119 - EVALUATION OF THE INFANTILE SELF-CONCEPT IN PRACTICANTS OF RHYTHMICAL GYMNASTICS

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INTRODUCTION

Everyone knows that the correct practice of sports can generate many benefits in all ages for any person; however, if it is practiced incorrectly it might cause serious consequences during all life long. The big majority of the population that practices some physical activity is formed by children and young people. For children, this practice is most of the time faced as a game, a play that stimulates the diversion, the success and satisfaction, however this meaning can be determined by contrary experiences, developing feelings of failure and inferiority.

Independently of the age, we live in a context of relations and discoveries about ourselves and the others which evidence the influence that each person exerts on us. In the first years of life, the influences come from parents and relatives, and with the growth of the child, they come from teachers, colleagues and friends. Subsequently to the family environment, the school world is also of great importance; therefore the children pass great part of their time in the school with their teachers and their colleagues. This way, the children's acceptance, rejection or the values that are attributed to them, influence on the formation of their self-evaluation (Marinho, s.d.). Moreover, the school also evaluates them, tending to emphasize the social comparisons based on the schools income.

The perception of the self-value is, therefore, something that is constructed since childhood from the personal experiences in interaction with the others and of the reaction of the others to the children's behavior. Thus, the concept that is formed about themselves as a consequence of their actions or attitudes incorporates all of the aspects that we think of what we are, meaning, it is central to our conscientious life (Weinberg and Gould, 2001).

According to Stevanato (2003), the self-concept is not inapt; it is constructed and defined during the development, thanks to the influence of significant people in the family, the school and the social environment, and as a consequence of the experiences of success and failure that children have.

As matter of fact, the self-concept is about the late experiences of the person, they might be real or even imaginary, which control the informative process related with the person itself and even exert the organized self-regulation function through a cognitive posture (Tamayo, 1993).

So, it can be said that each individual person develops and realizes the happenings, the objects, the other people and mainly themselves in a specific and only way. Gallahue and Ozmun (2003) contribute with this definition and consider the self-concept as a perception that the person has of its characteristics, attributes and limitations, meaning, this is how the person sees itself, without emitting any personal judgment or comparing itself with the others. In the other hand, self-esteem is the value that the person attributes to its characteristics.

Generally, three different components are considered in the self-concept, however they are related between themselves: the evaluative, the cognitive and the behavior. The first is called self-esteem and it consists in the global evaluation that each persons does on their own value. The cognitive component is constituted by the perceptions that each person has of its own way, of its characteristics and of its abilities that they possess or intend to. The behavior component consists in strategies of self-presentation used by the person, with the objective of transmitting to the others a positive image of itself (Tamayo et al, 2001).

This way, the self-concept can be defined as a valued attitude that each person has about itself, dealing with the esteem, the feelings, the experiences or the attitudes that the person develops about its own "me". It is an important aspect of the affective behavior of the child, because it is through the positive or negative formation of the self-concept that the image that we will have of ourselves and the valorization of this image will result.

In relation to the infantile self-concept the authors Sánchez and Escribano (1999), relate to the ages between 5 and 10 years old as a period of expansion of the children and the period of arrival at the school world, in which the variety of experiences lived by the children stand out the insufficiencies of the own "me" (the child itself) which was acquired until this moment. It is about a rich, intense phase, when the child starts accumulating and structuring a variety of images about itself, revealing this in its feeling of identity. Four categories referring to the infantile self-concept are detached: autonomy, confidence, physical evolution and school world. Standing out the physical evolution category, it must be considered two important elements: the physical aspect, which shows the appearance and the physical representation compared with the other children, and the physical ability considered as an important factor in the development of the self-concept, because it is about the ability to carry through or not one determined task in accordance with the level of domain of the individual.

Inseparable of the development of the child, the motor experiences contribute significantly for the learning of the person about itself and the environment that this person lives. This way, the motor ability plays an important role for the development of the self-concept, because the children value the good performance in the games, sports and tricks (Gallahue and Ozmun, 2003).

