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Master Thesis

Height and Body image- a study of young women's handball

Høyde og kroppsbilde- en studie av unge kvinner som spiller håndball

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In memory of Asbjørn Endal
-a man who truly believed in higher education

Acknowledgments

Finally, the day when I submit my master dissertation has arrived. It has been a long ride on a bumpy road, but I am proud to say I managed to complete the work, even though it has cost me sleepless nights and teary eyes.

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Enjoy the reading!

22/05-2015 Elverum

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English Abstract

Purpose: the purpose of this study is to look into how the participants of the study feel about their body image in relation to their height, and if handball can prove tall girls with an enclave or social network. Going through literature on body-image, sport, health and public health it became apparent that many studies have been done based on weight and BMI. Height on the other hand, is a factor which is hardly examined at all in the literature on body-image, especially regarding adolescent girls.

Method: The methodology of this study is based upon grounded theory, and is used through the entire research process. 12 girls participating in a national “tall girl” project conducted by the Norwegian Handball Association (NHF) were interviewed about their body image, seen in relation to their height and the fact they are all handball players.

Results: The results from the empirical data show a clear distinction between talking about body image and talking about height. The participants were talking more about “general issues” regarding their body image such as: what they liked or disliked about their bodies, media impact and if they would change something on their body or not. When they were talking about their height, they talked more specific about benefits and disadvantages being tall in everyday life and on the handball court. The girls distinguish between being tall in everyday life and being tall at the handball court. Playing handball was important to them in order to feel confident and proud of their height, however, this did not translate into everyday life. The findings in this study shows there are several factors having an impact on the participants and how they view themselves. Being participants in NHF’s “tall girl’s project” has helped them to take advantage of their height in the handball court and for some it has even raised their level of confidence as tall girls in everyday life. However, even though handball does provide a suitable enclave for the tall girls, handball is only temporarily able to alleviate the pressure on girls to conform to gender stereotypes of the female body as tiny and petite.

Norsk sammendrag

Hensikt: Hensikten med denne studien, har vært å se på hvordan deltakerne i denne studien ser på sitt kroppsilde i forhold til høyden sin, og om håndball kan gi jenter som er høyere enn gjennomsnittlig, et sosialt nettverk å lene seg på. Etter å ha sett på litteratur om kroppsilde, sport, helse og folkehelse, har det kommet klart frem at mange studier har blitt gjort på bakgrunn av vekt og BMI- relaterte utfordringer. Høyde derimot er en faktor som ikke har vært undersøkt i særlig grad i sammenheng med kroppsilde, hvert fall ikke sett i sammenheng med unge jenter.

Metode: I denne studien er Grounded Theory brukt som gjennomgående metode. 12 jenter som allerede er deltakere i Norges Håndballforbund sitt «høye jenter» prosjekt har blitt intervjuet angående deres kroppsilde, sett i sammenheng med høyden deres og at de alle spiller håndball.

Resultat: Resultatet fra de empiriske dataene, viser at jentene skiller klart mellom å prate om kroppsilde generelt og høyde. Deltakerne pratet mer om «generelle problemer» når de pratet om kroppsilde som: hva de eller ikke liker med kroppene sine, medias innvirkning og om de ville forandret noe på kroppene sine eller ikke. Når de snakket om høyden sin, kommenterte de mer om fordeler og ulemper med å være høg i hverdagen og på håndballbanen. Jentene skilte veldig på å være høy i hverdagen og det å være høg på håndballbanen. Funnene som ble gjort viser at det er mange ulike faktorer som spiller inn på hvordan deltakerne ser på seg selv. Det å være deltaker i NHF sitt prosjekt har bidratt til at mange har fått utbytte fordelene av å være høy på håndballbanen, i tillegg til at prosjektet har bidratt med at noen har fått bedre selvtillit som høy jente i hverdagen. Selv om håndball gir de høye jentene et sosialt nettverk de kan lene seg på, kan det bare midlertidig ta vekk presset jentene føler. For dem er det en utfordring å passe inn i det typiske kjønnsstyrte bilde laget av kvinnekroppen som liten og nett.

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2. Introduction: background

At a personal level, I am a coach with the Norwegian Handball Association (NHF).

In discussion with handball colleagues I became aware of a project called “More tall girls in Norwegian handball”. Being a short handball player and coach myself in a game in which taller than average girls tend to dominate from an early age, the project started me thinking about girls and body image. Growing up, it has always fascinated me why it is socially accepted to comment on; how tall a person is or if someone is too skinny, but not if a person is too short or too overweight. This initial interest was reinforced when I began to notice how even some of the taller girls I was observing appeared ill-at-ease with their size and shape beyond the handball setting.

2.1 Rational

I started to ask myself if this would be an issue worth studying and, if so, why it might be worth studying. Going through literature on body-image, sport, health and public health it became apparent that many studies have been done based on weight and BMI. For example, studies of how physical and psychological factors can affect the body and influence people's self-esteem and body-image, as well as why people are over-weight and interventions on how to lose weight are carefully examined. Height on the other hand, is a factor which is hardly examined at all in the literature on body-image, especially regarding adolescent girls. This seemed to me counter-intuitive -not least because of what I thought I was seeing in the case of the tall female handball players' sensitivity regarding their height at certain times and in certain places. This led me to conclude that there might be a gap in the research regarding the relationship between height and self-image – especially among girls and even among

some young elite female handball players where height would seem to be viewed as a very positive attribute.

2.2 NHF: “More tall girls in the Norwegian handball”

The NHF has started an intervention /project called: More tall girls in the Norwegian handball (Flere høye jenter til kvinnehåndballen). There are 21 girls between the ages of 13-16 who are all active members in NHF and plays at different level, with an average height on 185cm. In 1993 the average height for a 13 year old girl was 162,9 cm. Research indicates these numbers has not changed much since then (Graff-Iversen & Øien, 2000).

This specific project is an intervention with broad goals to keep tall girls physically active, and make the girls able to control and become comfortable with their long bodies. According to NHF, tall girls have a tendency to be put aside and drop out of sport during adolescence (2013). This may be a consequence of the demands of the modern game- modern handball has become a faster game than hitherto and can be a challenge for some of the tallest girls. According to coaches in NFH: the average player are often favored before the tall player since they tend to adapt new skills more easier ([NHF], 2013). The goal with this project is therefor to see if it is possible to make a tall girl as fast, strong and flexible as an average height girl by teaching her correct physical and mental exercises and help her feel more comfortable in her own body ([NHF], 2013). Hopefully this specific project will help some of the girls continuing playing handball and may contribute to increase the average height of the Norwegian national team in long term.

So, this study will be about young women, their perception of body-image and if being a handball player is affecting their everyday life and perception of their own bodies. Since the girls in this case-study have an average height on 185 cm, I am interested in examining whether their height affects their view of their own body-image and if different social context has an impact or not.

3. Literature review

By doing a literature review before starting on a research project, you will first and foremost get an overview of the academic literature that already exists, and avoid ‘reinventing the wheel’ (Bryman, 2012). “Your literature review is where you demonstrate that you are able to engage in scholarly review based on your reading and understanding of the work of others in the same field” (Bryman, 2012, p. 98).

In this chapter I will highlight some of the existing research within

- i. body image and public health,
- ii. general literature about female and body image,
- iii. girls, body image and sports
- iv. girls, height and handball.

Most of the articles are located at Ebsco host- sport discuss and Science Direct.

3.1 Body-image and public health

“Public health is a term which describes health, sickness and death in addition to living habits, health risks and protective factors for health in different populations” ((Pellmer, 2012, p. 14)own translation)). Even though the work to decreasing death in different populations has been essential, it is important to start acknowledge other health issues as well. This can be both physical issues (e.g. overweight, obesity) or psychological issues (e.g. stress, mental ill-health) which provides both individuals and the community with challenges (Mæland, 2010). Mental ill-health is a growing public health issue globally and one that affects young people in particular (Biddle & Asare, 2011). In Norway, mental ill-health is considered one of the largest public health problems regarding children and adolescents. The

Public Health Institute of Norway (FHI) reckons that approximately 15-20% of all children and adolescents have a mental disorder in varying degrees. About 70 000 of these children needs medical treatment (Norwegian Institute of Public Health([FHI], 2010). In two out of three cases, girls struggle the most with mental ill-health and often suffers from anxiety and depression ([FHI], 2010). Due to the increasing prevalence of mental ill-health among children and adolescence in Norway, the Norwegian government has decided to do something about this negative trend and turn it around. However, in order to understand what needs to be done in order to reduce the number of young people with a poor mental health, it is important to know what makes children and adolescents of today so exposed to these kind of problems (The Ministry of Health and Care)([MoHaC], 2014)). Mental health is now going to be a big part of the public health work, and new measures within mental health and drug prevention are taking form in collaboration with the different counties in Norway ([MoHaC], 2014).

Self-esteem is also closely linked to emotional health in adolescents, and research points out how self-esteem is a large part of how people view and understand themselves. Self-esteem can be provided to adolescence in many different forms, such as body image and physical sensations that one feels (Modrcin-Talbott, Pullen, Ehrenberger, Zandstra, & Muenchen, 1998). Body-image is based on how we feel, think and how we perceive ourselves and our body (Radell, Adame, Cole , & Blumenkehl, 2011). To an individual, body image is a large part of that person's personality and self-identity. It is linked to i.e. a person's level of self-esteem and psychosocial development. Body image includes both perceptual components which affects the accuracy of size estimation and cognitive affects components (Schneider et al., 2013). Schneider et al., (2013) writes: "Cognitive-affective components refers to evaluations and feelings of (dis)satisfaction with one's body size"(p.373).

Linked to this, comparing oneself to others and experience your body not corresponding to the ideal body imagined, can result in higher body dissatisfaction. Significant others, peers and media all play a big part in how an individual view their actual body compared to the ideals presented. Schneider et al., (2013) argues: “Body ideals presented in the media, by friends or other peers, and by family members are important in understanding the development of young people’s individual body image” (Storvoll, Strandbu, & Wichstrøm, 2005, p. 7).

The relationship between body image and self-esteem is an important aspect of young people's mental health- and girls and young women's especially Biddel and Asare (2011) argues. Schneider et al., (2013) indicates young women who experience body dissatisfaction, are in greater risk of engaging in body change strategies (e.g. using laxatives, skipping meals, exercise excessively) which can not only endanger the physical health in girls, but also cause mental problems (e.g. eating disorders, depression symptoms). “Adolescent girls are especially at risk for body dissatisfaction as they are particularly exposed to the ideal of extreme slimness portrayed in the mass media and the fashion scenes”(Schneider et al., 2013, p. 374). Adolescence is a very crucial time for youngsters, since they experiences both physical and psychological changes within their bodies. Therefore, it is important to understand what affects young women’s body image. So, not surprisingly much of the focus on young women's body image and self-identity, has concentrated on weight-related issues (e.g. eating disorders, overweight), because this is an important issue for young women all over the world (Schneider et al., 2013). However, far less attention has been paid to other aspects of body image such as height, especially concerning adolescent girls.

3.2 General literature (body-image and females)

During early adolescence, many girls and young women report low level of self-esteem and negative changes in body-image (Dorak, 2011). Dorak (2011) has investigated the relationship between self-esteem and body image in female adolescents who are athletic and non-athletic. There were 477 girls at the age of 12-14 years taking part in this survey done in Turkey. The findings revealed there is a significantly stronger relationship between self-esteem and body image among the athletic girls than those who were not engaged in sport. “Body image has an important influence upon adolescent self-esteem. However, for some young people, satisfaction with their physical appearance plays a critical role in this developmental process and becomes the central determinant of their sense of self” (Dorak, 2011, p. 554). Research indicates young girls also define beauty and what the ideal body looks like based on their own body image. Girls who are satisfied with their body image tend to define beauty more widely and flexible, and seems to be more occupied with feeling good about them (Holmqvist & Frisé, 2012).

Studies from 1966 to 1996 shows body image among female American college students have become much worse. The body image among guys on the other hand was found very stable (Storvoll et al., 2005). So, what is influencing young women’s body image? It is no longer only family, friends and other peers that influence how the ideal body should look like. The mass media and commercial interest helps to determine how the ideal body should look like too (Green, 2011). In the mass media and fashion scenes all over the world, extreme slimness is portrayed, and young women are often modelling. The mass media is available almost everywhere and young girls in particular are in risk of developing a negative body-image because they are exposed to the ideals (Schneider et al., 2013). Therefore, having an environment where they can enhance their body image and self-esteem, is important in order

to avoid young girls developing a negative body image. Schneider et al.,(2013) has examined how young girls between 14 and 17 years are viewing themselves and their body image. Using 3D-avatare software, 144 girls were asked to estimate their actual body image, their desired body image and what they believed their female friends and parents considered to be the ideal body image for them. The participants estimated their BMI, and findings revealed the girls wanted to be significantly thinner. They were asked to shape their ideal body image using the 3D-teqhnology. Generally, the girls wanted their ideal body to be 5.5 kg lighter than they actually are. The participants, who were taking part in esthetical sports, reported a much lower level of body dissatisfaction. Those who viewed much television, had a lower socio-economic status and received negative comments regarding their body from their parents had a significantly higher level of body dissatisfaction (Schneider et al., 2013).

A study conducted on female ballet students also raises the question to which extent mirrors can influence a person's perception of his/her body (Radell et al., 2011). To a dancer, the personal vison of his/her body image is important in order to feel confident performing in a studio. Mirrors are often used for the dancer to become self-aware of the body and how the body appears in different poses (Radell et al., 2011). Radell et al., (2011) used the Cash 69-item Body Self-Reletions Questionnaire as well as video-taping 46 female college ballet students. The students were divided into two groups: one group which taught ballet using mirrors, and one where the students were taught ballet without using mirrors.

