

STUDY ON THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract: *The physical education teacher plays a complex role in the professional activity, he/she is a guide of the sports movement, he/she plans, cooperates and stimulates the students. Knowledge of motivational factors in active and conscious participation in the physical education class of students involves the choice of modern means and methods in the application of physical exercise. Hypothesis: careful knowledge of students' preferences for various physical activities and adjustment of the means of action to these preferences lead to an increase in the attractiveness of the physical education class. The study was performed on 89 middle school students in Bacău. Two quizzes were applied, one aimed at the current assessment of the attractiveness of the physical education class and one aimed at students' expectations of the education physical class and teacher. The results of the study showed that there is a strong correlation between the degree of involvement in the physical education class and the students' preferences for exercising.*

Key words: *physical education, attractiveness, class, middle school.*

1. Introduction

Physical education programs aimed at optimizing physical condition are beneficial ways to influence physical condition, body aesthetics and self-esteem [2].

Participation in collective activities, especially physical ones, gives students the opportunity to form interpersonal relationships [4]. At this age, children enjoy being noticed, especially in physical activities. Usually, at this age, taller or

heavier children try to dominate others; but manage to impose those who prove better movement qualities [8].

An important aspect of the teaching profession is the professional perfection [3], which includes all cognitive, affective, motivational and managerial capacities, which interact with the personality traits of the educator, giving him/her the qualities necessary to have a teaching performance that ensures the achievement of competences by all students; and the performance achieved is

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close to the maximum level of the individual intellectual potential.

The teaching profession was a social profession; from this perspective, the teacher is also a social pedagogue concerned with raising the degree of culture and civilization [1].

In the framework of teaching and extra-curricular activities, interpersonal relationships are created between participants, all engaged in a constant process of mutual influence [4].

The success of a teacher often depends on the nature of the relationships he establishes with his students in this interaction, which is particularly important, since many learning and educational difficulties are due to poor relationships.

The nature of the relationships that the teacher establishes with the students is determined not only by the approach style of the activity and his personality traits, but also by the individual and group traits of the students [6].

The physical education teacher, as a guide of the sports movement, has a duty to convince young people about the necessity and usefulness of systematic exercise practice [5]. In the educational instructional process, the teacher plans, organizes the students' activity, observes, helps, cooperates, guides, controls, evaluates, and stimulates [7].

Conducted between November 2018 and May 2019, our study aims to validate **the hypothesis** that *the careful knowledge of students' preferences for various physical activities and the adjustment of the means of action to these preferences lead to an increase in the attractiveness of the physical education class.*

2. Material and Methods

The study took place between November 2018 and May 2019 and involved 3 groups of middle school students from the National College "Vasile Alecsandir" in Bacau.

89 seventh graders were included in the study, including 38 boys and 51 girls.

The study took place during physical education classes in the college's gymnasium.

The method of direct and indirect observation, the method of investigation, the method of bibliographic study were used as research methods.

In the first phase we observed the groups as part of the current research, identifying the number of constant participants in the class, the number of motivated or unmotivated absences, the respect of the structure/links of the class by the teacher in accordance with the annual planning and the curriculum, we also observed the diversity of means and methods of action during the class.

We also had discussions in the form of an interview on methodological and social issues with teachers from those classes where we tried to find out the problems they face, as well as what initiatives they had to improve the physical education class.

At a later stage we designed two quizzes (A and B) in which we requested various information such as teacher appreciation, proposals to improve the physical education class. Quiz B aims at the current assessment of the attractiveness of the physical education class and Quiz A addresses students' expectations from the physical education class and from the teacher.

Quiz A

1. What sports game would you like to play during the physical education class?
 - football
 - handball
 - volleyball
 - basketball
2. What individual sports would you like to play during the physical education class?
 - table tennis
 - badminton
 - working on machines/fitness
 - gymnastics
 - jogging
3. What qualities should the physical education teacher have?
 - good communicator
 - pleasant physical appearance
 - wealthy knowledge from various fields
 - attraction to the game/play
 - good organizer (excursions, camps, competitions)
 - punctuality
 - enable students and collaborate with them to organize parts of their physical education class according to their own preferences
4. To my physical education teacher, at the performed class, I give him/her the grade (1-10)
5. In the future I am thinking of becoming a teacher of physical education and sport or coach? (Yes/No)
6. What do you expect from the physical education teacher?
 - to organise excursions/camps
 - to organise sports competitions between classes/schools
 - not to impose intense efforts
 - not to have anymore the physical education class in the morning
 - more games.

