the game. So I hope children improve their mental development. (T7)</p> <p>I think children can feel physical achievement when they can improve their skills. So I want to make them improve their skills. I want them to be delighted like when they say 'I can do it'. (T6)</p> <p>I am always seeking good PE lessons like the one that children can be delighted when they practice very hard and achieve something.(T5)</p> <p>I set time that children can talk to each other in PE excepting practicing time. Then I tell them that you have to teach how to improve your skills to each other. Recently, they are teaching each other even I do not set talking time. (T8)</p> |

Findings and Discussion

How do female primary school teachers who study PE consider their gender?

Results for how female primary school teachers think about continuation as PE chief and continuation of PE study are reported in the following.

Male image of PE chief

There is an image that a male is PE chief. The organization of PE chief is mostly male social. When PE chiefs assemble, a lot of males are there. I go to PE chief meetings with the thought that there are so many males. (T7)

I have an image that males play PE chief. Maybe, everyone seems to think that most PE chiefs are male. Almost all are younger male teachers. Compare to another chief, PE chiefs have many jobs such as managing sport events and preparing PE lessons. Female teachers feel their lack of PE knowledge including me. As the result, female teachers tend to avoid being a PE chief and it is too hard for female teachers to achieve both a PE chief and housework including childcare. (T1)

Female primary school teachers had strong images of males as PE chiefs. Since male PE chiefs account for 86% in Shiga prefecture, clearly, there are many male PE teachers. Actually, this result shows that participants'

perceptions are accurate. Moreover, it is viewed that PE chief's jobs are tough because they have many tasks to handle. Therefore, female teachers in this study think that most of female teachers tend to avoid being a PE chief. At the base of the male image of PE chiefs, it is said that sports are described as a masculine activity (Murphy et al., 2014). As a result, sporting identities have been formed in the masculine areas (Dowling, 2007). Therefore, it is a fact that males teachers typically want to be involved in PE.

Perception toward gender differentiation

I feel the difference between male teachers and female teachers concerning domination because females do not have as much domination as men when teaching. (T7)

From the past, in Japan, males are more likely letting children learn how to live than females. Female teachers cannot suppress disobedient boys during the class. For this reason, male teachers take charge of the upper-grades class. (T6)

Female teachers feel a difference in domination from male teachers. Sasa et al. (2011) mentioned that female teachers cannot control boys during teaching. In addition, because PE teachers are required to play a role concerning student discipline, PE teachers need to be 'masculine' (Dowling, 2007). Therefore, female PE teachers think that PE teachers have to have physical power in order to restrain students. For this reason, female primary school teachers feel the same gender differentiation as female PE teachers in middle and high schools.

Physical problem

It is difficult for me to maintain physical strength. PE chiefs have to work outside, manage a city swimming event and sports festivals. When females carry some heavy equipment, we are physically disadvantaged. (T9)

I thought of quitting PE chief when I passed forty. As we are getting older, we begin to think whether we change from PE chief to another subject chief. Work of PE chiefs is very tough. (T14)

Sasa et al. (2011) observed that a physical problem makes continuation difficult for female PE teachers; specifically, a decline in strength affects their motivation (Sasa et al., 2011). Female primary school teachers also perceive decreased physical strength as they age. About a difference of physical strength between males and females, it is perceived as a biological given (Dowling, 2006). PE chiefs need more strength than teachers of any other subject. For this reason, female primary school teachers hope to become a chief of another subject as they get older. This situation is similar to that in middle and high schools, where female PE teachers quit and hope to teach another subject. However, even though female primary teachers quit as PE chiefs, it does not mean they completely resign from their positions because PE chiefs are one of the works teachers are assigned to do as general primary schools in Japan do not have a subject-teacher system.

Characteristics of female primary school teachers

In contrast, most female teachers involved in PE study in primary schools do not have difficulties to be a PE chief and study PE themselves.

Value of working in a male-dominated society

There were so many males in the PE chiefs meeting. So, when I was in the male-dominated society, male teachers were surprised that there was a female there. I was well known as the one who 'always manages PE training for teachers'. It was good for me because I got more motivated since I expected to give an opportunity of training for other teachers as a PE specialist. (T9)

This participant expressed that she could study what she wanted because she had the opportunity to learn at an organization of PE chiefs. As for this point, many researchers mentioned the problem of the lack of female PE teachers. However, for teachers who want to study PE in primary schools, being in a social milieu with many males is not necessarily an element of concern.

