

Review Article

Promote the equality and fairness for everyone in physical education activity-the case of mixed group

SIMONA PETRACOVSKI¹, SORINEL VOICU², MIHAELA FAUR³, FELIX SINITEAN-SINGER⁴

¹⁻⁴Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, West University, Timișoara, Romania.

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Abstract

Introduction

Since the classes are mixed in Romania but the lessons of physical education are still practicing by using separated groups for male and female, especially for team sports (e.g. football, handball, etc) where boys are playing against boys and girls against girls, the purpose of this study is to identify and combat gender stereotypes by using games and plays for mixed group in physical education activity. Also, using the mix group in the physical activity during all the school period will be a main method of learning civic rules, the respect of difference and will encourage the process of socialization between boys and girls.

Methods

The experiment was conducted between 15 October 2009 to 15 May 2010 by a group of 20 students (13 girls and 7 boys) at the age of 13 (VII grade in Romanian system) using the sociometrical method.

Results and discussion

If the initial testing shows that the choice of partner is primarily based on gender, the results made after final testing (after 7 months of work carried out by groups combined) reveals that the partner's choice is made according to sporting skills and physical development.

Conclusions

The conclusions highlight the importance of early work on mixed groups from the age of 9. The idea is to combat the stereotypes in so called "masculine" or "feminine" sports and to emphasize the respect for equality and fairness between students according to individual possibilities.

Keywords: physical education, football, mixed group, equality, fairness, socialization.

Introduction

In a society in which gender differences are evident and emphasized, the need to live together and next to the other sex is learned throughout the course of one's life. This is why school – with its formative role – is the medium in which moral, civic and educational values are learned, and the physical education class (through its mixed character) allows socializing between boys and girls, with the purpose of improving the relationships between them (Colwell, 1999, p.222).

The physical education class is the activity undertaken by pupils with the guidance of the teacher; during the lesson, they optimize their physical development, develop their motric abilities, gain knowledge and form basic motric skills, with specific utility and applicability in various sportive branches, according to the curriculum, in a specified time frame (Faur, 2004, p.152).

This topic is important because at present in most Romanian schools differences are being made between boys and girls during the physical education class; even if in the introductory part of the lesson there is no different approach as concerns gender, during the phase of learning-consolidation of motric skills specific to various sports games, group division is gender-based and not according to values of preferences (Combaz, 1991, p.63). If gender-based group division may be justified as concerns the development of psychomotric abilities, no such division may be made when the development of general or specific motric abilities is concerned (Davis & Louveau, 1991). Some teacher prefer working on football with boys and on volleyball with girls (Griffin, 1994, p.33) as they are influenced by the stereotype that boys are more "aggressive" and girls are more "delicate". These teachers do not take into account the other factors which may be dealt with then working with mixed groups, such as: learning how to communicate verbally and non-verbally with the opposite sex, accordance to rules of civic and moral behaviour, fulfilment of both educational general targets and of those specific to physical education and, last but not least, the development of psychomotric abilities and both basic and specific motric skills (Cogerino, 2005). It has been noticed (Coupey, 1995, p. 47) that early practice using mixed groups,

starting with the age of 9, the debut of preadolescence, will yield major results as concerns solving inequalities (Lentillon & Cogerino, 2005) and promoting equity.

The purpose of the research is to demonstrate that, even from an early age, working in mixed groups is possible and that after the pubertal stage, the child does not take gender into account when choosing partners during the physical education class, but rather chooses them according to their motric skills.

Research tasks and objectives

To identify and combat gender stereotypes through games and motric activities using mixed groups.

The subject is the boy-girl relationship in the context of a mixed group at a physical education class. As a sports game, football has been chosen, played by both boys and girls; this is due to the fact that in Romania there still is restraint as regards girls playing football and creating mixed teams, but it has been noticed that some girls wish to practice certain sportive activities considered to be “masculine” (Menesson, 2005), such as football.