7. the content of the physical education class you like the most:
 - warm-up part
 - relays and application paths
 - dynamic games
 - strength and gymnastics exercises
 - pair/partner exercises
 - athletic competitions.
8. What leadership style should the physical education teacher have
 - Democratic (the teacher takes your views into account, encourages and stimulates your creativity and initiative)
 - Authoritarian (the teacher decides for you, and you do it)
 - Permissive (laissez-faire) (the teacher accepts your actions, is less rigorous and less objective)

Quiz B

1. How much do you like the physical education class?
 - not at all
 - very little
 - a little
 - much
 - very much
2. Do you believe that the teacher's grade fully reflects your involvement and results?
 - Yes
 - No
3. Do you consider that the physical education class at school is
 - Very well organized
 - Well organized
 - Organized
 - Not organized at all
4. How do you assess your involvement in the physical education class
 - not at all
 - very little
 - moderate
 - much
 - complete

Following the analysis of Quiz A, we developed a set of means tailored to students' preferences and with the agreement of the teachers we introduced them into the physical education class.

The tailored means consisted of

- Improvised games
- Pair games
- Relays and applicative paths
- Sports games with reduced staff on the ground (volleyball, football)
- Competitions/races between students and classes (table tennis, badminton)
- Childhood games (hide-and-seek).

3. Results and Discussions

Regarding the **Quiz A**, applied in the beginning of the study, with the aim of finding the students' preferences regarding the physical education class, we observe the following:

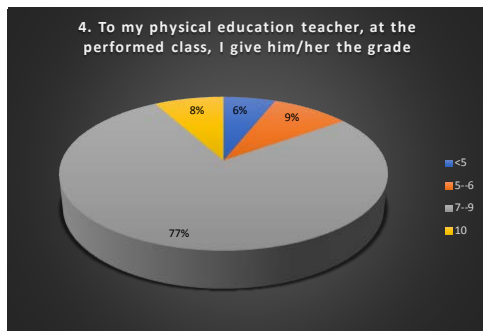


Fig. 1. Share of answers to question 4A

To question No. 4, we may consider that the high percentage of grades between 7 and 9 is a positive appreciation of the students but also an expectation of "more", either as involvement, or as diversity, or as organization on the part of the physical education teacher.

To question No. 3, we all know the ethical, moral, professional attributes that a teacher must fulfil, but we wanted to

know the opinion of the direct beneficiaries of the educational instructional process, namely what qualities they would appreciate at a physical education teacher.

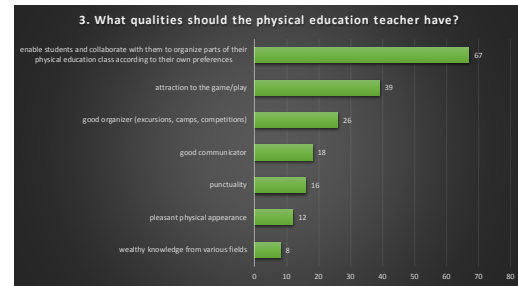


Fig. 2. The share of the answers to question No. 3A

Given that there were multiple answers, the attitude of the students was eloquent, in the sense that they want to actively participate both physically and with ideas, but especially with responsibility in the physical activities during the class, fact highlighted by the 67 answers.

Obviously, students wish that information are issued appropriately and at their level of perception, and students also want the physical education teacher to respect the particularities of their motor skills, of their understanding and possibilities, that the amount of information is restricted and transmitted in an easily accessible, friendly form.

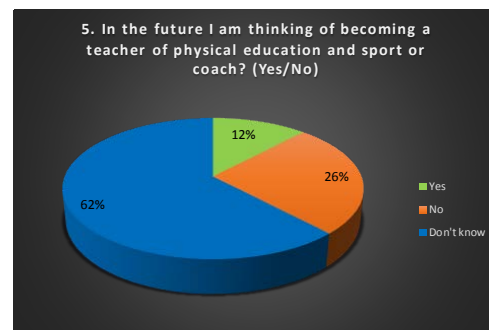


Fig. 3. The share of the answers to question No. 5A

We know very well that the learning process is best carried out in relaxing play conditions and not in a rigid and pressing setting. It was not surprising at all when many responses (39) were oriented towards the playful aspect of learning/teaching.

To question No.5 the interpretation may be varied, either because of age or because the percentage of 12% confers some certainty in the continuity of this profession, apparently appreciated by the students.

