



GOALS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION BASED ON OPINIONS OF ACADEMIC TEACHERS FROM SELECTED POLISH UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

To achieve its aim, any human activity needs to be performed consciously and purposefully. In this way, such an activity strengthens perseverance and contributes to the development of a strategy of action. The selection of the objective is associated with the valuation and hierarchy of goals and in such circumstances the teacher who targets the completion of a variety of tasks needs to determine what is important for them, prioritise, and establish which activities are indispensable in order to proceed to further steps (Strelau, 2000). Physical education forms a process through which students are prepared for an independent, satisfying and life-long participation in movement culture (Crum, 2007). However, the realization of these goals is relative to activities on the part of teachers and adequate education throughout the course of the study program. The objective of this paper is to establish the opinions of academic teachers regarding the hierarchy of the goals of physical education. The survey involved 52 teachers working at three Polish universities: Opole University of Technology, University of Physical Education in Katowice and State Higher Vocational School in Racibórz. The method involved a diagnostic technique, i.e. a survey in the form of a questionnaire. The specific tool applied a survey developed by the European Physical Education Association. On the basis of the replies to the questionnaire we can conclude that all interviewees agree on the principal objective i.e. encouraging students to follow an active and healthy lifestyle. This objective was followed in priority by ensuring students' safety during physical education classes and developing the range of movement skills.

Key words: goals of physical education, hierarchy, academic teachers..

Introduction

Physical education forms a process through which young people prepare for an independent, satisfying and life-long participation in the culture of movement (J. Pośpiech 2003 after Crum 2003). The realization of the objectives of physical education is related considerably to the educational priorities followed by academic teachers, since the latter have a decisive role in the perception of physical education amongst their students, i.e. future teachers of this school subject.

It was stated by Bart Crum (J. Pośpiech after B. Crum 2003) that the school should provide students with basic competency as a

result of which the latter will develop the ability to:

- adapt the course of activity to particular circumstances,
- appreciate and organize health promoting activities,
- act as a critical sports consumer,
- maintain a distance in relation to media reports.

The realization of the goals of physical education is considerably dependent on teachers themselves. The existing differences in the educational priorities followed by teachers can arise along the career path followed by teachers with a greater length of service, in particular with regard to those educated under the influence of the biotechnology-based theory of physical

education. The reasons for the discrepancies between teaching strategies in accordance with Bart Crum's theories can be associated with the various ideologies followed by teachers of physical education. "The first ideology – characterized by the idea of 'education-through-the-physical' – which claims that the described effects on character and personality development come more or less automatically simply by taking part in movement activities with the ascribed educational potential". (Crum 2007, p.5).

"The second ideology is 'training-of-the-physical'. The objectives of PE are formulated in terms of training effects and the content is described in terms of exercises that are classified according to desired effects and/or body parts. The main methodological rule of thumb is: keep students busy with frequent repetitions of simple exercises" (Crum 2007, p.6). Political transformations and socio-political factors can play a role in the educational views of teachers as they affect the system of education and vocational training. For this reason, it is important to correctly determine the hierarchy of the objectives followed in physical education and adapt a uniform system of teacher training (Kuśnierz 2015).

Research in the area of physical education undertakes basic issues related to the realization of this school subject. During such studies, one of the objectives is to determine educational activities, the effect of which is a commitment to developing well-educated persons in this area. To give an example, the European vocational associations in this area united in 1990 to form European Physical Education Association, (EUPEA), whose main objective is concerned with the protection and promotion of the Physical Education subject curriculum in school (Hardman, Green 2011). The important role of physical education as a subject that is recognized by the EU is demonstrated by the fact that the year 2004 was called the European Year of Education through Sport, and 2005 was named the United Nations International Year of Sport and Physical Education. Nevertheless, despite the considerable progress visible in many countries, the actual issue is probably associated with the "permanent tension between

the unfulfilled humanistic commitments expressed by politicians and compensation strategies generated by non-governmental organizations" (Klein, 2003, p. 424).

In consideration of the fact that each student attends school for at least 12 years and that schools employ professional PE teachers, the school takes responsibility for introduction to movement culture and the acquisition of movement competency (Crum 2007). The teaching of movement and sport should be followed by analogy to the teaching languages and literature. Despite the fact that the latter introduces the young to linguistic culture, the former gives an introduction to movement culture (Crum 2007). However, in order to ensure that this process occurs adequately, it is necessary to start from the source of the issue and determine which of the goals of PE are recognized as most important by the staff responsible for preparing future teachers, i.e. by academic teachers. "As long as the professor of biomechanics teaches a different message about the essence of PE than the pedagogy professor and as long as the games methodology teacher has a different PE perspective than the teacher for gymnastics methodology (just to give some examples), a PETE program will never be able to defeat the power of the apprenticeship of observation" (Crum 2007, p. 10).

