39 - PERCEIVED COMPETENCE AND INTERVENING CONTEXT VARIABLES: THE PERSPECTIVE OF FEMININE GENDER

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1. Introduction

The student's involvement in physical education classes is reached when he gets the tasks with success. The self-confidence demonstrated by the student is preponderant and it has been object of several researches about "motivation" in physical education, conceived under the perceived competence perspective. It's refers to the students' judgement on the own ability or competence to accomplish different tasks or activities in a specific domain (XIANG; LEE, 1998; LEE, 1997; WEISS, EBBECK; HORN, 1997).

The student's positive beliefs on the own competence, in general, are associated to the interest and involvement in the task (WEISS, 2000). The perceived competence influences the way as the student reacts to the teaching, being decisive for your motivation, perseverance in tasks and, consequently, for the academic performance (BIBIK, 1999; XIANG; LEE, 1998). In the ambit of physical activities and sport Weiss et. al. (1997) and Weiss (2000) affirm that the personal sense of competence is formulated when interaction of cognitive construct occurs with context factors related with the social regulations originating from of interactions with the parents, teachers or coach and class colleagues.

The youth's socialization in the physical-sport arena is influenced by the adults' expectations about your success possibilities (WELK, 1999). The parents with better appreciations about the physical activity motivated more their children to the practice and these demonstrated to possess more positive attitudes regarding involvement in these activities, as well as competence feelings in higher levels (BRUSTAD, 1996). However, the author also concluded that the parents tend to motivate more the boys than the girls. In the study developed by McKiddie and Maynard (1997), the girls of all the ages used the adults' feedback to evaluate the own competence.

The way as the teachers/coach interact during the teaching-learning process/training influences youths' personal perceptions. The feedback, the incentives and the relational climate (criticism and praise) affect the ability perception being mediated cognitively by the student. In Daniels (1983), the girls perceived to have little chances and leadership papers. For the girls the favorable atmosphere in the classes of physical education is that in that the teacher supplies pedagogic support, possesses technical knowledge, develops the teaching with competence and maintains order during the classes (LEAL, 1993).

The class friends, while socialization agents, represent a fundamental factor for the construction of student's competence feeling. This subject can be treated in the perspective of the social acceptance and friendly relationships. The social acceptance represents the popularity and the acquired social status by the pupil in the social group, considering how it is noticed while skilled individual. The friendly relationships are characterized by the nature and aspects originated in the affectionate relationships, representing an attraction for the maintenance of an active lifestyle (HENRIQUE, 2004). The real ability or perceived is decisive to measure the acceptance level (or acceptance perception) in the social group. Therefore, the skilled students or that possess positive beliefs on the own competence are more popular in the social group, while the less skilled ones are ridiculed, excluded and lacks them socialization opportunity (WEISS, 2000). Mourão (1997) verified the value attributed by the students to the social aspects in class, for besides the accomplishment in psychomotor domain. While the boys value the competitive aspect in the classes, the girls tend to value in larger degree the aspects of the social and affective domain. The difference among the parameters adopted by students of both genders in the evaluation of the own ability and/or success in classes, generates social interactions of different natures and these interactions influence youth' perceived competence.

Considering that in the PE classes academic performance becomes explicit for the whole class, enlarging or restricting the student's participation in the tasks, the analysis of the competence perceived by the students is justified for the influence of this cognitive variable on the attitude before physical education, motivation, and engagement degree in tasks and academic performance in school physical education.

2. Objective

To characterize 5th to 8th grade pupils' feminine gender perceived competence, and context parameters associated to the physical education discipline; and to analyze the relationship between student's competence perception and the perception on context variables related to the parents, teachers and class friends.

3. Materials and Method

The research is characterized as descriptive and relational (FLEGNER; DIAS, 1995). The sample is constituted by 268 students of the feminine gender (age range 10-18; M=14,2±1,3). All the participants signed the participation term in the research authorizing the use of the data. The anonymity was guaranteed to the participants.

The data were collected through *likert* scale questionnaires ("totally disagree"; " disagree slightly"; "I don't agree, nor I disagree"; " agree slightly"; "agree totally") including 10 affirmative questions. The perceived competence is multidimensional and it involves the perception of several aspects. Thus, the questionnaire is composed of the following dimensions: (the) pupil's competence perception; (b) supports of the parents to the children; (c) teacher's expectations; (d) class colleagues' expectations.

The instrument was validated by a panel of specialists, through the clarity analysis and objectivity (CARMO; FERREIRA, 1998). It was significant the correlations between the global indicator of perceived competence and each one of the questions (0,35 a 0,92, P=.01). This was considered an indicative of warranty of the internal consistency of the instrument.

The data were analyzed through the descriptive statistics to characterize the absolute and relative frequency of the answers to the questionnaire. The relationship between the perceived competence and the perception of context variables was accomplished through the Pearson correlation, with P=0,05.

