

Chapter 20

Importance of the Physical Sports Experience in Modern Physical Education

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this chapter was to examine whether the sporting experience determines the emotional experience of the participants when playing competitive sports games. Seventy-three students (51 boys and 22 girls) of the 2nd year of the Degree in Physical Activity and Sport Sciences of the Catholic University San Antonio of Murcia (UCAM) participated in the study. To identify the emotional intensity experienced by the participants, the Games and Emotion Scale (GES) was used, and the generalized estimating equations test (GEE) and classification trees (CHAID method) were chosen to analyze the data obtained. The results showed that participants with previous physical-sports experience experienced emotions more intensely than participants with no previous experience. The conclusion drawn was that the physical-sports experience determines the optimal emotional experience of the students.

INTRODUCTION

Physical Education (hereinafter PE) is a discipline that allows a positive and optimal emotional experience in students (Alcaraz et al., 2020; Cifo et al., 2021). In this sense, Csikszentmihalyi (1997) associates the notion of happiness to the experience of an optimal flow experience. The author states that when

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one is in a state of relaxation, it cannot be considered as a state of well-being or optimal. Only difficult, hard and uncomfortable situations that test the person favor experiences of well-being and happiness.

Through PE, for example, by overcoming challenges in sports games, motor situations can be created that test the student. This means that it matters how they act (motor level), how they think (cognitive level), how they relate (social level) and how they feel (emotional level).

Therefore, the PE teacher should not only know the characteristics of the internal logic of sports games, but should also consider other external aspects that have a direct relationship with the emotional experience. In this sense, it will be convenient to consider the physical-sports experience of the students when promoting emotional PE programs.

It is considered of interest to assess whether the emotional experience is different depending on the students' background, such as sports experience. When the teacher proposes a game situation, the emotional experience may be unequal depending on whether or not that situation is known to the student; whether or not it is part of his or her physical-sports background. These aspects may favor that the person experiences to a lesser or greater degree an optimal flow experience. According to Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi (2002) from the flow theory, "flow experiences leave their imprint in memory and thus make it possible to return to that optimal state again" (p. 17). The sports history could therefore be determinant in the development of well-being, since optimal experiences mark for life.

Therefore, the main objective of this chapter was to examine whether the sport experience determines the emotional experience of the participants when playing oppositional sports games.

EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PHYSICAL-SPORTS EXPERIENCE

There are numerous studies that show that emotional experience also depends on previous physical-sports experiences. Based on this, players with a sports background experience negative emotions with less intensity than players with no previous physical-sports experiences and also less intensity in states of tension and anxiety when performing introjective motor practices (Rovira, López, Lagardera et al., 2014), "which illustrates that the practice of physical exercise can favorably influence emotional self-regulation" (p. 120). Attending to the age of the participants, it can be noted that adolescents (high school students) score psychomotor games with lower emotional intensity and sociomotor games with higher emotional intensity (Duran et al., 2014). These authors not only reach this conclusion, but also obtain another great finding referred to the presence of adversaries, since after knowing the results of their study they affirm that opposition and cooperation-opposition games increase the intensity of negative emotions. According to Duran et al. (2014) the three types of socio-motor games generate similar positive emotional intensities, but with regard to negative emotions, only the adversarial games have a greater emotional experience. This fact, according to Sáez de Ocáriz et al. (2013) and Alonso, Lavega et al. (2013), may be due to the conflicts generated when an opponent tries to stop the achievement of the objective or goal of the game.

Sáez de Ocáriz et al. (2013) in the study conducted with primary school students immersed in a social environment of confrontation, observed that when oppositional games are played, conflicts and rivalry reactions (physical and verbal aggressions, perverse actions, etc.) originate; however, such situations are transformed by playing cooperation and cooperation-opposition games, since these imbalances are channeled to a certain extent and interpersonal dialogue and socioemotional learning are encouraged. In this sense, Lavega, Filella et al. (2013), show that cooperative games and competitive games register the

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