

DISCRIMINATION IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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Abstract

A broad legal framework was established many years ago to fight discrimination and penalize it when it occurs. A broad range of discrimination is prohibited by the 1945 United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the European Convention of Human Rights of 1950, and the International Convention for the elimination of all the forms of discrimination of 1965. These major principles were reaffirmed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union of 7 December 2000 and the Lisbon Treaty (signed 13 December 2007) amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community. Many European directives and national legislations on the subject should be emphasized, particularly regarding affirmative action (or positive discrimination). Within this, we have the right to get an education free of illegal discrimination. Education discrimination can happen both in public and private schools; colleges and universities; and in trade, technical, professional or business schools. In this paper we will discuss the opinions of third year students of the Faculty of Kinesiology (N=100) regarding discrimination appearances in teaching physical education. Emphasis is placed on perceiving physical differences and abilities between genders. We address the ways in which unequal power relations between genders have pervaded the structure, organization, and language of physical education. The right to education encompasses the obligation to rule out discrimination in education and set minimum standards of quality in it.

Key words: discrimination, the right to education, attitudes, physical education, teacher education, quality

Introduction

Discrimination is any negative behaviour or verbal act, whether it is individual-collective or institutionalized, directed against an individual regarding their origin, gender, family circumstances, their physical appearance, name, health condition, handicap, genetic features, moral, sexual orientation, age, political views, union memberships, their real or imaginary «belonging» or «not belonging» to a certain group, their nationality, race or certain religion. Discrimination is based on various inherent psychological functions of people. Therefore, social categorization is an unconscious, universal phenomena according to which all new information are perceived, memorized and processed through the filter of previously acquired knowledge in accordance with the principle of assimilation between objects which represent common features. We are prone to connect the objects which are similar, which have the same function or seem close to one another in a certain context and place them in certain «boxes» (categories). When we encounter a new object we automatically activate the category which it reminds us most of. So, we are able to easily recognize the object and adopt the behaviour which we consider to be the most appropriate. The same goes for people who are, from, from their point of view, classified into "boxes", following the principle of similarity and generalization. This classification is also based on the need for balance, for protection, for the encounter with the lack of tolerance and duality, it furthermore protects us from worries which enables us to predict the future in order to control it. Everything that is unknown or

inexplicable presents a source of stress. Therefore, we build categories as the strategies of control with the purpose of stabilization. These categorizations challenge mental structures, such as stereotypes, which are the collections of assumptions adopted by accepting group features or attributes. Such stereotypes are inevitable due to the fact that our capabilities of processing information are not infinite and we do not possess the abilities which enable us to entirely see and memorize the world around us. Prejudices are also the result of the discrimination process. As the name indicates, a prejudice is an attitude consisting of a previously adopted judgement. It includes the value dimension which can be described as a predisposition to act in a certain way toward a member of a certain group. Homophobic and heterosexist assumptions in the conceptualization and methodology which are used in sports researches serve for the review of validity of a "common sense" heterosexism together with homophobia in locker rooms and on the field (Lensky, 1991). For decades, the gender roles orientation concept was the centre of researches on women in physical activity, the mask of the process by which the hegemonic femininity and masculinity has been socially constructed and conducted. A number of research form the hypothesis that women in team sports or untraditional sports, or sports administration and management are more masculine than women in individual or aesthetic sports or women in traditional jobs. Feminist critics of the researches of gender roles in sports date back to 1973 (Griffin, 1989) and are in most part neglected. However, Hall (1981), has been stating

for a number of years, that there is a clear need for sports researchers to take these criticisms in consideration and decrease their unsuccessful search for the coefficients of masculinity/femininity in sportswomen and try to transfer the same to their students due to real dangers and misconceptions. Following the implementation of gender equality politics in many Western countries, researches have noted the problems related to the teaching of certain subjects, including Physical Education (PE). Recent researches emphasise constant discussion on the contribution of teaching in the PE classes by incorporating equal possibilities for girls related to physical activity (Oshorne, Bauer and Sutlif, 2002; Treanor, Graber, Housner and Wiegand, 1998) and the focus on PE as the place of reproduction of gender stereotypes in society. It has been suggested by a number of authors that the organization of co-ed PE classes does not by itself ensure the change in gender equality (Hargreaves, 1994; Talbot, 1996). It is important to introduce changes in curriculums and education policies. For instance, certain scholars say that co-ed PE classes ensure equal possibilities for participation and enable social interaction of girls and boys in schools (Colgate, 1999; Davis, 1999; Griffin, 1984; Knoppers, 1988). Equal possibilities in PE classes open a number of questions such as: the sense of equality, the influence of individual and group differences to the equality of opportunities and other relevant questions which refer to the relations of power and diversity in a society (Piotrowski, 2000, 26). It could be said that the consequences of gender interaction between teachers and students and stereotypical gender attitudes can be seen in the mere participation in PE classes. Some scholars believe that the quality of interaction in class influences the growth and the education of all students and that teachers have the responsibility in modelling attitudes towards genders in their classrooms (Jones, 1989; and Sadker and Sadker, 1994).

