Study Regarding the High Schoolers' Perception of the Physical Education Teacher's Personality

Tatiana DOBRESCU¹

¹Professor Dr. Sc., "Vasile Alecsandri"
University of Bacău, Romania,
lindadobrescu@gmail.com

Abstract: To find out what are the personality traits of the physical education teacher, evaluated through the perception of teenage pupils, constitutes the starting point of a sociological intervention conducted in high school. The paper stems from the author's loyalty toward the profession of physical education teacher, trying to support the identification of certain personality traits that are different through its instructional content and organizational framework from other teaching professions. The paper starts from the belief that the instructional process that is specific to this field, influenced by the people contributing to the formation of specific attitudes and character traits, can lead to valuable influences in modeling the personality of physical education teachers. The research consisted in applying a 12-item questionnaire with closed and open answers, organized at the "Eremia Grigorescu" Technological High School of Măreșești, county of Vrancea, on two eleventh grade groups of pupils, which totaled a number of 50 subjects. The perceptions of the subjects regarding the various topics were evaluated by grouping the items into 5 categories, according to their importance given by each subject. The data has permitted the assessment of the subjects' opinions on categories of assertions, measured on a scale of 1 to 5 for each question. The items proposed in the questionnaire envisaged the character, behavioral, attitudinal traits as components of the personality of physical education teachers manifested during the high school educational process. The results of this sociological intervention show that in the investigated subjects' opinion, the physical education teacher's personality is perceived as a model and an example for life.

Keywords: *sociological study; pupils' perception; personality; physical education teacher; high school education;*

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1. Introduction

The current educational system gives physical education new significance and dimension in slight opposition to the traditional teaching practices. The teaching activity, composed of a system of relation actions between teacher and pupil, can influence the modeling of personality as required by the demands of society (Iucu, 2000).

The teaching process is led now by a modern, always dynamic, inventive physical education teacher-manager, who is authoritative according to the situation (Joița, 2000). The educational style represents a series of traits that circumscribe the teachers' behavior in relation to their pupils and it emphasizes that what is specific to each teacher in accomplishing their tasks (Sălăvăstru, 2006). The leading styles are “a human construct, based on cyclic and hierarchical relationships, the reciprocal influence being a source of cohesion, self-regulation and direction of the pupils' behavior” (Zlate, 2004; Petrescu, & Sirinian, 2002).

This paper tries to identify the personality of the physical education teacher that is different through its instructive content and organizational framework from other specializations. This topic was chosen based on the author's belief that one can identify in the instructional process that is specific to high school physical education and sport, the components of the PE teacher's personality, based on the pupils' perception, this being able to offer new data regarding the teacher-pupil relationship.

2. Materials and Methods

The purpose of this research was to identify certain important aspects regarding how the physical education teacher's personality is perceived by high-school students in the context of a modern democracy.

The research objectives were to identify the role and importance of the teacher's personality components in the high school physical education activity.

Thus, one can record important data on how these essential personality elements work within the inter-relational system (Vîjială, 2010).

The original idea for this study was that the high schooler, as a participant in the instructive-educational process, can be an active factor in the identification of the components of the physical education teacher's personality.

In this sense, a hypothesis was formulated: presumably, the identification of the most important components of the physical education teacher's personality through the perception of pupils can direct an

applicative intervention regarding the improvement of the relational system, in the sense of making the high school educational process more effective.

In order to verify this hypothesis, a study was organized at the "Eremia Grigorescu" Technological High School of Mărășești, Vrancea county, in 2 11th grade groups, constituting a target group of 50 pupils. The research conditions were optimal, and the participation in the sociological study was based on volunteer work, respecting the confidentiality clauses.

The research methods used were: the inquiry, the observation, the study of the literature, the statistical-mathematical method, and the graphical representation method. The questionnaire comprised 12 items with closed and open answers. The perceptions of the subjects regarding the various topics were evaluated by grouping the items into 5 categories, according to their importance given by each subject.