Female teachers who do not have difficulties being in the role of PE chief and studying PE

I think that male and female are equal. I do not feel gender discrimination in studying PE and playing the role of PE chief because the number of female teachers is greater than male teachers in primary schools. (T7)

I have not felt gender consciousness since I became PE chief. Once we are chiefs, we have to do the same work as males do, and gender does not matter. (T3) In addition, children's development is appeared in PE. PE chief's work is very tough but if I do my best in teaching, children will be very active. So there are many benefits than difficulties.

This differs from the result that female PE teachers feel difficulties from the female perspective in middle and high schools. It seems that female primary school teachers do not feel gender discrimination because females comprise more than 60% of teachers in primary schools and in general, they play the role of PE chiefs in their own school. In addition, they feel worthwhile to be a PE chief and study PE. Even after quitting as a PE chief, they still keep studying PE. Therefore, despite the fact that they feel male image as PE chiefs and perceive their decreased physical strength, they do not have negative images on being PE chiefs and studying PE.

Continuation of teacher's work with others' cooperation

When I brought up my child, I could not afford to have private time. But the people around me helped me, especially my husband and my sister. It is difficult to continue being a teacher without any help. (T11)

It was very tough to work and take care of my child. But I received a lot of help from others, especially my husband

and my parents when I brought up my child, so I was able to continue teacher's work. (T13)

These answers were from the cohort in their fifties, who talked about teacher continuation. They struggled with both childcare and work, and also felt the difficulty of continuing to work as a teacher. Sasa et al. (2011) stated that help from husbands, parents and nursery schools is essential because household difficulties cause female PE teachers to consider quitting (Sasa et al., 2011; Itani, 2009). As for this point, however, female primary school teachers were able to continue their work, but with help. This context is beneficial in the case of female teachers who continue their work. However, In fact, teachers in their twenties to their forties in this study have not experienced childcare yet. Thus, they have also not been in charge of a household family. Hence, a case study exploring the thoughts of female teachers who continue with both PE and childcare is needed.

Therefore, primary schools also imply a gender subculture in that female primary school teachers involved in PE have images of males as PE chiefs, just as in case studies of female PE teachers in middle and high schools. Although they also perceive their decreased physical strength as they get older, it should be perceived as a biological given. However, despite of the situations, female primary school teachers do not feel the difficulty of being female PE chiefs and doing PE study and they do not have negative images of playing the role of PE chiefs. Consequently, there is no concept of male domination in the work environment in primary schools.

Teachers' development processes from PE-study continuation

As for female teachers, certain factors important to the study of PE development processes in each generation are based on concepts analysed and generated by M-GTA. These processes are indicated in Figures 1 to 4. Storylines based on these figures also are constructed. **Bold** indicates concepts, and *italics* indicate categories, which were generated when some related concepts were gathered in same perspective.