However, it is important to point out that the acceleration of the learning process in the sport practice can in such a way cause future failures in the aspects of physical development as in the psychological part. Therefore, the limits of each child must be respected and we should never force the children to do an activity if they are not prepared to, they need to feel sure of their action, even if sometimes they are in the beginning of the process of formation. Moreover, the children from 2 to 7 years old, according to Gallahue and Ozmun (2003), develop basic movements that will be necessary for the development of other motor abilities afterwards. This phase is the most critical period so that basic motor forms are developed correctly, and therefore needs adequate processes of formation.

Considering the relevance of the construction of a positive self-concept, mainly in the first ages, it becomes of utmost importance to unmask ways that contribute for a healthful development of the child in different scopes that can assist the transformation processes. In front of this affirmation, it was necessary to analyze if the infantile self-concept in relation to the sport practice is being formed through positive or negative structures. This way, we tried to evaluate the level of the infantile self-concept in practicers of Rhythmical Gymnastics between 5 and 6 years old and to relate it with how long they have been practicing this modality.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This study was characterized as a descriptive research and with characteristics of a case study. According to Thomas and Nelson (2002, p.294) "the case studies are not confined to the study of an individual, but they can be used in researches that

involve programs, institutions, organizations, politic structures, communities and situations".

The choice of the studied population was intentional, girls of 5 and 6 years old practicers of the modality of Rhythmical Gymnastics. The sample was constituted by thirteen girls, of the private school in the city of Maringá - PR.

The instrument used to measure was the Sánchez and Escribano's test (1999) of Perception of Infantile Self-Concept (PISC) in its individual form, meaning, the test was applied by the researcher herself in one child each time. The instrument consists in the presentation of thirty-four drawings and a question for each drawing. The drawings are constituted by a group of boys or girls in defined situations that represent the positive self-concept and another one in its negative shade. For each situation of the drawing, four alternatives of answers are presented, which got points from 1 to 4 in an increasing way according to the level of the positive self-concept.

The collection of the data was made in the school that the children used to study, in the times they practiced Rhythmical Gymnastic. To collect the data, the researcher got in contact with the school and, later with the parents of the children, explaining the reason of the study and asking for an authorization to the parents so that the children could participate in the research.

In the descriptive analyses of the data, Microsoft Office Excel version 2003 was used to calculate the averages, pattern-deviation and presentation of the tables.

ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The results were presented initially in relation to the level of the self-concept of the children by categories and later by the time they practiced the modality of sport. To the discussion of the results, it was stipulated that the values that did not reach at least half of the expected values, specific of each category, would be considered as negative self-concept values, so, the values above of the half of the expected values would be considered as positive self-concept values.

According to table one, it can be noticed that between the four categories (autonomy, confidence, physical evolution and school world) the physical evolution category presented the highest level of self-concept, meaning that, in relation to the difference of value expected (28) and the observed value (23,7), we got the lowest result (4,3), if compared to the difference between the other categories.

Table 1 - Level of self-concept by categories of children that practice Rhythmical Gymnastic

Self-concept	observed values (OV)	expected values (EV)	EV – OV
Autonomy	25,9	32	6,15
Confidence	31,87	40	8,38
Physical Evolution	24,01	28	4,3
School World	32,29	36	5,85

According to Sánchez and Escribano (1999), the positive relation between the infantile self-concept and the pedagogic variables as the general income and the concrete aspect of the body scheme seem to be evident. This way, it is possible to affirm that during this age, the practice of some physical activity contributes very much in the motor and corporal orbit. The physical growing and the motor development are aspects generated from the constant changes, evidencing that as much more opportunities of exploring the motor learning through experiences, better is the capacity of developing an identity and consequently, better is the self-concept about the children themselves and about the tasks that the children will make.

The school world category (5,85) evidences that even the children that are beginning to be a part of this new environment, seem to be initiating a process of where they have consciousness and valorize themselves, the school world and the socialization.

The children can notice themselves through the success situations in the realization of a task, or the failure situation due to distraction or unwished behavior of the others. Positive knowledge and feelings in relation to themselves have a repercussion in the good individual functioning, in the motivation and in the way that the individuals answer to the learning requests (Okano et al, 2004).

