Cooperative coaching: Benefits to students in extracurricular school sports

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Abstract:

Problem Statement: Many youths participate in school-based extracurricular sports activities (SBECSA). These SBECSAs contribute to positive youth development. However, SBECSAs sometimes require the outsourcing of human resources. The major reason is difficulty to manage SBECSAs by employing teachers as the primary coaching resources. Using external coaches is an effective solution for reducing the workload on teachers, and it can contribute to improving teachers' and students' knowledge and skills. Because teacher involvement also appears to provide benefits for students, cooperative coaching between external coaches and teachers is essential. However, the lack of evidence regarding the benefits that cooperative coaching offers students may result in inadequate cooperation. **Approach:** In all, 23 students who participated in SBECSAs were recruited from three junior high schools and three high schools that employed external coaches. An open-ended, semi-structured interview was conducted with each student. The KJ method was used for qualitative analysis of the responses. **Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to determine how external coaches and teachers impact students' experiences in SBECSAs, and how external coaches and teachers differ and/or have similar impacts. **Results:** In terms of benefits from external coaches, six categories and 31 subcategories were identified. The major categories included the following: expert coaching; support for SBECSA teacher; general coaching; human network; improved SBECSA atmosphere; and equipment supply. Benefits from teachers comprised six categories and 22 subcategories. The major categories identified were as follows: general coaching; management and office work; participation in SBECSA; human network; connection with school life; and improved SBECSA atmosphere. **Conclusions:** Students perceived overlapping and specific benefits from both groups, which indicated that cooperative coaching would be more desirable to students than having only external coaches or teacher instruct their SBECSAs.

Key words: external coach, extracurricular activity, human resource management, outsourcing, qualitative study

Introduction

Throughout the world, many young people participate in school-based extracurricular sports activities (SBECSA) mainly after school and on weekends (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012; Edwards, Kanters, & Bocarro 2011; Sport Council Wales, 2009; Sasakawa Sports Foundation, 2014). SBECSAs contribute to positive youth development (Barnett, 2007; Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2007; Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Lipscomb, 2007; Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan [MEXT], 2012; Schaefer, Simpkins, Vest, & Price, 2011; Shernoff & Vandell, 2007; Telama, 2009), although each country's SBECSAs have various purposes such as skill improvements, promotion of physical activities, recreation and character building (Nakazawa, 2014; Uchiumi, 2001). Currently, outsourcing of health, sports and physical education has proliferated (Evans, 2014; Flintoff, 2008; Gard, 2015; Macdonald, 2011; MEXT, 2013; Pope, 2014; Powell, 2015; Williams, Hay, & Macdonald, 2011; Williams & Macdonald, 2015) in line with the privatization of education (Apple, 2001). Outsourcing in SBECSA could be regarded as an unavoidable phenomenon due to the lack of in-school coaches (Aoyagi et al., 2013a; Aoyagi, Ishii, Shibata, Arai, & Oka, 2014b; Powell, 2015). In particular, the following issues have been reported: lack of teachers who can coach SBECSAs to an expert degree; aging of SBECSA teachers; and excessive workload for teachers managing SBECSAs in addition to their regular duties (Akita Prefecture Board of Education, 2013; Japan Senior High School Teachers Union, 2008; MEXT, 1997; Whiteley & Richard, 2012). Evans (2014) indicated that privatization and outsourcing in school is not likely to disappear. Sports coaches who can provide outsourcing assume important roles, especially in providing expertise and decreasing teachers' burdens (Aoyagi et al., 2013a; Aoyagi et al., 2014b; Jones & Green, 2015; Smith, 2015; Williams & Macdonald, 2015).

However, problems with excessive outsourcing have also been reported. One is the expansion of sports-related disparities as some children with low socioeconomic statuses cannot join sports activities (Evans, 2014; Morita, 2014). The other is the concern centred on less educational coaching by external coaches (Aoyagi et al., 2013a; Aoyagi et al., 2014b; Flintoff, 2008; Powell, 2015). Based on these situations, it is necessary to consider an appropriate degree of outsourcing, in particular, an appropriate cooperation of external coaches and teachers. Therefore, the current study contextualized “cooperative coaching” as situations in which both external coaches and teachers engage in and support SBECSAs.

