

ACTUALISING THE REQUIREMENTS AND ABILITIES OF THE STUDENTS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education students' self-actualisation

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Abstract

Introduction. One of the elements of a teacher's professional qualifications is the ability of actualisation of one's own requirements and opportunities. The objective of the present research was to study the tendencies behind self-actualisation of the physical education students and the attempt to determine the conditions accompanying the process. **Material and methods.** 1036 Physical Education students graduating from BA and MA studies, participated in the research. Diagnostic poll method utilising Witkowski AS-3 Self-actualisation Scale survey was conducted for the purpose of the research. **Results.** The highest results were achieved by the examined in the following scales: realistic approach, ability to experience ecstatic experiences, openness in emotional relationships, exclusion of social stigmas. The lowest self-actualisation was identified in task orientation, the need for seclusion, and inner-containment. Sex, the year of studies and hobbies, in terms of statistics, significantly differentiate the majority of self-actualisation dimensions. **Conclusions.** The graduating students undertake the effort of self-actualisation. However, many of them are at the beginning of the process. Women demonstrate a higher level of disposition towards self-actualisation than men. The tendency increases as the student progresses in his/ her education but also grows in people with various hobbies.

Key words: teacher, self-actualisation, the tendency towards self-actualisation

Introduction

According to contemporary representatives of modern life, the face of Polish education is changing. The image of a student searching for and creating knowledge, and not one merely embracing the curriculum is emerging. The situation is a challenge, especially for teachers, who are expected to change their attitude towards tasks but also towards themselves. According to Mirski [1], the future of education lies in the search for the synthetic approach defined as the perception of the student, the object of education (an independent and free entity) as regards values shared by him/her and the society. This requires particular interest on the part of the present teachers and teachers-to-be, who ought to undergo a permanent process of internal formation directed at self-awareness. This particular reinterpretation of the concept of the teacher requires the vision of man to be based on humanistic psychology.

Regardless of the differences in humanistic psychologists' theories, the holistic approach adopted by them allows to perceive man as an entity whose elementary aim of existence is self-actualisation. Apart from the term "self-actualisation", literature offers other terms to describe the tendency of constant development such as self-realisation, self-fulfilment, actualisation of self. The majority of authors use these as synonyms. Witkowski [2] is an opponent of such an approach. He emphasises the fact that the term "actualisation of self" defines the essence of the process of directing one's own development much better, highlighting the aware and active approach of a man towards himself/herself. "Self-actualisation" loses this vital aspect suggesting spontaneous, biological character of the process.

The common element joining authors supporting this concept is the belief that man was created to realise what is potentially given to him, the search for the characteristics of a mature, fully functioning (actualising oneself) person and

the emphasis of individual experiences [3].

As early as 1970s, while discussing the concept of actualisation of self, Witkowski [2] indicated that a higher level of actualisation of self is a value which is reflected in various types of social configurations and mainly refers to professionals active in the process of upbringing. It is them who bear responsibility for the development of individuals under their influence and care. Consequently, the first version of Actualisation of Self Scale, whose modification was utilised in the present study, was created with parents, educators and teachers in mind. The basis of the scale consists of Maslow's concept [4]. The majority of characteristic features of a person undergoing actualisation of self were drawn from the concept. The scale was supplemented with "seeing oneself in time" appearing in Shostrom's theory [2].

Maslow based his theory of self-actualisation on human abilities, values, experience and comprehension. Such theory is highly optimistic and full of trust in man and his good, constructive nature. The term "self-actualisation" is defined by the author as a constant actualisation of one's own abilities, opportunities, talents, pursuit of integration and internal harmony [4]. The theory is also regarded as hierarchically highest need of becoming what man is and can be [5]. This stems from the differentiation between the basic requirements and meta-requirements. The former bring about the deficiency motivation which is connected with the reduction of stress. The satisfaction of basic requirements enables the motivation of growth connected with self-fulfilment of own abilities and talents. The person who fulfilled the needs arising as first in the hierarchy has got a chance for self-actualisation.

Many claims made by Maslow are purely hypothetical in nature. The peculiarity of these does not allow them to be operationalised thus empirically tested. Despite that, they constitute an important guidepost for researchers.

The research discussed below constitutes a fragment of wider considerations regarding the pedagogic competences of students of various Physical Education institutions in Poland. The objective of the research was to establish the tendencies towards the actualisation of self of PE students and also the attempt at defining conditions accompanying the process.