Radell et al., (2011) found: "Lower performers who use the mirror worry less about their weight; those who do not use the mirror worry more. The mirror may provide feedback that helps low performing dancers feel more comfortable with their weight" (p.108).

High performance dancers on the other hand, reported feeling better about their bodies without using mirrors. In a dance studio, both reflection of themselves, their teachers and

other dancers presents, can influence their body image and self-awareness. Therefore, both mirrors, teachers and peers can have a large influence on how a ballet dancer view herself (Radell et al., 2011). Students attended the mirrored class reported lower level of anxiety and higher level of self-esteem regarding their body image, than student's thought without mirrors. This evidence does not only apply for ballet dancers, but it has been documented that non-dancers also are left with the same feeling (Radell et al., 2011).

3.3 Girls, sports and body-image

Today, sport is a popular and common leisure time activity for both boys and girls. Nevertheless, there is still a debate about whether sport challenges man's role in society and to which extent women can have an interests in the sport and still be seen as feminine (Schmalz & Kerstetter, 2006). Going through the history of sport, women have been ignored and sports have been an arena where men should and could be more masculine (Coackley & Pike, 2009). So, by knowing girls in sport have a higher level of self-esteem and body image (Schneider et al., 2013), my guess would be that sport, should only be positive for girls. However, when a child grows up, he or she goes through a process of both primary and secondary socialization. This teaches the child to participate in different social processes taking place in society (Berger & Luckmann, 2011 (1966)). Socialization is therefore an important part in understanding why and how girls learn to be girls, and also how girls participate in sport.

3.3.1 Socialization

Gender-socialization is an important part of growing up, and is a term that explains and refers to how one should behave as man and woman within different cultures and different societies (Green, 2011). "Gender-socialization is, in other words, the process by which

boys learn to be boys and girls learn to be girls in relation to the norms of femininity and masculinity”(Green,2011 p.83). The process of gender-socialization sets a certain standard for what type of activities a girl should do and how a girl should look like. Both leisure activities and sports are arenas where the general role of gender disposition is either challenged or reinforced (Green, 2011). Therefore, girls playing sport has been discussed in many studies and how the masculine sports culture may affect the role conflict between girls feminine identity and the masculine activity of sport (Strandbu & Hegna, 2006). In order to learn more, Strandbu & Hegna (2006) interviewed 17 adolescent and young women regarding how female Norwegian athletes experienced taking part in sport and how they perceived and deal with aspects of gender in sport. Standbu and Hegna (2006) write:

Another impression from our interviews is that sports participation empowers girls.

The basketball girls’ statements are in accordance with the suggestion that exercise empowers forms of embodiment other than the objectified. The physical coping and mastery gained from exercising is, of course, relevant not only for girls (p.123)

Today, more women than ever are participating in the area of sports. However, throughout the history of sport, the underlying message is that athleticism and femininity are contradictory (Krane, 2001). Traditionally, we understand sports based on what is suitable and acceptable for male and female. Hegemonic femininity in girls then can explain why girls choose their leisure activity as they do (Krane, 2001).

3.3.2 Hegemonic femininity

“We learn that women in our society are expected to act traditionally, with hegemonic, feminine manners, while males are to act in hegemonic masculine manners. Characteristics

of hegemonic femininity include being emotional, passive, dependent, maternal, compassionate, and gentle” (Krane, 2001, p. 117).

Sport is seen as a masculine domain, and it is considered masculine for girls to evolve in competitive and powerful movements required to be successful in sport. Therefore, the cultural practice within sport sports conflict, with hegemonic femininity (Krane, 2001).

“In other words, gender and gender roles are constructed against the backdrop of heterosexuality. Females are expected to conform to hegemonic femininity and males with hegemonic masculinity; these images of masculinity and femininity correspond to characteristics of compulsory heterosexuality “(Krane, 2001, p. 118).

It is also claimed sport can be used to both empower the female body as a subject, and help objectify the female body (Coackley & Pike, 2009). In order to find balance between athleticism and hegemonic femininity, female in sport must emphasize feminine characteristics but still not be perceived as too feminine. If girls are seen as feminine in sport, they avoid prejudice and discrimination. However, if a girl is seen as too feminine they might risk being sexualized and trivialized (Krane, 2001).

So, body image and how a girl perceives and presents herself, are important in the world of sports.

3.3.3 Body-image in sport

In a research done on female Norwegian basketball players- it emerges they all enjoy the feeling of belonging to a team and this is the most important factor for them. Still, putting makeup on and wear the right type of sport clothes to practice is something they are very aware of- especially the youngest players (16-17 years old) (Strandbu & Hegna, 2006).

Girls who are interviewed believe girls in general feel tremendous pressure to have a nice body and fit into the appropriate "body ideals". They think that male worry less about this

and do not have the same pressure to look good and perform, as girls do (Strandbu & Hegna, 2006). It might be, putting on make-up and doing their hair makes it easier to be taken serious as a girl, while having the appropriate sporting outfit is important in order to be taken seriously as an athlete (Krane, 2001). Even though the girls playing basketball spend their time doing their hair and makeup before practice, they can't spend too much time on their appearance. Strandbu and Hegna (2006) write: "If someone dresses very nice and uses lots of makeup that's commented upon. Not directly to them, but about them"(p.120).

There is a fine balance in order to be seen as feminine and not be perceived as masculine. It appears as the girls don't want to perceive as "posh" either (Strandbu & Hegna, 2006).

Going through the literature, it turns out it is important to promote a smaller body and gender-focused environment on trainings; and it is pointed out that parents and especially the coaches have a great responsibility for this (Buchholz, Mack, McVey, Feder, & Barrowman, 2008). To present a sporting environment which focuses on mastering new skills, cohesion within the group and learning how to be a good athlete is important. In this way, there is a lower risk, especially for young girls, to be worried about their appearances in practise (Buchholz et al., 2008). In addition to this, research shows athletic girls have reported a higher level of self-esteem and body image than non-athletic girls does. Being part of sport in adolescence has proven to be positively significant for both young girls and boy's level of self-esteem and body image (Dorak, 2011).

3.4 Girls, height and handball

When I was doing the first literature research in September 2014, I only found one article about the relationship between height, self-esteem and girls. Literature regarding tall men on the other hand was no problem finding. Being a tall man has been seen as a benefit, and it

turns out they often are successful both at school and work. Variation in individuals height is highly visible and one of the most obvious differences among people. In addition to this, research shows 80% of the variation in height is linked with genetic control (McEvoy & Visscher, 2009). Therefore, height under normal circumstances is something a person is not able to control, unless they are exposed to environmental factors such as extreme diet and diseases (McEvoy & Visscher, 2009).

A review already done of the literature, have discovered it is a clear link between height, adolescent identity and physical attractiveness (Booth, 1990). A study conducted in 1990 suggested people with “normal” height, had no linear relationship between height and body-image. Extreme height on the other hand, was related to heightened self- consciousness and therefor had a great impact on the person’s perceived body-image (Booth, 1990).

Booth (1990) did a quantitative study were 479 college students, mostly under the age of 21, participated. She investigated if there was a relationship between height and self-esteem and the mediating effect of self-consciousness.

“Adolescents are distinctly aware of their size and how much they vary from their peers. The perceptions and evaluations of others are undeniably important during adolescence”(Booth, 1990, p. 614). Socialization, enculturation and biological imperative are factors that affects how people view each other body and their own body-image (Booth, 1990).

So, what strikes me is, there are hardly any existing research out there regarding height and youngsters in general, and almost nothing at all regarding body image, height and adolescent girls. In order to see if I was one the few researchers out there finding this link between height, body image and adolescent girls playing handball interesting, I did another literature search in April 2015. I was then able to find another article regarding girls and height. The

researchers did a qualitative study using in-depth interviews and a phenomenological approach (Firmin, Hoffman, Firmin, Lee, & Vorobyov, 2013). They reported being a tall college girl, made them very aware of the height of others, they had a personal sense of identification with their tallness and they felt they received much attention from others regarding their height (Firmin et al., 2013). Earlier studies done, indicates that the concept of height normally is seen as an objective descriptions regarding a person's body length. Height among men affects their perceived character, but height among women is still unaddressed to a large extent (Firmin et al., 2013). "However, on another level, the impact that height has on social constructions, self-esteem, stereotyping, and stigmas can be quite cogent, especially within the concept of gender (Firmin et al., 2013, p. 405). Over time, tall women has made personal sacrifices in order to appear shorter than men. One thing in particular is regarding their posture, where they tend to slouch together so they would not immediately be perceived as tall. In addition to this, during adolescence, tall girls are often exposed to teasing and bullying. Many tall girls in general often receive comments regarding their height (e.g. how tall are you?, do you play basketball?, how can you be so tall?). These types of comments are often received from complete strangers (Firmin et al., 2013). Also, putting on high heels has been challenging for many girls. Partly because it is hard finding high heeled shoes in a large enough size, but also because it gives the impression they are taller (Firmin et al., 2013). In order to fit in to 'the normal body ideals' existing in society- children of tall parents can have the opportunity to get hormone treatment before puberty to reduce their expected adult height (Venn et al., 2008).

Oestrogen treatment to reduce the adult height of constitutionally tall girls was first reported in 1956 and has been used for psycho-social indications since then.... The use of oestrogens is based on the knowledge that, in normal puberty development, oestrogen leads to the epiphyseal fusion of the long bones. Moderately high doses of oestrogen have been used, usually 3-10 times daily oestrogen requirements for young adult women (Venn et al., 2008, p. 926)

Venn et al.,(2008) did a retrospective cohort study on tall girls in Australia who all received oestrogen treatment between 1959 and 1993. They concluded oestrogen treatment was more effective on younger girls, and their actually adult height was lower than predicted. Still, most girls experienced the change in their height were not as significant as they would have wanted before starting on the hormonal treatment (Venn et al., 2008). So, in order to receive hormonal treatment and in order for the treatment having best effect, it needs to be given during early adolescents. Follow-up studies done on girls who were offered hormonal treatment, concluded that all of the women, both treated and non-treated actually were satisfied with their adult height eventually. Others tend to believe tall women must be unsatisfied with their height. However, only half of the girls, who had a lower height than average, were satisfied with their adult height (Firmin et al., 2013). This has leaded me to wonder, maybe height actually is not a problem for tall women, but it is a problem for the society around?

3.4.1 Handball

Since my research project is based on tall girls playing handball, I needed to look at literature regarding handball and girls as well. A study conducted on young girls active within handball, showed they were all generally heavier, taller and had a larger arm spread than other sedentary girls their age (Popovici & Radu, 2014). However, it was not specified if any of the girls had a significantly taller body than their peers. The girls in this specific study had an average age on 12,5 years. 48 girls attended the study, where half of the girls played handball 3-4 times a week, a 1.5 hours each work out. The untrained girls took part in PE- classes two times a week (Popovici & Radu, 2014). Handball is a sport where height and a physically strong body is preferred, because there is many rough tackles during a match and stronger players with higher body mass has an advantage in meetings with opponents

(Popovici & Radu, 2014). In other words, handball is an arena where tall girls should feel welcome.

3.5 Research question

Based on my literature review and my earlier observations regarding tall girls in general, my research question for this study will be *"Does handball provide an enclave (and social networks) for girls and young women who otherwise might feel very awkward about, even unhappy with, their height in everyday social contexts?"*

4. Methodology

Methodology is normally describing the study of methods, but is often referred to as a technique used to investigate different research methods (Roberts, 2009).

“Methodology can then refer to the theoretical underpinnings of these methods. So a methodology might, for example, be positivist, feminist, symbolic interactionist, Marxist” (Roberts, 2009, p. 169). Methodology is important in order to know exactly what we can expect; what knowledge are we looking for and can make into new hypotheses and theories. It is also important to be aware that the knowledge we acquire as researchers, are more or less objective or subjective (Bryman, 2012).

As a researcher, I have been exposed to a number of choices needed to be considered along with the proses of writing. Do I choose a qualitative or quantitative approach, and which theoretical perspectives do I choose? According to Roberts (2009), there are various theoretical perspectives to choose from doing a research project I.E., hermeneutics, phenomenology, objectivism and grounded theory. Even though there are literature to guide the researcher in the right direction and helping he or she to decide which theoretical perspective and methodological approach to use, it must all be seen in the light of the research question. The researcher must decide for themselves which approach helps highlight the research question most fairly (Bryman, 2012).

4.1 Qualitative vs. quantitative research

Doing a methodological abstract about qualitative and quantitative methods, can be a good way to start. In many cases, it can be found helpful in order to know which theoretical approach one should use. Distinguishing the differences between the two main research

paradigms- makes it easier to discover the pros and cons with the different methods and can help the researcher to decide which method is most suitable to his/her project (Bryman, 2012). “On the face of it, there would be little to the quantitative / qualitative distinction other than the fact that quantitative researches employ measurement and qualitative researchers do not” (Bryman, 2012, p. 35). Thus, a quantitative method is a way to employ measurements and looks at large samples of data. This method helps the researcher to organize and present large numbers, significant findings and trends / patterns in society. The aim of this method is to get a foundation for precise calculations of the relationship between various concepts / topics that are examined. The measure of quantitative analysis is causality (the desire to explain), repeatability, generalization (the desire to say something about more than those we examined) and measurement (Bryman, 2012). A qualitative method is more focused on words instead of numbers and the researcher is interested in understanding the world and the question *why* (Bryman, 2012). Examples of qualitative research methods are unstructured interviews, open-ended questions where either the researchers or participants write down the answers or unstructured observations (Roberts, 2009). Using a purposive sampling is often relevant for this method since it is desirable to have an understanding of the subject (Bryman, 2012). “This type of sample is selected on theoretical grounds, because the cases selected will be especially interesting and informative for the purpose of a particular study”(Roberts, 2009, p. 221). In my study, I am interested in finding out if there is a link between young girl’s body-image and height, and if so- try to understand why. Therefore, I have chosen to do a mixed-method study, doing a qualitative study with an element of quantitative method as well.

