

Perception Differences in Children Learning to Golf with Traditional versus Modified (Scaled) Equipment

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Abstract : Golf is a lifetime sport that provides numerous physical and psychological benefits. The game has struggled with attrition and retention within minority groups and this has exposed the lack of a modified introduction to the game that is uniformly accessible and developmentally appropriate. Factors that have been related to sport participatory behaviors include perceived competence, enjoyment and intention. The purpose of this study was to examine self-reported perception differences in competence and enjoyment between learners using modified and traditional equipment as well as the potential effects these factors could have on intent for future participation. For this study, SNAG Golf was chosen to serve as the scaled equipment used by the modified equipment group. The participants in this study were 99 children (24 traditional equipment users/ 75 modified equipment users) located across the U.S. with ages ranging from 7 to 12 years (2nd-5th grade). Utilizing a convenience sampling method, data was obtained on a voluntary basis through surveys measuring children's golf participation and self-perceptions concerning perceived competence, enjoyment and intention to continue participation. The scales used for perceived competence and enjoyment included Susan Harter's Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC) along with the Physical Activity Enjoyment Scale (PACES). Analysis revealed no significant differences for enjoyment, perceived competence or intention between children learning with traditional golf equipment and modified golf equipment. This was true even though traditional equipment users reported significantly higher experience levels than that of modified users. Intention was regressed on the enjoyment and perceived competence variables. Congruent with current literature, enjoyment was a strong predictor of intention to continue participation, for both groups. Modified equipment users demonstrated significantly lower experience levels but reported similar levels of competence, enjoyment and intent to continue participation as reported by the more experienced, and potentially more skilled, traditional users. The ability to immediately generate these positive affects suggests the potential adoption of a more effective way to learn golf and a method that is conducive to participatory behaviors related to attrition and retention. These implications in turn, highlight an equipment candidate ideal for inception into physical education programs where new learners are introduced to various sports in safe and developmentally appropriate environments. A major goal of this study was to provide foundational research that instigates the further examination of golf's introductory teaching methodologies, as there is a lack of its presence in current literature. Future research recommendations range from improvements in the current research design to expansive approaches related to the topic, such as progressive skill development, knowledge of the game's tactical and strategic concepts, playing ability and teaching effectiveness when utilizing modified versus traditional equipment.

Keywords : adaptive sports, enjoyment, golf participation, modified equipment, perceived competence, SNAG golf

Conference Title : ICPESS 2016 : International Conference on Physical Education and Sport Science

Conference Location : Venice, Italy

Conference Dates : April 11-12, 2016