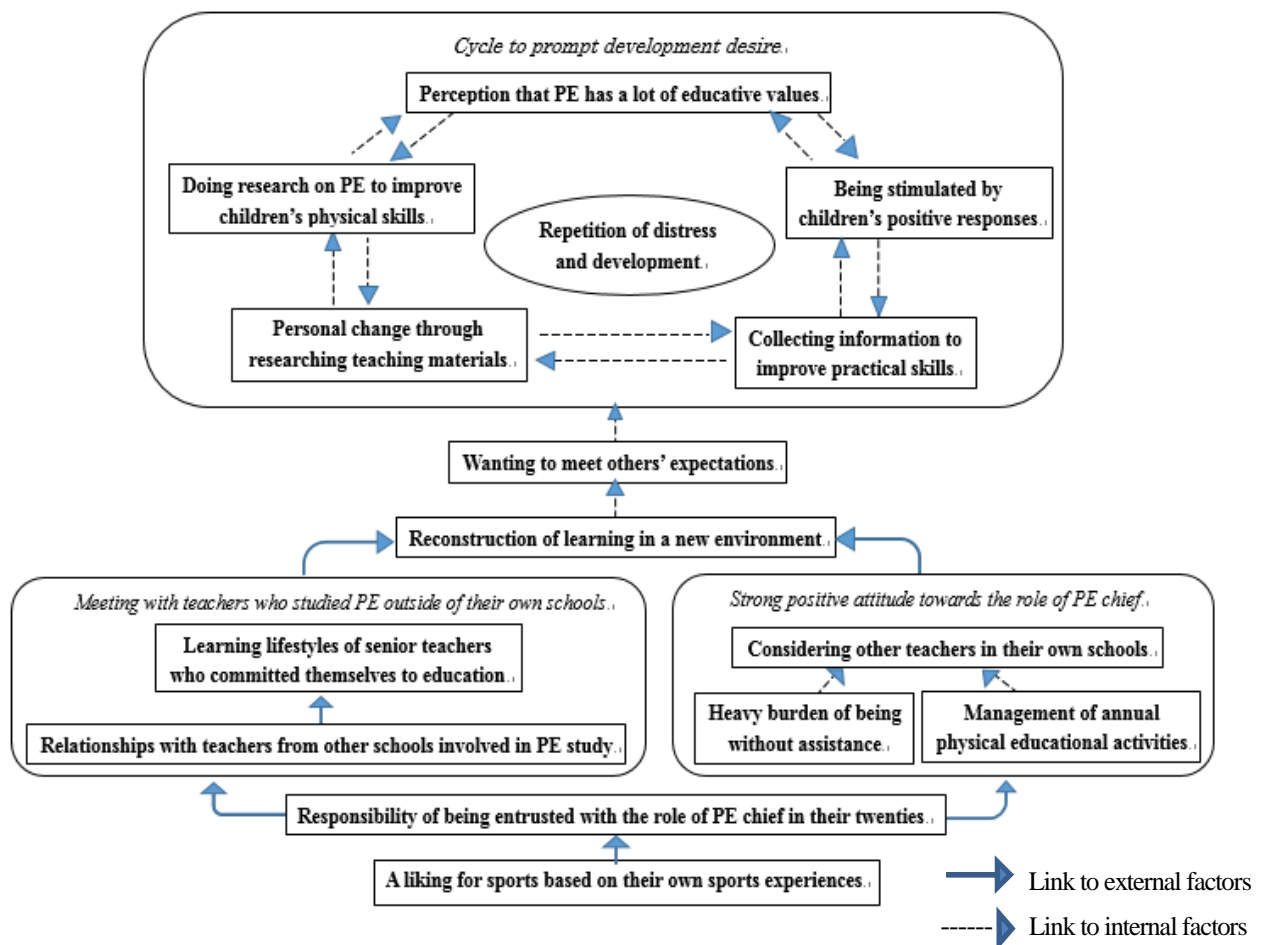


Figure 1. Development process of Japanese female PE primary school teachers in their twenties

Note: Developmental-mediating processes are indicated by only two mediating processes in the figures. One is the influence of teachers' personal factors, including perception, beliefs and psychological disposition. The other is the influence of environmental factors, including support of colleagues, workplace conditions and school equipment. These two factors were classified by reference to definition of Wang & Ha (2008).

Storylines of teachers in their twenties

A liking for sports based on their own sports experiences triggered these teachers' interests in PE. Next, they positively accepted becoming PE chiefs. Being a PE chief early in their careers and lives, they felt the **responsibility of being entrusted with the role of PE chief in their twenties**, and this prompted them to study PE. In conducting the duties of PE chief, **management of annual physical educational activities** was very hard for them. They also felt the **heavy burden of being without assistance** when they were preparing for PE. However, they still wanted to help other teachers, especially **considering other teachers in their own schools**. Thus, they kept a *strong positive attitude towards the role of PE chief*. Meanwhile, they had *meetings with*

teachers who studied PE outside their own schools, and they had some collaborators. Thereby, they had **relationships with teachers from other schools involved in PE study**. In addition, they learned senior teachers' instructional viewpoints there, and they **learned lifestyles of senior teachers who committed themselves to education**. The experience as PE chief and an environment to meet with teachers who study PE are linked to **reconstruction of learning in a new environment**. Afterwards, these teachers come to think that they **want to meet others' expectations**. Thus, a *cycle to prompt development desire* was generated. First, **personal change through researching teaching materials** occurs, and the teachers think they want to study to improve their PE-teaching skills. Next, they **do research on PE to improve children's physical skills**; they think they want to change children with their lessons. By continuing PE study, they have the **perception that PE has a lot of educational values**. Besides, they are **stimulated by children's positive responses** when they teach PE, and they more and more **collect information to improve practical skills**. This cycle can reverse directions. Thus, these teachers spend every day with **repetition of distress and development**.