Contrary to this, some studies show teachers tend to interact with boys more often than with girls, so boys are generally more included in the interaction with teachers (Bailey, 1993, Duffy, Warren and Walsh, 2001; Hopf and Hatzichristou, 1999; Jackson and Salisbury, 1996). Of all educational subjects in contemporary schools, PE offers optimum opportunities for a more detailed attention towards the reproduction of gender inequality between boys and girls. Scraton (1986) describes PE classes as an open reinforcement of gender differences regarding selected activities and also, through attitudes and reactions of those included in the classes. Qualitative approach is used frequently in the research of lessons in PE which are drawn to the attention as a social process under the influence of social beliefs, attitudes and opinions such as gender stereotypical beliefs (Kirk, 1992; Sparkes, 1992; Wright, 1995). Attitudes and behaviour of teachers in PE classes often reproduce and strengthen gender stereotypes together with gender stereotypes for certain physical activities. Gender messages consist of open or subtle gender

partial interaction teacher/student by which the female students are offered class expectations. The possibility of feedback and participation are different from the ones offered to the boys. It is therefore important to examine the equality of genders in PE classes with the focus on teachers' and students' gender stereotypical beliefs and their relation with the interaction in the classroom.

Method

Data for this pilot study was collected in 2014 during regular lessons at the Faculty of Kinesiology. Before completing the questionnaire, the participants were introduced with the aim of the research. The participation in the research was on voluntary basis and anonymous and the participants were informed that they were free to stop participating in the research at any moment. The research was carried out on the sample of 100 third-year students at the Faculty of Kinesiology of Zagreb University, consisting of 37 women and 63 men of the average age of 21. The questionnaire for the evaluation of the minimum quality of the educational process and general teacher's competences was made with the aim to evaluate the recognition of the educational quality process by the indicator of acceptability as the aspect of the right to education.

The final version of the questionnaire consisted of 122 items (9 qualification items and 114 items about the application of individual quality indicators). The task of the participants was to assess, using the Likert scale of 5 levels (1 - strongly agree, 2 - mostly agree, 3 - not sure, 4 - mostly disagree, 5 - strongly disagree), the level of importance and presence of certain acceptability indicators of the right to education in PE classes. For the needs of this article, the analysis of instrument measuring features which refer to the part of the questionnaire of 18 items related to the group of questions on gender equality as the dimension of assessment of discrimination in PE classes was shown. The constructive validity of the questionnaire was verified by the component model of factor analysis using Cattell's scree test and Guttman-Kaiser criterion for the reduction of main components and the rotation with Varimax normalization. Thereby, the following was calculated: the variances of significant main components, the percentage of the total variance of items explained by the significant main components and each of the extracted factors and the matrix of the factorial set. The reliability of the questionnaire's internal consistency type has been expressed in Cronbach's alpha. The contribution of each individual item to the questionnaire's reliability was expressed in Cronbach's alpha in case the item was excluded from the analysis. The sensitivity of items and the total result of the questionnaire was analysed by descriptive statistical parameters: arithmetic mean and standard deviation, and measures of the result distribution form: the asymmetry coefficient and the distribution skewness coefficient.

Results and discussion

The right to education and the discrimination are most often studied on a macro level with the aim of monitoring the states or individual segments of this large area. The assessment questionnaire of the minimum quality of the educational process and general teacher's competences (UPminKOOP) was created with the aim to assess the recognition of quality in the educational process by acceptability indicators as the aspect of the right to education. Besides acceptability, the right to education is manifested in another three dimensions: availability, accessibility and adaptability (Tomaševski, 2004). Few systems appreciate all four dimensions of the right to education on all levels of education. This questionnaire has been defined by the indicators of one of the dimensions - acceptability with the representation of the main principles which the right to education refers to and those are equality and non-discrimination. Recently, the list of the indicators of the right to education has been presented. It was suggested by Audrey Chapman (2007) and a group of scholars at the UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning.

The indicators were developed comparatively on both national and international levels, and moreover, developmental aims of countries were developed. The indicators focus, among other things, on discrimination by demanding data used in the desegregation of vulnerable groups. The acceptability is researched by means of the following indicators: teachers' competences, tolerance, qualifications, gender equality, discipline, religion and language.

