

Polyfunctionality of physical education as pedagogical processes in primary school (based on expert assessment)

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Abstract

The polyfunctionality of physical education matters as purposeful and pedagogically meaningful motor activity and the place of these functions in the educational process are considered in the report.

An attempt was made for their ranking in order of importance, based on a survey data of the expert opinion of lecturers from South-West University "Neofit Rilski" and primary teachers of "Physical Education and Sports". The methods analysis of literature sources, survey and expert assessment were used during the research.

The research results show the specific vision of the respondents' different groups regarding the role and purpose of physical education and sports in the primary education system. Physical education for sports and general pedagogues is mainly a pedagogical process focused on the formation of adolescents' sports culture and increasing their physical ability. However, primary school teachers belittle and even underestimate these sport-pedagogical effects of physical education, as for them this subject has mainly recreational functions in the educational system. The implementation of the polyfunctionality of physical education as a pedagogical process depends on some factors, one of which is the professional training and qualification of the teachers who realize the teaching process of this subject in school. Their attitude and academics preparation has an direct impact on the quality of the achieved educational results.

Keywords: physical education, functions, primary school, upbringing, expert assessment.

Introduction

Organized and purposeful physical activity is an indispensable factor for the proper psychophysical development of adolescents from an early age (Kostov, 2017; Dokova & Kinov 2016).

The leading pedagogical theories for their part generally define childhood as a particularly important and sensitive period in the process of which significant biological, mental, and social changes take place within the child, thus influencing the specifics and dynamics of the developing child's personality (Dzhorova, 2019). Thus, the main goal of physical education in preschool is the comprehensive development of motor skills that is a condition for achieving physical improvement and harmonious development of the child's personality. (Kadiyski et al., 1992).

As a part of the general education of the individual, physical education plays the role of forming the knowledge and skills for purposeful physical activity in children and building the need for a healthy lifestyle from early childhood to old age (Kinov, 2010). To accomplish, this objective Tomova (2013) points out that the quality and effectiveness of the physical education system created is of great importance. As a school subject saturated mainly with intense physical activity,

physical education is traditionally associated with solving the pedagogical, educational, and rehabilitation tasks. However, according to some authors (Kostov, 2006), reducing the meaning of the subject "Physical Education and Sport" in school only to this trinity is not enough to capture the diversity of possibilities and functions of this activity to influence the development of the individual. Moreover, in the contemporary social context, physical education and sport must fulfill a more extensive range of socially relevant functions (Dimitrova, 2002).

To support the above, Kovachka's (2017) opinion can be considered that the educational environment should and can perform more than just training functions.

Derived from the complex-integrative nature of physical education in primary school, Kostov (2006) identifies and conditionally distinguishes the following functions (Fig.1):

- **Educational** - related to the enrichment of the motor culture of students through the acquisition of special theoretical knowledge and the formation of motor skills and habits.
- **Motor-developmental** - related to increasing the physical capacity of students.
- **Health-prophylactic** - related to the improvement of the health condition of the students and prevention regarding the influence of negative factors.
- **Upbringing and communicative** - related to the casual teaching of children in a number of moral virtues and the development of abilities for group interaction and communication.
- **Entertaining and relaxing** - related to the fact that the motor activity realized in the classes of "Physical Education and Sports" plays the role of anti-stressor and brings the psycho-emotional relief that students need nowadays.