The perception of the issue stated by Bart J. Crum can be limited to the statement regarding the differences between the objectives of physical education recognized by academic teachers in charge of theoretical subjects, such as theory of physical education, theory of learning, methodology of physical education and the group of university teachers providing training in the gymnastics hall, swimming pool and athletic stadium.

Objective of the study

This study aims to learn and report on the hierarchy of the objectives of physical education as they are recognized and valued by academic teachers.

Study questions:

- Which of the objectives of physical education are most important in the opinions of academic teachers?

- Are there differences in the hierarchy of goals followed by teachers teaching theoretical and practical courses?
- Does gender form a factor in the hierarchy of the goals?

Material and Methods

The pilot studies involved 52 teachers working at Polish universities: Opole University of Technology, The University of Physical Education in Katowice and State Higher Vocational School in Racibórz. The method involved a diagnostic technique, i.e. a survey in the form of a questionnaire developed by the European Physical Education Association (Repond, 2010). This questionnaire includes 13 goals of physical education representing general and detailed content, and the task of the interviewees was to indicate a hierarchy by marking the most important goal and giving a score to the remaining objectives in accordance with their preferences with regard to the priority. The analysis of the results involved calculation of arithmetic means and the statistical materiality level was established by the application of the Mann-Whitney test.

Results

An adequate selection and effective implementation of the objectives of physical education can provide students with suitable competency that can enable life-long participation in the culture of physical education. The acquisition of the competency will be relative to the effective following teaching and educational activities and fulfillment of their goals. A classification of such goals was provided by the European Physical Education Association, and it involved 13 competencies considered as core to the subject curriculum. They are formulated as follows:

1. 'To encourage students to follow an active and healthy lifestyle'

2. 'To develop a feeling of personal well-being';
3. 'To spread values among students that are connected to participation in sport: solidarity and fair play';
4. 'To ensure students' safety during classes';
5. 'To develop a broad repertoire of students' competence in movement';
6. 'To show students the cross-curricular links between physical education and other school subjects'
7. 'To promote among students the social and cultural importance of sports and physical activity'
8. 'To develop students' ability to evaluate their own and others' performance';
9. 'To develop group management skills and the ability to organize others' work';
10. 'To appreciate the value of fitness and health';
11. 'To develop the capacity to apply and develop skills in specific forms of physical activity';
12. 'To foster a sense of citizenship';
13. 'To provide opportunities for satisfactory participation in classes to all students, regardless of ability, gender or social and cultural background'.

The analysis of the results based on arithmetic mean demonstrates that among the goals listed above, the teachers recognized objective no. 1 as the most important one (encouraging students to follow an active and healthy lifestyle'). It was followed by two equally important ones (goals 4 and, 5, i.e. ensuring students' safety during classes and developing a broad repertoire of students' competence in movement). The goals that are considered as the least relevant to the teaching process include: no. 12: fostering a sense of citizenship and no. 6., i.e. encouraging students to appreciate the cross-curricular links between physical education and other school subjects (Fig. 1).