From the external coaches’ perspectives, it is suggested that teachers’ engagement in SBECSAs promotes external coaches’ engagement in SBECSAs (Aoyagi et al., 2013b; Aoyagi, Ishii, Shibata, Arai, & Oka, 2014a). In contrast, the teachers’ perspectives reveal a number of benefits for teachers and students in using external coaches. The use of external coaches is considered an effective method for reducing the workload burden and improving the teachers’ knowledge and coaching skills (Aoyagi et al., 2013a; Williams & Macdonald, 2015). Teachers have also reported improved techniques and increased motivation among students following the use of external coaches (Aoyagi et al., 2013a). Therefore, external coaches and teachers need one another to develop valuable SBECSAs. However, these are evidences only perceived by external coaches and teachers, but not by students. A previous survey conducted with junior high school students indicated that the contents of coaching affected their motivation to participate in sports (Sirard, Pfeiffer, & Pate, 2006). Based on such reports, coaches and teachers are regarded as influential people to students. Students are receivers of coaching, and could be neutral evaluators of the benefits derived from external coaches and teachers. Understanding the benefits of external coaches and teachers from the students’ perspectives contributes to the discussion on the cooperative coaching of external coaches and teachers. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to determine how external coaches and teachers impact students’ experiences in SBECSAs, and how external coaches and teachers differ and/or have similar impacts.

Material & methods

Content of SBECSA in Japan

In Japan, 65% of junior high school students and 42% of high school students participate in SBECSAs (MEXT, 2013). SBECSAs are officially positioned as a part of school education. Their aim is not only to improve skills, but to also help students develop a zest for living and provide them with valuable school experiences (MEXT, 2008, 2009, 2013). However, almost all SBECSAs in Japan become members of a national sports organization and aim to winning some interscholastic games continuing to a national convention. Generally, not only PE teachers, but also other subjects’ teachers assume the roles of coaching and managing SBECSAs, primarily on a voluntary basis. However, almost half of SBECSAs teacher are unable to expertly coach on the sports’ technical aspects (Japan Sports Association, 2014). To supplement the lack of expert in-school coaches, the recruitment of external coaches is promoted (MEXT, 2013). External coaches are defined as an out-of-school individual who primarily coaches the technical aspects of school-based extracurricular activities as a substitute or to support a teacher. They can be expert coaches living in the neighbourhoods, graduates of the schools, or students’ parents (Sasakawa Sports Foundation, 2014). Such SBECSAs are rarely organized in Japanese elementary schools.

Participants

Based on the recommendation that qualitative studies include a sample size of greater than 12 people (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006), 23 students from junior high schools and high schools who participated in SBECSAs that employed external coaches were recruited for this study. Purposeful snowball sampling (Handcock & Gile, 2011) was conducted using the authors’ personal networks with teachers. To vary the participants’ characteristics, three junior high schools and three high schools in five prefectural areas were selected. The sample included 11 males and 12 females. The participants’ ages ranged 12–17 years, with an average age of 15.0 ± 1.4 years. There were 12 junior high school students and 11 high school students.

Students participated in nine different SBECSAs (two badminton teams at different schools, basketball, Japanese archery, soccer, swimming, table tennis, track and field and volleyball). The SBECSAs targeted in this study were also similar to the general context in Japan. Teachers basically aimed for students’ education, and students primarily focused on enjoyment and skill improvements in order to win their target games. All of these SBECSAs recruited one or two external coaches, although three SBECSAs had expert teachers. These external coaches were volunteer coaches living in the neighbourhoods, graduates of the schools and students’ parents. None were coaches from a coaching company. The mean of external coaches’ engagement was approximately two days a week.