Hypothesis

Using mixed groups during the physical education class will lead to choosing a teammate/partner according to psychomotric abilities and not according to gender.

Material and methods

The experiment took place in the School with eight grades from Jamu Mare, Timiș County during the 2009-2010 scholastic year, at a seventh grade class with 20 pupils – 13 girls and 7 boys. As methods of research, the following were chosen: the observation method (systematic observation) and the sociometric method (Moreno, 1934, Georgescu, 1979, pp.160-170). The questionnaire used to determine those who were chosen for the team (and those who were not) contains four types of questions (“Whom would you choose to be part of your football team?”, Whom would you not choose to be part of your football team?”, “Who do you think would choose you to be a part of his/her football team?” “Who do you think would not choose you to be a part of his/her football team?”). Three options of response are provided, each being allocated points – 3, 2 or 1 – according to preferences.

In the tables presented below, the 7 boys are highlighted using blue, and the 13 girls using red. An initial testing was conducted at the beginning of the scholastic year and a final one was conducted at the end of the same scholastic year.

Results

The data that has been recorded after the initial testing is presented in the following two tables:

Student	DE	KF	IM	FC	MC	TA	AE	AE	DA	SA	TT	ZF	SL	UA	ML	GI	AA	VA	PS	GI
DE	0	-2				2				-1						1		-3	3	
KF	0	0	-3		-2					3	2		-2							1
IM			0	-3						1	3	-2	-1				2			
FC				-3	0					3	1		-1				-2			2
MC					0						3	-2	-3	-1		2				1
TA				-3	-2	0		-1							2			3	1	
AE							0	-2		3							-1	+1.3	2	
AE							-3	0			-2			1	2		3			
DA	-3			-1		2	-2		0							3				1
SA				-1	-2		-3			0	1					3				2
TT						-3				3	0	-2			-1	2	1			
ZF				-3		-2				1	0			-1		-3				2
SL		2					-3	-1			-2		0	3	1					
UA					-2			-3			3	-1		0		1				2
ML					-3	-2				2				-1	0	1				3
GI					-3	-1	1							-2		0		2	-3	
AA	-3							-2			3					1	0			2
VA							1			-2	-1					2	-3	0	-3	
PS	-3						1	-1	-2							3				0
GI						2	-1						-2	-3		3				1
T.Pre.	0/0	1/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	6/9	0/0	0/0	0/0	6/17	8/17	0/0	0/0	2/4	2/3	13/27	3/6	4/8	15/29	0/0
T.Res.	3/9	0/0	7/18	7/15	6/12	0/0	6/18	3/4	1/2	1/1	3/6	5/8	7/12	3/5	1/1	0/0	3/6	2/8	0/0	0/0
ISS	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.31	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.31	0.42	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.68	0.15	0.21	0.78	0.00
ISP	-0.15	0.05	-0.36	-0.36	-0.31	0.31	-0.42	-0.15	-0.05	0.36	0.26	-0.26	-0.36	-0.05	0.05	0.68	0.00	0.10	0.78	0.00

Table nr.1 The sociomatrix of preferences and rejections after the initial testing

From table nr.1 one can observe that boys prefer girls firstly only in one case (BF - SA), while girls choose boys in 4 cases (SA - GI, ZF - GI, ML - PS, GI - GI).

As concerns the second position, boys do not prefer girls at all at this point, whereas girls choose boys in 8 cases (FC - PS, MC - GI, SA - PS, TT - GI, ZF - PS, UA - PS, AA - PS, GI - TA).

For third position, boys do not prefer any girls. However, girls prefer boys in 6 cases (KF - PS, MS - PS, UA - GI, ML - GI, AA - GI, GI - PS).

Concerning the rejection of potential teammates, one can observe, based on table nr. 1, that boys would not choose girls for the first position in 3 cases (TA - IM, GI - FC, IA - AA), whereas girls would not choose boys in 5 cases (AE - BF, SA - BF, SL - BF, UA - BF, AA - OF). It can be noticed that BF get 4 rejections from girls, which can lead to the conclusion that BF has an inadequate behaviour towards his girl colleagues and is rejected (this has also been noticed during class observation).