Material and methods

The research was conducted among the students of the final year of PE studies coming from 7 different universities in Poland in the academic year 2007/2008 and 2008/2009. The students came from full-time undergraduate, graduate and unified Master's studies. The research data was ob-

tained from 1036 people. The data was gathered by means of a diagnostic poll utilising Witkowski AS-3 Self-actualisation Scale survey [2]. This tool is implemented in order to define the degree to which the examined meets the criteria for his/her own development. The scale does not determine the level of actualisation particular to the individual, but emphasises the criteria driving the process without impediments. The scale consists of 15 features describing two extreme situations at the same time. The task of the examined is to indicate his/her own place within the A-G segment by marking the particular place in the segment. All the features are based on metric 1-7 scale. In the statistical analysis of the data the following were calculated: weighted mean, chi-square value (χ^2), the correlation and dependence value (C_{KOR}).

Results

The analysis of the relationship between sex and scores in particular actualisation-of-self scales indicated that, in the majority of scales, women obtain higher results. Men tend to demonstrate distinctly higher tendency of self-actualisation in terms of realistic approach. Men also obtained somewhat higher results than women regarding "inner-containment", "creativity", "the need for seclusion" and "sense of humour". Although these categories in both groups ranked the same, their average values were significantly different. Women exhibit a higher tendency to actualisation of self in almost all remaining categories. This claim is supported by higher than in men average ranks of importance. The most significant differences occurred in relation to "the ability to accept oneself and others", "freshness of evaluation" and "ability to experience ecstatic experiences". A deeper statistical analysis, aimed at defining the relationship between the tendency to actualise oneself in terms of particular categories and respondents' sex, proved that the statistically important relationship was established in 10 categories. Sex is the differential variable for the "location of self in time", "self-acceptance and acceptance of others", "following one's own internal motivation", the ability to experience emotions regarding the situations occurring around us, the ability to be open in emotional contacts, universal values and matters. The statistically vital difference was also indicated in the relationship between respondents' sex and the following categories: "sense of humour", "creativity" and "the ability to overcome dichotomies". The fact that the statistically vital relationships were established between sex and some self-actualisation criteria allows for the determination of the strength of such relationship (C_{KOR}). The analysis proves

Table 1. Average ranks of importance obtained in individual self-actualisation scales in relation to sex

Self-actualisation criteria	Men (n=680)		Women (n=356)		Chi-square value (χ^2)	C _{KOR}
	Average	Ranking	Average	Ranking		
Placement of oneself in time	4.68	VI	4.69	VII	17.77	0.22
Acceptance of oneself and others	4.73	IV	5.13	V	16.87	0.22
Realistic approach	5.09	I	5.17	IV	6.97	-
Orientation on tasks	4.00	XIII	4.37	XI	7.68	-
Inner-containment	3.69	XV	3.26	XV	14.04	0.20
The need for seclusion	4.44	XII	4.26	XII	9.45	-
Freshness of evaluation	4.45	XI	4.74	VI	7.84	-
Ability to experience ecstatic experiences	4.96	II	5.42	II	29.83	0.28
Participation in general thinking and assessment	3.95	XIV	3.71	XIV	23.36	0.26
Openness towards emotional contact	4.69	V	5.24	III	20.28	0.23
Exclusion of social stigmas	4.85	III	5.51	I	29.9	0.28
Setting objectives for one's own life	4.61	VIII	4.57	VIII	8.5	-
Spontaneous sense of humour	4.59	X	4.17	XIII	17.15	0.22
Creativity	4.64	VII	4.51	X	18.09	0.22
Ability to overcome dichotomies	4.60	IX	4.52	IX	14.69	0.21

Numbers in bold denote statistically vital differences for $p < 0.05$; $df=6$

Table 2. Average ranks of importance obtained in individual self-actualisation scales in relation to the year of studies

Self-actualisation criteria	3 rd year (n=580)		Final year (n=456)		Chi-square value (χ^2)	C _{KOR}
	Average	Ranking	Average	Ranking		
Placement of oneself in time	4.55	VIII	4.82	VIII	10.94	-
Acceptance of oneself and others	4.86	IV	4.88	VI	17.56	0.22
Realistic approach	5.01	II	5.26	I	20.09	0.23
Orientation on tasks	4.23	XIII	4.51	XII	13.0	-
Inner-containment	3.45	XV	3.66	XV	12.12	-
The need for seclusion	4.52	IX	4.20	XIII	19.23	0.23
Freshness of evaluation	4.46	XI	4.66	X	15.34	0.21
Ability to experience ecstatic experiences	5.09	I	5.15	IV	6.6	-
Participation in general thinking and assessment	3.86	XIV	3.88	XIV	4.49	-
Openness towards emotional contact	4.75	V	5.04	V	19.79	0.23
Exclusion of social stigmas	4.97	III	5.20	II	5.17	-
Setting objectives for one's own life	4.46	XI	4.77	IX	17.80	0.22
Spontaneous sense of humour	4.75	V	5.16	III	11.57	-
Creativity	4.56	VII	4.63	XI	11.41	-
Ability to overcome dichotomies	4.49	X	4.86	VII	13.12	0.05