The data has permitted the assessment of the subjects' opinions on categories of assertions, measured on a scale of 1 to 5 for each question. The items proposed in the questionnaire envisaged the character, behavioral, attitudinal traits as components of the personality of physical education teachers manifested during the high school educational process.

3. Results and Discussions

According to the answers to the first questions, 94% of the subjects have confirmed the personality of the physical education teacher that was highlighted during the high school educational process. The next item asked the subjects to rank their teachers based on who they considered to be models in regard to their personality. The results show that the pupils' perception was favorable for the high school PE teachers, who are fresher in their memory (54%), while the middle school teachers have remained among their favorites (24%). Teachers of other specializations constituted models for 22% of the subjects.

Figure 1. Question 2 answers

This allows the assessment of the subjects' loyalty for the physical education specialists, and the author would like to believe that this ranking is due to the teachers' competence and professionalism, and not to other factors (Fig. 1).

To the question asking about an authoritarian behavior of the teacher during the physical education lesson, 44% of the subjects answered that they did not see such a behavior, and 30% said they rarely see it. A smaller percentage of the subjects (26%) consider the use of commands and task giving during the lessons to be close to an authoritarian style. The subjects appreciate teachers with a style that is flexible and efficient in their teaching activity.

In the other items of the questionnaire, one can notice the diminishing of the authoritarian-perceived impact generated by an abusive use of commands and excessive control of the children's performances (Mitra, 1980: 22). The answers show "the pupils' independence in action, their creativity, self-education, and self-leading" (Firea, 1979: 158). The subjects identified signs from the teacher to ask the pupils to lead and be responsible mainly in the first part of the lesson (54%), while the rest (46%) saw these signs in the thematic part, mainly during the workshops for consolidating the motor skills or influencing the skills.

The questionnaire asked the subjects to assess how much the teacher is manifesting a creative behavior during the process of teaching the motor skills. Kounin (cited in Mitrofan, 1992:20) states that the physical education teacher manifests a creative behavior, a permanent preoccupation to use various means, motivating the pupils and getting them interested in the lesson. This was confirmed by 54% of the subjects, who identified these components of the teachers' personality that are compatible with a democratic education.

In regard to the identification of the dominant style, most subjects (52%) observed that the teacher makes a decision after consulting the pupils, while 30% said that the teacher has an autocratic style, and 18% said the teacher leaves the decision to the group. This proves that efforts are made by the teachers to escape the limitations of a rigid and outdated educational style (Fig. 2).

Figure 2. Question 6 answers

Regarding the functions identified in the literature (Ekman, 2015) of nonverbal communication in the lesson, 52% of the subjects have emphasized its role in supporting the verbal communication (repetition). 16% of the subjects have chosen the answer stating that nonverbal communication plays a role in the good decoding of verbal messages (complementarity); 24% have said that it can completely replace words (substitution), while 8% have chosen the answer regarding the accentuation and regulating the verbal communication through the nonverbal one (Fig. 3).

Figure 3. Question 8 answers

The evaluations were based on the subjects' statements, on a scale of one to five, according to the importance given to the 5 means that ensure a good coach-athlete communication.

The literature regarding nonverbal communication as a component of the personality offers the following alternatives: posture, movement, gestures, facial expression, and aspect (Luca, 2006; Leathers, 2007; Knapp, 2010).

Based on the statistical evaluations, the number one place is body movement, scoring an average of 4,80 points, number two being posture, scoring an average of 4,60 points. The maximum value for both was 5,00 points, and the minimum value, 4,20 and 2,60 points, respectively.

In the number three spot is gesture, scoring an average of 4,40 points, a maximum value of 4,60 points and a minimum value of 3,40 points. Less recognized in the communication relationship between teacher and pupil are the influences of aspect and facial expression (3,60 points) (Table 1).