The rejection of girls by boys for the second position appears in 5 cases out of 7 (OF - IM, TA - FC, BF - AE, GI - SL, IA - TT) and thus draws the conclusion that boys are distrustful of the girls' physical abilities, while girls reject boys for the second position just in one single case (AA - BF; BF is the boy rejected by various girls).

For the third position, boys reject girls in the majority of cases: 6 out a total of 7 (OF - SA, TA - AE, BF - AA, DA - FC, GI - MC, IA - ZF) and girls do not choose boys but for a single case (GI - BF).

Also from table nr.1, following the calculation of the Sociometric Status Index (ISS in the table) it can be noticed that boys are to be found on the first two places (PS - 0,78 and GI - 0,68) followed closely by two girls (TT - 0,42 and SI - 0,31).

The Preferential Status Index (ISP in the table) confirms the same order with both boys (PS - 0,78 and GI - 0,68) and girls (TT - 0,26 and SI - 0,36).

Student	OF	KF	IM	FC	MC	IA	BF	AE	DA	SA	TT	ZF	SL	UA	ML	GI	AA	GA	PS	GI
OF	0		-2			2			3						-1				-3	1
KF		0		-3	-2			-1		3	2						1			
IM			0			-1				2	3					-2	1			-3
FC	-1	2		0	1					3	-2						-3			
MC					0	-3			-2		3							1		+2.1
IA						0							-3	-2	-1	2		1		3
BF	1					3	0			-3							-2	-1		2
AE			3				2	0			-2			1	-3					-1
DA	-3	-1				1			0	-2						2				3
SA			3			-3	-1		-2	0		1						2		
TT	-2					-3			-1	2	0					1				3
ZF	-2					-3			-1			0				2	1			3
SL			-3	-1								1	0	3	2					-2
UA			-2							1	3		2	0						-3
ML			1			-1				-2	2			3	0					-3
GI	-1		-3			2						-2				0		1		3
AA	-1	-2				-3				2	3					1	0			
GA	-2					-3			2	-1						1		0		3
PS	-3					-2	-1		2							3		1		0
GI		-1			-2				1	3				-3			2			0
T.Pra.	1/1	1/2	3/7	0/0	1/1	4/8	1/2	0/0	3/7	7/14	5/17	3/4	1/2	3/7	1/2	7/12	4/5	5/8	9/23	0/0
T.Res.	8/15	3/4	4/10	2/4	2/4	5/22	2/2	1/1	4/8	3/6	3/6	1/2	1/3	2/5	3/5	1/2	2/5	2/4	5/8	2/3
ISS	0.05	0.05	0.15	0.00	0.05	0.21	0.05	0.00	0.15	0.36	0.31	0.15	0.05	0.19	0.05	0.36	0.21	0.25	0.47	0.00
ISP	-0.36	-0.10	-0.05	-0.10	-0.05	-0.21	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05	-0.15	0.15	0.10	0.00	0.05	-0.10	0.31	0.10	0.15	0.21	-0.10

Table nr.2 The sociomatrix of the perception of the preferences and rejections after the initial testing

As concerns the perception linked to choice of teammates, it can be noticed that boys think that they will be chosen on the first position by boys in all the cases, while the girls presume that they will be chosen by boys in 2 cases (TT by PS, ZF by PS).

On the second position, boys think that they will be chosen by boys in all the cases, while girls believe that they will be picked by boys in 4 cases (MC by PS, AE by BF, SA by IA, ZF by GI).

For the third position, boys presume that they will be chosen by boys in all the cases, while girls think that they will be chosen by boys in 3 cases (MC by IA, TT by GI, AA by GI)

As concerns the perception linked to rejection, the boys estimate that they will not be chosen by girls in 3 cases (TA by SL, BF by SA, GI by IM), whereas the girls think that boys will not choose them in 7 out of 13 cases (IM by PS, MC by TA, SA by TA, TT by TA, ZF by TA, UA by PS, AA by TA).