Procedure

Each participant’s demographic characteristics were obtained in writing. Next, personal (i.e., one to one) semi-structured interviews that followed an interview guide were conducted with all participants. The interview guide was comprised of points of attention during the interview (e.g., maintaining an open-ended approach and using repetition) and the following two open-ended questions: (1) What benefits do you feel you obtain from having an external coach?, and (2) What benefits do you feel you obtain from your SBECSA

teacher? Participants were asked to respond freely to the questions. All the interviews were conducted by a well-experienced researcher using the interview guide, which added reliability to the interview content (Flick, 2011). The interviews were conducted between July and October 2013 at the individual participant's school and were recorded with the participants' consent. Participants answered questions about their experiences and feelings from the time in which they joined the SBECAs until the study interviews. Participants were offered a gift card worth 1000 yen for taking part in the research. The participants and their parents were informed of the research purpose and design, and both provided their written informed consent. The research proposal was approved by the Waseda University ethics board (No. 2013-020).

Analysis

Each recorded interview was transcribed verbatim. The KJ method (Kawakita, 2004) was used to analyse the transcribed data. The KJ method is a means of qualitative analysis that contains abductive procedures involves four essential steps: 1) label making; 2) label grouping; 3) chart making; and 4) written or verbal explanation. This makes it ideal for conducting exploratory research (Scupin, 1997), as with the present study. In accordance with the KJ method, all of the transcribed data were independently divided into minimal meaningful units according to their content by three researchers with expertise in sports education or psychology. Once this was completed, the three researchers discussed any differences in their segmentation, and a final segmentation scheme was determined. Next, units of similar content were grouped together in subcategories, and the final labelling of all the subcategories was agreed upon by all three researchers. Related subcategories were further grouped to create several main categories, which encompassed the general theme of the included subcategories. Initials were used to indicate the benefits ascribed to external coaches (e) and teachers (t) in order to facilitate discussion. This was especially employed in cases in which the benefits may have overlapped. Independent segmentation and subsequent consensus among the three researchers enhanced the objectivity of the analysis, i.e., triangulation (Flick, 2011).

Results

Benefits from external coaches

Six main categories and 31 subcategories of benefits from external coaches were identified (Table 1).

Table 1. Perceived benefits from external coaches

Category (6)	Subcategory (31)
Expert coaching	e1. coaches expertly
	e2. provides understandable advice
	e3. improves skills
	e4. plays together with SBECAs members
	e5. provides mental coaching toward game
	e6. suggests appropriate practice for each member
	e7. varies the practice
	e8. offers advice on SBECAs management
	e9. clarifies what to do
	e10. provides secure feeling during competition
	e11. has expert knowledge about sport-related injuries
	e12. improves safety due to expert technique knowledge
Support for SBECAs teacher	e13. bridge between SBECAs members and other coaches
	e14. states opinions that are difficult for the teacher to state
	e15. improves quality of practice due to increased number of coaches
	e16. be able to practice when teacher is not there
	e17. easier to talk to than teacher
General coaching	e18. recognizes effort
	e19. encouragement
	e20. coaches positive attitude
	e21. coaches the entire team equally
Human network	e22. provides information on the sport outside of the school program
	e23. arranges practice matches and joint practices with other schools
	e24. easy to join the SBECAs because external coach is an acquaintance
	e25. has expert acquaintances within the sports community
Improved SBECAs atmosphere	e26. improves motivation
	e27. improves sense of unity within the SBECAs
	e28. make activities fun
	e29. more earnest practice
Equipment supply	e30. supplies equipment
	e31. supplies food or drink

Note: "e" placed in front of a subcategory signifies "external coach". Additionally, each subcategory was given an identical number for discussion.

Expert coaching. This category included following subcategories: coaches expertly, provides understandable advice, improves skills, plays together with SBECAs members, provides mental coaching toward game, suggests appropriate practice for each member, varies the practice, offers advice on SBECAs

management, clarifies what to do, provides secure feeling during competition, has expert knowledge about sport-related injuries and improves safety due to expert technique knowledge. Many subcategories were extracted with respect to expert coaching. Some students reported the expertise of the external coaches, such as that cited in the following comment:

With a new school year, the SBECSA teacher also changed from someone with experience to a beginner. Therefore, it became difficult to learn proper skills without using an external coach. (Interviewee no. 3; categorized as e1 “coaches expertly”)

In addition, the prevention and care of injuries were noted:

When I got injured, the external coach took care of it well. (Interviewee no. 9; categorized as e11 “has expert knowledge about sport-related injuries”)