Numbers in bold denote statistically vital differences for $p < 0.05$; $df=6$

that in all of the evaluated categories, the relationship between the variables was weak (Tab. 1).

Students graduating from PE studies constituted the participants of the research. These were students completing not only undergraduate studies but also those completing Master's studies. The analysis indicated that the 5th year students achieved higher averages in almost all scales. Respondents completing undergraduate studies demonstrate

slightly higher tendency towards self-actualisation in terms of the need for seclusion. Respondents completing graduate studies were able to define their goals and life aspirations in a slightly more confident way. They were more open towards making contact with other people and avoided stereotyping in interpersonal relations more frequently. Their attitude towards tasks and the ability to overcome various dichotomies in their functioning were slightly

stronger than in case of their younger colleagues. The statistical analysis undertaken with the purpose of defining the relationship between the year of studies and the tendency towards self-actualisation substantiated the existence of the relationship in case of 7 criteria. The year of studies was pinpointed as the differential variable for "the ability to accept oneself and others", "overcoming dichotomies" and "realistic approach". Statistically vital differences also occurred in relation to "openness towards others", "freshness of evaluation", "setting objectives regarding one's life and the ability to choose means of their realisation" and "the ability to overcome dichotomies". However, correlation and dependence values indicate that the relationship was weak and, as regards, "the ability to overcome dichotomies" the correlation can be considered as weak (Tab. 2).

The Self-actualisation Scale used in the research allows for gathering of information pertaining to respondents' interests. This presents an opportunity to examine the actualisation of developmental potential from the perspective of the respondents' hobbies. The surveyed students named various forms of interests, which even though categorised, made the statistical analysis difficult. Therefore, the comparison of self-actualisation tendencies in groups of students with particular hobbies, regardless of their type, and those declaring lack of particular interests, was decided upon. The analysis indicates that those students who declared having various type of interests exhibited strong realistic approach, were cheerful and spontaneous in their behaviour. These categories showed the greatest differences in the average values of importance ranks. The analysis also showed that people who declared having various life passions demonstrated a higher tendency towards creating deep emotional relationships, democratic character structure and acceptance of oneself and human nature. In turn, the examined who declared lack of particular interests, in relation to the respondents from the previous group, were able to place themselves in time better, were more autonomous and searched for seclusion more frequently. Statistical analysis showed that a significant relationship between the self-actualisation tendency and the possession of interests occurred in 9 categories. Hobbies are seen as the differential variable for the following aspects of self-actualisation: "the acceptance of oneself and others", "orientation on reality and task", "readiness towards re-evaluation of certain issues", "experiencing emotions and making contact with other people". The correlation and dependence value indicates, however, that as regards "the acceptance of oneself and others", "orientation on tasks", "realistic approach", and "spontaneous sense of humour" the correlation between the variables was low and when considering the

remaining variables, the relationship ought to be defined as weak (Tab. 3).

Discussion

The theory of self-actualisation constitutes a theory of personality development which underlies the belief that every human being is driven by development and fulfilment of individual dispositions. The tendency, although positive, may not reveal itself. In addition, research indicates that only a part of population reach the optimum level of development. The reason behind it may be a personality development defect, which Maslow identifies as neurosis or the cause of neurosis [4]. The obstacle for the development may consist of both external factors and internal mechanism limiting or hindering the individual's activity or directing the individual towards goals which conflict his/her needs and the hierarchy of values. Development constitutes the essence of self-development of every human being. However, as regards teachers, development is doubly important. A teacher actualising his/her own developmental potential, perfects not only him/herself, but also is able to catalyse the process in people under his/her care. In addition, only this type of facilitator is able to create the optimum conditions for personality development. An individual who self-actualises is prepared for life within culture, but does not yield to fashionable cultural trends without thought. Moreover, such an individual, without shame or fear, accepts people as they are and not as he/she would like to perceive them. Consequently, self-actualisation studies regarding this group of professionals supply vital information as regards the readiness to work with children and the youth.

