

THE SHIFT OF STUDENTS ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE TEACHER OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Background. The aim of the research was to identify the shift of the attitude of students towards the physical education teacher. Hypothesis of the research: Students attending compulsory physical education classes view physical education teacher worse than those who have a possibility of physical education as an optional subject at the university.

Methods. The first study was conducted in the spring semester of 2009 and the second study was conducted after four years (in the spring semester of 2013). First year students took part in the research, 362 females participated in the first study and 343 females in the second study. The total number of male participants in the first study was 129, in the second study – 169. Research participants were students selected from several universities using convenience sampling strategy. The data were analysed using the statistical data software package SPSS 21.0 for Windows.

Results. The analysis of the research data about the most appealing traits of physical education teacher revealed that male students appreciated the teacher's ability to be calm, interested in each student, to be creative and be able to apply innovations.

Conclusions. For students the most appealing traits of physical education teachers are good knowledge of the subject and friendliness. The female students also emphasized the importance of good appearance of the teacher of physical education as well as good interaction with the group, the male students appreciated a good sense of humour and possibility of easy communication with the teacher. In four years' time students' attitudes towards the teacher of physical education improved.

Keywords: students' attitudes, physical education teacher, university physical education.

INTRODUCTION

The teacher's profession just like any other is judged by its psychological content, e.g. by its the object, aim, methods, motivation, product and the result (Зимняя, 2006). The object of teacher's performance is a student who manages to take subjective position and become an active participant of the educational process with their own purposes, beliefs, motives, logical behaviours and whose role is to acquire the given information during the learning process (Adamonienė, Daukila, Krikščiūnas, Maknienė, & Palujanskienė, 2001, 2003). Therefore, speaking about deep and meaningful understanding of the teacher's role in the educational process it could be claimed that

in the social environment of a teacher they are the best seen by the direct participants of the same process – students. The nature of the educational process predicts a close interaction between these two subjects, thus educational psychology often deals with the topic of the subjects of the common educational process; as a student and a teacher are the elements of the same link where the major difference is that they are located on the different sides of that link (Зимняя, 2006).

The most important factor for physical education in higher school is physical education teacher, since his/her qualifications, educational excellence depends on how he is able to create

a positive learning environment and talk about the emotional aspects (Tamošauskas, 2007; Poteliūnienė, 2010). Even though it is doubtful whether the positive students' attitude towards the teacher is significant during the process of conveying and receiving information, still there is a lack of the research carried out to identify the male and female students' attitudes towards the teacher in Lithuania especially physical education teacher's work, behaviours and students' position.

The aim of the research was to identify the shift of the attitudes of students towards the physical education teacher.

Hypothesis of the research. Students attending compulsory physical education classes view physical education teacher worse than those who have a possibility of physical education as an optional subject at the university.

METHODS

Research methods applied were a questionnaire survey and statistical analysis. Students' attitudes towards studies and the teacher of physical education were established with the help of the provided questionnaire.

The first study was conducted in the spring semester of 2009, and the second study was conducted after four years (in the spring semester of 2013). First year students took part in the research (Table 1).

Table 1. Characteristics of subjects

| | Study | Males | % | Females | % |
|--------|-------|---------|------|---------|------|
| Gender | I | n = 129 | 26.3 | n = 362 | 73.7 |
| | II | n = 169 | 33.3 | n = 343 | 67.0 |
| Age | I | < 20 | 84.5 | < 20 | 85.6 |
| | | > 20 | 15.5 | > 20 | 14.4 |
| | II | < 20 | 52.1 | < 20 | 76.7 |
| | | > 20 | 47.9 | > 20 | 23.3 |

There were 362 female students who participated in the first study and 343 females in the second study. The total number of male participants in the first study was 129 and 169 in the second study. The research sample included a representative group of students selected from several universities using convenience sampling strategy.

The prevailing characteristics of the physical education teacher were determined with the help of 11 statements in the questionnaire. Students were

asked to choose one of the options from "strongly agree" (5 points) to "strongly disagree" (1 point). Internal consistency of the whole scale, Cronbach's alpha was .91.