The boys' perception of rejection for the second position by girls is present in 5 cases (OF by IM, TA by UA, BF by AA, DA by SA, GI by ZF), whereas girls think that they will not be chosen by boys in 5 cases (IM by GI, MC by DA, SA by DA, TT by OF, ZF by OF).

For the third position, boys think that they will not be chosen by girls in 4 cases (OF by ML, TA by ML, DA by KF, IA by SA), while girls believe that they will not be chosen by boys in 9 cases (IM by TA, FC by OF, MC by PS, AE by PS, SA by BF, TT by DA, ZF by DA, ML by TA, AA by OF).

Following the final testing, the data which has been recorded is presented in tables 3 and 4:

Student	OF	KF	I.M.	F.C.	M.C.	TA	BF	A.E.	DA	SA	T.T.	Z.F.	SL	UA	M.L.	GI	AA	IA	PS	G.I.
OF	0					2		-2		3					-3	1	-1			
KF		0		1	2					3		-1	-3		-2					
I.M.		1	0	-3	3		2					-1	-2							
F.C.	-1	2		0						3					1		-2		-3	
M.C.		3		-1	0				-3		2			-2					1	
TA				-3		0		-2		2					-1	3			1	
BF	2					3	0	-2						-1			-3		2	
AE		-2	2	1		-1		0			3	-3								
DA		-2		-3					0			-1				2	1	3		
SA				-3	-2			-1		0	3						2			1
TT				-1	-2		-3			3	0						2		1	
ZF				-3		-2				2		0			-1	1			3	
SL		2	-3	-2				-1					0	3	1					
UA			-2	-3			-1			3	1			0			2			
ML		2		-2	-1					3		-3			0					1
GI		-2	-3			1						-1				0	2		3	
AA	-3			-1			-2			2	3						0			1
IA						1			2	-1	-3						-2	0	3	
PS	-2					-3	-1			3	2					1			0	
G.I.							-1			1	2		-2	-3			3			0
T.Pre.	1/2	5/10	1/2	2/2	2/5	4/7	1/2	0/0	1/2	11/28	7/16	0/0	0/0	1/3	2/2	5/8	6/10	1/3	1/3	3/3
T.Res.	3/6	3/6	7/16	9/21	2/3	3/7	4/5	5/8	1/3	1/1	1/3	6/10	3/7	3/6	4/7	0/0	4/8	0/0	1/3	0/0
ISS	0,05	0,26	0,05	0,10	0,10	0,21	0,05	0,00	0,05	0,57	0,36	0,00	0,00	0,05	0,10	0,26	0,31	0,05	0,05	0,15
ISP	-0,10	0,10	-0,31	-0,36	0,00	0,05	-0,15	-0,26	0,00	0,52	0,31	-0,31	-0,15	-0,10	-0,10	0,26	0,10	0,05	0,00	0,15

Table nr.3 The sociomatrix of the preferences and rejections after the final testing

Based on table nr.3, one can observe that boys prefer girls for the first position in 4 cases (OF - SA, TA - SA, DA - AA, IA - FC), while girls prefer boys for the first position also in 4 cases (IM - BF, ZF - PS, UA - PS, ML - TA).

As concerns the second position, boys prefer girls in 3 cases (DA - TT, GI - SA, PS - TT) whereas girls choose boys in 7 cases (FC - BF, MC - OF, AE - PS, ZF - GI, SL - GI, UA - GI, ML - DA).

For third position, boys prefer girls in 4 cases (TA - TT, DA - SA, GI - TT, PS - SA), while the girls prefer boys in 2 cases (AE - GI, SL - DA).