Teachers in their twenties are in the stage to be assigned as PE chiefs because of the important of the role, many responsibilities are involved. For example, they manage PE activities in their own schools and meet senior teachers who committed themselves to PE. Additionally, they prompt themselves to enhance their teaching skills through internal factors. A feature of teachers in their twenties is that they have the responsibility of being entrusted with the role early in their careers. This prompts them to study PE. T2 said, 'I was assigned to be a PE chief in the second year of my teaching career. A PE chief is a very important role. So, I should achieve my role as a PE chief'. Obviously, in the Japanese structure, the opportunity to be PE chief is provided in the early years of a teaching career. Yomoda et al. (2013) insisted that teachers should have a role expectation and responsibility for PE and also the training opportunities to prompt commitment to PE. As a result, being assigned PE chief early in a career is important in prompting commitment. As for teachers in their twenties, what keeps teachers in their twenties to study PE is affected by mainly external factors and the factors gradually change to internal factors.

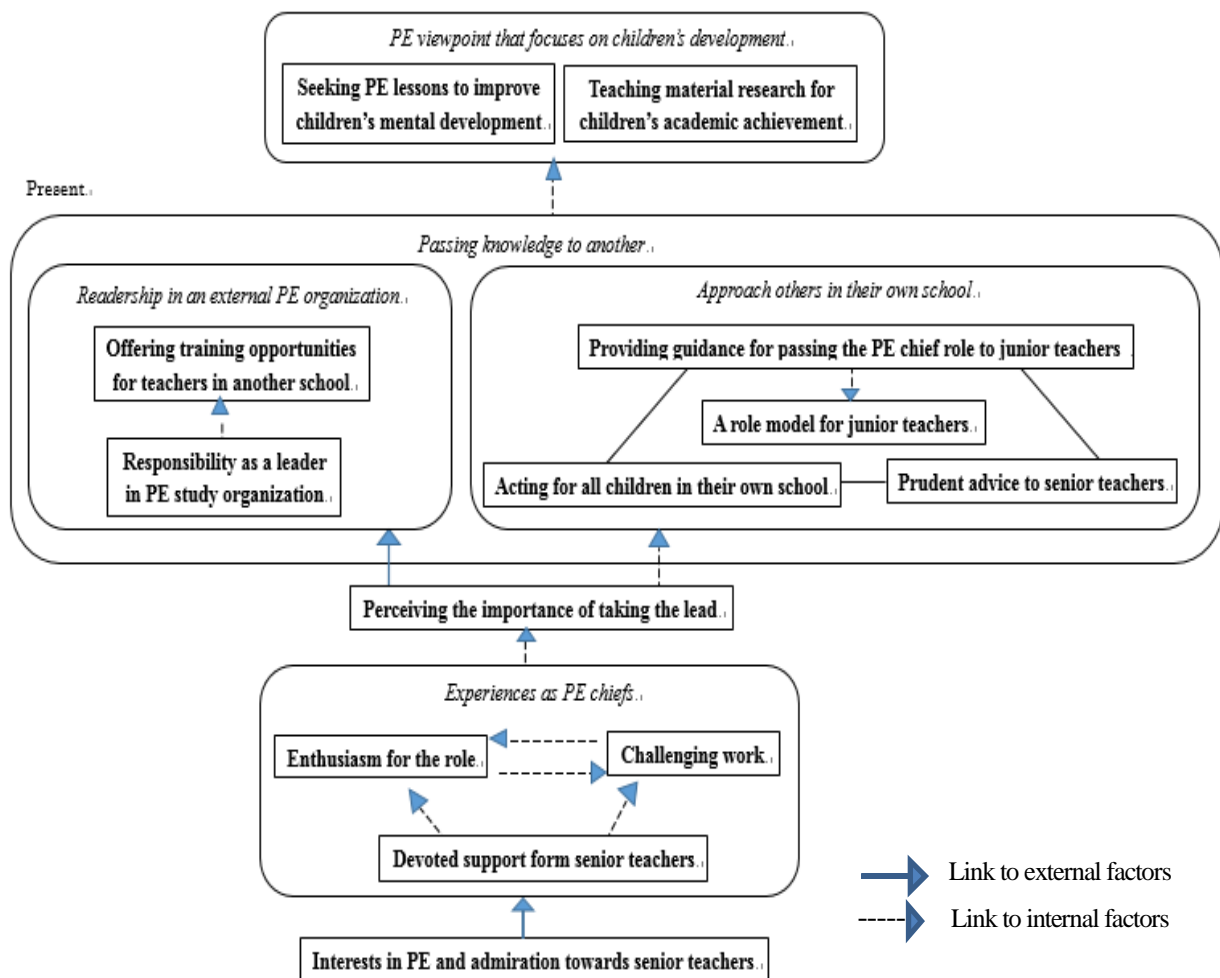


Figure 2. Development process of Japanese female PE primary school teachers in their thirties