Most SBECSA teachers don’t have the experience to teach the sport even though with archery there is the risk of being hit by an arrow in the head or arm. But there have been no injuries at school because the external coach was an expert. (Interviewee no. 13; categorized as e12 “improves safety due to expert technique knowledge”)

Support for SBECSA teacher. This category was comprised of five subcategories: bridge between SBECSA members and other coaches, states opinions that are difficult for the teacher to state, improves quality of practice due to increased number of coaches, be able to practice when teacher is not there and easier to talk to than teacher. Students felt that external coaches assumed part of the teachers’ role and facilitated smoother communications between teachers and students (e.g., e13 “bridge between SBECSA members and other coaches”, e14 “states opinions that are difficult for the teacher to state” and e16 “be able to practice when teacher is not there”). Ease of communication between the students and external coaches was also reported:

Voicing various opinions with external coaches is easier than with teachers. This is because teachers have authority, such as being able to decide on team members and academic grades at school. But the external coaches are much closer to me, and that makes it easier to talk with them than with teachers. (Interviewee no. 4; categorized as e17 “easier to talk to than teacher”)

General coaching. This category had four subcategories: recognizes effort, encouragement, coaches positive attitude and coaches the entire team equally. Opinions were offered about coaching other than technical aspects, such as item e18 “recognizes effort”, e19 “encouragement” and e20 “coaches positive attitude”. With regard to e20 “coaches positive attitude”, one interviewee said:

Of course external coaches see our conditions and improve our skills, but they also basically explain ways of becoming members of society. (Interviewee no. 13)

Human network. This category consisted of following the subcategories: provides information on the sport outside of the school program, arranges practice matches and joint practices with other schools, easy to join the SBECSA because external coach is an acquaintance and has expert acquaintances within the sports community. External coaches have broad networks outside of the school, especially in their sports areas. Students noted the following:

Our coach knows many people related to table tennis and provides us with various kinds of information about other schools and table tennis techniques in Japan. (Interviewee no. 22; categorized as e22 “provides information on the sport outside of the school program”)

At first, we couldn’t take part in joint practices or practice matches with other schools. And by playing only at our school, we may be not able to win games. (Interviewee no. 12; categorized as e23 “arranges practice matches and joint practices with other schools”)

Improved SBECSA atmosphere. This category contained four subcategories: improves motivation, improves sense of unity within the SBECSA, make activities fun and more earnest practice. Several students explained that the SBECSA atmosphere improved due to the involvement of external coaches:

If we weren’t calling out loudly enough, the coach would say that it was better to be louder and psych us up. That way, we could increase our motivation. The coach motivates us. (Interviewee no. 1; categorized as e26 “improves motivation”)

Every team member can unite and enjoy the practice ... and everyone tries hard during the practice. The atmosphere with the SBECSA is different on the days when the external coach is there or not. (Interviewee no. 20; categorized as e27 “improves sense of unity within the SBECSA” and e29 “more earnest practice”)

Equipment supply. Finally, this category consisted of the subcategories “supplies equipment” and “supplies food or drink”. Some external coaches bring equipment, food, or drinks for students. This is reflected by the following comment:

The coach brings us shuttlecocks for playing badminton. Without the coach, we wouldn’t have as many shuttlecocks. I appreciate what our coach does. (Interviewee no. 10; categorized as e30 “supplies equipment”)

Benefits from teachers

Six main categories and 22 subcategories of benefits from teachers were identified (Table 2).

Table 2. Perceived benefits from teachers

Category (6)	Subcategory (22)
General coaching	t1. encouragement
	t2. corrects students when doing something wrong
	t3. offers compliments
	t4. coaches each member carefully
	t5. coaches technique
	t6. coaches positive attitude
Management and office work	t7. performs office work relevant to SBECSA
	t8. SBECSA could not exist without teacher
	t9. handles injuries
	t10. transports equipment
	t11. provides access to school facilities and equipment
Participation in SBECSA	t12. participates in SBECSA routinely
	t13. attends morning practice
	t14. attends competitions
	t15. observes effort in SBECSA
Human network	t16. conveys information from teachers at other schools
	t17. invites graduates to coach
	t18. arranges practice matches with other schools
Connection with school life	t19. provides advice outside of SBECSA hours
	t20. coaches with consideration for school life
	t21. offers lifestyle guidance regarding school life
Improved SBECSA atmosphere	t22. improves sense of unity within the SBECSA

Note: “t” placed in front of a subcategory signifies “teacher”. Additionally, each subcategory was given an identical number for discussion.