Based on table nr.3, concerning the rejection of potential teammates, one can observe that boys would not choose girls for the first position in 6 cases (OF - GI, BF - SA, DA - MC, GI - UA, IA - TT, PS - MC), whereas girls would not choose boys in 4 cases (KF - PS, ZF - OF, SL - TA, AA - OF). It can be noticed that BF get 4 rejections from girls, which can lead to the conclusion that BF has an inadequate behaviour towards his girl colleagues and is rejected (this has also been noticed during class observation).

The rejection of girls by boys for the second position appears in 6 cases (OF - AA, TA - GI, BF - TT, DA - IM, IA - UA, PS - IM) while girls reject boys for the second position in 5 cases (KF - GI; FC / GI, MC - IA, UA - OF, GI - BF).

For the third position, boys reject girls in 5 cases (OF - TT, TA - AA, BF - AA, GI - IM, IA - AA) and girls do not choose boys in 5 cases (FC - PS, SA - TA, SL - OF, UA - BF, AA - DA).

Student	OF	KF	I.M.	F.C.	M.C.	TA	BF	A.E.	DA	SA	T.T.	Z.F.	SL	UA	M.L.	GI	AA	IA	PS	G.I.
OF	0	-1	-2							1		-3				3				2
KF		0	-1	2	3					-2	-3		1							
I.M.		1	0		3	-1				-3				2		-2				
F.C.	-2	1		0	2					3							-1		-3	
M.C.		2			0	-2				1	3							-1	-3	
TA				-3		0		-2		3	2				-1				1	
BF	-1		3				0	-3	2									1	-2	
AE					3			0	1		-2			-1			-3		2	
DA			-1	-3					0				-2			3		1	2	
SA	-1					-3				0	3	-2					2			1
TT			-3			-1				3	0	-2					1			2
ZF		+2	2			-1	-3					0	1				3			
SL		2	-2	-3	-1								0	3	1					
UA		2	-2					-1	1				3	0					-3	
ML						-2				1				2	0	-1			-3	3
GI				-2			-3			2	3				-1	0	1			
AA	-3				-1			-2		2	3						0			1
IA	-3			-1					3			-2				2		0	1	
PS	-2					-3	-1			1						3		2	0	
G.I.			-1			-2				1	3			-3			2			0
T.Pre.	0/0	6/10	1/3	2/5	3/8	0/0	0/0	0/0	3/6	11/19	6/17	0/0	3/5	2/5	2/3	4/11	5/9	3/4	5/8	4/7
T.Res.	6/12	4/7	7/11	4/10	2/3	7/13	3/7	3/7	1/1	2/5	2/5	4/9	1/2	2/4	2/2	1/1	3/6	1/1	5/14	0/0
ISS	0,00	0,31	0,05	0,10	0,15	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,15	0,57	0,31	0,00	0,15	0,10	0,10	0,21	0,26	0,15	0,26	0,21
ISP	-0,31	-0,10	-0,31	-0,10	0,05	-0,36	-0,15	-0,15	0,10	0,47	0,21	-0,21	0,10	0,00	0,00	0,15	0,10	0,10	0,00	0,21

Table nr.4 The sociomatrix of the perceptions of the preferences and rejections after the final testing

As concerns the perception linked to choice of teammates, it can be noticed in the final testing that boys think that they will be chosen on the first position by girls in 2 cases (OF by SA, IA by FC), while the girls presume that they will be chosen by boys also in 2 cases (FC by GI, UA by IA).

On the second position, boys think that they will be chosen by girls in 2 cases (GI by SA, PS by TT) while girls believe that they will be picked by boys in 2 cases (KF by DA, ML by DA).

For the third position, boys presume that they will be chosen by boys in 5 cases (OF by TT, TA by GI, DA by GI, GI by TT, PS by SA), while girls think that boys will choose them in 2 cases (MC by OF, ML by BF).

As concerns the perception linked to rejection, the boys estimate that they will not be chosen by girls in 6 cases (OF by GI, TA by ZF, BF by ZF, GI by SL, IA by TT, PS by MC), whereas the girls think that boys will not choose them in 5 cases (SA by PS, TT by PS, ZF by OF, UA by OF, AA by OF).