Story lines of teachers in their thirties

Interests in PE and admiration towards senior teachers triggered their enthusiasm for PE study when these teachers were in their twenties. Next, these teachers thought that they would continue to study PE from their *experiences as PE chiefs*. Besides, they received **devoted support from senior teachers**. In playing the PE chief role for some years, they had **enthusiasm for the role** and perceived that PE chiefs had **challenging work**. They also **perceived the importance of taking the lead**. At present, they have been selected as leaders of organizations for PE study and have *leadership in an external PE organization*. They are beginning to think of their **responsibility as a leader in a PE study organization** and of **offering training opportunities for teachers in another school**. Moreover, they actively *approach others in their own school* and are **acting for all children in their own school** to improve children's PE skills. Meanwhile, they give **prudent advice to senior teachers** because they hesitate to advise on senior teachers' PE lessons. They also **provide guidance for passing**

the PE chief role to junior teachers because the junior teachers are at a stage to take over as PE chief, and teachers in their thirties hope to become **a role model for junior teachers**. Thus, they perceive that they need to *pass knowledge to another*. In addition, they have a *PE viewpoint that focuses on children's development*, and they conduct **teaching material research for children's academic achievement**. Finally, these teachers think that they are **seeking PE lessons to improve children's mental development**.

Teachers in their thirties have already experienced being PE chiefs and now they have become leaders in a PE organization. They also turn over the position of PE chiefs to the younger. Moreover, their view on PE focuses on children's development. A feature of teachers in their thirties is that they become leaders of research organizations and keep contact with people from their own schools. This makes them realize that they should support and provide learning opportunities for colleagues, in addition to enhancing their own skills. Yamazaki (2012) conducted research about the most important factors for enhancing the teaching quality of in-service teachers. As a result, in-service teachers in their thirties thought that research activity is most important in their own school, and they tend to take leadership roles in research organizations. As for teachers who study PE, opportunities to offer PE training as a lecturer at a study organization can enhance teachers' leadership commitment in the field. As for teachers in their thirties, both internal and external factors keep them studying PE consistently and gradually, internal ones have more influences as they move to teach in their forties.