My research question asks if handball can provide an enclave or social network for girls who might feel awkward, and unhappy about their height in everyday social contexts. Therefore, I need to investigate,

- i. how they feel about their height,
- ii. if handball does have any impact on how they feel about themselves and if it provides them with an social network and enclave.

Since the girls are from all parts of Norway, and they are all participating in an already existing “tall girl project”, I am also interested in seeing if this specific project have had an impact on their body image or created an enclave for them.

4.1.1 Design

In my study I will look at a small project conducted by the NHF. This specific research project has few participants who are all members of an organization, and I want to find out if handball as a sport can help or provide tall girls an enclave or social network.

Case studies are normally used when looking at a single community, school, family, organization, a person or a single event (Bryman, 2012). According to Bryman (2012): “The basic case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case”(p.66).

The main goal using a case-study is always to learn more about different opinions, processes and motivations which can give a better understanding. In long terms, this can lead to new hypotheses which can be seen in relation to the world around (Roberts, 2009).

In my case, I am hoping to contribute to other people finding the relationship between height, body image and adolescent girls interesting. Hopefully this study will inspire other researchers to develop new hypothesizes in order for more research to be conducted.

According to Bryman (2012), there are five different types of case studies. These are:

- i. Critical case,
- ii. extreme or unique case,
- iii. representative or typical case,
- iv. revelatory case and the

- v. longitudinal case.

My study will be categorized as an extreme or unique study. It is unique in terms there is no other project like this in Norway (nor in the rest of Europa where handball is popular, as far as I am aware of). NHF has started a project which has not been documented before, and the effect of this type of project is unknown. In addition to this, there has hardly been conducted any research regarding tall adolescent girls and their body image. Looking at the participants in my study, this study can be classified as an extreme case. All of the girls are between 1.80-1.90m tall, which is minimum 20 cm higher than the average Norwegian girl (and most other girls in the world as well). Considering they are only 13-16 years old, they have an extreme height seen in relation to other girls in the society.

4.2 Deductive and inductive theory

The next step in order to do a research project (after deciding which method and design reflects the research question the most), is deciding which theoretical perspective to use.

In order to reflect and considering the relationship between theory and research, it is important to know if one are using a deductive or an inductive approach to the theory. If the researcher starts with a deductive approach, a common theory is used and developed into a hypothesize. An inductive approach means the researcher lets the data speak for it selves, and develop the theory from here (Bryman, 2012).

The risk using a deductive approach is that one might only confirm already known data, instead of developing new knowledge. By using an inductive approach, there is a chance theory might be re-invented (Bryman, 2012). In my study, I will try to marry the inductive and deductive approach together. So, my dissertation will be informed by, and be in the spirit of Grounded Theory. In order to do so, I am using existing theory to make a hypotheses, and

still letting my data speak for it selves. In this way, I will develop new theory and not risking re-inventing old theory.

4.3 Grounded theory

Grounded theory is increasingly used as a method in qualitative research and the theory can provide a coherent explanation of what is going on around us and give an understanding of what is happening in various fields. It is an inductive, sociological approach that focuses on patterns of human interaction (Hjalmhult, Giske, & Satinovic, 2014).

This theory allows the researcher to appreciate people's perception of their words to understand their actions, and be open towards people are relatively independent (Roberts, 2009). Grounded theory was originally developed by the American sociologists Barney Strauss and Anselm Strauss (Roberts, 2009). "Grounded theory is an interactive approach to the analysis of qualitative data that aims to generate theory out of research data by achieving a close fit between the two" (Bryman, 2012, p. 712). The researcher are deliberately open towards what information the target group will bring and is confident that the data collected-reflects what is essential for the participants (Roberts, 2009). It is argued the main concern will emerge, despite what earlier studies, theories or experience suggests, and the researcher must be as open minded as possible in order to use grounded theory (Hjalmhult et al., 2014).

However, what is separating Grounded Theory from other qualitative approaches is the analyzing process. In the spirit of Grounded theory, the collection of the data and the analysis is happening at the same time. The data which emerges will constantly be analyzed, in order for the researcher to create an opinion on what is important and highlight this eventually. During the analysis, the researcher starts to look at the findings with an open

mind, and narrows it down during the process of coding and analyzing (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2010).

“Already from the beginning; the researcher is more focused on creating codes which are more abstract than the words highlighted in the text. This is separated from the other qualitative approaches, where it is normal to start with an “experience near” coding system, which is based on codes that are similar to the words of the informer”(Johannessen et al., 2010, p. 84)(own translation))

Therefore, there are different outcomes of grounded theory. Concepts or a label is produced by using open coding. Different categories is created from the different labels and reflects on real-world phenomena. Properties and hypotheses has emerged from the aspects of a category and relationships between concepts and new theory is created (Bryman, 2012).

There will be two types or level of theory when using grounded theory: substantive and formal theory (Bryman, 2012). “The substantive theory is explored using grounded theory processes in relation to different settings from that in which it was generated, so that formal theory may be generated. A formal theory will relate to more abstract categories, which are not specifically concerned with the research area in question (Bryman, 2012, p. 571).

In my dissertation, I am only using a small piece of grounded theory. Due to my small amount of time, I will not have the time to dig down deep enough in all of the aspects of grounded theory. The aspect of time has also been mentioned as criticism from researchers who has used grounded theory earlier (Johannessen et al., 2010).

4.3.1 Criticisms

This theory has had its critics over the years, and other researcher has questioned if it is really possible to wait to take account of different theories and other relevant concepts before

the analysis is almost finished (Bryman, 2012). Also, due to the fact many researches has many tight and strict deadlines, it can in many cases be difficult to use all time necessary to carry out a genuine grounded theory analysis. Some researchers find it hard distinguishing between concepts and categories and believe this is one of the main challenges in grounded theory (Bryman, 2012). Bryman (2012) also write: “It is somewhat doubtful whether grounded theory in many instances really results in theory”(p.574). In my experience, using grounded theory has been challenging. In order to do the analysis, I needed a lot of time and I struggled to find codes and categories suitable for my findings. By consulting my supervisor, I was able to find codes and place them in suitable categories eventually. Looking at the positive sides of grounded theory, being able to go back to the literature and search for more theory if needed, has been positive. There are not much literature existing regarding tall adolescent girls, therefore I have needed to go back to the literature several times, even after I finished analysing my data.

4.4 Preparation

Doing a research project based on Grounded theory, it is argued no pre-understanding is needed. However, theory can still be used, but it is considered equally with other data which emerges during the research process (Johannessen et al., 2010). In my case, it has been hard to find any literature discussing my research question regarding body image and height. Therefore, most of my pre-understanding has been based on my earlier observations of tall girls (both on the handball court and in everyday life) and my thoughts on what it is like being taller than average.

Nevertheless, in order for this study to happen I need to collect a sample of participants.

4.4.1 Selection sampling

There are two key ways of sampling- probability and purposive sampling.

Probability sampling is mostly used when doing a quantitative study, but purposive sampling is used when doing a qualitative study and when looking at I.E organizations, people and documents (Bryman, 2012). “This type of sampling is essentially to do with the selection of units ... with direct reference to the research question being asked” (Bryman, 2012, p. 416).

Within purposive sampling, theoretical sampling is a subset. This sampling method is advocated by the creators of Grounded Theory, and is meant to be an alternative strategy to collect data until theoretical saturation is achieved (Bryman, 2012). When theoretical saturation is obtained, the researcher should no longer strive to collect more data. Instead, it is more important to collect the different categories and start generating hypotheses based on his or her findings (Bryman, 2012). Bryman (2012) suggests the process of theoretical sampling should take place with a general research question, which will lead the researcher to start sample theoretically and collect data. When data is collected, they must be analyzed into concept and categories. As the researcher generates more data, theoretical saturation will be achieved at one point and hypotheses can be generated. If needed, the researcher can go back to “theoretically samples”, and re-start the process.

In my case, 21 girls are already gathered in the project conducted by NFH. Every one of these girls will get the opportunity to take part in this specific research project. Since I have no opportunity to meet the girls in person before the interviews will take place, e-mails will be sent out with information about the project to the girls and their parents, containing consent forms and my contact information in case there are any questions. In an agreement with NDS (Norwegian Social Science Data Services), the project manager of the “tall girl project” will be sending out the e-mails. Since NHF does not have obtained consents from

the participants and their parents to hand out personal information (e.g. phone number ,e-mail address), it needed to be done like this, if not, the NSD would not have approved my application.

4.5 Data collection

In this study, interviews will be conducted. In addition to this, a small questionnaire will be handed out to the girls as well. My purpose is to use interviews to get a deeper understanding on what it is like being a tall adolescent girl and see if height really is an issue for them. The questionnaire will be used to figure out if the “tall girl project” they are attending, directed by the NHF, has had an impact on them and if it has provided them with an enclave suitable for tall girls.

4.5.1 Interviews

In this study, interviews will be conducted. There are three types of interviews:

structured, semi-structured and un-structured, and interviews can be both qualitative and quantitative. If a structured interview is used, the person answering has no opportunity to respond outside of the questions being asked and the interviewer will be locked to the interview guide (Bryman, 2012). Semi-structured and un-structured interviews on the other hand is qualitative, since both the person answering and the person interviewing has the opportunity to talk freely and they are not fully locked to the interview guide (Bryman, 2012).

In my study, I am most likely to use semi-structured interview since I want to combine obtaining data on specific themes (e.g. their perception of the relationship between height and body-image) with allowing the girls to answer freely about things that matters to them. The interview guide will consist of, approximately 4-6 questions or main topics which will

function as a template during the interview. I will start of the interview by asking about body-image in general, and then narrow it down to height in relation to body-image more specific. Every interview will be estimated to about 30 minutes and take place at OLT January 9. and 10. 2015. All of my interviews will also be conducted in Norwegian.

In an agreement with the NHF and the project manager of “the tall girl project”, the interviews will be conducted in Oslo during the national gathering of the tall girls. The girls are invited to stay at Olympiatoppen (OLT) for two days, in order to see each other, exercise and take part in other educational arrangements(e.g. what to eat, meeting a sport psychologist to talk about performance, what it is like being tall). So, when their schedule allows them, I will be given a room at OLT to interview the girls in private. A tape recorder will be used to record the interviews, and I will also have the opportunity to take notes during the interviews.

It has also been obtained indirectly data which can identify the participants to a certain degree. However, these data only tell me the year of birth and their height. Since data regarding the participants already has been published, it is possible to figure out who the participants are. Therefore, I am likely to only generalize which year they are born and how tall they are.

All of the participants were given an individual code (e.g. A1, B2, C3 etc.,) so they would remain anonymous. However, in my findings I have decided to rename all of my participants and given them pseudonym based on their original name code (e.g, Julianne, Karianne, Oliva). In this way, it should not be possible to recognize who is talking; still, it seems a little more personal than using I.E “person 1” or girl 1”.

Before going to the OLT, pilot interviews will be conducted with other tall girls, in order to test my interview guide and rehearsing doing follow-up questions.

4.5.2 Weaknesses

Even if interview is widely used as an research instrument, there can be weaknesses as well (Bryman, 2012). These weaknesses can involve such things as putting the objects at ease during the interviews, avoiding leading questions, being sensitive to the issues that most concern them and giving them time to answer the questions (Bryman, 2012). In my case, this can be a challenge not to put the young girls at ease, especially given that the topic is a sensitive issue. I want to find out if their height really is relevant for their body image; therefor it is important I don't ask leading questions so it may seem like height is a big issue when it's perhaps not.

4.6 Processing the data

After finishing the interviews, the real work begins- transcribing and analyzing the data. Transcribing and coding the material is a time consuming and complex process, which is crucial for the outcome (Roberts, 2009). In Grounded theory, analyzing the data consist of multiple steps and it is important to have a plan for how to do the analyses. Therefore, before collecting the data it is important to know you should start analyzing the data once the interview is finished (Hjalmhult et al., 2014).

4.6.1 Transcribing interviews

After conducting the interviews, transcribing the data is needed in order to analyze them properly. Transcribing speech into text is a time consuming job and being careful and exact is crucial. All the little words like I.E. "ehm", "hmm" and "well" must be documented in order to get a sense of how the object interviewed is talking. Silence, laughs, teary eyes and frustrations are also signs which are important to recognize. Still, it has been discussed to which extent it is actually needed to transcribe interviews afterwards. Not only does it take a

lot of time, it also takes a lot of paper (Bryman, 2012). In my opinion, transcribing the interviews was an awful job, but luckily my interviews did not last longer than 30 minutes so it was feasible. The bright side of transcribing, according to myself, is I am very familiar with my findings and it has given me a huge advantage during the process of analyzing.

Looking at grounded theory for the first time with an untrained eye, it looks like a theory which is easy to use and it gives the researcher a much needed freedom to interpret and code data. Going deeper into the method, grounded theory requires the researcher to stay focused in order to do the analysis at the same time the data is collected. In addition to this, it is required the researcher is able to maintain theoretical sensitivity during the whole process of analyzing (Johannessen et al., 2010).

4.6.2 Theoretical sensitivity

Theoretical sensitivity is when the researcher has sensitivity and is able to distinguish, identify and understand what is important when collecting and analyzing the data.

Investigate and understanding the literature before starting a research project, have both professional and personal experience within the field which are investigated and have a general understanding of the analytical process which is happening later on, are all sources to theoretical sensitivity (Johannessen et al., 2010). In my case, I have only observed tall girls in different social settings, and tried to understand the existing literature. However, I realized after my interviews, I was not familiar enough with the literature and I had not made enough pilot- interviews in order to ask proper follow-up questions. Therefore, this can be seen as a limitation of my study.