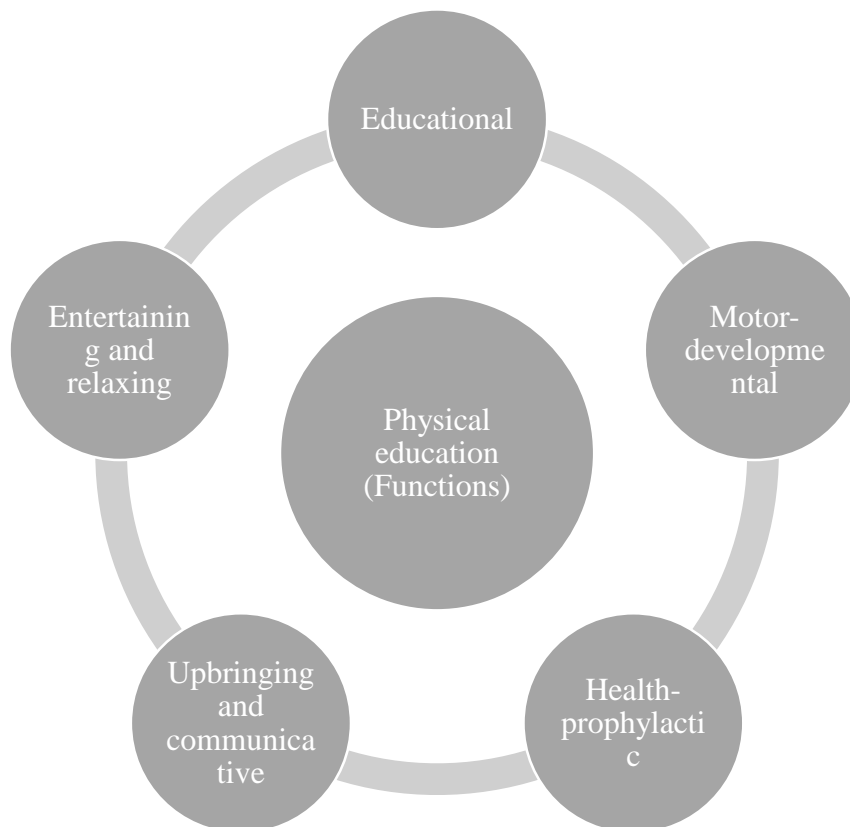


Fig.1. Functions of physical education

Within the context of the aforesaid, and in support of the multidirectional impacts of physical education and sport on the child's personality, it can be indicated that with the renewed curricula and the state educational standard for general education, the subject "Physical Education and Sports" is equal to all other subjects in school, in addition to the undeniably proven positive impact on the health of adolescents, emphasis is also placed on the potential of this subject to enhance students' cognitive abilities and to form harmoniously developed personalities.

The functions performed by physical education in primary school, bring to the fore the importance and their place in the whole educational process. The importance of this problem is supported by the opinion of some authors (Rusev, Ivanov, 2007) stating that not all tasks of physical education can be solved in the classroom work on the subject, as indicated in most scientific and methodological developments in the field of the theory of physical education.

Based on the problem's researched literature, an opinion was formed - for most specialists the healing tasks of physical education should be in the first place in the subject's lessons. According to others, the classes' high density is the basis for achieving effective results. Many believe that the emphasis should be on educational functions as a condition for the formation of the physical culture of students.

It is clear from the presented that there is still a lack of consensus among the pedagogical community about the role and place of the individual functions of physical education and their importance for the harmonious development of the child's personality. This fact provokes the desire to study the expert opinion of the socio-pedagogical factors that are directly related to the problem.

Material & methods

The purpose of the study is to determine the place of the individual functions of physical education in the learning process, according to the expert assessment of specialists who are training teachers and primary teachers of this subject.

The subject of this research is the expert opinion of pedagogue specialists and primary teachers regarding the importance of the functions of physical education and their role for the harmonious development of students.

The object of research are the functions of physical education in primary school.

During the research, we used the methods: analysis of literature sources, survey, and expert assessment.

For this purpose, we compiled a questionnaire, including the five above-mentioned functions of physical education, which should be arranged in order of importance, according to the expert opinion of the respondents, using a rating scale from 1 (most important) to 5.

The study involved 45 university professors, of which 25 sports and 20 general pedagogues from South-West University "Neofit Rilski", and 86 primary teachers from Sofia and Blagoevgrad regions, leading the subject "Physical Education and Sports". The data from the survey are presented in tabular form. In column (№) is indicated the place obtained for the individual function, as arithmetic means of its ranking by each respondent, and in column (K) - the numerical expression (coefficient) of the respective place.

Results and Discussion

Physical education functions	Sport pedagogues		Primary teachers		General pedagogues	
	№	K	№	K	№	K
Educational functions	1	1,66	5	4,16	3	3,27
Entertaining and relaxing	5	3,94	3	3,36	5	3,90
Motor-developmental	2	2,33	1	1,56	1	2,09
Health-prophylactic	3	3,16	2	2,35	2	2,36
Upbringing and communicative	4	3,66	4	3,78	4	3,36

Table 1. Results of the research

According to the different groups of respondents, the information in the table indicates that physical education has a different role and purpose in the primary education system. Based on their judgment, each group puts a different meaning into the concept of "physical education" and its meaning as a subject. For this reason, it would be logical to initially analyze the expert assessment of sports educators, based on which to interpret the opinion of other groups of persons.