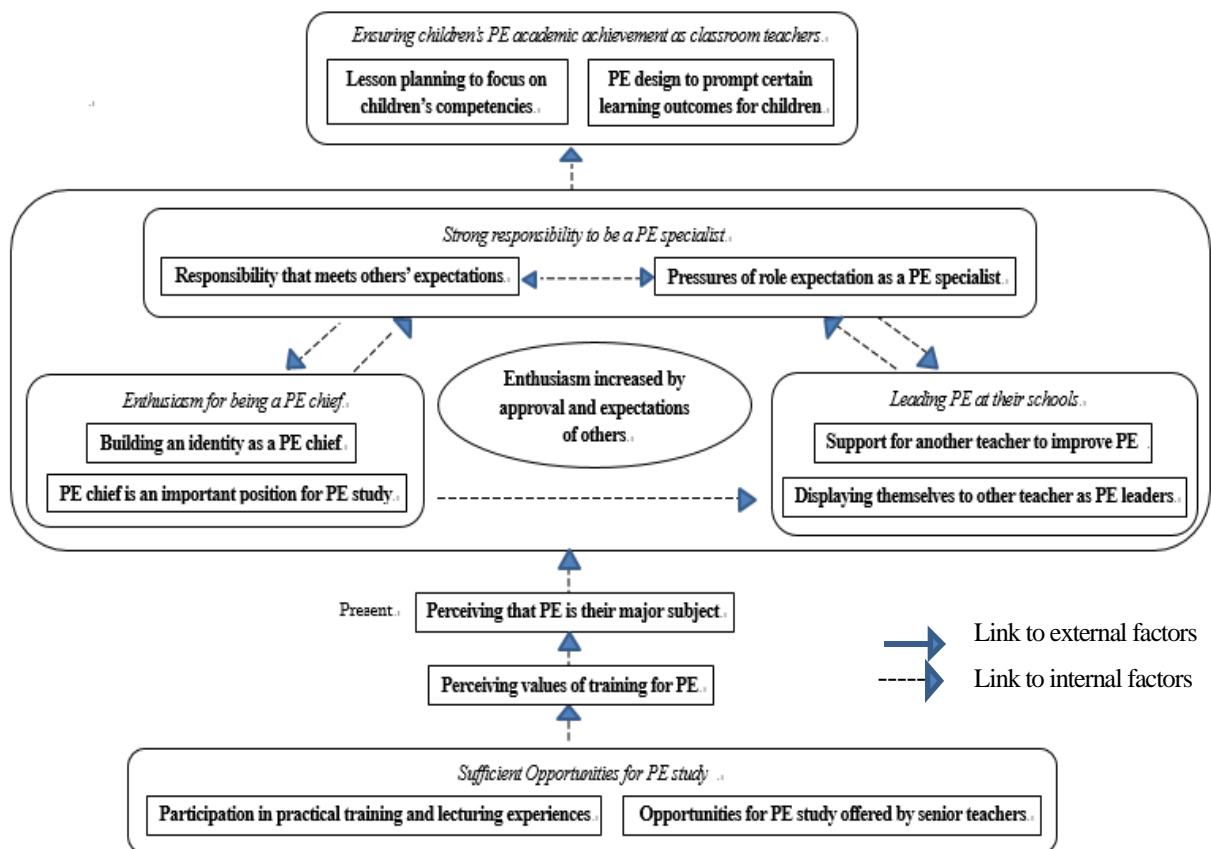


Figure 3. Development process of Japanese female PE primary school teachers in their forties

Storylines of teachers in their forties

Sufficient opportunities for PE study, such as **participation in practical training and lecturing experiences** and **opportunities for PE study offered by senior teachers** sparked these teachers' enthusiasm for PE study when they were in their twenties. By studying PE, they **perceived values of training for PE** and actively went to PE training outside the school. At present, they **perceive that PE is their major subject**. If their attitude about studying PE is positive, it leads to **responsibility that meets others' expectations**. However, if their attitude is negative, it leads to **pressures of role expectation as a PE specialist**. This responsibility can have both positive and negative influences on PE study. Thus, these teachers feel *strong responsibility to be a PE specialist*. In addition, two of them resigned as PE chiefs, handing the duties to junior teachers. Meanwhile, T11 still had *enthusiasm for being a PE chief*. By having such long experience, she was **building an identity as a PE chief**. She thinks that a **PE chief is an important position for PE study**, because if she works as PE chief she can obtain information about PE and training opportunities. Teachers in their forties also perceive that **support for another teacher to improve PE** is very important. Therefore, they **display themselves to other teachers as PE leaders** and are able to *lead PE at their schools*. Thus, the cycle of development for these teachers in their forties

is generated by **enthusiasm increased by approval and expectations of others**. For PE teaching, they aim to *ensure children's PE academic achievement as classroom teachers*. They are exploring **lesson planning to focus on children's competencies** and **PE design to prompt certain learning outcomes for children**.

Teachers in their forties have experienced being PE chiefs and leaders of PE organizations and now they perceive themselves as a PE experienced teacher. They are recognized as a PE experienced teachers by others and they support other teacher's PE classes. Moreover, they ensure children's PE academic achievement as a classroom teacher. A feature of teachers in their forties is that some study PE actively and some inactively, motivated by the consciousness that 'I am a PE specialist'. T10 worried about her identity in an organization for PE. Fuchigami (1995) focused on empowerment, stating that empowerment means members join an organization by their own choice. However, the psychology of resistance interferes with empowerment (Furukawa, 1990). T10 felt pressure as a member of a PE organization because she transferred to a demonstration school. The pressure prevented her from encouraging partial empowerment temporarily. However, she continues to study PE at present, and she is still committed to it. Therefore, she seems to have overcome great pressure. As for teachers in their forties, internal factors have a great influence on their commitment in studying PE.