4.6.3 Analyzing and coding the material

One of the most distinctive factors in grounded theory, is the way to code and categorize the data material after transcribing it (Roberts, 2009). According to Bryman (2012) constant

comparison and coding is the most important steps in analyzing the data material.

“Coding ... entails reviewing transcripts and/or field notes and giving labels (name) to component parts that seem to be of potential theoretical significance and/or that appear to be particularly salient within the social worlds” (Bryman, 2012, p. 568). Bryman (2012) argues there are three types of coding: *open*, *axial* and *selective* coding. *Open coding* makes it possible to completely break down the material, examine and compare the material which brings out different concepts. *Axial coding* is used to put data back together in new ways after open coding, and in this way make connections between different categories (Bryman, 2012). *Selective coding* is “the procedure of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationship, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development”(Bryman, 2012, p. 569).

In my experience, doing the analysis and finding codes and categories has been hard. I started out during the interview, trying to do an open coding. I took notes while my participants were talking, in order to identify important descriptions which I brought with me to the next interview. After I was finished transcribing all of the interviews, I closely read all of the material, highlighted important sections and tried to label them. In addition to this, I eventually tried to organize all of my transcripts with coding's in a table (see appendix 1). In the spirit of grounded theory and open coding, it is all about giving the different statements codes, in order to eventually give them abstract names (Bryman, 2012). Still, I struggled to find suitable codes for my material and I needed to go through my material and codes several times.

After finishing the process of open coding, I tried to go one step further in order to find the links between the different categories. By narrowing down the different categories by using axial coding, it will be easier to develop and formulate a new theory (Bryman, 2012). It took

me many attempts before I was able to organize my categories from very small and many, to larger and more descriptive categories. After the process of axial coding I was left with these categories:

- i. body image in general
- ii. height in specific
- iii. self-esteem regarding their height
- iv. expected adult height and hormonal treatment

The final step of the coding process is selective coding. This is where the theory is created and the main categories are pointed out (Bryman, 2012). In my dissertation, the main categories which stands out after my selective coding is:

- i. Body image in general
- ii. Self-esteem regarding their body image
- iii. Body image and height in specific

4.6.4 Memo-writing

Given the fact grounded theory is a creative theory which requires the researcher to juggle between analyzing and collecting data, it can be hard remembering all of the thoughts and ideas appearing. Therefore, doing memo-writing or keep a diary throughout the research process can be advisable (Bryman, 2012). Throughout my research process, I have taken notes and written down thoughts which have occurred. This has been helpful both in the process of preparing for the interviews, analyzing and discuss my findings. It has also helped me identify the limitations of my study as well.

4.7 Ethical considerations

When doing a social research project, there are many ethical considerations to be aware of.

Bryman (2012) presents four main principles:

- 1. whether there is harm to participants;*
- 2. whether there is lack of informed consent;*
- 3. Whether there is an invasion of privacy;*
- 4. whether deception is involved. (p. 135).*

Doing this project, there will be many ethical challenges. I will need to obtain ethical approval for the study from the Norwegian Research Council. Despite this, the girls are under 18 years old, which means I need the parent's approval for them to participate in my study. Of course, I will need the girl's permission as well since they will be my research objects. Prior to this, body-image and height might be a sensitive subject for them and I must be careful how I ask my questions and make sure they feel safe enough to answer. It is also important for me to put my assumptions on what it is like to be a tall girl aside, and be open-minded about their answers without trying to make them say what they think I want to hear.

My aim will be to meet the girls in person and interview them face to face. The interviews will most likely take place at Olympiatoppen (OLT) /NIH in Oslo when all of the girls are gathered by NHF. I must be careful to store my data and findings in a way that nobody else can find them, and make sure it is not possible to recognize the persons talking.

If the interviews are taking place at OLT, I also need to be sure that the girls don't know who is talking with me, and that they don't talk to each other about the interviews.

When the project is finished, I will store the data at HiHm for two years. After this, the data will be anonymized.

5. Findings

In this chapter, the findings of this study are presented. There are four main categories or themes which stand out from the data. These categories are:

- i. The girl's body image in general
- ii. Their height
- iii. Self-esteem and confidence regarding their height
- iv. Expected adult height

Within these four categories, there are sub categories which revealed in greater detail how the participants perceived themselves and their body image. Each of the themes reviled from the data is illustrated with quotations from the interviews.

In addition to this, the results from the minor questionnaire regarding NFH's "tall girl project" and their body image is presented and analyzed as well.

5.1 The girl's body image in general

In terms of their general body image, many of the girls found it hard to find something positive to say about themselves. Finding something negative to say (on the other hand), appeared less difficult. Some of them indicated they would change something about their bodies if they had the opportunity. Many of the girls talked about their body according to weight-related concerns and used words like: "I'm normal", "I'm fit", "I'm not fat" and "I'm skinny" to describe themselves. Words like these are all typical reference points to weight-related issues. Known from the literature, this is also seen as stereotypical concerns for youngsters in general and especially adolescent girls. Having a fit body, not been seen as fat

and feel normal is important for young girls and their self-esteem. All these words may be linked with femininity or the desire to fit in to a gender dominated environment.

The data suggest being part of a handball team seems to be liberating for many of the girls. Practicing to become better and learning new skills are what being on the handball court has been all about.

“Ehm, in my handball team it is not as much pressure. We are all feeling safe together, ehm, you can be yourself and you don’t have to be skinny or fit and like be pretty for the rest of the team” (Danielle)

5.1.1 Body image satisfaction and dissatisfaction

During the interviews, most of the girls spent time talking about how hard it was to find something to be satisfied with. Eventually, they all seemed to find something they liked about themselves. Nevertheless, many of them seemed embarrassed about saying out loud what they actually were satisfied with.

“Ehm.. Yes, I often find it difficult, especially concerning bodies and stuff like that.. But, yeah I’m actually very satisfied with my long and thick hair. But other than that I think it is hard to say it is something I am very happy about, because I think there is nothing to be 100% happy about”(Andrea)

Most of the girls were able to find several things they did not like about their body in general. The majority of the participants seemed more preoccupied with thinking about their legs, stomach, hair and how much body fat their body had. Some of the participants also mentioned that they were too skinny and lacked curves.

“Ehm, yes, or I would like to have some more curves maybe”(Julianne)

Normal teenage issues like stomach, thighs or lack of female curves (e.g. breasts, hips) were brought up. These are all issues related to being seen as feminine. To have a slim and shaped

body, but still have feminine curves is important in order to fit in as a woman and not be seen as masculine.

5.1.2 Changes

All of the girls were asked if they would have changed anything about their body if they had the opportunity. When I asked the question, it seemed like many of them were thinking really hard about the question, but the answers were very divided. Some of them said:

“Yes! I guess I would have done it. Ehm, (silence). Like, was it only one specific thing?” (Andrea)

To me, it seemed like they felt embarrassed about wanting to change something about their bodies.

“Ehm, well actually I would like, ehm, I would have changed a lot about my body if that was an option” (Danielle)

This might be, wanting to enhance your body is something which is not normal to talk openly about in Norway. Nevertheless, if they could use exercise to change (e.g their size, or get more muscles) that would be acceptable. However, they would not have done anything to change something about their appearance or their height for that matter. They thought it would be like cheating if they did anything to change their bodies

“Ehm, I don’t think I would have changed my height. But I think maybe I don’t would have been so, or not fatter, but not so skinny” (Karianne)

This might be linked with the strong sporting tradition existing among athletes in Norway, where cheating in order to get results is frowned upon.

5.1.3 Bodily comments received from peers

During the interviews, many of the participants mentioned they received comments about their body and listened to people talking about each other's body is a large part of their everyday social life. Being surrounded by peers every day may be challenging at times. Many of the participants told me it is a lot of pressure looking good, especially at school.

Well, for example, one in my class actually has anorexia, and that is a proof that this person feels the pressure. But it is like, to have, I don't know. It just shows that there is a lot of pressure in my class, but it depends how you adjust to it in a way" (Ida)

Being exposed to bodily pressure can be quite though. Some are coping well, but others are finding it difficult. Generally, they think people mean well when they are talking about others and how good he or she looks. Still, it is tough too. Even though it is meant as a positive thing, it can easily create a lot of negativity and people may be offended by it.

"When first one begins, then everyone begins. And then you say like: "oh, you look so good, look at me.. I don't have what you have". But, eh, at least with the people I spend time with, we try not to focus about it because it creates so much negativity" (Olivia)

Some of the participants have also experienced negative comments about their body.

"Well, or in elementary school people used to call me skyscraper and stuff like that" (Julianne)

In this way, the participants received comments directly regarding their bodies, still it was never mentioned exactly which part of the body was commented. More general terms like "skyscraper" were used. However, it is likely to believe this specific comment might indicate the person being tall and shapeless. Even though it might be hurtful receiving negative comments, some of them reported they tried to not care about it.

"Yes, I use to think like I know. But I don't bother to do anything about it, like I don't let it get to me, like when someone comment that my butt is flat, I just smile,

because I don't have the energy to do anything about it. When they say something, it just goes into my ear and right out the other one" (Elise)

It seems to me, this might be more of a mechanism to cope with negative comments from others. Blocking negative feedback completely is hard, and given the fact this girl were mentioning it, makes me believe she has given this aspect a lot of thought.

Another participant talked about how important it to be satisfied with her, rather than be focused on how one should look; and she said:

"I rather think, ehm, those who want to focus that much about it, can focus on it. I can rather be happy about myself instead. Since I don't feel that much pressure on looking good in a way, I don't need to have the biggest breasts, or the flattest stomach or the biggest butt. It is not what matters" (Malene)

This might be a technique to cope with other aspects of life and body image instead. If the body already is matching the standards of "being fit and look normal", she can spend her energy on other aspects in life. Throughout the history of women and gender-socialization, being accepted and being seen as an individual member of society has been important. Still, not caring about peer comments and the pressure of looking good might be another way of coping and avoiding negative energy. Giving the impression it does not matter what other people are saying, might make the one commenting lose interest.

5.1.4 Media and peers impact

The media and peers are a large part of the participant's everyday life. Being a part of social media and watching commercials everywhere can be challenging for many of them. Some of the girls find it difficult being surrounded by "perfect bodies", but they try not to feel pressured about it. They all think there is a very high focus on appearances in the media; some of them even think it is worse now days than it was before.

“I feel like they are focusing a lot more on the physical than they did before ... Like, either you are perfect, or you are nothing at all ... There is someone who is so perfect and it kind of gets like, you look at them and then you look at yourself and then you feel like you are not perfect” (Elise)

Many of them found it hard to match the bodily standards presented by the media or other peers. Those who generally were happy about their looks, did not focus as much about the pressure presented by media and peers. Those who were more concerned about their bodies not being fit enough, cared more about matching the bodily standards presented.

5.2 Height

In this category, six sub-categories represent how the participants viewed their height. In addition to this, they also divided being tall into two different settings: being tall in everyday life and being tall at the handball court. The girls reflected around both the benefits and the disadvantages being a tall teenage girl. Many of them find it challenging being tall in everyday life and think it is hard to find something to be satisfied with, beside the obvious reasons like reaching the top shelf.

“Ehm, [laughs] or I do have (embarrassed), I have been discovered by a model agency and stuff like that. But yes, beside that it is not as many benefits. It depends what you do about it yourself. Or, I do reach the top shelves in our kitchen...” (Julianne)

However, all of the girls found it positive being tall in the handball court, even though it could be challenging as well. Still, the girls thought working hard to succeed at the handball court was worth it since they felt at home and so secure at this specific arena.

“It is very positive being tall. At least in some ways. Well, you automatically become slower and maybe use more time doing stuff, but it is like, it is something you can work on. Like, you cannot play with high heels on. So it is quite smart actually” (Heidi)

5.2.1 Height in general

Everyone except for one, initially described themselves as tall when they were asked about their appearance.

“Physical? Do you mean the body? Tall!” (Heidi)

The only girl which did not mention she was tall, reflected about her body and said:

“My looks, like how do I look? Yes, ehm, I am skinny, I have a normal body that is also a bit fit. I am, I don’t feel fat or anything, I just feel normal” (Malene)

Very few of the girls even mentioned their height in the beginning of the interview- besides: I’m tall. It may seem like the girls were highly aware of their height, since they pointed to it straight away. However, it may be that having mentioned their height early on, they then could focus on the weight or the shape of their body instead since those are factors they are able to control.

In addition to this, when the girls were asked what they liked about their body, there was only one girl who actually said something about her height at this point. She reflected around her height and said:

“I like the fact that I am tall. That is an advantage. And that I have the height that I do” (Malene)

This was the same girl who did not describe herself as tall. To her, being tall was something she thought was very positive. It may seem like mentioning all other aspects about her body besides her height at first, gave her an opening to talk about her height which she was not able to control. She already had a fit body which matches the standards for a sporty girl, so she did not need to spend any extra energy worrying about that aspect of her appearance.

A few of the girls also mentioned something about their height in a negative setting. One of the participants indicated she was very unhappy about being tall. To her, being tall in everyday life was a terrible feeling.

“Ehm, eh, my height. The only situation I think it is ok being tall, it is on the handball court” (Her eyes got tear full at this point). (Karianne)

Another girl told me it could be a disadvantage being tall at the handball court, because it was hard controlling such long legs. It is very easy to be seen as a “klutz”. Still, she was very clear about this being a problem which is possible to fix.

“Yes, or I am slow. Like, my feet do not move as fast when they are so long. So that is perhaps what I don’t like so much. But of course, that is something I can work on” (Ida)

5.2.2 Benefits being tall in everyday life

Being tall in everyday life was more of a challenge for the participants than it was beneficial. Only few of the girls were able to identify factors which were positive.

