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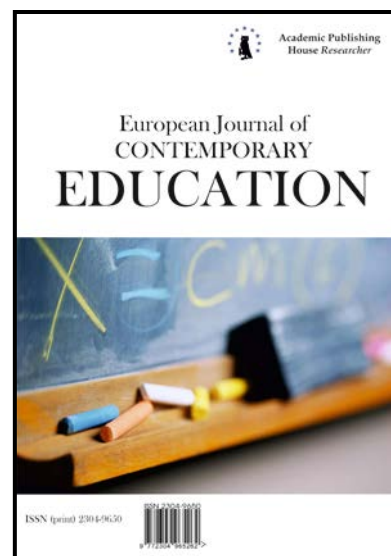
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Social Skills Expression of Senior High School Age Students in Physical Education Classes

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Abstract

The main purpose of the present study is to reveal the peculiarities of social skills expression of senior high school age students in physical education classes. The independent random sample consisted of 244 (15 – 16 years old) students and 258 (17 – 18 years old) students, of which there were 224 boys and 278 girls. L. Bulotaitė and V. Gudžinskienė communication skills survey questionnaire, Tromsø social intelligence questionnaire and I. Yusupov's empathy diagnostic method were employed. It was found that 17 – 18 years old students have higher rate of social awareness abilities, while 15 – 16 years old students have higher rate of empathy abilities and girls have a higher rate of communication and empathy skills in physical education classes than boys.

Keywords: social skills expression, physical education classes, senior high school age.

Introduction

Adolescence is a time of personal and social development that requires a sophisticated repertoire of social – emotional skills for healthy adjustment. Teenagers often face considerable difficulties negotiating the biological, cognitive, and physiological changes associated with puberty [19]. As adolescents increasingly interact with peers, they must simultaneously contend with peer pressure. Teenagers also must navigate the vicissitudes of identity development and the search for purpose and meaning as they transition into adulthood [12]. These developmental and contextual shifts challenge positive youth development and increase normative risk for problem behaviors such as violence, substance use, and school dropout [14; 30]. It is therefore particularly important to carry out an investigation of senior high school age students. This age period is attributed to

middle adolescence (15 – 18 years) [18]. Lithuanian education system involves all senior high school age (9 – 12 grade) and some eighth grade students in this period.

Students with higher social and emotional skills tend to perform better in school [26], have better quality relationships [23], resolve conflict in more constructive ways [4], solve social reasoning problems more effectively [25], and engage less frequently in unhealthy behaviors [3].

In contrast, students with poor social and emotional skills are more at risk of experiencing learning difficulties and engaging in such behaviours as anti-social behaviour, substance abuse, violence and criminality, and to leave school without any certification or vocational skills, with consequently poor employability opportunities [1; 2; 8].

There are a variety of subjects taught at school; however, social emotional skills education is not given much attention. Students do not know what to do when they get angry, enter the conflict situations or experiencing sadness. This leads to the emergence of addictions, decrease of learning ability, failure to establish a close relationship [33]. Social and emotional learning is defined as the process through which we recognise and manage emotions, establish healthy relationships, set positive goals, behave ethically and responsibly and avoid negative behaviours [9].

Physical education classes, during which students experience intense emotional situations, reveal students' character and personality and is the perfect environment for the development of students' social and emotional skills. Recently, more and more schools in the physical education curriculum include social and emotional skills education goals [29].

Contemporary physical education, through its dynamic social nature and its different codes, provides a variety of opportunities for student interaction that requires performance of social skills such as self-control, goal setting, accepting, helping and cooperating with others [16]. Research evidence suggests that quality physical education contribute positively to students' social and moral development [15], fair play behaviour [32], team building, cooperation, and development of social skills [17].

Study, carried out in our country, in the context of sports activities reveals social skills relevance and importance in groups of students of different age. Š. Šniras (2005) analysed the basketball school students' (10-15 years) social skills educational peculiarities. Š. Klizas (2010) analysed the social adaptation among pupils of middle school age during physical education lessons. A. Brusokas (2014) sought to draw attention to the young basketball players' self-efficacy and its educational peculiarities. Although carried out studies reveal the importance of different school age students' social skills, however the studies regarding senior high school age students in physical education classes analysis are still lacking.

The aim of the study – to reveal social skills expression of senior high school age students in physical education classes.

Study method – questionnaire used for determination of expression of senior high school age students' social skills in physical education classes.

Study limitations. Limitations of the study is that it analyses only senior high school age students' social skills expression in physical education classes, although further study is worth to analyse middle school age students' social skills expression in physical education classes as well and compare data of these age groups students.