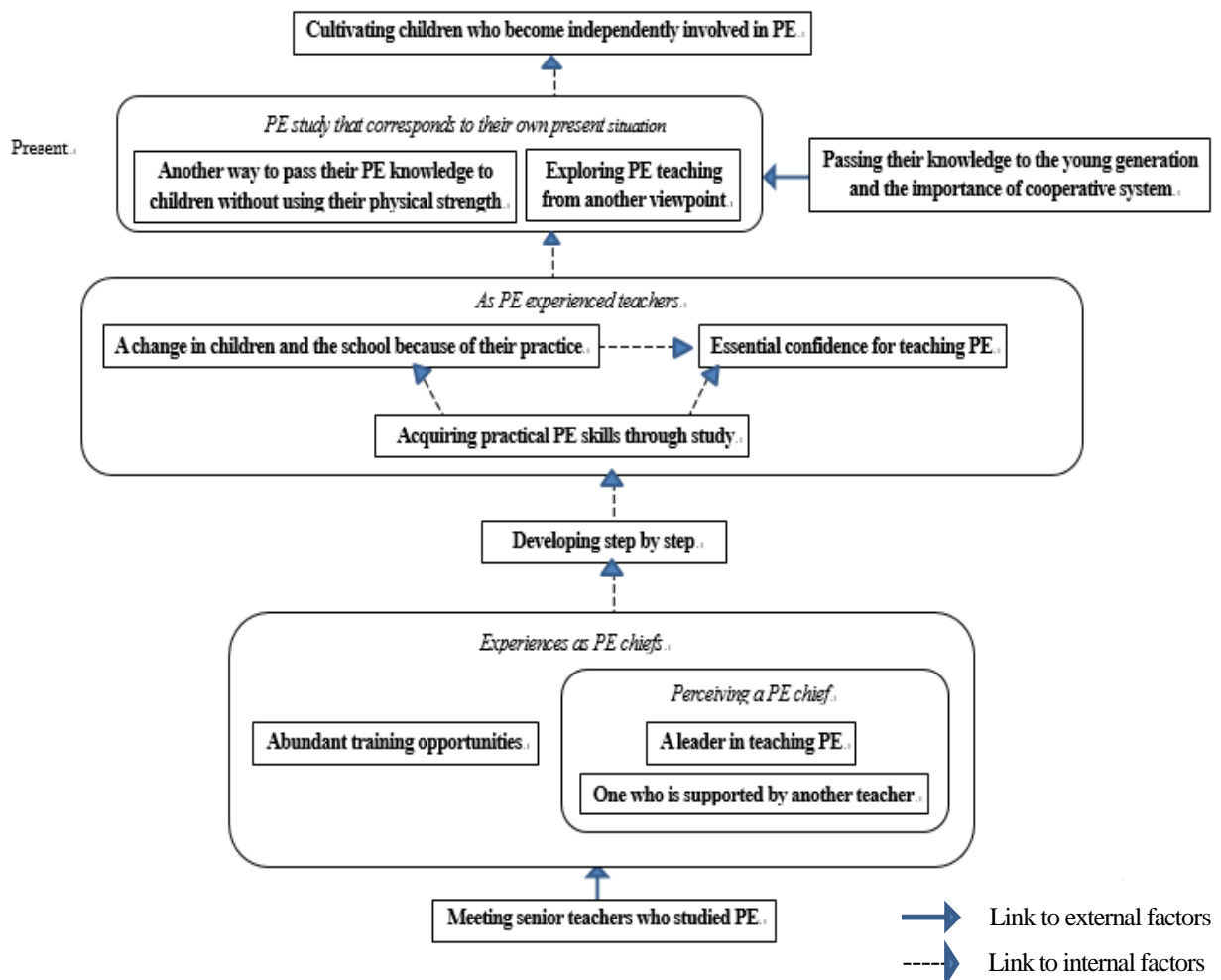


Figure 4. Development process of Japanese female PE primary school teachers in their fifties