“In concerts, because then you can see over everyone. And you can reach the top shelf ... And you can sit behind someone and still notice what is happening in front of you without bending” (Elise)

These are all factors which are beneficial for tall girls in general. Nevertheless, it may be seen as frustrating and frightening for other people having a person stand in the middle of a crowd, being taller than most people around. So, the obvious benefits might not always be beneficial as well- at least when it comes to other people’s perception.

5.2.3 Benefits being tall at the handball court

Being tall on the handball court on the other hand was reported as very beneficial. One of the participants strongly agreed it was an advantage being tall on the handball court; however, it takes time to learn how to take advantage of the benefits.

“..Of course, it is a benefit being tall if you know how to take advantage of it. But you have to learn how to use it to your advantage. It takes a lot of technique to learn how to shoot pass a block and score...” (Karianne)

Another girl commented that even though she has a lot of advantages a short player don't have, she has never experienced what it is like being short.

“Well,ehm, well yeah when I am a goal keeper, ehm I can reach more. Ehm, yeah I guess I am sort of much bigger when I am a goal keeper so I have a higher percentage of rescues. Ehm, like I don't know what it is really like being short, so.. Well, at least it is an advantage so it is fun” (Andrea)

It was also pointed out that the majority of all the girls playing handball in Norway, are shorter players. Therefore, some of the participants are viewing their height as something unusual, and in this way it is more special being tall- in a good way.

“Well, the average handball player in Norway is short, so we who are attending this project are taller than everyone else, so that is fun” (Olivia)

It has been extra beneficial when the NHF actually has created a special program to help the tall girls develop even more as handball players. As indirect anecdotal evidence, one of the girls' mothers approached me and said she was so happy for the “tall girl project” and wished she had an opportunity like this when she grew up as a tall girl. It did not matter how much she as a mother tried to tell her child how wonderful and normal she is, because there were no other tall girls in her community. Being able to meet other tall girls with the same interest on the other hand, made her daughter shine and she could see how happy she looked training with the other girls.

During the gathering at OLT, one girl playing professional handball at Larvik HK presented the story of her life as a tall girl. She then said: “You can make a tall player good, but not a good player tall”. This was something some of the girls took with them as a mantra in life. It seems to me like the girls are good at finding the benefits of being tall on the handball court. This can be explained by their feeling of security and belonging on this specific arena. Therefore, it might be they forget to a large extent, what is hard and they focus on what is good and beneficial instead.

5.2.4 Disadvantages being tall in everyday life

Being tall in everyday life has been challenging and created many problems for the girls. Growing up, it has not always been easy being at least one head taller than friends and peers around.

“When I was younger. At least when all of my friends was one head larger, no I meant smaller than me, then I wanted to be as small as they were.. But I don’t notice it as much now days” (Linnea)

For people in general; and teenagers specifically- fitting in and feeling normal is very important. Therefore, being physically different than others can be challenging and give a person low self-esteem. It is mentioned that this girl don’t notice the differences as much anymore. To me, it seems like either her peers have grown taller as well and the physical differences are not as severe anymore, or she has stopped caring, and might be concerned about other aspects of growing older.

Many of the girls agreed with being a tall teenage girl, many disadvantages follows. Finding pants which were long enough, having a relation to boys or feeling feminine was reported as challenging.

“It is impossible to find pants that is long enough. And when we are going to prom and stuff like that, you always are too long for all the boys, and, you can’t wear high heels because then you get too tall, like, hehe, that’s some disadvantages” (Danielle)

Being able to feel feminine and fit into stereotypical gender roles (like e.g in weddings, prom, and world of dating) is important in order to be seen as a girl and not a “tomboy”.

For other’s there were more practical challenges and disadvantages being tall in everyday life, like getting enough space for their legs or unwanted attention.

“In the classroom, I am often the first to get notices since I am so tall. And on airplanes. And busses. And trains (..) I really don’t have enough space to my legs. And also sometimes doors, they are too short” (Elise)

For one girl in particular, being a tall teenage girl has been so challenging she had to change school because of bullying.

“It used to be a disadvantage when I was younger. I was that much taller than everybody else, and I was taller than all the boys. They kind of got scared since a girl was that much taller than them. And it has affected my personal Life afterwards. And it has not always being ok going to school and stuff like that. Ehm, I was bullied because of it. Which lead to me changing school in middel school..” (Malene)

Being a tall girl during adolescent obviously has its share of implication. So, I have gradually started to understand how being a tall teenage girl is not always easy. Besides my data, I also got some indirect anecdotal evidence from parents which approached me at OLT. One of the mothers was so happy someone finally highlighted what a challenge it is, being a tall teenage girl. She told me about how her daughter had struggled with her self-esteem and body image growing up, and how hard it was getting recognition that this being an actual challenge. Therefore, she asked me please sending her my thesis when it is finished so she could share this knowledge with her community.

5.2.5 Disadvantages being tall at the handball court

Even though being tall has its benefits on the handball court, there are some disadvantages as well. Controlling a long body in a sport which demands a high pace is hard.

“As already said, my legs are not moving as fast, I am very slow, but it is definitely a benefit being tall” (Ida)

Nevertheless, it does not seem like the participants find the challenges too hard, and they seem confident these challenges are ones they can overcome. Again, this might be explained by their feeling of security and accomplishments on the handball court. They feel they can overcome the negative aspects with exercising since handball gives them so much positive energy.

Another problem which is created by other players could be harder to deal with. Some of the girls have experienced situations where other teams were trying to take advantage of their height, and used variant tricks to make it look like the tall girls were playing dirty.

“.. In defense, ehm, then i think that other short players are told to lift their legs if I hold them. Because, when I need to let go after 3 seconds, they just fall into the ground, and that looks bad. And then I often get 2 minutes suspension or a yellow card as a warning. And that is not fun when I know I have not done anything wrong. And, ehm, then it is also often short players are making themselves shorter, so they run straight into my arm with their necks, without me being able to do anything about it. In those cases, I often get 2 minutes suspension as well. So it is hard to adjust to short players when I am in defense, because of what the short players do” (Malene)

In this way, the tall girls are more likely to be suspended from the handball court than the shorter players. Shorter players are often faster and more in control of their body, which gives them a benefit against tall girls, who use more time to control their long arms and legs. To me, it seems like this is their biggest challenges at the handball court, but it is not necessarily their fault. Coaches and judges need to be clearer in these situations, and set some ground roles for their team, so the tall girls are not seen as horrible players. Tall girls

are often viewed as a large threat to other teams who wants to win the game. Therefore, it is likely that other teams would do anything they can to control the tall girls, in order to make them score fewer goals.

5.2.6 Comments regarding their height

During the interviews, all of the girls mentioned to a varying degree, they received comments regarding their height almost daily. It could be from peers, but also random people stopping them on the street, just to ask how tall they are.

“It is like, when people first see me, it is like: “wow, you are tall!” (Frida)

“Yes! Very many. And then they say: Wow, you are tall, or how tall are you really and stuff like that. It is ok that they are asking, but I do know pretty well myself that I am tall in a way, so yes I have discovered it” (Ida)

For a teenage girl, trying to fit in and just feel normal is important. Therefore, it may be hard for the girls to forget they are much taller than averages women when they are constantly reminded of it. Most of the comments the girls received were harmless, but some of the comments could be very hurtful and painful. At this point, only one of the girls has been open about her getting bullied. Still it is never a good feeling receiving comments were their appearances are compared to tall buildings or animals.

“Like one of the boys in my class calls me giraffe every day, and they can be more brutal than the girls in the way they are commenting. Mhm. More honest”(Ida)

Even though it might not be bullying, it may cause problems for the girls regarding their body image and self-esteem. Young women in general are already exposed to the risk of poorer self-esteem and negative body image as they are growing up. Being constantly reminded about how tall they are can then expose them to a much larger risk of having low self-esteem and disliking their own body. Indirect anecdotal evidence received from a father, said his daughter found it painful receiving comments regarding her height multiple times

each day. At a certain point it seemed like she just stopped care and said “ok” or “I know” when people commented about her height. Some of the girls also confirmed they get tired of answering to people.

“Yes, because everyone is noticing our height, and then you get tired of answering after a while. Even though one person asks for the first time, then I have already heard it many times. And all you want is just to be normal!”(Olivia)

Once again, the desire to feel normal is mentioned.

5.3 Self-esteem and confidence regarding their height

Receiving daily comments regarding their height can be challenging for the girls and their body image and their self-esteem. To have the confidence to be proud of their height is therefore very important. The participants have already divided being tall into two different categories: being tall in everyday life, and when playing handball. Some of the girls also divide being confident and proud about their height into these two categories as well.

“Ehm, you feel very at home on the handball court at least, and then you feel very proud to be tall and you want to be tall. But, it is at school and other arenas, than you tend to crook together, because it is nothing, or maybe it is usual” (Olivia)

Playing handball gives them confidence which is also reflected in their body image and how they present themselves. Being tall in everyday life on the other hand is in many cases tough for the girls and does not boost their level of confidence. In order to be less visible or be seen as a shorter girl, the participants tended to crook together outside the handball court. When I was staying at the OLT in order to conduct the interviews, I was able to see the girls when they were standing alone in the reception area waiting for each other. As they were standing in a crowd with unknown people which were shorter than them, almost every single one of the tall girls started to lean their heads down. It seemed to me like they wanted to sink into the ground. However, when all of the tall girls were gathered and they walked together to

their handball practice, they were all walking with their back straight and looked confident together as a group.

Being together with other tall girl seems to give the girls a higher level of confidence. Being a participant in NHF's Tall girl project have also had a big impact on the girls. One of them said:

"Yes, and: "how do you manage to be so tall?" Like, that is, ehm (..) Sometimes, if I have heard it a lot in one day, I just say: "yes, I have noticed that", but the first times in a day I tend to say: "Thank you!", like we have learned to do at this project. We learned how to raise our level of confidence as tall girls" (Olivia)

Learning how to raise their level of confidence has been important. Even though this is a program which are supposed to help the girls develop as handball players, it has had a very positive affect on the girls in their everyday life as well. Since they all are receiving so many comments regarding their height daily, it is important for them to be able to interpret comments as a compliment instead of something negative.

Being able to deal with negative comments and find the confidence to believe in herself, was important for the girl who was bullied about her height

"..It has not been anything negative about my height after that. So I have just decided it is a good thing being tall. And that I just need to rise above it and show the world: No, I would not let this take me down any more! Ever again. Mhm" (Malene)

5.4 Expected adult height

Many of the girls have been in contact with doctors and hospitals, finding out what their expected adult height would be.

"Yes, eh, well, I have been tall my whole life so. But when I started to, like, I actually hit puberty very late, so they were, or they said, or when I was at the hospital then they were afraid I was going to be too tall, because they can control the bone structure, and they asked me if I wanted to start on birth control pills, so I could have

started taking it, but they said it would not have worked any ways. I also could have started on other medications, but it could have made me sterile so I couldn't have children, and I didn't want that" (Danielle)

It was never asked if it was the girls and their parents who contacted the health system or if it was the Norwegian health system who contacted them. Nevertheless, taking such a huge decision about stopping their height in such a young age is hard, and it needs to be considered carefully. One father I spoke with to at OLT as an indirect anecdotal evidence said, he and his wife never even considered to let their daughter start on an intense hormonal treatment to stop her height. First of all, he wanted her to be proud of her self no matter what, and to focus on the height as something positive, instead of something negative which had to be corrected. Second of all, there is hardly any literature out there telling about the physiological consequences regarding giving young girls 3-10 times higher hormonal doses each day, than it is normal to prescribe in normal birth control pills.

Exposing a young body for such big bodily stress, can in worst case lead to blood clot, other cardiovascular disease or making the girl unable to have children. Some of the girls reported the chance of getting sterile as one of the biggest reasons why they did not change their height. If they had risked becoming sterile, they would not have been able to complete the most natural and normal task a woman can do: giving birth. It seems to me like the girls rather would have an abnormal height and be seen as a normal woman, seen in the light of evolution and gender socialization, than risking not being able to have children. When they look at the bigger picture, having a shorter body is just not worth it.

Another girl explained she was told to become almost 1.90m, but the only way to control her height was by operating her knees.