Gallahue and Ozmun (2003) emphasizing the importance of the learning phases, affirm that the self-concept is learned in the childhood and it is resistant to changes, in case it is totally established. This way, the presence of love and incentive from adults increase the competence of the child.

Stevanato et al (2003) after doing a study referred to the self-concept and to the difficulties of learning, observed that the children who have difficulties show a more negative general self-concept that the children with good school performance.

Referring to the autonomy category (6,15) it can be said that this is in a process of formation, because it is in this phase that the small accomplishments of independence and individuality start to develop. The autonomy in this age is still very much influenced by the dependence that the children have on the adults; although it is temporary, indispensable changes occur in the behavior and in the attempt to domain due to the acquisition of a positive self-concept (Gallahue and Ozmun, 2003).

The confidence category has also obtained a positive level of self-concept, however, the difference between the expected value (40) and the observed value (31,62) was higher than the other categories (8,38), evidencing a possible characteristic of this age related to the formation of the self-confidence phase and the necessity of security phase. This is because, according to Sánchez and Escribano (1999), in this phase, at the same time that the child fights for its independency, it searches for security, because it needs to feel confident with the environment, with the family, meaning, it needs a stable place where it can search for refugee to its feelings.

Table 2 - General profile of the children that practice Rhythmical Gymnastics in relation to how long they practice it

Time of practice	Autonomy	Confidence	Physical Evolution	School World
Less then 1 year	25,01	31,73	23,46	29,46
More then 1 year	26,78	32	24,55	31,11
Average	25,90	31,87	24,01	30,29
Pattern deviation	1,25	1,9	0,77	1,17

Table 2 relates the 4 categories that form the self-concept and the time that the children practice Rhythmical Gymnastic. In the time of practice variable, we have not considered the age, because there were children between 5 and 6 years old in the two periods, which are, the period of less than 1 year and more than one year of practice of the Rhythmical Gymnastic modality. We observed that comparing both of these times, the children that practiced the modality for more than 1 year got higher values of self-concept that the children that practiced for less than 1 year in all of the categories. However, we noticed that in the autonomy and school world categories this result was more evident, what calls the attention to the physical evolution category.

About the positive changes that the physical activity and the sport proportionate to the children, Gruber (1986) apud Weinberg and Gould (2001) discovered that the self-concept and the self-esteem were associated with the participation in directed games and in the programs of Physical Education.

This way, the sport activity if is properly done will be able to became an important facilitator in the development of a positive self-concept. Some factors that contribute to this development stimulate the children to participate actively in the sports practice as, for example, happiness, the acquisition of abilities, competence and abilities development, health, liberation of energy, between other reasons that contribute with the physical and social development of the child (Becker, 2000).

Some researchers like Heinzelmann and Bagley (1970) and Wheeler (1982) apud Samulski (2002) observed that people that practice physical activities have a global self-esteem higher that the ones that do not practice them. Weinberg and Gould (2001) help and affirm that some studies did not find positives relations between the self-concept and the exercises and, justify this relation due to the variation of the exercise form or due to a series of environment conditions.

However, the sports and the physical activity influence about the self-concept seem to depend, not exclusively on the benefic action of the physical activity over the physiologic functioning of the organism, but also in the social dimension present in this variable (Tamayo et al, 2001).

A study made by Zaichkowsky et al (1975) apud Gallahue and Ozmun (2003) revealed that the level of the self-concept of children was positively related to the level of expectancy of the teacher and to the physical activities made by the children.

This way, to consider factors like environment, the people that are part of this environment (parents, teachers, coaches) and the task or action that will be made in a determined context is necessary to evaluate the self-concept, mainly when it refers to the infantile self-concept, which finds itself in a formation process.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

After evaluating the infantile self-concept of the practicers of Rhythmical Gymnastic between 5 and 6 years old, it can be realized that some results are relevant. There has been noticed that the results were inside indexes expected by the ages, but, it can be said that the children analyzed are receiving a feedback that can be considered positive, because the average of the categories are close to the expected values.