Study originality/meaning. This study is one of few studies which address senior high school students' social skills expression in physical education classes. In the context of physical culture and sports only middle school age students' social adaptation peculiarities during physical education classes [21; 22], basketball school students' social skills education peculiarities [31] and young basketball players' self-efficacy and its education peculiarities [5] studies were carried out, however, there is lack of publications that would analyze by senior high school age students' social skills in physical education classes. Therefore, this study provides new knowledge of social skills in the field of research.

Research methods

Instruments: data collection and analysis. To determine senior high school age students' social skills expression in physical education classes following questionnaires were used:

L. Bulotaitė and V. Gudžinskienė (2003) communication skills survey questionnaire aimed to students' verbal and non-verbal communication skills assessment. The questionnaire consists of 30 statements which students need to assess by the 4-points scale: 1 - „I fail to do that”, 2 - „I do

not really lucky”, 3 - „I do pretty well”, 4 - „I do great success”. Communication skills composite score is composed of verbal and non-verbal communication skills scores totals. This study research sample Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.71, each subscale internal consistency was also tested. Cronbach alpha coefficients ranged from 0.66 to 0.77.

Tromsø social intelligence questionnaire (TSIS) is intended for teenagers social consciousness determination [28]. The questionnaire submitted 21 claims (e.g., „I am often astonished at other’s deeds”), which students need to evaluate by interval Likert scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means „strongly disagree” and 7 – „strongly agree”. In this study, a research sample Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.79.

I. Yusupov empathy diagnostic methodology [34] for determination of empathy species consists of 6 empathy scale, which expresses the relationships with parents, old people, children, art figures, with strangers, animals. The questionnaire submitted 36 statements, each respondent has to evaluate and indicate whether he agrees with the statements or not, by choosing one of six response options: „do not know”, „never” or „no”, „sometimes”, „often”, „almost always”, „always” or „yes”. Each response corresponds to option points: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. In this study, a research sample Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.64. The statistical hypotheses were tested by applying the Student *t*-test.

Sample and procedure. The research was carried out during 2014/2015 academic years. The respondents are selected randomly by a random number tables from Lithuanian cities and districts secondary schools list. According to the earlier research carried out by F. Gresham, S. Elliot & R. Kettler (2010) results that the social skills also alter with age, senior high school age students were divided into two different age groups. The independent random sample consisted of 244 (15 – 16 years old) students and 258 (17 – 18 years old) students, of which there were 224 boys and 278 girls. The study involved senior high school age students from Kaunas, Klaipeda, Siauliai, Alytus cities, including Kaunas district secondary schools. The survey was conducted during physical education lessons. The survey was conducted in compliance with the ethical principles and applicable legislation, i. e. each respondents was explained the goal of the study and was ensured that the questionnaires were anonymous. The duration of the survey was 20 minutes.

Results

The research started from the analysis of the communication abilities of 15 – 16 years old students and 17 – 18 years old students in physical education classes. The analysis of the ability to communicate resulted in the following averages: 56,59 ± 5,12 in case of 15 – 16 years old students and 57,02 ± 8,45 in case of 17 – 18 years old students, there was no statistically significant difference between 15 – 16 years old students and 17 – 18 years old students. The obtained results are summarized in table 1.

It was found that 17 – 18 years old students have higher rate of social awareness abilities in physical education classes than 15 – 16 years old students: $t(500) = -1,73; p < 0,05$. The analysis of the ability of social awareness resulted in the following averages: 27,16 ± 6,62 in case of 15 – 16 years old students and 28,13 ± 6,00 in case of 17 – 18 years old students.

Table 1: Mean scores of social skills expression among 15 – 16 years old and 17 – 18 years old students in physical education classes (M ± SD)*

Social skills	15 – 16 years old students (N=244)	17 – 18 years old students (N=258)	Scores of Student’s <i>t</i> test	<i>p</i>
Communication	56,59±5,12	57,02±8,45	-0,53	$p > 0,05$
Social awareness	27,16±6,62	28,13±6,00	-1,73	$p < 0,05$

Empathy	74,46±19,72	72,06±22,90	1,25	$p < 0,05$
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*Note (M ± SD) – mean and standard deviation.

The analysis of empathy abilities in physical education classes resulted in the following averages: 74,46 ± 19,72 in case of 15 – 16 years old students and 72,06 ± 22,90 in case of 17 – 18 years old students. It was found that 15 – 16 years old students have higher rate of empathy abilities in physical education classes than 17 – 18 years old students: $t(500) = 1,25$; $p < 0,05$.