"I was told how tall I was expected to become and it was 1.85m, but then I had a feeling this was not correct. So they checked once more, and they said I was going to be 1.90, and that was a little tall. But then I got to know what it would mean, and it

was only stopping the growth in my knees, and then you get like super long arms and stuff like that, and it is only your legs that stops growing. So I didn't want that. I would rather look normal" (Elise)

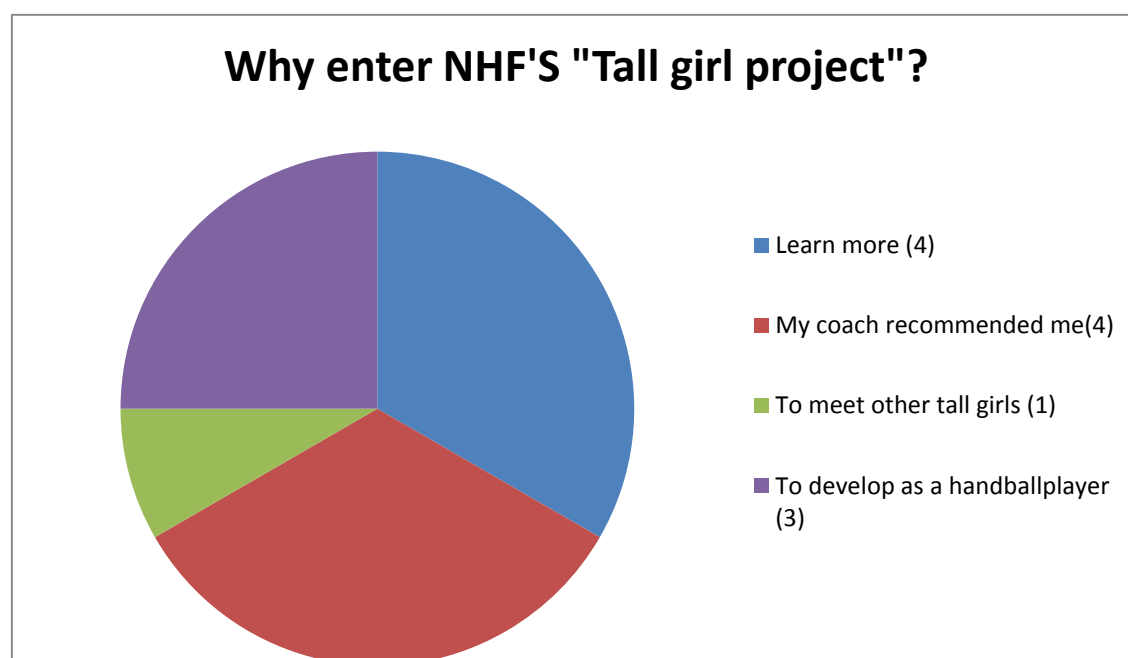
To her, having a body looking visually and proportionally normal was more important than be a few cm shorter. To have a well-balanced body was more important than being shorter and not having a well-proportioned body. However, one of the participants have actually done something about her height. To her, operating her knees and become 1.81cm was the absolute right thing to do

Yes, that is very different. I have always been tall, so ehm, it is not always fun being taller than everyone else. I have always been tall and, yeah. You kind of walk around and try to be like.. (she is crouching together), and like, maybe you don't walk with your back strait. I have always been tall, especially until 8.grade and then people has grown taller with me. Yes, because, well I operated my knees so I would not be taller and stuff like that. So I don't think it is very fun. (Andrea)

Being just above 1.81 m gave her more positive feeling regarding her body image. Looking back, she would even have done the surgery again if she was offered it today.

5.5 Results of questionnaires

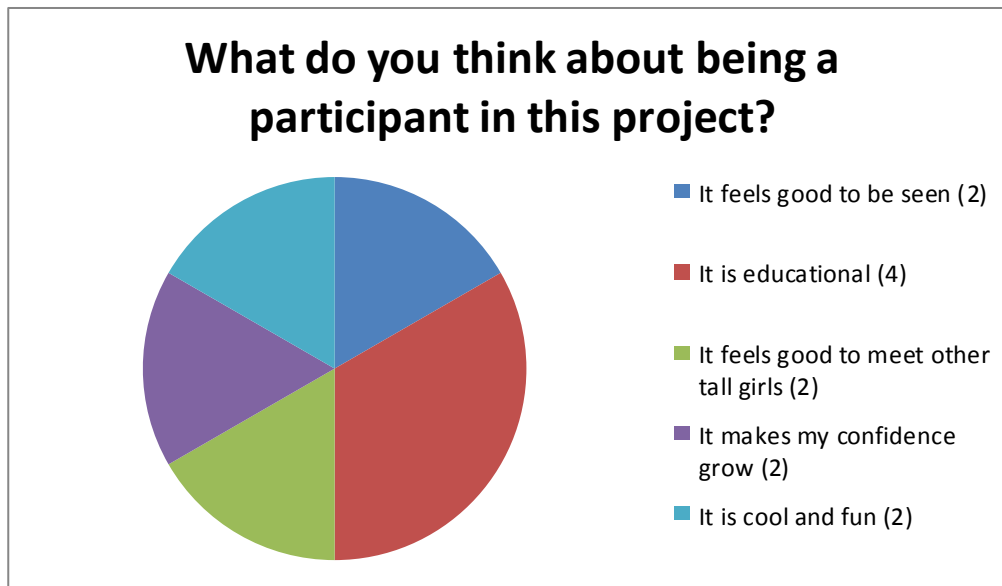
The girls were born between year 1998 and 2000 and the height varies from 181 cm to 189 cm. There were not any significant findings between the year of birth, their height and their body image regarding their height. They all entered NHF's "tall girl project" since it sounded like fun, and they were also hoping to develop as a handball players. Some of the girls were recommended by their coaches to enter this project, and some of them wanted to meet other tall girls and learn more about how to take advantage of their tall bodies.



Being a participant in this project has been interesting for all the girls, some of them have developed better confidence and also different exercise techniques to make them stronger; many of them have also learned how to control their long body. Some of them have become much more comfortable in their own skin. Meeting and talking to other tall girls helped a lot, and many of them can identify themselves in similar problems.

"I think it is more ok being as tall as I am, because I now know there are many other girls who are tall as well." (Anonym)

They also appreciate the fact that NHF sees them and wants to help them.



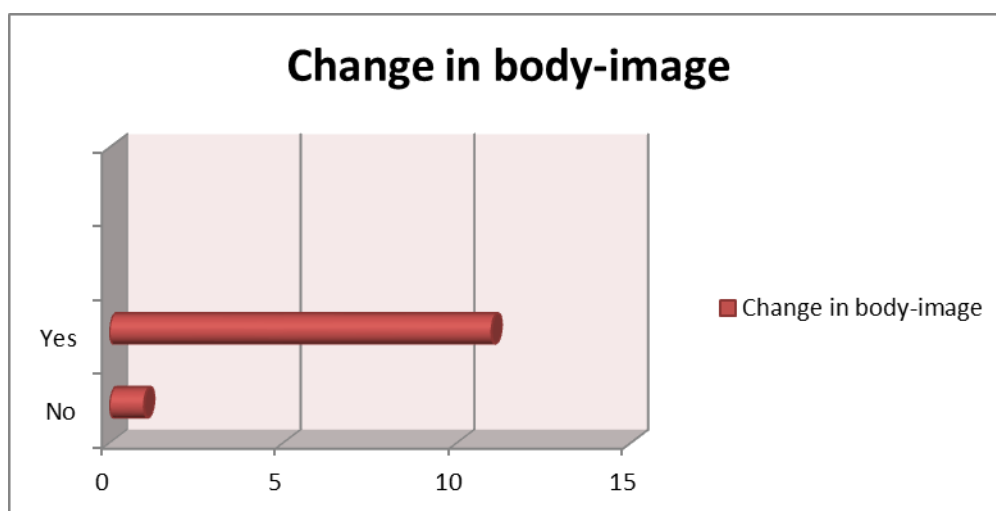
When they were asked if this project has changed their view of their own body, all of them except one, said “yes”.

“My body image has changed in a way that I feel more confident about myself in my own skin as a tall girl.” (Anonym)

However, the only participant who answered “no” wrote:

“Being a participant at NHF’s tall girls project have helped me become much stronger where I was weak. It has made me growing better confidence regarding my height and made me become proud of myself”

Therefore, it is reasons to believe every one of the participants actually have experienced their body image changing with the help of this specific project.



The participants reported they now are able to see the benefits of being tall on the handball court more clearly, and they have grown more confident in themselves and their height. Knowing that there are other tall girls out there, facing the same problems as they are experiencing both in everyday life and on the handball court, makes them think it is ok being tall. This gives them a feeling of having a social network to rely on, which has been important to them all.

“It has not changed a lot, but a little. It is only the fact that I am not looking at myself as the only tall girl, and that it is actually someone out there with a lot of the same problems, advantages and interests as I do.” (Anonym)

6. Discussion

The findings in this study shows there are several factors having an impact on the participants and how they view themselves, and how handball provide them with an enclave. Throughout the analysis, a clear distinction between talking about body image and talking about height emerged. The participants were talking more about “general issues” regarding their body image such as: what they liked or disliked about their bodies, media impact and if they would change something on their body or not. When they were talking about their height, they talked more specific about benefits and disadvantages being tall in everyday life and on the handball court. When the girls are together as a group and play handball, they feel confident about their own height. They also shared their thoughts and experiences about expected adult height, hormonal treatment to stop their height and comments from other people regarding their height.

Through this chapter, I will compare the significant findings with previous research and try to explain them using theory.

6.1 Body image in general

As mentioned above, the findings revealed that the participants spoke generally about their body and seemed concerned about “normal teenage problems” like having a flat stomach or nice skin. Biddle and Asare (2011) suggested that self-esteem is an important factor for young people’s mental health. For girls and young women this is especially true (Biddle & Asare, 2011). Body image is an important aspect within self-esteem for youngsters and it has been defined as the way a person feel, think and view herself and her body (Radell et al., 2011). Seen in the light of research done by Booth (1990) adolescents are very aware of their looks and if they vary from their peers. This is also particularity true for adolescent girls. The

findings in this study show all but one of the girls immediately described themselves as tall. The girls are already now showing they are aware of their variation in height, in relation to their peers. Having the literature in mind, I would have expected the girls to carry on talking about their height. However, most of the girls were more preoccupied with having a nice butt, skinny or fit stomach, muscular legs and low percent of body fat. They also talked about how they would like to change something about their body if they had the chance.

So, why were they so focused about saying I'm tall, when all they could talk about afterwards was all but their height? Another question occurred to my mind was: why is almost every research done on body image and girls regarding body mass index, overweight or being fit. All of the girls in my study presented themselves as tall, which to me indicate being tall is a concern for to them, in a smaller or larger extent. Still, they only talked about other issues regarding their body image. Am I the only one thinking this actually is an issue for the girls, and this being an issue worth studying for that matter?

In existing literature, much of the focus on young women's body image and self-identity has concentrated on weight-related issues (e.g. eating disorders, overweight). Far less attention has been paid to other aspects of body image such as height. Looking at an individual, variation in a person's height is one of the most obvious differences between people.

A persons height is even noticed and documented from birth and monitored during childhood until the person has become an adult (McEvoy & Visscher, 2009). The girls also recognized their height immediately when they were asked about their body image.

Evolutionarily, being tall is seen as a sign that the child gets all the nutrition needed.

However, within the literature of height, most research has been done looking at men. The tendency are when a man is tall, he is viewed as a healthy man which can provide for his family (McEvoy & Visscher, 2009). However, it does not seem like there is any existing literature presenting the same findings for tall girls and women. Looking at general literature

regarding body image and girls on the other hand, media and peers are seen as two major promoters in relation to how one should look or not (Holmqvist & Frisé, 2012). Therefore, it might be questioned to which extent women in general have the opportunity to care about their height, when they are exposed to so many other bodily factors that should be perfect (e.g. curves, hair, BMI, stomachs, thighs) (Holmqvist & Frisé, 2012). This seems to be matching my findings as well. Observing what I thought I was seeing at OLT, when all of the girls were crouching together in the reception area, I would have expected the girls to recognize their height as a much bigger issue than they apparently did. All of the girls besides few were going on about their butts, stomachs, thighs, etc., instead of spending more time talking about their height.

So, seen in the light of research done by Booth (1990 b), being a tall teenage girl might actually be a concern for the girls in this study, however, they don't have the power to change their height. Therefore, it appears like they are more concerned about other gender stereotyped issues which are more likely to influence their level of self-esteem to a larger extent than their height. In addition to this, changing a person's height is hard. It can only be done with the power of medicine before reaching puberty (Venn et al., 2008). Changing hair color or percentage of body fat on the other hand, is something people actually have the power to change or do something about. Also, it can be quite risky to do something about a person's height medically. For the girls in this study, the risk of becoming sterile was reported as a big factor for why they chose not changing their height. This can be explained by; they would rather live with an abnormal height, than not been able to complete the most natural task a woman can do, which is giving birth.

6.2 Self-esteem regarding their body image

Self-esteem is also closely linked to emotional health in adolescents, and research points out how self-esteem is a large part of how people view and understand themselves (Radell et al., 2011). Mental ill-health has been reported as one of the largest public health challenges for adolescents in Norway. Therefore, being satisfied with one's body image, which influences a person's self-esteem, is important in order to avoid being mentally ill and be confident about oneself ([FHI], 2010). Many of the participants in this study mentioned how comments about people's or their own body are a big part of their everyday life. Usually, it is commented on what is positive about other people and what is negative about the ones comparing themselves to others. Therefore, having self-esteem regarding one's body is important in order to cope with negative attention and not risk starting with body-changing strategies. To have a more positive view on oneself and to be able to deal with negative attention, body appreciation is important. To appreciate, respect, accept and protect one's body is important in order to have a good body image and self-esteem (Holmqvist & Frisén, 2012). Seen in the light of this study, the girls seemed to find it hard appreciating their own body. They focused a lot more on what they were not satisfied with, than respecting their body enough to be comfortable in their own skin. However, when it came to their height, they all seemed to accept the fact that they were tall girls. Research reveals if a person is having a high body appreciation, he or she has a higher psychological well-being and is lesser likely to be ashamed of their body and consider cosmetic surgery (Holmqvist & Frisén, 2012). So, it seems to me the girls are ashamed of their body in general, but they have learned to accept the fact that they are tall. Is this why some of the girls would consider changing their appearances if they had the opportunity, but they would not have changed their height? Even though a person appears to be satisfied with their body image, it does not immediately mean he or she is not unhappy with their body image. According to the findings in this

study, they all immediately acknowledge the fact they were tall. However, finding other aspects about their body image they were satisfied with was a problem. For the girls, it seemed like being satisfied with their own body image was hard for many of them. Still, this was not regarding their height as I would have expected.

Most of them only found negative things about other aspects of their body (e.g. size on waistline, thighs, stomachs, percentage of body fat).

So, what strikes me is: these are not only sporty girls; these are girls which are very good at their sport in a country where sport matters. In addition to this, handball is an iconic sport for many girls in Norway. The girls are also given special attention by the NHF in order to develop even more as athletes. Still, these girls find it hard to have a high level of self-esteem regarding their general body image. Talking about their own body image, it appears like they just want to be normal teenagers and fit in, regardless of their height. Confronting the literature, it turns out having a good body, fit in and be seen as attractive is very important for youngsters. This does not only apply for girls (Holmqvist & Frisé, 2012).