When analyzing the four categories in a general way (autonomy, confidence, physical evolution and school world), we noticed that the children obtained a self-concept level that can be considered positive, because the values observed were higher than the half of thee expected values. In relation to the category that obtained the highest results in relation to the difference of the expected value, it was the physical education category, followed by the school world category, autonomy and confidence. So, the sports practice showed itself as a positive element presented as one of the main ways that contribute to the process of developing of the children.

In the categories autonomy and confidence, the infantile self-concept showed itself positive and in construction process due to ages and the phase in which the children find themselves, that being, the children searching for more autonomy and still in a process of adapting in the environment contexts.

There has also been analyzed the relation between the level of self-concept and the time of practice of the Rhythmical Gymnastic modality and we observed that in all of the categories the values were superior to the children that practiced the modality for more than 1 year.

This way, the practice of the Rhythmical Gymnastic, can contribute very much to the developing of the infantile self-concept, because it is characterized as a modality that requires surpassing, self-control, conquer, socialization, dedication, between other psychological factors that represent the development of the person that practices sport activities.

This way, the sports practice can proportionate a healthy adjust in the children through the results of the self-concept considered positive and consequently through the proper physical and psychological development, contributing to help the children fell better about themselves, the others and the environment in which they live. This way, the most different environments that the children will frequent, as the family one, the school one, the sports activity center one, must be part of a positive process of developing, as the parents will disengage an important role in the influence of the developing of the infantile self-concept.

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EVALUATION OF THE INFANTILE SELF-CONCEPT IN PRACTICANTS OF RHYTHMICAL GYMNASTICS

ABSTRACT: The objective of the study was to evaluate the level of the infantile self-concept in children that practice Rhythmical Gymnastic between 5 and 6 years old. This research was characterized as a descriptive and case study research. The target population was composed by thirteen girls, chosen intentionally in the private school system, with the previous authorization

of the school and the parents. As an instrument of measure, there has been used the Sánchez and Escribano (1999) test of Perception of the Infantile Self-Concept (PISC) in its individual form which consists in the presentation of thirty-four drawings. The data collection was made in the school before the time of practice of the Rhythmical Gymnastic. To analyze the data there have been used descriptive statistics. The results showed that the level of the self-concept in the children presented positive results in the four categories (autonomy, confidence, physical evolution and school world). Besides this, when these categories were compared in relation to the time of practice of the modality, there has been observed that in all of the categories the value of the levels in the self-concept were higher to the children that practiced the modality for more than one year. This way, it can be concluded that the infantile self-concept showed itself positive and in the construction process in some of the categories (autonomy and confidence), which will depend on the environment contexts and on the subjects that participate of this environments; and the sports practice showed itself as a positive element because the highest average was in the physical evolution category.

Keywords: self-concept, rhythmical gymnastic, children

ÉVALUATIUN DU JUGEMENT QUE LES ENFANTS ONT D´EUX-MÊMES QUI PRATIQUENT LA GYMNASTIQUE RYTHMIQUE

RÉSUMÉ: Le but de cette étude a été d´évaluer le niveau du jugement que les enfants ont d´eux-mêmes, ceci chez des enfants qui pratiquent la gymnastique rythmique, âgés de 5 à 6 ans. Elle s´est caractérisée comme une recherche descriptive et une étude d´un cas. La population visée a été composée par treize petites filles, choisies intentionnellement dans la secteur de l´enseignement privé, avec, l´autorisation aupréalable de l´ecole et des parent. Le test de Sanchez et Escribano (1999) et perception du jugement des enfants sur eux-mêmes (PAI) a été utilisé comme outil de travail, de forme individuelle, et qui consiste en une présentation de trente-quatre dessins. La banquede données a été réalisée à l´école avant les horaires du cours de gymnastique rythmique. Pour analyser ces données, on a utilisé la statistique descriptive. Les résultats démontrent que le niveau du jugement personnel infantil s´est révélé positif parmi quatre catégories : (l´autonomie, la confiance, l´évolution physique et le monde scolaire). De plus, par rapport au temps de durée de la pratique de la modalité, on a pu oberver que, dans toutes les catégories, la valeur des niveaux de jugement que les enfants ont d´eux-mêmes, était plus élevée chez les enfants qui pratiquaient la modalité depuis plus d´un an. Ainsi, nous pouvons conclure que le jugement infantil se révèle être positif et en voie de développement dans certaines catégories (autonomie et confiance), lesquelles dépendront des contextes de milieux ambients et de ce qui participent à ces milieux ; La pratique sportive se révèle être un élément positif puisque la meilleure moyenne a été celle de la catégorie de l´évolution physique.