4. Results

4.1. Perceived competence

In the questionnaire, six subjects requested the students' registration about their personal perceptions related to the own ability condition and/or competence in the physical education classes. The Table 1 exposes the considerable consistence in the students' answers, in the measure in that the coherence is verified in five of the six subjects presented them, even in one of the subjects presented in inverted scale (*difficulty in the accomplishment of the tasks*).

Table 1. Variables regarding the perceived competence in physical education

Affirmative	Estatistic	Scale of registrations				
		totally disagree	disagree slightly	I don't agree, nor I disagree	agree slightly	agree totally
I am skilled in PE classes	F	18	33	114	75	28
	%	6,7	12,3	42,5	28,0	10,4
I have difficulty in accomplishing tasks with success in PE classes	F	52	92	62	50	12
	%	19,4	34,3	23,1	18,7	4,5
I learn with easiness in PE classes	F	13	37	58	98	62
	%	4,9	13,8	21,6	36,6	23,1
I get to accomplish the tasks with success in PE classes	F	11	31	73	110	43
	%	4,1	11,6	27,2	41,0	16,0
I have good performance in the games that are not of my preference	F	17	52	71	90	38
	%	6,3	19,4	26,5	33,6	14,2
Few times I am victorious in the games	F	32	56	63	87	30
	%	11,9	20,9	23,5	32,5	11,2

In general, the students' registrations denote that more of a third of the sample presents high ability perception in the physical education (38,4%), however, highlighting that most showed in the intermediary scale, what takes to conjecture that is considered in medium level in the respective classes. Most absolute (53,7%) doesn't consider difficult the accomplishment of the tasks in the classes or it considers common to be well successful in the tasks (57%). In the same way, most absolute (59,7%) believes to accomplish the learning with easiness. Coherent with the previous registrations, 47,8% of the girls consider to have good perfomance, even in activities that are not of her preference and on which don't present positive attitudes. The only subject in that certain incoherence is verified refers to the 43,7% of the sample that get few times victories in the games developed in PE classes. However, this result can be due to the form of structuring of the groups promoted by the teachers in the classes. Another factor to highlight in relation to the answers for this question was that the newest students (up to 12 and between 13 and 15 years) contributed in larger degree to this result.

4.2. Variables of Context

The consistency of the answers referred previously is maintained in relation to the context variables. Confirming the theory, the girls' perceptions are positive in relationship supports supplied by the parents (78%), ratifying the importance attributed to the practice of physical activity in the contemporary society (Table 2). In formulated questions that evidence the perception of expectations of other, the influence of the several social agents' actions seems to induce the students to the conscience on the differences in class and perceiving before them. Thus, the compatibility is verified among the registrations on the perceived competence and the registrations on the teachers' expectations and class colleagues.

Table 2. Context variables associated to the competence perception

Affirmative	Estatistic	Scale of registrations				
		totally disagree	disagree slightly	I don't agree, nor I disagree	agree slightly	agree totally
My parents consider important I to practice PE and sports	F	5	18	36	116	93
	%	1,9	6,7	13,4	43,3	34,7
PE teacher considers me a skilled student	F	23	33	126	65	21
	%	8,6	12,3	47,0	24,3	7,8
My class friends consider me little skilled	F	46	65	83	61	13
	%	17,2	24,3	31,0	22,8	4,9
In general I am among the last ones chosen when teams are formed in the classes of EF	F	59	95	56	41	17
	%	22,0	35,4	20,9	15,3	6,3

In relation to the perception of the teachers' expectations, 47% of the girls denote neutrality and about of a third (32,1%) agree with the assertive that the "*teachers consider them skilled*". These data are preoccupying in the measure in that the teacher represents a social agent that strongly influences the student's motivation, as well as theirs personal perception of competence. The evaluation is more positive in relation to the class colleagues' expectations, in that 41,5% of the sample consider that are seen as skilled for the colleagues. Most absolute of the girls (57,4%) doesn't perceive herself as the last ones chosen when selection of teams occurs in the classes, although was observed with concern that 21,6% of the girls perceive such expectations, indicating the perception of the class colleagues' low expectation.

4.3. Relationship between perceived competence and context variables

Relatively to the relationships verified between the global indicator of the girls' perceived competence and the perceptions on the context variables, the results indicate direct and significant relationship between global perception of competence and perception on the teacher's expectations (r = 0,52; P = .000); perception of the class colleagues' expectations (r = 0,46; P = .000); and, position of the choice in the games (r = 0,36, P = .000). Surprisingly, in spite of the direct association, the relationship between global indicator of perceived competence and support perception provided by the parents was not significant (r = 0,17; P = .057). The results, in general, corroborate the theory, confirming the direct association between

competence perception and different social agents' action (WEISS et. al., 1997; BRUSTAD, 1996). In spite of the relationship between perceived competence and support received of parents not to be significant, the results suggest the influence of the interaction with teachers and class colleagues on personal perceptions of competence formulated by school youths in this research.