General coaching. This category was comprised of the following six subcategories: encouragement, corrects students when doing something wrong, offers compliments, coaches each member carefully, coaches technique and coaches positive attitude. Even though SBECSA teachers may not be able to offer coaching to develop expert skills, they still appear to provide benefits in terms of general coaching. One student said:

The teacher doesn’t understand archery, but he encouraged me when I lost an event or was delighted when I won, and that gave me a lot of pleasure. (Interviewee no. 16; categorized as t1 “encouragement”)

However, if students did something wrong, the teachers noted it and corrected the students’ behaviour:

If I did something wrong, the teacher was strict and scolded me. I haven’t been told that kind of thing before ... It gave me the chance to change myself. (Interviewee no. 9; categorized as t2 “corrects students when doing something wrong”)

The students mentioned other benefits with respect to general coaching:

The SBECSA teacher looks after each student carefully. For example, if a student is feeling sick, the teacher soon notices that and asks if they want to quit practice. (Interviewee no. 9; categorized as t4 “coaches each member carefully”)

She coaches us not only about technical aspects, but also mental aspects and attitudes toward other people in detail. It’s good for me. (Interviewee no. 9; categorized as t6 “coaches positive attitude”)

Management and office work. The category had five subcategories: performs office work relevant to SBECSA, SBECSA could not exist without teacher, handles injuries, transports equipment and provides access to school facilities and equipment. Benefits that applied to aspects other than sports practice were also cited, such as the following:

Filling application forms for competitions is a teacher’s job at our school. Maybe it’s difficult for coaches to do that. This job seems to be appropriate for teachers. (Interviewee no. 14; categorized as t7 “performs office work relevant to SBECSA”)

Other interviewees mentioned the direct importance of teachers in item t8 “SBECSA could not exist without the teacher”. In addition, difficulties in managing SBECSA without teachers were reported:

We don’t know whether we can or can’t use school facilities and equipment if only the external coach is there. That’s a problem. (Interviewee no. 18; categorized as t11 “provides access to school facilities and equipment”)

Participation in SBECSA. The category was comprised of four subcategories: participates in SBECSA routinely, attends morning practice, attends competitions and observes effort in SBECSA. It is noteworthy that simply participating in SBECSA without providing substantive technical coaching could be beneficial to students:

It's hard for external coaches to come to practice every day. Therefore, the teacher holds practices on weekdays. As well, I like it when the teacher supervises resistance training. (Interviewee no. 6; categorized as t12 "participates in SBECSA routinely")

If I'm able to do something in a sport that I was previously unable to do, the teacher recognizes that. I'm happy the teacher sees my effort in being able to achieve something in that way. (Interviewee no. 2; categorized as t15 "observes effort in SBECSA")

Human network. The category included three subcategories: conveys information from teachers at other schools, invites graduates to coach and arranges practice matches with other schools. Aspects related to human networks were also indicated as a benefit derived from teachers. One student noted:

During a competition, it's better when the teacher is there. There are lots of other schools' teachers at the competition, and so our SBECSA teacher can keep in touch with them and get information better than an external coach. (Interviewee no. 13; categorized as t16 "conveys information from teachers at other schools")

Teachers may have a similar role to that of the external coach:

If the SBECSA teacher isn't there, we can't play practice matches. We can't do anything without the teacher. Practice matches don't take place properly when only through the coach's personal contacts. (Interviewee no. 22; categorized as t18 "arranges practice matches with other schools")

Connection with school life. The category contained the following subcategories: provides advice outside of SBECSA hours, coaches with consideration for school life and offers lifestyle guidance regarding school life. There are specific benefits as the teachers are able to connect SBECSAs with the students' school lives (e.g., t19 "provides advice outside of SBECSA hours" and t20 "coaches with consideration for school life"). With respect to t20, one student explained:

