Goal Orientations, Motivational Climate, Discipline and Physical Self-Perception Related to the Teacher’s Gender, Satisfaction and Sport Activity of a Sample of Spanish Adolescent Physical Education Students

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The aim of this research was to find possible relationships between goal orientations, motivational climate, physical self-perception and discipline and the teacher’s gender, satisfaction with physical education and sport activity outside school hours in Spanish physical education students. The sample consisted of 565 students aged between 12 and 16. Participants completed the following scales: Goal Orientations, Motivational Climate in Physical Education Classes, Disciplined-Undisciplined Behaviour and Physical Self-Perception Profile. Correlations were raised among the discipline-indiscipline behaviours, perceptions of the motivational climate, goal orientations and physical self-perceptions. The results showed that students who have a female teacher have higher task-involving motivational climate, discipline, body attractiveness, sport competence, physical condition and self-confidence than those that have a male teacher. Those that are satisfied with physical education have higher task-involving motivational climate, task orientation, discipline, body attractiveness, sport competence, physical condition and self-confidence than those that are not satisfied. Exercisers have higher ego orientation, task orientation, body attractiveness, sport competence, physical condition and self-confidence than non-exercisers.

key words : Physical self-perceptions; discipline; Goal orientation; Motivation; Physical education; Gender; Physical activity involvement

Introduction

Many researchers have examined the theories on achievement motivation in physical education (Atkinson, 1977; McClelland, 1961). The relationship between the goal theory and intrinsic motivation has been examined very extensively, with evidence that task-oriented goals in physical education are associated with a great deal of intrinsic interest, while ego-oriented goals are connected with more extrinsic responses (Biddle, Cury, Goudas, Sarrazin, Famose & Durand, 1995; Dorobantu & Biddle, 1997; Goudas, Biddle & Fox, 1994; Papaioannou, 1995a, 1995b; Spray, 2002). Therefore, task-oriented subjects perceive sport and physical activity as something that strengthens their capacity for cooperation and social responsibility. On the other hand, ego-oriented subjects perceive physical activity as something that should help them to acquire more recognition and social status.

As a result, the perception of a task-oriented climate is related to the belief that effort and
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ability are the reason for success, huge feelings of satisfaction, a more positive attitude towards physical education classes and more perception of skill. By contrast, the perception of an ego-oriented climate supposes a direct relationship between skill and success and, with the negative and tedious belief, that of which success is due to effort and a positive attitude in physical education classes (Carpenter & Morgan, 1999; Morgan & Carpenter, 2002; Papaioannou, 1995b; Solmon, 1996; Treasure, 1997).

Carr, Weigand & Hussey (1999) and Cecchini, Gonzalez, Carmona, Arruza, Escarti & Balague (2001) analysed the influence of teachers, among others, on goal orientations, intrinsic motivation and physical competence in children and adolescents in physical education classes. They discovered that teachers as well as peers were the most influential social agents in the different orientations, intrinsic motivation and physical competence of the adolescents. Studies such as those by Cervello & Santos-Rosa (2000), Duda (1996) & Papaioannou (1995b, 1998a) showed that both goal orientation and the perception of the criteria used by the teacher in physical education classes determine the cognitive consequences that students show in these classes. This indicates that the work physical education teachers perform is essential when laying the foundations for building the student’s choice of the different goal orientations.

On the other hand, Papaioannou (1998a) and Spray & Wang (2001) found that task orientation and self-determination predicted disciplined behaviour. On the contrary, ego orientation was linked positively to external reasons and amotivation and did not predict disciplined behaviour. They also argued that task orientation identified intrinsic reasons for behaving well in physical education classes, so that students could concentrate on aspects of skill development, affiliation and fun. Thus, task-oriented students should not feel obliged to be quiet or follow rules because they really want to learn, to cooperate with other pupils and to develop a sense of responsibility.

With regards to discipline, Papaioannou (1998b) and Spray (2002) indicated that the perception of a task-involving climate is related to intrinsic and identified reasons promoted by teachers for behaving well in physical education classes. This is due to the attention paid to the task in hand and which has to be mastered, while a disorderly atmosphere in class would hinder this learning process.

Consequently, the rules stressed by the teacher and threats of punishment to maintain discipline should not be as prominent when a task-involving climate predominates. However, the perception of an ego-involving climate is more likely to encourage more means of controlling motivation, due to the promotion of external assessment criteria. In this environment, the role of effort and hard work is emphasised, the students try to perform better than the others and they are concerned about the errors they make (Ames, 1992; Papaioannou, 1998b; Spray, 2002).

Recent studies have shown us the association between the perception of a motivational climate and discipline. Thus, Cervello, Jimenez, Del Villar, Ramos & Santos-Rosa (2004) demonstrated that the perception of a motivational task-oriented climate is linked positively with more disciplined behaviour, while the perception of a motivational ego-oriented climate is linked to more indiscipline in physical education classes.

On the other hand, Heaven (1996) considers that the formation of a self-image, which is known as self-concept, is one of the challenges that the adolescent has to face. Thus, Sallis, & McKenzie