Storylines of teachers in their fifties

Teachers in their fifties became interested in PE by **meeting senior teachers who studied PE**. Next, when they were PE chiefs, they had **abundant training opportunities**, encouraging their PE study. In addition, they *perceived a PE chief as a leader in teaching PE and one who is supported by another teacher*. They thought of a PE chief not as a sole leader, but as a teacher supported by others. What they learned through their *experiences as PE chiefs* became an important in their teaching careers. In continuing PE study, they **developed step by step** and identified themselves *as PE experienced teachers*. They were **acquiring practical PE skills through study**, and they perceived **a change in children and the school because of their practice**: these skills and perceptions were connected to **essential confidence for teaching PE**. At present, they are thinking about **passing their knowledge to the young generation and the importance of a cooperative system**. Thereby, they are seeking *PE study that corresponds to their own present situation*. They no longer play a role that is concerned with PE, but they are **exploring PE teaching from another viewpoint**. Moreover, they are

supporting a school as an assistant. They are also thinking about **another way to pass their PE knowledge to children without using their physical strength**. As for their viewpoint of PE, they think they want to **cultivate children who become independently involved in PE**. They plan to spend the rest of their lives teaching.

Teachers in their fifties keep studying as PE experienced teachers. Now they no longer play a role in the PE study. However they have perspectives on how they can pass knowledge that they cultivated from PE study to the younger generation. For example, T14 said, 'I no longer have my classroom. I am playing a role that trains beginning teachers. I show them my PE lessons to tell them how to design a PE lesson'. Moreover, they still continue to explore better ways of PE teaching. A feature of teachers in their fifties is that they think about another way to pass their knowledge to children without using their physical strength. T13 said, "I no longer have enough physical strength to teach children. Although I think I want to improve children's physical skills by teaching them orally". Thereby, they are continuing to come up with methods to teach PE that correspond to their age and physical strength. As for teacher in their fifties, internal factors have a great influence in both teachers in their forties and fifties.

Conclusion and future prospects

Through qualitative research, this study demonstrated how female primary school teachers perceive difficulties of continuation arising from their gender to continue being a PE chief and studying PE and have experienced the development in continuing to study PE in each generation.

First, the result for how female primary school teachers perceive difficulties of continuation arising due to their gender was determined by the limit of their physical strength as they age: they must therefore give up the role of PE chief. However, teachers who play the role think that they do not have difficulties being a PE chief and they feel worthwhile playing the role and studying PE. Teachers who already quitted PE chiefs also think positive to continue studying PE. Previous research focused on female middle and high school teachers emphasized gender difficulties, but this result differed, probably because in primary schools, female primary school teachers predominate.

Second, for how the female PE primary school teachers' past and present experiences and subjective perspectives affect their development process, this study demonstrated development processes which focused on factors that generate continuation of PE study and on the influence of each factor on each generation. The result of this study supports previous research concerning CPD (Guskey, 2002: Claeke and Hollingworth, 2002: Wang & Ha, 2008: Bechtel and O'Sullivan, 2007). Features of their development on each generation are as follows: 1) teachers in their twenties have the important responsibility as a PE chief, which prompts them to be committed to PE; 2) teachers in their thirties realize that they should support and provide learning opportunities for colleagues, in addition to enhancing their own skills; 3) in teachers in their forties, some study PE actively and some inactively, motivated by strong responsibility to be a PE specialist and 4) teachers in their fifties continue to think of methods to study PE that correspond to their age and physical strength.

For future prospects, changing the image that the PE chief position is appropriate for males is important to

increase the number of female primary school teachers willing to become and remain PE chiefs in Japanese schools. For one thing, the amount of PE chiefs' responsibilities should be reduced, probably by changing the system so that all primary school teachers share PE work, rather than the chief managing it all alone. To encourage teachers' development purposefully, most important thing is structuring and providing opportunities for development of teachers (including external and internal factors) for each generation.

Finally, although researches on gender bias of female PE teachers are not common in international literature, there are relatively many researches focusing on understanding of gender relations and the ways of teaching female students in PE classes (Decorby, 2005; Dowling, 2006, 2007; Murphy, 2014). Some of these researches have shown on how some teachers modify the scoring values and participation rules for female students when they are playing games with male students and use single gender classes for certain activities in order to increase female student's participation in PE. However, it is disputable that there is a concept in which male students are good at doing sports well on the contrary to female. One teacher in their forties in this study said, "I do not want to modify the scoring values for girl pupils, I have never used it. In primary school PE, it is thought that boys and girls are individually difference. If those ways are used, they make girls look less capable than boys". Additionally, teacher educators in Physical Education Teacher Education in the study by Dowling (2006, 2007), they think that gender is not perceived as an important factor in PE teaching, it is necessary to develop knowledge of what they are teaching. For future studies, it is important to look at the effect on PE teaching through teachers who do not perceive gender bias.

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