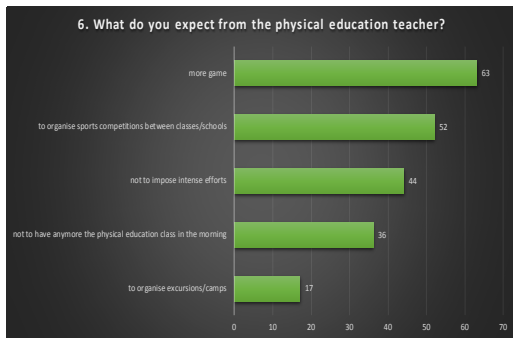


Fig. 4. The share of the answers to question No. 6A

To question No. 6 we wanted to find out exactly what the students want from the physical education teacher, both in terms of his/her involvement in the extra-curricular activity, but also of the form of organization of physical education.

Thus, many responses have been oriented towards the playful form of teaching-learning, the beneficial nature of this form being known for a long time.

Surprisingly, the students want the teacher's presence not only in curricular classes but also at extracurricular activities, such as excursions, hiking, and camps.

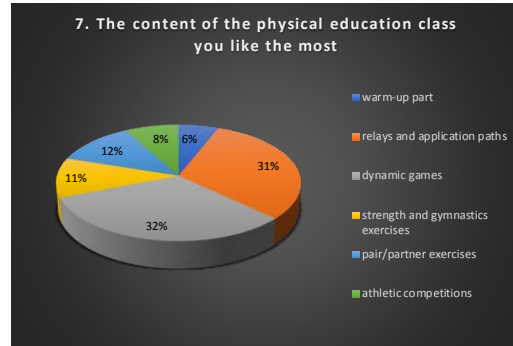


Fig. 5. The share of the answers to question No. 7A

It is not to be neglected that they do not want to be treated as performance athletes in physical education class, thus interpreting the more than 40 effort responses.

To question No. 7, the high percentages of dynamic games and relays can be explained by their competitive, playful nature. As you can see, the answers are many and varied, which means that at this age the expectations are high, the playful nature prevails, but the inclinations towards certain types of effort differ, and the teacher must find solutions to please both those who prefer static exercises on the mat or force, but also those who choose the emulation of competitions from relays or dynamic games.

To question No. 8 amongst the choices of the three types of leadership we are given once more the students' wish to conduct the physical education class in a pleasant setting, in which the physical effort is also appreciated by the teacher and the students, in which the activities are chosen by mutual agreement and not imposed at any cost, the actual participation in the management and conduct of the class is also from the students, the 46% of respondents being a significant percentage in this respect.

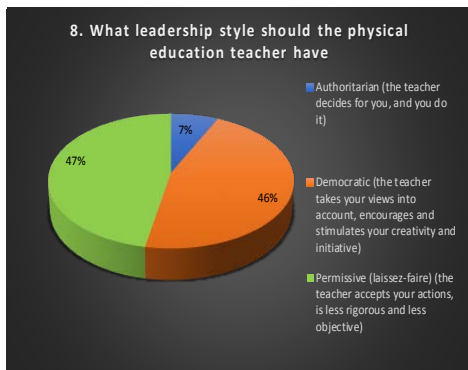


Fig. 6. The share of the answers to question No. 8A

Those 7% who want an authoritarian style of leadership are the legitimate athlete students, who are used to a certain rigour of training and prefer a "military" regime precisely because they have been educated that performance is a consequence of intense, heavy efforts, carefully coordinated.

With regard to **Quiz B**, at the beginning and end of the research, we note the following:

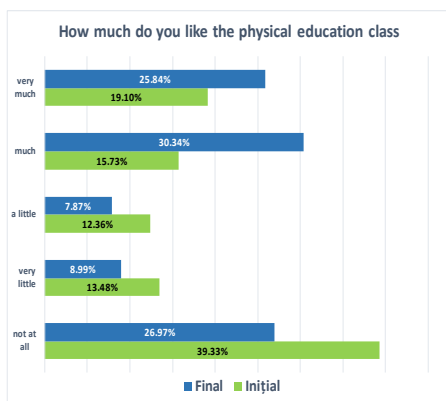


Fig. 7. The distribution of the answers to question No. 1B

To question No. 1, our contribution to diversify the means, working methods, or teaching style, attracting the student in structuring the physical education class,

reaching their "sensitive point" in the sense of knowing what they want, what they like during the physical education class, successfully crowns our approach.

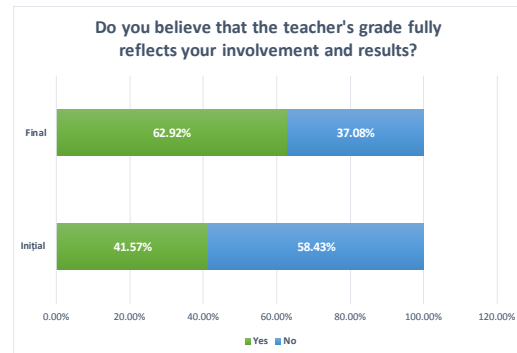


Fig. 8. The distribution of the answers to question No. 2B

The proof is the degree of appreciation of the class in the applied quiz (very much – from 19.10% initially to 25.84% in the end, much – from 15.73% initially to 30.34% in the end).