The component model of factorial analysis, carried out on 15 items of the UPminKOOP questionnaire confirmed 4 significant main components according to Guttman-Kaiser criterion, as well as Cattell's *scree--test* (Chart 1). 64% of the total variance of questionnaire items were explained by significant main components, of which 29% ($\lambda=4.41$) by the first main component, 17% ($\lambda=2.53$) by the second, 10% ($\lambda=1.53$) by the third and 8% ($\lambda=1.53$) by the fourth. The rotation of the significant main components defined the factorial structure of the questionnaire with relating items for each factor (Table 1).

Parallel projections of items which dominantly saturate certain factors were in the range from 0.63 to 0.80 for the first factor, from 0.63 to 0.81 for the second factor, from 0.57 to 0.77 for the third factor and from 0.45 to 0.86 for the fourth factor (Table 1).

The first factor dominantly saturated the items: "I think I can notice something is happening with the students in the gym", "I think the PE teacher should pay special attention to the students victims of bullying and to the bullies", "I think violence in school happens in all its types" and "I think schools should employ the same number of female and male PE teachers".

The second factor dominantly saturated the items: "I think male teachers should teach boys and female teachers should teach girls", "I think boys are superior in PE classes regarding intellectual abilities" and "I think the PE teacher must make students aware of stereotypes".

The third factor dominantly saturated the items: "I think the PE teacher possesses all necessary knowledge and skills for the prevention of violence", "I think the PE teacher organizes various events on the school playground in order to raise consciousness about the problem", "I think the PE teacher enjoys and offers the support to colleagues in order to prevent violence in school" and "I think the PE teacher uses all available resources allowed in schools in order to react to violence.

The fourth factor dominantly saturated the items: "I think boys are superior in PE classes regarding motoric abilities", "I think girls do not have same abilities as boys" and "I think the PE teacher gives the same opportunities to girls and boys in PE classes".

The items have been grouped in four sub-factors: spotting violence and preventive actions, the relationship towards the diversity of genders and abilities, teachers' competences towards gender equality and the promotion of equality among sexes and genders in PE classes.

The results of the analysis showed that the participants of the research do not see gender equality as a unique set of a discrimination basis, rather, there is a tendency towards a quite independent assessment of four groups of gender discrimination manifestations.

The reliability of total results of the questionnaire has been estimated by the method of internal consistency. Cronbach's coefficient of reliability of the questionnaire's total result defined on the analysed sample of participants was 0.78, standardized coefficient was 0.80 and average intercorrelation of items was 0.22.

The results of the analysis of questionnaire's sensitivity have been shown in Table 2.

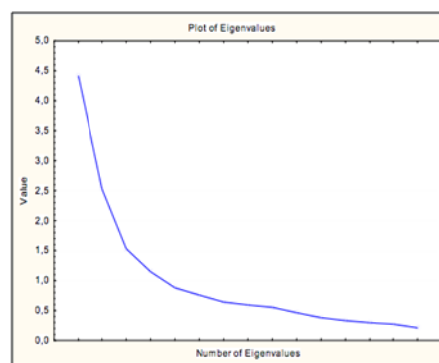


Figure 1. Variances of main components defined by the factorial item analysis (Scree plot)

Table 1. Questionnaire factorial structure – factorial set matrix

Variable	Factor Loadings (Varimax raw) (Spreadsheet2) Extraction: Principal components (Marked loadings are >,700000)			
	Factor (1)	Factor (2)	Factor (3)	Factor (4)
I think the PE teacher takes all measures for the promotion of gender equality in the PE class	0.37	-0.02	0.57	0.17
I think the PE teacher gives the same opportunities to girls and to boys in the PE class	0.36	-0.37	0.41	0.45
I think girls do not have the same abilities as boys	0.06	0.27	-0.05	0.84
I think male teachers should teach boys and Female teachers should teach girls	-0.11	0.81	0.09	0.13
I think boys are superior in PE classes regarding motoric abilities	0.03	0.13	0.12	0.86
I think boys are superior in PE classes regarding intellectual abilities	-0.26	0.77	0.08	0.29
I think that PE teacher must make students aware of stereotypes	0.41	0.63	-0.17	0.18
I think schools should employ the same number of female and male PE teachers	0.70	-0.08	0.16	0.00
I think violence in school happens in all its forms	0.64	-0.00	0.27	-0.02
I think I can notice something is happening with the students in the gym.	0.74	-0.06	0.31	0.13
I think the PE teacher should pay special attention to the students victims of bullying and the bullies.	0.81	-0.13	0.10	0.05
I think the PE teacher possesses all necessary knowledge and skills for the prevention of violence.	0.06	0.02	0.77	0.17
I think the PE teacher is using all available resources allowed in schools in order to react to violence.	0.14	0.20	0.69	0.02
I think the PE teacher enjoys and gives the support to colleagues in order to prevent violence in school.	0.37	0.07	0.75	-0.02
I think the PE teacher organizes various events on the school playground in order to raise consciousness about the problem.	0.09	-0.11	0.76	-0.03
Expl.Var	2.78	1.97	2.99	1.88
Prp.Totl	0.19	0.13	0.20	0.13

