PE TEACHERS’ VALUE ORIENTATIONS AND STUDENTS’ HEALTH-RELATED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
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Promotion of lifelong physical activity among children and adolescents has become a priority for public health. Accordingly, PE curriculum in many countries seeks to promote the habit of routine physical activities, stressing their benefit upon health and cultural participation. However, the literature shows that many PE teachers have assigned low importance both to health education and the promotion of active lifestyles. Among the many factors that may explain why the curriculum is not implemented as planned, individual values of PE teachers are considered the most important (1).

Considering that PE presents the potential to provide opportunities for students to be active during the day, and to practice the physical, cognitive and behavioural skills needed to be active later in life, we have carried out a case study focused on a secondary school, aimed at knowing the role of PE in the promotion of active and healthy lifestyles among the students. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between PE teachers’ value orientations and the practice opportunities offered to students, associated with health-related fitness. First, the Value Orientation Inventory (2) was applied to all PE school teachers (n=10) with the goal of determining their prevailing PE value orientation. Then, the students’ in-class behaviours, from three lessons of each teacher, were assessed through the SOFIT (3). Heart rates (HR) of a sample of four students per class were also measured. Finally, a questionnaire was completed by the students of each teacher (827 students from the 7th to 12th grades). The questions were related to attitudes toward PE and physical activities after school, perceived physical competence, and goal orientation. A cluster analysis was used to characterize the groups of students related to each prevailing PE teacher value orientation, namely: disciplinary mastery, self-actualization, social reconstruction, learning process, and ecological integration.

Results from SOFIT indicated that 6 teachers out of 10 provided moderate to vigorous physical activity during PE classes. Mean HR across the three lessons was 131.9, ranging from 108 to 154. Results of the analysis did not reveal any difference between groups. These findings do not confirm the results of previous studies on PE teachers’ value orientations where close relationship between teachers’ values and curriculum decision were observed. The fact that PE teachers work collegially could be a probable explanation.


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