Mots-clés: jugement, Gymnastique Rythmique, enfants

EVALUACIÓN DEL AUTOCONCEPTO INFANTIL EN NIÑOS PRACTICANTES DE GIMNÁSTICA RÍTMICA

RESUMEN: El objetivo de ese estudio ha sido evaluar el nivel de autoconcepto infantil en niños practicantes de Gimnástica Rítmica de 5 y 6 años de edad. Se ha caracterizado como una pesquisa descriptiva y un estudio de caso. La población ha sido compuesta por trece niñas, elegidas intencionalmente de la red particular de enseñanza, con autorización previa de la escuela e de los padres. Como instrumento de medida se ha utilizado el test de Sánchez y Escribano (1999) de Percepción de Autoconcepto Infantil (PAI) en su forma individual, lo cual consiste en la presentación de treinta y cuatro dibujos. La toma de datos ha sido realizada en la escuela antes de los horarios de la práctica de Gimnástica Rítmica. Para análisis de los datos se ha utilizado la estadística descriptiva. Los resultados han demostrado que el nivel de autoconcepto de las niñas se ha presentado positivo en las cuatro categorías (autonomía, confianza, evolución física y mundo escolar). Además, cuando comparadas con relación al tiempo de práctica de la modalidad se ha observado que en todas las categorías el valor de los niveles de autoconcepto han sido mayores para las niñas que practicaban la modalidad a más de 1 año. De esa manera, se puede concluir que el autoconcepto infantil se ha mostrado positivo y en proceso de construcción en algunas categorías (autonomía y confianza), las cuales irán depender de los contextos ambientales y de los sujetos participantes de estos ambientes; y la práctica deportiva se ha mostrado como elemento positivo, pues el mejor promedio ha sido lo de la categoría evolución física.

Palabras-clave: autoconcepto, Gimnástica Rítmica, niños

AVALIAÇÃO DO AUTOCONCEITO INFANTIL EM PRATICANTES DE GINÁSTICA RÍTMICA

RESUMO: O objetivo do estudo foi avaliar o nível de autoconceito infantil em crianças praticantes de Ginástica Rítmica de 5 e 6 anos de idade. Caracterizou-se como uma pesquisa descritiva e um estudo de caso. A população alvo foi composta por treze meninas, escolhidas intencionalmente da rede particular de ensino, com autorização prévia da escola e dos pais. Como instrumento de medida utilizou-se o teste de Sánchez e Escribano (1999) de Percepção de Auto-Conceito Infantil (PAI) em sua forma individual, o qual consiste na apresentação de trinta e quatro desenhos. A coleta de dados foi realizada na escola antes dos horários da prática da Ginástica Rítmica. Para análise dos dados utilizou-se a estatística descritiva. Os resultados demonstraram que o nível de autoconceito das crianças apresentou-se positivo nas quatro categorias (autonomia, confiança, evolução física e mundo escolar). Além disso, quando comparadas em relação ao tempo de prática da modalidade observou-se que em todas as categorias o valor dos níveis de autoconceito foram maiores para as crianças que praticavam a modalidade a mais de 1 ano. Assim, pode-se concluir que o autoconceito infantil mostrou-se positivo e em processo de construção em algumas categorias (autonomia e confiança), as quais irão depender dos contextos ambientais e dos sujeitos participantes destes ambientes; e prática esportiva mostrou-se como elemento positivo, pois a melhor média foi a da categoria evolução física.

Palavras-chaves: autoconceito, ginástica rítmica, crianças.