The surveyed students of PE, in the majority of scales, obtained slightly-above-average results which indicates that they are on the self-actualisation path. However, the process seems to have only begun or respondents seem to encounter difficulties as regards work on their own development. It seems that actualisation of self is a process bringing gradual results. The claim may be supported by the fact that 3rd year students obtained lower results in individual scales than the students of the final year. Moreover, Self-actualisation Scale research conducted by Głodzik [6] among professionally active teachers demonstrate that their results in the majority of scales surpassed the 5.0 average. Only in inner-containment, both PE students and the teachers obtained low result. A similar presentation of the tendency is demonstrated by Janowska's research [7] conducted among students of studies training prospective teachers. The examined obtained similar arithmetic means in individual scales. However, the highest tendency of de-

Table 3. Average ranks of importance obtained in individual self-actualisation scales in relation to declared by the examined interests

Self-actualisation criteria	Lack of interests		Various interests		Chi-square value (χ^2)	C _{KOR}
	Average	Ranking	Average	Ranking		
Placement of oneself in time	5.00	II	4.62	IX	7.5	-
Acceptance of oneself and others	4.22	XII	4.97	V	33.11	0.25
Realistic approach	4.53	VII	5.22	I	28.69	0.23
Orientation on tasks	3.97	XIII	4.44	XII	32.47	0.24
Inner-containment	3.81	XIV	3.50	XV	7.48	-
The need for seclusion	4.67	V	4.33	XIII	11.6	-
Freshness of evaluation	4.89	III	4.49	XI	14.84	0.17
Ability to experience ecstatic experiences	5.06	I	5.13	II	14.43	0.16
Participation in general thinking and assessment	3.61	XV	3.91	XIV	17.87	0.18
Openness towards emotional contact	4.44	IX	4.95	VI	18.9	0.19
Exclusion of social stigmas	4.72	IV	5.13	II	7.44	-
Setting objectives for one's own life	4.58	VI	4.60	X	3.85	-
Spontaneous sense of humour	4.28	XI	5.04	IV	27.96	0.23
Creativity	4.36	X	4.63	VIII	10.15	-
Ability to overcome dichotomies	4.47	VIII	4.68	VII	17.06	0.18

Numbers in bold denote statistically vital differences for $p < 0.05$; $df=6$

velopment was indicated in placement in time, exclusion of social stigmas and the ability to experience ecstatic experiences.

Research conducted among the prospective PE teachers proved that, in accordance with Maslow's views [4], there exist differences between men and women as regards some self-actualisation indicators. However, such relationship is confirmed by neither Żylicz's [3] nor Jankowska's [7] research. In the latter's case, the relationship was virtually impossible to grasp due to the very low percentage of men in the sample group. This is the consequence of feminisation of studies training prospective teachers.

Self-actualisation of prospective teachers may be considered as a crucial aspect underlying educational competences. According to Czykwin [8], a teacher developing his/her own awareness feels in control of the situation, is responsible for his/her own choices and their consequences. Owing to these skills his expectations develop students' role in a much better way. Therefore, these skills contribute to developing people oriented towards development who are more self-aware and aware of their own needs. Self-awareness of the teacher allows him to develop personally and professionally. It leads to integrated personality which, in the contemporary world, constitutes an antidote for various disorders ensuing from ambiguities and social disintegration.

Conclusions

1. Students graduating from PE studies as prospective teachers demonstrate a high level of actualisation regarding openness to emotional contact, exclusion of social stigmas and acceptance of oneself and others. Still, respondents exhibit certain tendencies towards defensive attitude as regards oneself, withdrawal into the surrounding environment, demonstrating conformist behaviour.
2. Female respondents exhibit a stronger tendency towards self-actualisation than men. Women demonstrate significantly higher ability to be open to emotional contact with other people and they avoid social stigmatisation of others.
3. Students of the final year demonstrate a higher tendency to self-actualisation than 3rd year students, which may give evidence to the fact that the tendency to self-actualise grows with the progression of a student in his/her studies.
4. Students who become engaged in their hobbies exhibit a higher tendency to self-actualise than people declaring lack of particular interests. This fact constitutes a fundamental piece of advice regarding activities undertaken by universities which, apart from the educational function, ought to create and foster students' interests as this is one of the methods leading to the development of a competent PE teacher.

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