However, girls are often more exposed to bodily pressure and is under a greater pressure to conform to the ideals existing in society, than boys (Holmqvist & Frisé, 2012). Research also indicates young people's body image and self-esteem is controlled by others to a large extent (Biddle & Asare, 2011). The girls indicated they either received comments regarding their own bodies or listen to their friends commented their peers, at daily basis. Some of the participants said they did not have the energy to deal with all the commenting, so they either closed their ears and smiled or tried to avoid comment themselves or others. To me, it appears like the girls locked out the negative comments in order to cope and make the impression they just don't care about their looks. Throughout the history of women and gender-socialization, being accepted and being seen as an individual member of society has been important (Green, 2011). Obviously, it seems like this is important for the girls in my

study as well since they talked so much about their general appearances. Still, not caring about peer comments and pressure on looking good might be another way of coping and avoiding negative energy. By giving the impression it does not matter what other people are saying, might make the once commenting lose interest. Research reveals it is often given negative feedback regarding people's body, especially during adolescence. However, not caring about comments regarding their looks received from others, is nearly impossible (Furman & Thompson, 2002).

Even though the girls in this study are all active within sports, it turns out neither handball nor the social network around them, provided from handball, is enough to protect them from the bodily pressure existing in society. From the data, words like "fit" and "not fat" was highlighted multiple times by the girls. Within the nature of sport, being fit (e.g. Have a toned body, muscular legs) and not being fat (e.g. have a low BMI, low percentage of body fat) is synonymous with being a good athlete (Porter, Morrow, & Reel, 2013). Research done on female swimmers also links thinness, toned and slightly muscular bodies with success, both in sports and everyday life (Porter et al., 2013). Always trying to pursue an ideal body, may have a negative impact on a person's body image and self-esteem. The findings also indicate this is particularly true for the girls. Always caring and comparing their bodies to an ideal body image, makes them worry a lot about their appearances and provide them with low self-esteem. Since 1960's, the desire for a lean, athletic body with well-defined shapes (e.g. Hips, breasts, butts) has existed, well imposed by the media and society (Pelegrini, Sacomori, Carmo Santos, Flores Sperandio, & Cardoso, 2014). Therefore, having a good body appreciation is important for women and young girls in particular, since they often are exposed for poor body image and bodily pressure (Holmqvist & Frisén, 2012). However, being able to find an environment which can provide young girls (tall or not), with a higher body appreciation is hard. Within the world of sports, parents, peers and coaches have a big

impact on girl's motivation to stay in sport (Atkins, Johnson, Force, & Petrie, 2013).

Positive and supporting parents was reported as one of the biggest reason for higher level of enjoyment in sport, general self-esteem and higher sport competence (Atkins et al., 2013).

Can this be linked to everyday life as well? If parents, first of all, are supportive, warm and involved in their girls everyday life, can this also provide a safe environment for girls with a low level of self-esteem regarding their body? The indirect anecdotal evidence provided to me from one of the participant's mothers, indicated it did not matter how often she told her daughter how wonderful and beautiful she was or how much she was being there for her, because there were no other tall girls around to reflect this claim. Therefore, the mother felt she were not able to provide her daughter with self-esteem and an environment which gave her confident in herself. Her daughter on the other hand, indicated being part of a handball team was liberating for her. She did not have to conform to the high bodily standards set in society at practice.

6.3 Body image and height in specific

So, what is particularly interesting regarding this specific research project is not only have I interviewed athletic girls about their body image. The girls are also much taller than average girls, not only in Norway, but in the rest of the world as well. In searching for answers on what the girls actually felt about their body image in relation to their height, I then asked the girls more directly about their height and what it was like playing handball. All of the girls could confirm what a huge advantage it is being tall on the handball court. Being tall in everyday life on the other hand is hard. On the handball court people look up to you because you can do so much with your long body. Research done on girls being active playing handball, shows they are generally heavier, taller and have a larger arm spend than other girls. This might explain why the girls felt so at home at the handball court and were

provided with much needed self-esteem regarding their bodies. Handball being a physical sport, having muscles and a solid skeleton which can take rough collision and duels, run fast and have a long arm with a longer arm spend is important in order to succeed in a certain level. Handball can therefore be seen as a sport where it is beneficial having a solid body (Popovici & Radu, 2014). For the participants, it seems like handball can provide tall girls with a much needed social network in order to feel safe and at home in an environment. Some of the mothers also could confirm they envied their daughters when they saw them together with the other tall girls at OLT. They wished some sort of enclave with tall girls had existed when they grew up. So, they would have wanted the NHF to start this type of “tall girl project” years ago. Not only to give the tall girls exercises and programs specialized for them, but to give the girls a place where they could feel at home and feel normal among other tall girls.

So, as a tall teenage girl, many people envy you your height on the handball court. In real life, however, people tend to fear you because you are taller than most of the people around you- even men as well. Searching for literature on height, being tall is seen as a way to be success full. Most people who are tall, often have higher education, they tend to have better pay checks, higher social status and is sometimes seen as an authority (McEvoy & Visscher, 2009). However, this is hardly true for women (McEvoy & Visscher, 2009). Even though it has become more socially acceptable for women to be tall within the last decades, research reveals women may still feel pressured to conform to the social and cultural norm of petite and shorter women (Firmin et al., 2013). Trough out history, the height of women has been linked with male dominance and sometimes intimidation towards other women especially, but also towards men (Firmin et al., 2013). Some of the participants found it hard being tall in relation to boys. In addition to them being tall, most of the boys, at least during adolescence is shorter than the girls. Instead of being seen as feminine, the girls often feel to

masculine and like they are seen as a treat to the boys. Dressing up in high heels, finding pants which are long enough or putting on a shorter dress which might reveal too much of the body, was all issues brought up by the girls. Going through the literature, all these factors has been mentioned as sacrifices tall women does, because they need to shop more selectively than non-tall women (Firmin et al., 2013).

During adolescence, tall girls are often given unwanted attention regarding their height, and in many cases they are also frequent targets of teasing. Research points out, as they attend adulthood, most people stop commenting, instead comments often switch to stares (Firmin et al., 2013). In relation to the participants in my study, many of them told stories about people coming up from behind trying to see just how much taller the girls are than themselves, and about random people stopping them on the street and commenting their height. This only enhances and confirms the small amount of literature existing out there regarding tall girls and women.

So, it turns out when I started to dig deeper, being tall is a challenge for a lot of the girls interviewed. There is a story needed to be told and more research needed to be done regarding tall adolescent girls. Of course, being tall can have some benefits as well like reaching the top shelf in the kitchen or you are able to see everything. Besides this, being a young and tall teenage girl is hard. Very short children (both boys and girls) and very tall girls have turned out to have similar negative psychological effect (e.g. exposed to bullying, less social acceptances, fewer friends), and peers look different at children who are significant smaller, or girls who are significant taller than other children or youngsters (Scholder, Davey Smith, Lawlor, Propper, & Windmeijer, 2013). It also turns out being tall can have an impact on academic attainment, IQ-self-esteem, depression symptoms and behavioral problems (Scholder et al., 2013). Therefore, being tall can be a large challenge for

the girls. One of the girls could confirm what a challenge it could be, as she needed to change school due to bullying.

The society also seems to recognize being tall as a problem. In order to fit in to 'the normal body ideals' existing in society- children of tall parents can have the opportunity to get hormone treatment before puberty to reduce their expected adult height. This is a method which has been used since 1956, and young girls expected to be taller than 1.80 can be given oestrogen to epiphyseal fusion of the long bones. High doses of oestrogen are then needed, and the girls are given 3-10 times daily oestrogen requirements for young women (Venn et al., 2008). All of the girls in this study had been in contact with doctors and hospitals to check it out. But, it was never asked if the girls contacted the health care system themselves, or if it was the health care system contacting them. Some of them were also given the opportunity to stop their height and half of them considered to stop their height either with operating their knees or get hormonal treatment like birth control pills. However, only one of them did actually accept this opportunity and did something with her height. For her, controlling her height was the right thing to do and she would have done the same today. When I first started thinking about girls and height, I was convinced being tall was a negative thing. Eventually, as I was finishing interviewing the girls, it seems to me being tall is not their biggest concern regarding their body image after all. Still, having tall teenage girls in society seems to be an issue for other people since all of the 12 girls was asked if they wanted to change their expected adult height. If 11 out of 12 girls do not find it as challenging being tall so they are not willing to change their height, should it be as important for the society? Going back to research conducted by Booth (1990) extreme height has proven to be related to heightened self- consciousness and therefor had a great impact on the person's perceived body-image.

It seems to me like some of the tall girls are coping very well with being tall and some are

not. Some are appearing to cope, but in reality it has been very hard being a tall teenage girl. Some of the parents I met also could provide me with some indirect anecdotal evidence, being a tall teenage girl has not been easy for all of the participants. For one of the girls, being tall was such a challenge she had to change school because of bullying. Nevertheless, she appeared to be very satisfied with her height and would not have changed it no matter what. This can be explained by, to her, height never really was an issue, but to others, her height might was seen as frightening and something un-normal. It turns out, a common mistake regarding women and their height is that they all are generally unhappy and unsatisfied with their height (Firmin et al., 2013). To which extent this is true for adolescent girls, are not clear. Are tall girls and women really as large of a threat to society and male dominance, they actually has to be offered medical treatment in order to fit into the female stereotype of petite and small women?

In this case, most of the girls felt they had gotten very much unwanted attention regarding their height, and some of them only found it positive being tall on the handball court. So, to me it seems like most of the girls are concerned about their height, at least in everyday life. In addition to this, studies done on tall successful women in Hollywood shows many of them faced teasing and had to make personal adjustments during childhood and adolescence. Growing older, they became more comfortable and felt more secure about their height and were then able to use the height it to their advantage. Now, many of them are leading actresses, models or other important women, using their height as their benefit (Firmin et al., 2013). So, maybe when growing older, the girls will find it easier to cope with their height with the help of the social network provided to them from handball in general and the “tall girl project” in specific.

6.4 NHF'S Tall girl project

Being a participant in NHF's Tall girl project has opened the eyes for many of the girls regarding their own body. Many of them used to feel like the only tall girl in the world, but after the gatherings at OLT they know there are other tall girls out there. They know there are other girls facing the same problems as themselves. Also, having the opportunity to be around other tall girls at the same age and with similar interest as themselves has been a good feeling for them. To them, it only increases the feeling of security they already felt at the handball court. The coaches in this specific project have taught them how to be proud of their height, and use their height as a benefit instead of look at all the disadvantages both on the handball court and in everyday life.

Growing up being taller than their peers can result in heightened self-consciousness and reflect badly on a person's body image (Booth, 1990). Therefore, being seen by the NFH and learn that there are other girls out there feeling the same is important so the girls can reflect positive about their body. A study done on female ballet students also raises the question to which extent mirrors can influence a person's perception of his/her body. The mirror is not necessarily a mirror, but can also be other student's performances or a teacher's demonstration. To a dancer, the personal vision of his/her body image is important in order to feel confident performing in a studio. Mirrors are often used for the dancer to become self-aware of the body and how the body appears in different poses (Radell et al., 2011). If a person feel he or she is not matching the ideal characteristics presented, they may start having a negative self-evaluation (Radell et al., 2011). This evidence does not only apply for ballet dancers, but it has been documented that non-dancers also are left with the same feeling (Radell et al., 2011). Turning these findings around, seeing you matching these ideal characteristics presented may boost your self-image and you can get a positive self-evaluation. Seen in the light of NHF's project, all of the participants are appearing as a

mirror to each other's; telling each other that they fit in and it is ok being tall. To me, it seems like this project actually has created an enclave for tall girls playing handball.

7. Conclusion

The main intention for this study was to investigate if handball can provide an enclave and a social network for girls who otherwise feel uncomfortable, or might even be unhappy about their height in everyday social contexts. The findings show being a tall teenage girl is complex, i.e. they distinguished between being tall in everyday life and being tall on the handball court.

All of the girls are very active and even successful within an iconic sport in Norway, and they all felt being tall was a huge advantage within the field of handball. Being provided with a national “tall girl enclave” organized by the NHF, in addition to the social network they already have in their handball teams, has been very important for the girls. They have learned how to take advantage of their height in the handball court and for some it has even raised their level of confidence as tall girls in everyday life. Still, being tall in everyday life has been a much bigger issue for the girls, and many of them have had a hard time growing up receiving comments regarding their height. One of the girls was also bullied because of her height. In addition to this, they were also able to find elements with their general body image (e.g. shape, curves, stomach, and thighs) that was not satisfying, or they wanted to change.

It seemed like the girls were more preoccupied with conforming to the gender stereotypes of the female body.

If these girls who are well trained and successful within their sport find it hard liking their body image and believe in themselves as tall girls. What is it them like for other girls out there (tall or not) without an enclave or social network to rely on? Even though handball provides a suitable enclave and social network for these girls, handball is only temporarily able to alleviate the pressure on girls to conform to gender stereotypes of the female body.

7.1 Reflections, limitations and future research

Throughout this study, it has been attempted to highlight different factors which are important for the tall girl's body image and the way they are viewing themselves.

My contribution is that nobody has really looked at adolescent girls in addition to height, and certainly not in relation to handball. Within the field of public health, this is a new way of looking at body image and girls. There is a big gap in the literature regarding young girls who are taller than average and how they truly feel about themselves.