The boys' perception of rejection for the second position by girls is present in 5 cases (OF by ML, BF by ML, DA by TT, IA by UA, PS by IM), whereas girls think that they will not be chosen by boys in 6 cases (KF by BF, IM by GI, SA by GI, TT by GI, SL by IA, GI by BF).

For the third position, boys think that they will not be chosen by girls in 3 cases (TA by TT, DA by SA, IA by AA), while girls believe that they will not be chosen by boys in 9 cases (IM by PS, SA by OF, SL by GI, AA by DA).

Discussions

- “Whom would you choose to be part of your football team?”

It can be noticed that, upon initial testing, boys do not choose girls as teammates, while girls choose boys in more than half of their choices. But, upon final testing, after prolonged work with mixed groups, one can observe a significant increase in the number of choices for the first, second and third position of girls by boys (from one single choice in the initial testing to four choices for the first position and from no choices to four choices for the second and third positions), which proves that working with mixed groups can improve boys' perception about girls, especially those who have well-developed sportive abilities and the teammate's gender is no longer a problem, as long as the physical qualities and interpersonal communication exists between boys and girls. Furthermore, in the initial testing, girls prefer boys for the third position in just two cases, as opposed to the final testing, when boys were preferred in eight cases.

- “Whom would you choose not to be part of your football team?”

If, upon initial testing, boys would not choose girls for the first position in 3 cases, for the second position in 5 cases and for the third position in 6 cases, the situation changes upon final testing, when girls are rejected in 6 cases for the first and second positions and in 5 cases for the third position.

- “Who do you think would choose you to be a part of his/her football team?”

In the case of the perception of who they will think will chose them as teammates, upon initial testing, it can be noted that, in all the cases, the boys do not take girls into account, which proves the existence of preconceived notions about the girls' sportive value and the fact that being chose by a girl is not a proof of value. After working with mixed groups, it can be noticed that upon final testing boys think they will be chosen by girls in two cases, for each position. As concerns the girls' perception about them being chosen by boys, if upon initial testing they think that they will be chosen in 2 cases, both for the first choice, 4 cases for the second choice and 3 cases for the third choice, the final testing notes that the perception has lowered itself to 2 cases in all the three choices. This may be interpreted as an increase of the perception of sportive value as a criterion in the choice of teammates and it also proves that the girls that do not have a high perception of their own sportive abilities in football will take this fact into consideration.

- “Who do you think would not choose you to be a part of his/her football team?”

As concerns the boys' perception over which girls will not choose them as teammates, there are no major differences between the initial and the final testing. (3, 5, 4 initial choices - 3, 5, 3 final ones). When looking at the girls' perception of their rejection by boys, one can notice a slight improvement between the initial and the final testing (7, 5 and 9 initial rejections as opposed to 5, 6, 3 final ones).

This proves that preconceived notions do indeed exist in the boy – girl relationships in the context of sportive activities and, moreover, that the rejections are due to aspects which are not linked to sportive value, but more due to the nature of the social relationships existing between boys and girls and the way in which these were built.

- Group cohesion

The group's cohesion index has been calculated and upon the initial testing an index figure of 0, 010 has been established, which proves a weak group cohesion, and upon the final testing, an index figure of -0,05 was yielded, which indicates tension in the relationships within the group. The fact that, before working with mixed groups, there used to be a segregation between boys and girls confirms weak group cohesion. Even if working together brings an increase to the number of choices and rejections between boys and girls, this does not bring an

increase in group cohesion; this may be achieved in the next scholastic year, through continuity in working within a mixed group and through the promotion of equity.

Conclusions

As noted from the results of the study, boys tend to reject mainly girls both in the initial and final testing. An objective argument may be the low level of sportive performance in football and the lack of confidence in girls' physical abilities when football is concerned, but working with mixed groups contributes to the capitalization of girls' motric qualities but also to the increase of boys' confidence in these possibilities, which will help to combat gender stereotypes.

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