The data were analysed using the statistical data software package *SPSS 21.0 for Windows*. Chi-square test (χ^2) was used to evaluate statistical differences between the groups. The significance level was set at $p < .05$.

RESULTS

While analysing the responses of the female students about the appealing traits of the physical education teacher it was found that the majority of responses to the questionnaire statements differed a lot ($p < .05$) in the first study and in the second study (Table 2). The analysis of the female students' responses revealed that students most of all liked that the teacher of the physical education had good knowledge of the subject; responses "strongly agree" and "agree" were marked by 93.3% of the participants in the first study and 91.3% of the second study participants, ($p = .399$). Secondly, the students pointed out the importance of the teacher's being friendly (86.9 and 87.7% of the female students respectively). However, the responses about the third most important trait of the physical education teacher differed. During the first study it was found that the good shape of a physical education teacher was a significant factor for the students (77.7%) but the second study revealed that the interaction between the physical education teacher and the students was important (80.5%). The analysis of the research data about the appealing traits of the physical education teacher revealed that the female students wanted the teacher to have a good sense of humour (responses "strongly agree" and "agree" were chosen by 77.2 and 77.1% of females respectively, $p = .985$).

Analysing the data received from the male students about the most appealing traits of physical education teacher it was established that male students' responses differed from those of the female students ($p < .05$) (there were no significant differences between the responses to the statements about the good shape of physical education teacher, friendliness and considering students' opinions while giving the tasks) (Table 3). Both studies revealed that male students mostly appreciated the friendliness of the physical education teacher: responses "strongly agree" and "agree" in the first study were chosen by 82.5% of

Table 2. Female students' responses to the question "What traits of the physical education teacher do you like?"

| No. | Statements | Study | Responses | | | χ^2 and p values |
|-----|---|-------|----------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | | | Strongly agree/agree | I don't know | Disagree/ strongly disagree | |
| 1. | Nice shape | I | 77.7 | 20.9 | 1.4 | $\chi^2(2) = 26.070$ $p = .001$ |
| | | II | 60.4 | 34.8 | 4.8 | |
| 2. | Friendliness | I | 86.9 | 11.7 | 1.4 | $\chi^2(2) = 0.387$ $p = .824$ |
| | | II | 87.7 | 11.4 | 0.9 | |
| 3. | Good knowledge of the subject | I | 93.3 | 6.7 | 0 | $\chi^2(2) = 1.835$ $p = .399$ |
| | | II | 91.3 | 8.4 | 0.3 | |
| 4. | Calm | I | 61.6 | 33.4 | 5.0 | $\chi^2(2) = 2.075$ $p = .354$ |
| | | II | 56.2 | 38.4 | 5.4 | |
| 5. | Interaction with the group | I | 74.9 | 18.9 | 6.1 | $\chi^2(2) = 6.536$ $p = .038$ |
| | | II | 80.5 | 17.1 | 2.4 | |
| 6. | Sense of humour | I | 77.2 | 20.3 | 2.5 | $\chi^2(2) = 0.031$ $p = .985$ |
| | | II | 77.1 | 20.2 | 2.7 | |
| 7. | Interested in every student | I | 40.9 | 39.6 | 19.5 | $\chi^2(2) = 16.619$ $p = .001$ |
| | | II | 55.1 | 33.7 | 11.1 | |
| 8. | Easy-going | I | 69.4 | 27.0 | 3.6 | $\chi^2(2) = 5.338$ $p = .069$ |
| | | II | 77.1 | 20.5 | 2.4 | |
| 9. | Creative | I | 46.8 | 46.5 | 6.7 | $\chi^2(2) = 8.429$ $p = .015$ |
| | | II | 57.8 | 37.0 | 5.1 | |
| 10. | Applies novelties | I | 55.2 | 34.7 | 10.1 | $\chi^2(2) = 4.337$ $p = .114$ |
| | | II | 60.4 | 33.5 | 6.0 | |
| 11. | Considers students' opinions while distributing the tasks | I | 57.3 | 32.7 | 10.1 | $\chi^2(2) = 8.051$ $p = .018$ |
| | | II | 67.7 | 25.5 | 6.8 | |