Our SBECSA teacher can take school events and classroom matters into consideration. Therefore, the teacher may let us be late for SBECSA if there are reasons related to school life. Teachers should relate to SBECSA. (Interviewee no. 12)

Another student commented:

If I'm bad at school, the teacher tells me about that as well as with SBECSA. And that's good for me. (Interviewee no. 7; categorized as t21 "offers lifestyle guidance regarding school life")

Improved SBECSA atmosphere. Along with the external coaches, teachers can improve the SBECSA atmosphere. One interviewee commented:

The team members are able to play as a unit because the teacher is there. If there wasn't a teacher present, SBECSA would be just fooling around. (Interviewee no. 19; categorized as t22 "improves sense of unity within the SBECSA")

Discussion

Personal semi-structured interviews were conducted with 23 students to identify the benefits of external coaches and teachers involved in SBECSAs from the students' perspective. Multiple benefits were identified and categorized from the open-ended responses provided. Overlapping and specific benefits were identified for both external coaches and teachers (see Appendix 1).

Fig. 1. Model of benefits from external coaches and teachers

Contributing to the improvement of the SBECSA atmosphere (t22). With respect to human network, external coaches and teachers have different networks, which can provide separate benefits for students. Understanding the sport in a greater context outside the school can encourage students' interests and knowledge

of the sport, whereas inter-school networks can provide competition for the students and help build local sports communities. Previous guidelines on the use of external coaches have recommended strict separation in terms of role allotment, with external coaches assuming technical coaching duties and teachers restricting themselves to program management (Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education, 2008). However, the overlapping benefits from external coaches and teachers indicate that common roles between external coaches and teachers may work to maximize the advantages for students.

Specific benefits perceived from having external coaches included those related to expert coaching, support for SBECSA teacher and equipment supply. Many subcategories for expert coaching were identified (“expert” in this study was defined as having more sport-related knowledge and skills than SBECSA teachers). This included not only technical coaching skills, but also expert knowledge about sport-related injuries and safe playing techniques. The use of external coaches could therefore help improve safety in SBECSAs alongside students’ skills development. However, an excessive commitment to expert technical coaching has risks that can lead to overly competitive attitudes and burnout (Isoard-Gauthier, Guillet-Descas, & Lemyre, 2012; MEXT, 2013; Sirard et al., 2006). Therefore, further discussion regarding the extent of expertise required in school sports is needed.

Within the category of support for SBECSA teacher, students felt that external coaches achieved better communication between students and coaches (e13), that the students could voice opinions that would be difficult to express to the teacher (e14) and that coaches were sometimes more approachable than their teachers (e17). Therefore, the use of external coaches could also contribute to strengthening the overall relationships among students, teachers and other coaches.

Typical benefits derived from teachers fell into the categories of management and office work, participation in SBECSA and connection with school life. There are many administrative tasks involved with SBECSA management (e.g., escorting students to the competition sites, cooperation with related organizations and management of facilities and equipment) in addition to technical coaching (MEXT, 1999), and someone has to assume these roles. Indeed, some students reported that SBECSAs would be unable to function without teachers (t8).

Schools are considered appropriate settings for adolescents to play sports and participate in physical activities due to their available physical environments (Elder et al., 2007). According to the results of the present study (e.g., t11 “provides access to school facilities and equipment”), teachers’ participation in SBECSA is valuable for providing easy access to school facilities and equipment rather than relying on external sources to supply them. Some students felt that simple participation in SBECSA and observing their own efforts were benefits that teachers provided, even if they unable to coach expertly. This supports the finding that teachers’ supportive behaviour correlates with satisfaction and highly self-determined motivation in students (Standage, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2005).

Connection with school life was also recognized as a teacher benefit. The Course of Study (the Japanese curriculum guide that defines basic standards for education) for junior high schools and high schools proposes that good connections be established between school education and SBECSAs (MEXT, 2008, 2009); this combination is also favourable from the students’ perspectives. Therefore, teachers should not rely exclusively on external coaches; they should actively participate in SBECSAs and engage in coaching and SBECSA management in a way that maintains connections to school life.