Table 1. Question 11 centralized results

Statistical markers	Categories of means				
	Movement	Posture	Gesture	Look	Facial expressio n
Arithmetical mean	4,80	4,60	4,40	3,80	3,60
Maximum value	5,00	5,00	4,60	4,40	4,00
Minimum value	4,20	2,60	3,40	3,00	2,40

Starting from the directions for the nonverbal communication, its effectiveness can be grouped in: assessment and self-assessment, correction and prevention, direction feedback, improving the processes of knowledge and self-knowledge, and relating.

Based on the same evaluation procedure, the assessment and self-assessment process answers are the majority of the subjects' choices, with a maximum value of 5,00 points, a minimum value of 4,30 points, and an average value of 4,80 points. The subjects are aware of these means' effect on raising the ability to evaluate the correct performances.

The second place in the subjects' choices is the knowledge and self-knowledge process, with a maximum of 4,80 points, a minimum of 3,80 points, and an average of 4,60 points. The pupils seem to be aware of the role played by body language in increasing the ability to assimilate the motor content. The third place is occupied by the teacher and pupil relationship, with a maximum of 4,20 points, a minimum of 3,20 points, and an average score of 3,50 points. The fourth place is taken by the directing feedback, with a minimum of 2,50 points and a maximum of 3,80 points, and an average of 3.30 points. The last place regarding the influence of nonverbal behavior, as perceived by the subjects, is the correction and prevention group of answers, in the sense of forming the correct automatisms, with an average value of 2,80 points, the emitter and receiver synchronization tendencies. The data emphasizes the recognition of the role of nonverbal

communication, alongside the para-verbal and verbal communications that are encountered in the teaching process (Table 2).

Table 2. Question 12 centralized results

Statistical markers	Capitalization				
	Assessment and self-assessment	Knowledge and self-knowledge	Relating	Direction feedback	Correction and prevention
Arithmetical mean	4,80	4,60	3,50	3,30	2,80
Maximum value	5,00	4,80	4,20	3,80	3,00
Minimum value	4,30	3,80	3,20	2,50	2,00

4. Discussions

The results of this sociological intervention show that the investigated subjects believe the personality of the physical education educator to be perceived as a model and an example for life. At the end of this sociological study, it can be said that the physical education teacher's personality can ensure the basis for an improvement in the high school education system. Also, this kind of studies must be continued on other segments of the population, in order to identify, that the components of the physical education teacher's personality.

The author declares that the subjects have participated voluntarily in the research, and have understood all the given information. Every participant has understood that they can withdraw from the research at any time, without any legal or other type of adverse outcome. Research has observed the ethical standards of research. The author states that the legal representatives of the research participants gave their informed consent for the participation of their children.

5. Conclusions

The answers reveal elements that could lessen the authoritarian-perceived impact generated by an abusive use of commands and excessive control of the children's performances.

The educator has a mostly democratic, flexible teaching style, using a combination of command leadership (necessary in certain moments) with self-leadership.

The answers given by the subjects show the coexistence of certain elements that are common for an outdated, conformist, routine and inflexible

behavior with elements of a creative behavior. Starting from the idea that modern education demands the teachers to be inventive and competent, to have initiative and be responsible, it can be concluded that they are morally and professionally obligated to leave behind an obsolete tradition.

Although body language was perceived by most subjects as useful for a good communication between teacher and pupil, the former must master it and use in an opportune and harmonious manner all communication techniques for an effective transmission of the motor skills.

Body movements are dominant in the physical education lesson, representing a psychosomatic connection, expressing emotions and feelings (Dobrescu, 2006).

The teaching process' management has to be linked to a dynamic, modern, inventive physical education educator, with true authority and a new attitude toward children.

With this kind of new attitude, the educators can cultivate a democratic and flexible teaching style, using a combination of command leadership (necessary in certain moments) with self-leadership.

In the end, the initial hypothesis was validated, in the sense that the components of the physical education teacher's personality can ensure the basis for an improvement in the high school education system.

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