Table 3. Male students' responses to the question "What traits of the physical education teacher do you like?"

| No. | Statements | Study | Responses | | | χ^2 and p values |
|-----|---|-------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | | | Strongly agree/agree | I don't know | Disagree/strongly disagree | |
| 1. | Nice shape | I | 54.3 | 32.3 | 13.4 | $\chi^2(2) = 4.493$ $p = .106$ |
| | | II | 60.1 | 33.7 | 6.1 | |
| 2. | Friendliness | I | 85.2 | 10.9 | 3.9 | $\chi^2(2) = 1.774$ $p = .412$ |
| | | II | 89.7 | 8.5 | 1.8 | |
| 3. | Good knowledge of the subject | I | 82.9 | 12.4 | 4.7 | $\chi^2(2) = 7.839$ $p = .020$ |
| | | II | 87.3 | 12.7 | 0 | |
| 4. | Calm | I | 70.1 | 22.8 | 7.1 | $\chi^2(2) = 6.110$ $p = .047$ |
| | | II | 81.1 | 16.5 | 2.4 | |
| 5. | Interaction with the group | I | 71.3 | 21.7 | 7.0 | $\chi^2(2) = 6.767$ $p = .034$ |
| | | II | 83.0 | 14.5 | 2.4 | |
| 6. | Sense of humour | I | 73.4 | 16.4 | 10.2 | $\chi^2(2) = 7.289$ $p = .026$ |
| | | II | 74.5 | 22.4 | 3.0 | |
| 7. | Interested in every student | I | 58.1 | 28.7 | 13.2 | $\chi^2(2) = 8.539$ $p = .014$ |
| | | II | 69.1 | 26.7 | 4.2 | |
| 8. | Easy-going | I | 69.0 | 21.7 | 9.3 | $\chi^2(2) = 12.809$ $p = .002$ |
| | | II | 84.3 | 13.9 | 1.8 | |
| 9. | Creative | I | 51.9 | 39.5 | 8.5 | $\chi^2(2) = 7.567$ $p = .023$ |
| | | II | 63.8 | 33.7 | 2.5 | |
| 10. | Applies novelties | I | 54.7 | 32.8 | 12.5 | $\chi^2(2) = 11.029$ $p = .004$ |
| | | II | 69.9 | 26.4 | 3.7 | |
| 11. | Considers students' opinions while distributing the tasks | I | 65.3 | 28.2 | 6.5 | $\chi^2(2) = 2.288$ $p = .319$ |
| | | II | 70.9 | 26.1 | 3.0 | |

male respondents and 89.7% in the second study. Moreover, the male respondents preferred teachers who knew their subject well (responses “strongly agree” and “agree” were chosen by 82.9% of male respondents in the first study and 87.3% in the second study, $\chi^2(2) = 7.839, p = .020$), good sense of humour (respectively 73.4 and 74.5%, $\chi^2(2) = 7.289, p = .026$); teacher’s ability to be easy-going (responses “strongly agree” and “agree” were chosen by 69.0 and 84.3% of the male students respectively, $\chi^2(2) = 12.809, p = .002$), interaction with the group (71.3 and 83.0% of male students, $\chi^2(2) = 6.767, p = .034$).

The analysis of the research data about the most appealing traits of physical education teacher revealed that male students appreciated the teacher’s ability to be calm, interested in each student, to be creative and be able to apply innovations.