To questions No. 2 and 4, the teaching style, the closeness to the student, the in-depth knowledge of their peculiarities, the knowledge of the limits or, on the contrary, of latent performance, the degree of involvement more increased towards the end of the semester on the part of the student in the educational process as an active participant lead to surprising results, whereby, with increased objectivity, the student recognises his value, credit, performance, embodied in the increase in the percentage of those who say that the grade awarded reflects their involvement, from 41.57% initially to almost 63% in the end, i.e. the positive change in the percentages of substantial involvement (much and very much).

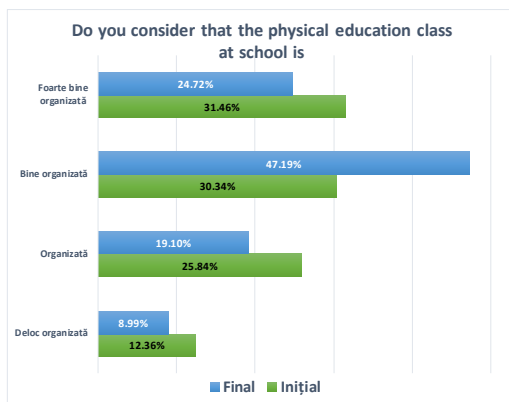


Fig. 9. The share of the answers to question No. 3B

To question No. 3, despite meeting the requirements of the school curriculum, we allowed ourselves some contrivances, including learning and strengthening more through dynamic games, by stimulating emulation, persuasion, by direct student participation in organization of the group and by choice of the desired games, by stimulating creativity even in the form of a homework assignment, which led to a "different class", in which the student even felt that he was free to play, to make effort because he wants to be the first because he likes it.

The results of question No. 3 reflect this through the higher values recorded at the "well-organized" item (initially 30.34%, in the end 47.19%), while decreasing the percentages of those who consider the class as being not at all organized or organized.

4. Conclusions

We conclude this study in the following words: in the educational instructional process, the physical education teacher must know not only the means and methods of improving psychomotor

abilities, not just to impose and impose himself, but he/she must also feel the group that consists of several entities each with their own possibilities, aspirations and expectations.

Working with students requires a lot of dedication and continuous and active participation on the part of the teacher to always be surprising to them, to attract them into physical actions, to make them love physical exercise and understand its benefits.

In order to facilitate the resolution of disciplinary problems, the teacher may get involved in the student's situation, may express his concern for the student as a person, thus building a relationship with the student. In this way, the teacher can help his students reflect on their own desires and plans, while trying to understand their options. If the student has made an irresponsible choice, the teacher may ask him: "What do you really want?" "What do you need?" "How would you like it to be at school?"

The teacher-student relationship is the main way of didactic mediation, of its hypostasis in a human, subjective variant. Beyond the concrete content that is transmitted, in the teaching activity will be very important the type of interaction that will be established between the class of students and the teacher, as well as his attitude in connecting himself as a group and to each individual student.

The teacher must have the ability to master the student's behaviour at a given time, without reminding him of past mistakes. The teacher should encourage honesty and can help students make a choice and be accountable for their own choice.

The relationship with the students should not be reduced to a formal,

administrative aspect, being governed by ethical or institutional codes of ethics or norms; it will fit and customize incessantly, it will size up and relativize to the specifics of the school group or its members.

Teacher-student relationships can be characterized by dimensions such as conflict, closeness and over-dependence. They are closely linked to other variables such as age, ethnicity, and social status.

Due to the distinct nature of the physical education class from other disciplines, it may and is necessary to measure interpersonal relations within the group in order to identify a leader, mediator between the teacher and the group who often does not match the "head of the class".

Knowledge of the psychosocial climate of the group counts in the management of the relationships between the physical education teacher and the student in that it helps to stimulate the student in exceeding their own limits, in accepting the team partners, in the desire for victory or acceptance of defeat, in stimulating the spirit of fair play.

Precisely because of the appearance of many varieties of exercise (some unthinkable 10-20 years ago) in the sense that young people seek to make easy movement through modern "gadgets" (e.g. skateboard), to remain frozen in teaching physical exercise as 10-20 years ago means totally compromising yourself to the new generation, basically condemning the physical education lesson before getting to know the students. We appreciate it's harder now to convince to do physical exercise than to do the exercise itself.

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