Table 2. Descriptive statistical parameters and asymmetry measures and the skewness of the questionnaire results distribution

	Mean	Std.Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	2,21	1,06	0,51	-0,51
2	2,08	1,13	1,15	0,71
3	2,72	1,30	0,20	-1,18
4	3,63	1,21	-0,54	-0,78
5	2,82	1,24	0,32	-0,87
6	3,73	1,20	-0,65	-0,55
7	2,67	1,25	0,30	-0,73
8	1,75	1,03	1,77	3,07
9	2,19	0,92	0,73	0,59
10	2,00	0,79	0,87	1,56
11	1,95	0,83	0,63	-0,09
12	2,30	0,99	0,77	0,02
13	2,35	1,04	0,52	-0,25
14	2,18	1,02	0,74	0,21
15	2,39	1,04	0,30	-0,64

The lowest arithmetic mean was confirmed for item 8 (1.75) "I think schools should employ the same number of female and male PE teachers", with which the students agree. The students, to the highest degree, do not agree with item 6 (3.73) "I think boys are superior in PE classes regarding intellectual abilities" and 4 (3.63) "I think male teachers should teach boys and female teachers should teach girls". Standard deviations of items were between 0.79 and 1.30, while the highest variability in answers was defined for item "I think girls do not have the same abilities as boys", and the lowest for item "I think I can notice that something is happening with the students in the gym".

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Conclusion

This pilot study was conducted on a heterogeneous sample of students at the Faculty of Kinesiology in Zagreb. Considering the features of the sample, that is, that the students had not been teaching PE in school, the results of this pilot research cannot be generalized with full certainty. Furthermore, the reliability of the sole instrument needs to be increased.

Considering all the above, it would be useful in future researches to define questionnaire measuring features on PE teachers employed in schools. By applying this questionnaire on a different sample with taking into consideration necessary improvements of measuring features, a better understanding of this complex phenomenon would be enabled, as well as the identification of indicators related with the perception of gender discrimination within the right education in educational system.

The principle of equal opportunities in education is becoming a higher priority of states and educational institutions on a global level. The term discrimination is defined as "acting in support of your own or contrary the other group based on unequal criteria", which can be expressed based on social origin, sex, race, religion, nationality, political and other beliefs, as well as other characteristics (Spajić-Vrkaš, Kukoč, Bašić, 2001). Even this quote is not sufficient for the understanding of the way in which social inequality would be measured in practice. The study of the indicators of the right to education is one of the possible potential directions of future projections.

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DISKRIMINACIJA U NASTAVI TJELESNE I ZDRAVSTVENE KULTURE

Sažetak

Prije mnogo godina uspostavljen je širok zakonski okvir borbe protiv diskriminacije zajedno sa posljedicama kada se diskriminacija dogodi. Širok raspon diskriminacije zabranjen je Poveljom Ujedinjenih Naroda iz 1945; Općom deklaracijom o ljudskim pravima iz 1948; Europskom konvencijom o ljudskim pravima iz 1950 te Međunarodnom konvencijom o ukidanju svih oblika diskriminacije iz 1965. Glavni principi navedeni u dokumentima ponovo su utvrđeni u Povelji o temeljnim pravima Europske unije od 7. - og prosinca 2000 i Lisabonskim sporazumom iz 2007. s izmjenama i dopunama Ugovora o Europskoj uniji i Ugovoru o osnivanju Europske zajednice. Mnoge europske smjernice i nacionalno zakonodavstvo naglašavaju ovu temu, osobito u pogledu afirmativne akcije (ili pozitivne diskriminacije). Unutar toga egzistira pravo na obrazovanje oslobođeno od nezakonite diskriminacije. No diskriminacija u obrazovanje se može dogoditi u javnim i privatnim školama; na fakultetima i učilištima; na ekonomskim, tehničkim, stručnim i poslovnim školama. U ovom radu razlaže se mišljenje studenata treće godine Kineziološkog fakulteta (N=100) o pojavnosti diskriminacije u nastavi tjelesne i zdravstvene kulture. Naglasak je postavljen na doživljavanje fizičke razlike i sposobnosti između spolova. Ovdje se naglašava načine na koje se nejednaki odnosi moći među spolovima prožimaju kroz strukturu, organizaciju i jezik tjelesne i zdravstvene kulture. Pravo na obrazovanje obuhvaća obvezu isključivanja diskriminacije u obrazovanju uz postavljanje minimalnih standarda kvalitete u njemu.

Ključne riječi: diskriminacija, pravo na obrazovanje, stavovi, tjelesna i zdravstvena kultura, obrazovanje nastavnika, kvaliteta obrazovanja.

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