5. Conclusions

Regarding competence perceived by the girls, the results corroborate the theory, because the global indicator of competence indicates positive personal perceptions in school PE. The registrations in referring questions to the ability perception and frequency of victories in games have support in the literature, because girls tend to demonstrate smaller indicators of perceived competence than boys. The comparison with study of Santos; Pedroso; Santos (2007) denotes the confirmation of this evidence, in which the indicators of the boys' perceived competence were much higher. The apparent incoherence verified in the question about the perception of victories can be due to the form as the teachers administered the formation of groups for the participation in the games, as well as the development of activities that are usually stereotyped by the own girls as adapted for the boys, as it is the case of the soccer, and that would not more frequently allow success experiences. Besides, studies indicate that the girls consider negative the competitive atmosphere in the classes (contrarily to the boys, that value it) and they tend to value the aspects associated to the social and affective domain (GONÇALVES, 1998). In the study of Lirg (1993), the girls tended to demonstrate larger confidence in the classes of the same gender. These aspects of the practices deserve the teachers' attention, in way to provide the same success opportunities for the students of both goods in the classes.

Although the literature refers that competence perception increases proportionally with the largest family support to the practice of physical activity, this relationship was not significant. This result can be due to the parents to value more the practice of physical activity for the boys (Brustad, 1996). Santos, et al (2007) verified the significant relationship among these variables in the study with male youths. It seems coherent to assume that the class colleagues and teachers influenced in larger degree and significantly the girls' perceived competence, indicating that their competence perception increased in direct proportion with the perception of those social agents' positive expectations.

The girls use several references when basing the judgement on the own competence. The interaction with the parents, teachers and colleagues suscitate their personal formulations, and for that they should deserve the educational agents' attention. The management of the teaching and class climate implemented by the teacher, including the promotion of equalitarian conditions of success for the whole class, contributes to elevate the students' competence feeling, enlarging the academic involvement and, consequently, the learning levels and adherence to the practice of physical activity and sport.

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PERCEIVED COMPETENCE AND INTERVENING CONTEXT VARIABLES: THE PERSPECTIVE OF FEMININE GENDER

ABSTRACT

The self-confidence demonstrated by the student is fundamental condition for the learning, and it has been object of researches about motivation in the area of physical education. The objective of this research is to characterize as pupils of feminine gender perceive the own competence and to verify relationships with context variables. The research is descriptive and correlational. The data were obtained through closed format Likert-scale questionnaire. The results show positive values of perceived competence and significant influence of the context variables related with the teachers' expectations and colleagues.

KEY WORDS: perceived competence; gender; social support

PERCEPTION DE LA COMPETENCE ET VARIABLES DU CONTEXTE INTERVENANTES : ANALYSE SOUS LA PERSPECTIVE DES ETUDIANTS DU GENRE FEMININ.

RESUME

La confiance en soi démontre par l'élève est condition fondamental pour l'apprentissage et est objet de plusieurs recherches sur la motivation dans la discipline d'éducation physique. L'objective de cette recherche a été de caractériser la compétence aperçu de 268 étudiants du genre féminin e sa relation avec des variables du contexte. La recherche est descriptive et relationnel. Les donnes ont été obtenu au travers d'application des questionnaires. les résultats montrent des indices positives de compétence aperçu et l'influence significative des variables du contexte que ont eu de relation avec les expectative des professeurs et collègues de classe.

MOTS-CLEF : auto-perception ; genre; support social

COMPETENCIA PERCIBIDA Y VARIABLES INTERVENIENTES DEL CONTEXTO: LA PERSPECTIVA DEL GÉNERO FEMENINO

RESUMEN

La mismo-confianza demostrada por el estudiante es condición fundamental para el aprendizaje, y ha sido objeto de investigaciones sobre la motivación en el área de educación física. El objetivo de esta investigación es caracterizar la competencia percibida de las alumnas (N=268) y analizar la influencia de las variables del contexto. La investigación es descriptiva y correlacional. Los datos se obtuvieron a través del cuestionario cerrado tipo Likert. Los resultados muestran los valores positivos de competencia percibida y la influencia significante de las variables del contexto relacionadas con las expectativas de los maestros y colegas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: competencia percibida; género; apoyo social

PERCEPÇÃO DE COMPETÊNCIA E DE VARIÁVEIS DE CONTEXTO INTERVENIENTES: ANÁLISE SOB A PERSPECTIVA DE ESCOLARES DO GÊNERO FEMININO

RESUMO

A autoconfiança demonstrada pelo aluno é condição fundamental para a aprendizagem e tem sido objeto de diversas pesquisas sobre motivação na área de educação física. O objetivo desta pesquisa foi caracterizar a competência percebida de 268 escolares do gênero feminino e sua relação com variáveis de contexto. A pesquisa é descritiva e relacional. Os dados foram obtidos através da aplicação de questionários. Os resultados mostram índices positivos de competência percebida e a influência significativa de variáveis de contexto relacionadas às expectativas de professores e colegas de classe.

PALAVRAS CHAVE: autopercepção; gênero; suporte social.