The results of the research (Table 1) show that sports educators put the educational functions of physical education first. Through these functions is formed the physical culture of students, as an important component of their general culture. This is the global goal of education in the subject "Physical Education and Sports". In this regard, with the introduction of State Educational Standards (Ordinance № 5 of the Ministry of Education and Science from 2015) and the new curricula on the subject, the role of educational orientation in the educational process in physical education is significantly increased, as a condition for achieving the above. purpose).

Primary school teachers, unlike sports educators, see physical education as an entertaining activity rather than an educational process. This is seen from the last net place with a coefficient of the educational functions - 4.16, and the fact that they are far behind the entertainment-relaxing ones placed in third place with a coefficient of 3.36. Such assessment suggests that primary teachers do not give the necessary importance and due seriousness to this important subject for the growing children.

For general educators, however, the educational functions of physical education are in third-place of importance, which might be due to the meaning they attach to the functions` content. General pedagogues can connect the educational functions of physical education only with the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, as in the teaching of other subjects, and the mastery of motor skills and habits to include in the content of motor-developmental functions. Also, given that it is a subject with a strong practical nature, the rear position on which they place the educational functions of physical education is fully understandable. On the other hand, a third-place of these functions suggests that general educators, unlike primary teachers, see the possibilities of this subject for development along with the motor and cognitive abilities of

children.

As a pedagogical process, without a doubt, physical education is aimed at the physical improvement of students included in the educational system. This determines one of its main tasks related to the development of motor skills of students. At the same time, the realization of the motor-developing functions of physical education is carried out in parallel with the educational ones in the course of the educational process. The very acquisition and improvement of motor skills and habits require the presence and development to a certain extent of the necessary motor qualities, and conversely, every motor quality is manifested in the form of some motor action. Physical education specificity on the one hand emphasizes the leading positions where sports educators place educational and motor-developmental functions, and on the other hand, contradicts the understanding of primary teachers about the educational nature of physical education as a subject.

Solving educational tasks and achieving a constructive effect in terms of the physical and motor development of students, physical education is aimed at improving their health. Its health-preventive functions are placed third by sports educators, and second by primary teachers and general educators. This suggests that, regardless of their different views on the nature of physical education, they see the possibilities of this subject for a positive impact on children's health. In the conditions of scientific and technical progress, which has penetrated all spheres of the modern way of life, the need to look after students' health condition is becoming more relevant.

With similar coefficients, sports pedagogues, primary teachers, and general pedagogues put in fourth place the upbringing and communicative functions of physical education, which may be due to the fact that these, unlike its other functions, are realized by other educational activities. However, it should be noted that the targeted physical activity realized in the process of physical education is a natural environment for achieving positive results in all aspects of development and education, and this fact should not be underestimated.

In the last place in importance sports and general pedagogues place the entertaining and relaxing functions. This means that for them, the learning process of physical education should educate, educate and develop students rather than bring them emotional relief. Given the excessive mental and sensory loads to which students are subjected in theoretical disciplines, it is necessary for the classes of "Physical Education and Sports", along with the educational impact, to achieve psycho-emotional unloading of children. In this way, physical education can provide a healthy balance between the mental and physical load of students.

Conclusions

As a results summary of the survey, the following conclusions are considered:

1. Sports pedagogues put in the first three places the educational, motor-developmental, and health-prophylactic functions of physical education, giving a certain predominance to the educational functions, as a necessary condition for the successful formation of the physical culture of the student;
2. General pedagogues also prioritize these functions of physical education, giving priority to biological and constructive functions, as an important prerequisite for proper physical and motor development of children;
3. For the sports and general pedagogues the subject "Physical education and sport" by its essence and purpose is a purposeful pedagogical process in which it is trained, educated, developed;
4. Of the primary teachers' part, a certain underestimation can be seen concerning the importance of physical education's functions of education, defining them as the least important.

In this regard, it is necessary to point out that these functions are a condition for the formation of initial sports literacy in students, which will serve as a basis for upgrading in the next educational levels and stages. Primary teachers' attitude and understanding towards the educational nature of physical education as a pedagogical process require measures for increasing their professional and pedagogical preparation for conducting this important subject for the children's harmonious development.

We can conclude that physical education is a polyfunctional pedagogical process that has a complex impact on the psychophysical development of adolescents. A very important condition for multidirectional impact realization on the organism of the participants is the sport-pedagogical training and qualification of the teachers conducting this subject. Therefore, it is recommended that primary physical education teachers from 1st to 4th grade be systematically involved in organized forms for improving their qualifications in the field of physical education.

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