In the present study, some participants reported negative aspects of outsourcing to external coaches. Issues included use of different coaching methods than those that teachers used and not adhering to school policies (e.g., predetermined practice time). Therefore, inconsistent coaching policies between external coaches and teachers created confusion among students. To enhance the benefits for their students, external coaches and teachers should communicate well to develop unified coaching policies and appropriately define their roles.

With regard to teacher and coach partnerships, there are some studies from elementary schools (Jones & Green, 2015; Smith, 2015). According to these previous studies, generalist class teachers (i.e., not a PE specific teacher) traditionally teach PE lessons. This situation is similar to SBECSAs in Japan in which teachers who are not PE teachers or SBECSA experts are required to manage SBECSAs (over 40% of teachers are not PE teachers and not experts in the sport: Japan Sports Association, 2014). Similarly, in Japan the educational aspects SBECSAs are valued as part of the school education (MEXT, 2008, 2009). Using coaches can help overcome the teachers’ lack of expertise (Jones & Green, 2015; Smith, 2015). However, some coaches also have weaknesses, such as the lack of appropriate teaching credentials, prioritizing sport-related aims other than education and poor class management skills (Flintoff, 2008; Flintoff, Foster, & Wystawnoha, 2011; Jones & Green, 2015; Smith, 2015). Teachers’ engagement in SBECSAs has some merits. For instance, teachers can inform coaches of students’ usual behaviour (Smith, 2015). In addition, engaging in SBECSAs is a good opportunity for teachers to understand their students better (Jones & Green, 2015). As Whiteley and Richard (2012) suggested, it is necessary to create an environment in which teachers can easily engage in SBECSAs.

There are several dimensions of educational privatization. One aspect is regarding the “field”. This refers to where the activities take place, such as activities that are exported outside of the school or activity providers that are imported inside of the school. With regard to “field”, extracurricular sports activities should be

provided within the in-school field as this provides opportunities for more children to join sports activities. This claim was enhanced by De Meester, Aelterman, Cardon, De Bourdeaudhuij, and Haerens (2014) in which the relatively low costs, lack of need for transportation and familiarity with the school setting compared to community-based activities were reported. The other dimension centres on “degrees” such as full or partial commission. Previous studies indicated that teachers were concerned about the external coaches’ lack of educational abilities, although the teachers desired external coaching support (Aoyagi et al., 2013a; Aoyagi et al., 2014b; Flintoff, 2008; Flintoff et al., 2011). External coaches also expected teachers’ engagement in SBECSAs (Aoyagi et al., 2013b; Aoyagi et al., 2014a). Additionally, using external coaches is good economic strategy for schools (Jones & Green, 2015). Therefore, cooperative coaching would be valuable in a comprehensive manner.

Although this study clearly identified the types of benefits and specific features that students appreciate in external coaches and teachers, the ability to assess the extent to which students perceive these benefits is limited. Therefore, future research is needed for more in-depth qualitative and quantitative examination of the students’ perceptions. Additionally, this study primarily focused on the students’ points of view. Policy makers and school principals should consider other factors such as financial costs and the teachers’ burdens in order to develop educational, viable and effective outsourcing strategies. These findings could inform stakeholders with regard as to how to improve after-school sports in countries with similar situations, and to accelerate discussions regarding outsourcing in health, sports and physical education.

Conclusions

The present study clarified benefits for students from the use of external coaches and teachers in SBECSAs. Students perceived both overlapping and specific benefits from both groups, which indicated that cooperative coaching between external coaches and teachers would be preferable for students compared to using only one or the other. Within the discussion about the outsourcing of health, sports and physical education, it is necessary to find ways for external human resources and teachers to cooperate and coexist in order to maximize the benefits for students. Particularly with SBECSAs, external coaches might assume expert coaching duties and support teachers. Meanwhile, teachers need to focus on SBECSAs’ administrative management, participate as much as possible and ensure that students’ school lives are considered with SBECSAs. Finally, both external coaches and teachers should participate in general coaching, incorporate their human networks and foster positive atmospheres within the SBECSAs.

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