Doing this master thesis has been challenging, and time managing has been my biggest concern throughout the whole process. Being structured enough to control my own research project has been hard, and I did not make as much progress from January till April as I thought I would have. In addition to this, getting the approval from NSD in time for my interviews was very stressful, since I only had one attempt to meet the girls face to face at their gathering at Olympiatoppen (OLT)/Oslo. Doing the interviews, the girls had a very tight schedule those two days at OLT. Therefore, I needed to schedule the girls tightly so I would manage to talk to them all. Because of the tight schedule, I did not have time to reflect around what I was told before the next interview, so I did not manage to ask new questions based on the information I just received. In addition to this, I needed to conduct two of the interviews by phone later on. Sadly, the only girl who actually notified in advance that she wished to participate in my research was one of the girls having to answer by the phone. Besides this, it has been a very educational process, which I am glad I completed.

In addition to this, there are some limitations as well. There were in total 21 girls invited to participate in this study, only 12 out of the 21 girls took part in the research. Therefore, I could have missed out on a lot of essential information since I only had a 50% response rate.

Also, since adolescence is a crucial time for youngsters, I might have generated other data if I had interviewed I.E older women.

At the time I was doing the interviews at OLT, I came to realize I had not practise my interview guide good enough and I did not do enough pilot interviews. Transcribing the interviews, it became very clear I failed to ask good follow up questions where it matters. The most obvious example is one interview where I had spent time asking follow-up questions about what she liked/ did not like about herself, and at the very end of the interview the participant said she had been bullied because of her height and had to change school. So instead of asking more follow up questions and get good data, I was more occupied with keeping my tight schedule for the interviews. Therefore, seen in the light of grounded theory, my theoretical sensitivity can be questioned because I failed to notice something which actually was an important finding. In addition to this, all of the interviews are also conducted in Norwegian, so transcribing the data into English was challenging in order to keep the sentences as original as possible and still make sure they make sense in English.

So, knowing my study has its limitations and knowing there is a big gap in the literature regarding tall girls and their body image; it would have been desirable to do a follow-up study where the participants were observed. The girls in this study clearly divided being tall into two different setting, on the handball court and in everyday life. Therefore, in order to see if their body language changed in those different settings it would be interesting to observe them in both settings.

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9. Appendices

Due to the fact my research are conducted in Norwegian, most of my appendix are written in Norwegian.

9.1 Appendix 1: Interview guide:

Follow up fraises:

Can you tell me what **you mean** by.....?

Can you tell me **more about**.....?

You said something about....., can you **tell me more** about that?

Can you **explain**..... / what you meant about.....?

Can you give me **an example** of?

Can you tell me why you **think about** this?

How did this **come about**?

If I say to you or ask you....., what do you think about that?

If I asked **your friends** about.....,what do you think they would have answered?

If I asked **your family** about....., what do you think they would have answered?

Definition of body-image:

“Body-image constitutes the perception, thoughts and feelings we have about our body”

«Kroppsbilde/body-image er med på å forme de meningene, tankene og følelsene vi har for vår egen kropp»

1: How did you begin playing handball? (warming up- question)

Theme 2: body image in general:**a) for themselves**

How would you describe yourself physically?

Which of your physical characteristics do you like?

Which of your physical characteristics do you not like /are unhappy about?

If you had the opportunity to change something about your body, what would you change and why?

b) for girls

How would you describe the looks of an average Norwegian girl?

If you should describe how the media focuses on bodies and body-image among girls, is it anything in particular you think about?

Theme 3: Relationship between**a) Body image and sport**

Is it a high focus on body-image and bodies in general at your school / classmates /handball team / group of friends?

Is it anything in particular your peers are focused about?

b) Body image and handball

How would you describe the physique of an average female handball player in Norway?

Theme 4: Height in particular

Have you ever experienced your height being beneficial for you?

Have you ever experienced your height not being beneficial for you?

9.2 Appendix 2: Spørreskjema

Hvilke år er du født?

Hvor høy er du (cm)

Hvorfor meldte du deg på NHF's "høye jenter prosjekt"?

Hva synes du om å være deltaker i NHF's høye jenter prosjekt`?

Har kroppsbildet og måten du ser på deg selv endret seg siden du ble med på prosjektet?
(Sett kryss)

Ja____ NEI____

Dersom ja:

På hvilke måte har kroppsbildet ditt forandret seg?

9.3 Appendix 3: information and consent form

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjekt

”[Jenter og kroppsbilde- en studie av unge kvinners håndball]”

Bakgrunn og formål

I forbindelse med min masterutdanning i Folkehelsevitenskap ved Høgskolen i Hedmark, avdeling Elverum ønsker jeg å invitere deg som er deltaker i Norges Håndballforbund (NHF) sitt prosjekt: «Flere høye jenter til kvinnehåndballen» til å være med i masterprosjektet jeg skal gjennomføre høsten 2014/ våren 2015. Denne studien vil ta for seg om håndball har en innvirkning på hvordan unge jenter ser på seg selv og sin egen kropp.

Med bakgrunn i NHF sitt unike «høye jenter» prosjekt, ønsker jeg å se hvilke effekt /innvirkning håndball og eventuelt deltakelsen i dette spesifikke prosjektet har hatt på hvordan du ser på din egen kropp. Formålet med studien er å undersøke vurdering av eget kroppsbilde (body-image) og om høyde har noe betydning for dette.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

I denne studien vil det bli datainnsamling ved hjelp av intervju på ca. 30 minutter og en liten spørreundersøkelse som sier noe om hvem du er som person. Ved å si ja til å delta på dette, vil det kreve aktiv deltakelse av deg- altså at du svarer på spørsmålene som blir stilt så godt og utfyllende du kan.

Intervjuene vil bli gjennomført og tatt opp ved hjelp av lydopptaker i tillegg til at jeg som intervjuer vil ha muligheten til å notere litt undervegs.

Det er planlagt at intervjuene skal finne sted på OLT ved samling i forbindelse med «høye jenter» prosjektet 8. og 9. januar 2015. Dersom dette ikke lar seg gjøre er skype eller telefon

et alternativ da det verken er økonomisk eller praktisk mulig for undertegnede å reise Norge rundt for å møte informantene.

Foreldre/foresatte:

Grunnet at din datter ikke er fylt 18 år, kreves det at du/dere gir ditt/deres samtykke til at hun kan delta i denne undersøkelsen. Dersom du /dere samtykker til dette, kan dere på forespørsel få se intervjuguiden og spørreskjemaet som skal brukes i intervjuet på forhånd.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?

Alle personopplysninger som kommer frem i denne studien vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Det vil kun være undertegnede og min veileder som har tilgang til materialet. Min veileder er engelsk, og vil heller ikke ha mulighet til å kunne gjenkjenne eller identifisere hvem som snakker eller blir beskrevet.

Datamaskinen og båndopptakeren som blir brukt i denne prosessen vil til en hver tid være låst med brukernavn og passord og ha muligheten til å bli låst inn i egne skuffer eller rom slik at ingen andre vil få tilgang til det. Hver deltaker vil få en egen kode/koblingsnøkkel som identifiserer hvem som snakker, og identifiseringskodene og navnelister vil ikke bli oppbevart sammen.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 22. mai 2015, og da vil alle dataene som er innhentet bli lagret ved Høgskolen i Hedmark. Dataene vil bli lagret i inntil 2 år etter at masteroppgaven er ferdig, da det kan være aktuelt med etterprøving av studien til senere publikasjoner. Det vil kun være undertegnede og veileder som vil kunne ha tilgang til opplysningene. Skulle det bli aktuelt med videre studier vil det bli innhentet nytt samtykke til dette. Dersom materialet ikke skal brukes noe mer, vil det bli 100% anonymisert, senest innen 22.mai. 2017.

Viktige opplysninger

Det **er frivillig å delta** i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli anonymisert. Dette vil *ikke* ha noen påvirkning på din allerede eksisterende deltakelse i NHF sitt «høye jenter» prosjekt!

Dersom du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med Synnøve Endal Andersen på mail: synnove_ea91@hotmail.com eller telefon: 90837879. Spørsmål angående oppgaven kan også stilles direkte til min veileder Ken Green ved universitetet i Chester på mail: k.green@chester.ac.uk OBS: spørsmål til Ken må forekomme på engelsk. Om det er ønskelig bidrar jeg til å oversette om det skulle være behov.

Ikke nøl med å ta kontakt om det er noe dere lurer på angående denne studien!

Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS. (NSD).

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

[Jenter og kroppsbilde- en studie av unge kvinners handball]

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og er villig til å delta

☐ *Jeg samtykker til å delta i intervju og spørreskjema*

Jeg samtykker til at personopplysninger kan lagres etter prosjektslutt

(Signert av **prosjektdeltaker**, dato, sted)

(Signert av **foresatt**, dato, sted)

9.4 Godkjenning fra NSD

Ken Green

Institutt for idrett og aktiv livsstil Høgskolen i Hedmark, campus Elverum

Postboks 400

2418 ELVERUM

Vår dato: 06.01.2015 Vår ref: 40970 / 3 / LB Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 28.11.2014. Meldingen gjelder

prosjektet:

40970 Height and body-image: A study of young women's handball

Behandlingsansvarlig Høgskolen i Hedmark, ved institusjonens øverste leder

Daglig ansvarlig Ken Green

Student Synnøve Endal Andersen

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være

regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering.

Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema,

<http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database,

<http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 22.05.2017, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Lene Christine M. Brandt

Kontaktperson: Lene Christine M. Brandt tlf: 55 58 89 26

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Kopi: Synnøve Endal Andersen synnove_ea91@hotmail.com

Personvernombudet for forskning Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Prosjektnr: 40970

Prosjektet gjennomføres i samarbeid med Norges håndballforbund (NHF). Høgskolen i Hedmark er behandlingsansvarlig institusjon. Personvernombudet forutsetter at ansvaret for behandlingen av personopplysninger er avklart mellom institusjonene. Vi anbefaler at det

inngås en avtale som omfatter ansvarsfordeling, ansvarsstruktur, hvem som initierer prosjektet, bruk av data og eventuelt eierskap.

Formålet med studien er å undersøke unge håndballjenters vurdering av eget kroppsbilde (body-image), og om å drive med håndball, og om deres høyde har noen betydning for dette.

Student Synnøve Endal Andersen opplyser per telefon 05.01.2015 at utvalget rekrutteres ved at medarbeider i NHFs prosjekt "Flere høye jenter til kvinnehåndballen" videreformidler kontakten/informasjonen om prosjektet på vegne av student.

Utvalget informeres skriftlig og muntlig om prosjektet og samtykker til deltakelse. Informasjonsskrivet av 05.01.2015 er godt utformet.

I lys av prosjektets tematikk tas det høyde for at det vil kunne fremkomme sensitive opplysninger om helseforhold, jf. personopplysningsloven § 2 nr. 8 c).

Personvernombudet legger til grunn at forsker etterfølger Høgskolen i Hedmark sine interne rutiner for datasikkerhet. Eventuell bruk av Skype bør avklares med IT-avdelingen. Dersom Skype skal behandle personopplysninger på vegne av Høgskolen i Hedmark, skal det inngås skriftlig databehandleravtale (jf. personopplysningsloven § 15). Dersom personopplysninger skal lagres på privat pc/mobile enheter, bør opplysningene krypteres tilstrekkelig.

Forventet prosjektslutt er 22.05.2015. Etter prosjektslutt vil datamaterialet lagres med personidentifikasjon i to år i påvente av eventuelle oppfølgingsstudier. Det forutsettes at informantene har samtykket til dette. I de tilfellene hvor det ikke foreligger aktivt samtykke fra den registrerte til videre lagring, må datamaterialet om vedkommende anonymiseres ved prosjektslutt. Dersom det ikke blir aktuelt med oppfølgingsstudier, vil datamaterialet være anonymisert senest innen 22.05.2017. Anonymisering innebærer å bearbeide datamaterialet slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes. Det gjøres ved å:

- slette direkte personopplysninger (som navn/koblingsnøkkel)
- slette/omskrive indirekte personopplysninger (identifiserende sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger som f.eks. bosted/arbeidssted, alder og kjønn)
- slette lydopptak

Category	Sub category	Quote (Appendix 5)
Body image	Looks	“Well, I am tall first of all, that is nothing to hide” -Ida
	Satisfaction	“..I think it is hard to say it is something I am very happy about, because I think there is nothing to be 100% happy about” -Anne
	Dissatisfaction	“Ehm, no I would have maybe shrunk 5-3 cm (..)I just want to be on like 1.80- 1.79m” -Frida
	Changes	“Ehm, I don’t think I would have changed my height. But I think maybe I don’t would have been so, or not fatter, but not so skinny” -Karianne
	Media impact	“All kids are involved with social medias, it shows what other people like on Facebook, and then other people can see it, with bodies” -Oda
	Comments	“When first one begin, than everyone begins. And then you say like: “oh, you look so good, look at me.. I don’t have what you have”. -Oda
	Benefits	“..It is ok, like I have a job. And I am working with placing groceries out in the shelves. And then I don’t need a soda crate to stand on to reach the highest shelves..” -Malene
	- everyday life	
	- handball	“If you have exercised, you are actually quite good when

Height	Disadvantages - everyday life -handball Comments Expected adult height Confidence	you are tall too. So yes, I think it is an advantage yes” -Danielle “It is because I feel like everyone can see me, since I am tall, and when you are standing in a crowd and stuff like that, then you are one head taller than everyone else and I almost feel like a sky scraper..” -Oda “The cons is maybe when I am going to do a trick, than I stumble in my own feet. I think I am much slower than the other once. I don’t work as fast as the rest of my team in defense” -Frida “Sometimes people comment like: wow, you are tall. Well, yes” -Julianne “.. I went to see the doctor a few years ago, and they scanned my bones to see how tall I was going to be, and then they let me know I was supposed to be 1.89, ehm and I thought that is almost 1.90..” -Natalie “Sometimes, if I have heard it a lot in one day, I just say: “yes, I have noticed that”, but the first times in a day I tend to say: “Thank you!”, like we have learned to do at this project. We learned how to raise our level of confidence as tall girls” -Oda
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