DISCUSSION

The most important factor for physical education in the institution of higher education is a physical education teacher since their qualifications and educational excellence depend on how they are able to create a positive learning environment (Miškinis, 2000; Tamošauskas, 2007; Poteliūnienė, 2010). The majority of scientists deal with students’ attitudes towards the university studies, and the importance of the teacher (Pukelis & Pileičikienė, 2005; Savickienė, 2005; Louw, 2008; Balasooriya, Hughes, & Toohey, 2009; El Hassan, 2009; Ellis, Ginns, & Piggott, 2009; Pamuk & Thompson, 2009; Bobrova, Grajauskas, & Norkus, 2010) stressing the fact that good academic results, teacher competences and the importance of the clear objectives are of great importance. The results of the research proved that the most important characteristic of a teacher of physical education is knowledge of their subject and friendliness with the students. According to Tamošauskas (2012), the personality of the student should not be considered as the object of educational performance and the activity must be organized in such a way that the innate powers could be revealed. If the education is organized relying on these principles the psychological pressure and constraint are illuminated from the educational process. Partnership, democratic style of communication and the norms of human relationships are the most significant factors of the educational performance.

Our hypothesis that students attending compulsory physical education classes view physical education teacher worse than those who have the possibility of physical education as an optional subject at the university was confirmed.

Physical education teacher’s ability to interact with a group student, to have a sense of humour and good physical appearance are very important to our respondents. Bobrova, Grajauskas and Alūzas (2012), Neimane and Rupeika (2012) revealed that according to the students the most important qualities are: teacher’s communication skills, interesting content of the classes and original representation of information. Introduction of the evaluating criteria and the individual tasks are also considered as some of the most important advantages. These authors suggest that students notice teacher’s effort to discuss the learning process with them, analyse their academic achievements, learning materials, students also agree with the distribution of individual work, they appreciate teacher’s effort to motivate them. Our survey results confirm this.

Constant communication and close teacher-student interaction encourage people to form certain attitudes towards each other. The nature of teaching process organization projects students’ better and clearer understanding of the teacher as the teacher in the communication process is believed to be in the dominant position and the teacher is in charge of the process direction. Hence, the understanding of the teacher is grounded according to this interaction and the fulfilment of functions as well as the evaluation of the personal traits. However, it is possible to claim that this category is rather subjective, complicated and complex as it is determined by such diverse factors as students’ senses, assumptions, expectations and experiences which are affected by the environmental context, students’ psychology and possible halo effect (Mackelo, 2009; Druteikienė & Mackelo, 2010). The teacher is not only an information provider, but also the manager and supervisor-controller of the student’s knowledge (Morkūnienė & Jucevičienė, 2010). According to Liukinevičienė (2003), the aim of the university is the priority relationship between the student who is an active participant in the knowledge creation process and ever improving teacher (consultant, advisor, intermediary of change). The relationship develops and finally turns into student/teacher/employer relationship.

From the description of teacher's profession, the aims which have creative background and aim to influence students' psychological development as well as students' competences arise. However, they are not standard, not patterned, stereotypical or the same and they totally depend on the social background changes (new technologies, the educational reform, changes in the law system). This is a complex element of professional context disclosure which links cognition (disclosure of phenomenon interaction, ties and significance), education (developing students' competences of performance), nurturing (meant to form individual's emotions, values, behaviour worldview and gospels) and aims (Adamonienė et al., 2001, 2003). Therefore it is possible to form such essential teachers' performance aims as suitable conditions for students to absorb the culture, values, adequate knowledge, the revelation of students' inner potential, students' identity development encouragement as well as adequate personal assessment development) (Смирнов, 2001; Трухачёв, Тарасова, Таранова, & Скрипкин, 2014). Bobrova et al., (2012), Neimane and Rupeika

(2012) revealed that students observed teachers' efforts to discuss with them about learning to analyse their progress in learning the material that supports students to promote self-employment, recognizes the efforts of teachers to motivate students.

We think that for each university physical education teacher it is important to know students' expectations and try to meet them; thus positive communication and cooperation will help achieve expected outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

For students the most appealing traits of physical education teachers are good knowledge of the subject and friendliness. The female students also emphasized the importance of good appearance of the teacher of physical education as well as good interaction with the group, the male students appreciated a good sense of humour and possibility of easy communication with the teacher. In four years' time students' attitudes towards the teacher of physical education improved.

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Received on June 13, 2014

Accepted on September 09, 2014

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