It was found that girls have higher rate of communication skills in physical education classes than boys: $t(500) = -2,38$; $p < 0,05$. The analysis of communication abilities in physical education classes resulted in the following averages: boys – 55,74 ± 9,95 and girls – 57,68 ± 8,32. The obtained results are summarized in table 2.

The analysis of empathy abilities in physical education classes resulted in the following averages: boys – 71,80 ± 22,52 and girls – 74,37±20,47. It was found that girls have higher rate of empathy skills in physical education classes than boys: $t(500) = -1,34$; $p < 0,05$. According to the other components of social skills between boys and girls statistically significant difference was not observed.

Table 2: Mean scores of social skills expression among boys and girls of senior high school age in physical education classes (M ± SD)*

Social skills	Boys (N=224)	Girls (N=278)	Scores of Student's <i>t</i> test	<i>p</i>
Communication	55,74±9,95	57,68±8,32	-2,38	$p < 0,05$
Social awareness	26,85±6,34	27,01±6,24	-0,28	$p > 0,05$
Empathy	71,80±22,52	74,37±20,47	-1,34	$p < 0,05$

*Note (M ± SD) – mean and standard deviation.

Discussion

In this study 15 – 16 years old and 17 – 18 years old students' expression of social skills in physical education classes was compared, which showed that 17 – 18 years old students have higher rate of social awareness skills, while 15 – 16 years old students have higher empathy abilities in physical education classes. Which is consistent with previous findings [13], stating that the social skills change due to respondents' age change. Meanwhile, another study has provided evidence that while students' age is increasing, positive social behavior is decreasing and anti-social behavior is increasing in physical education classes [27]. E. Christodoulides and colleagues (2012) analyzed different age students' social skills in physical education classes. The results showed that elementary school boys are able to communicate and cooperate with each other better in physical education classes than middle school age boys.

This study compared senior high school age boys' and girls' expression of social skills, which showed that the girls have a higher rate of communication and empathy skills in physical education classes than boys. The survey results coincide with previous findings that girls have more developed social skills - social responsibility and the ability to help others in physical education classes than their peers boys [7].

The finding that girls have better social skills than their peers boys could be explained according to K. Margetts (2005) study results showing, that secondary school age boys face more frequently a range of behavioral problems and use more frequently physical violence. Boys develop self-control ability later than girls, so they often can not control their emotions, they quickly become angry, lack for respect and tolerance towards other people, often do not understand their own and other people's feelings [11]. Physical education classes often include contention situations, that's why there is competition among teenagers, which can affect the appearance of conflict situations. These reasons may help explain why more boys more frequently face behavioral problems and have lower social skills results than their peers girls in physical education classes [27].

The study revealed that senior high school age students' social skills in physical education classes should be improved. It can be assumed that a curriculum based on the social emotional personality education model may enhance senior high school age students' social skills.

To sum up it can be stated that Lithuania has not yet developed the educational model on which base senior high school age students' social skills in physical education classes can be educated, so the development of such model – is a task for further research.

Conclusion

1. It is revealed that 17 – 18 years old students have higher rate of social awareness abilities ($p < 0,05$), while 15 – 16 years old students have higher rate of empathy abilities in physical education classes ($p < 0,05$).

2. It is revealed that girls have higher rate of communication and empathy skills in physical education classes than boys ($p < 0,05$). According to the other components of social skills between boys and girls statistically significant difference was not observed.

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Выражение социальных навыков у учащихся старшего школьного возраста на уроках физкультуры

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Аннотация. В статье рассматривается выражение социальных навыков у учащихся старшего школьного возраста на уроках физкультуры. Объем выборки для исследования – 244 учащихся 8–9 классов и 258 учащихся 10–11 классов средних школ, в том числе 224 мужского и 278 женского пола. В качестве инструмента выбраны следующие методики: опросник Л. Булотайте и В. Гуджинскене для оценки коммуникативных способностей, опросник Тромса для оценки социальной компетенции, опросник «Диагностика уровня эмпатии» И. М. Юсупова, применен с целью изучения общего уровня эмпатии у учащихся. Выявлено, что учащиеся 10–11 классов социально более сознательны, у учащихся 8–9 классов обнаружен достоверно более высокий уровень эмпатии, у девушек уровень эмпатии и коммуникативных способностей выше по сравнению с их сверстниками парнями.

Ключевые слова: выражение социальных навыков, учащиеся, уроки физкультуры, старший школьный возраст.