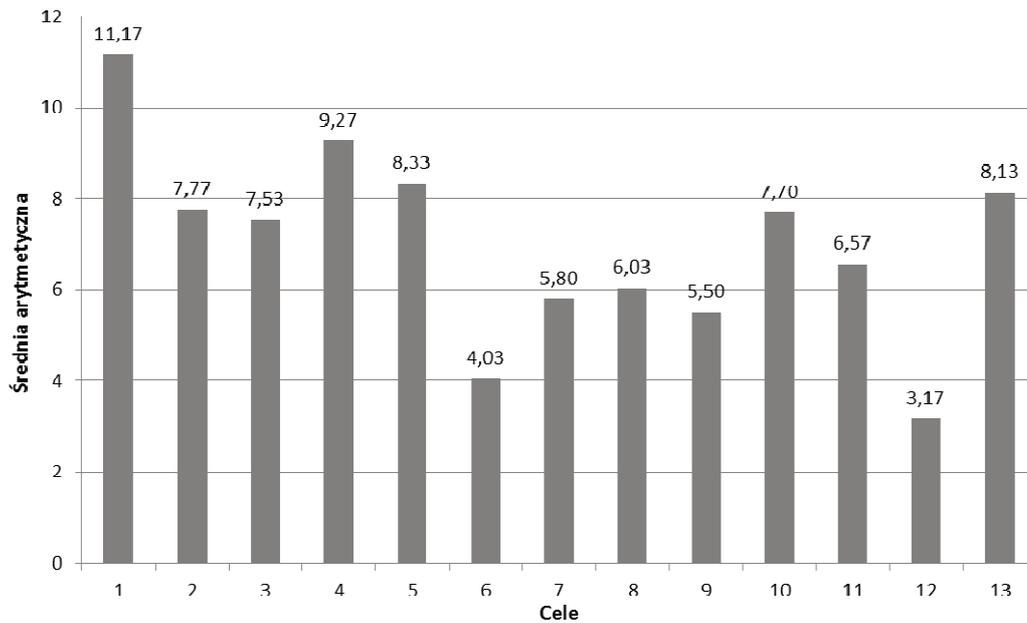


Fig. 1. Differences between EMG recordings of the right and left side of the body in individual movement schemes (I - marching, II - trotting, III - running)

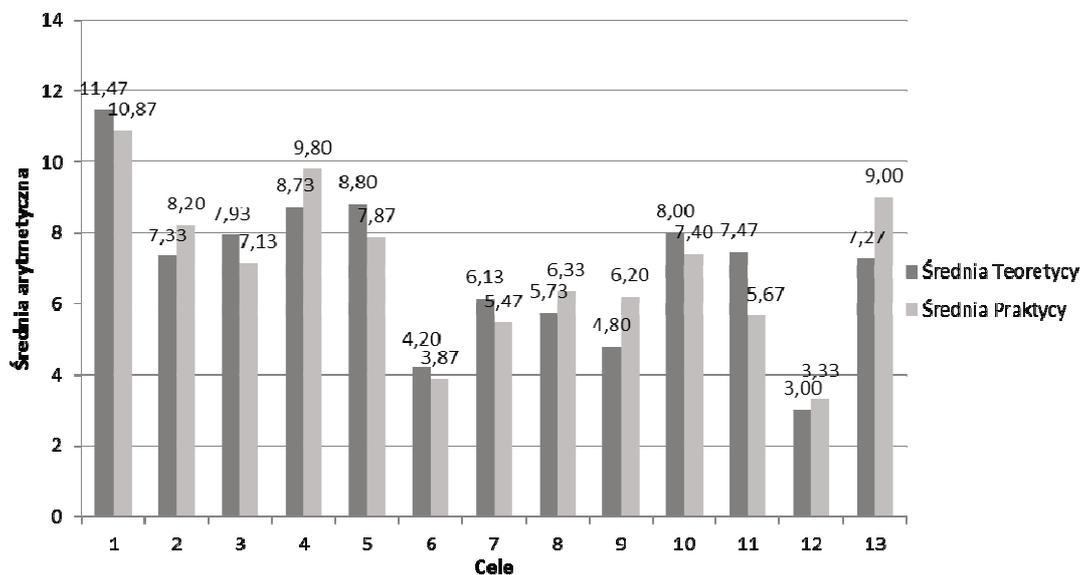


Fig. 2. Hierarchy of goals of physical education, comparison of staff teaching theoretical and practical courses

On the basis of a comparative analysis of the arithmetic mean gained from the interviews involving academic staff teaching theoretical and

practical courses, we can immediately note some differences in the hierarchy of goals in the area of physical education observed by the two

groups of academics. Despite the fact that both groups indicated objective no. 1 as the most important one, later choices demonstrate discrepancies between the two groups. The second place among theoreticians is occupied by goal no. 5, i.e. development of a broad repertoire of abilities, whereas the practitioners indicated goal no. 4, which is associated with ensuring student safety during the classes. The objective no. 4 took third place in the opinion of the staff teaching theoretical subjects, whereas for those giving practical courses this position is occupied by providing opportunities for satisfactory participation in classes regardless of ability, gender or social and cultural background (goal no.13), for details see Fig. 2.

The following step involved a comparison of the hierarchy while focusing on the differences

depending on the gender of the interviewees. With regard to goal no. 1, i.e. encouraging students to follow an active and healthy lifestyle, a higher arithmetic mean was registered in the female group and similarly a higher score among women was indicated with regard to goals no. 4 (ensuring student safety during class) and no. 2 (developing a feeling of personal well-being). Concurrently, the male interviewees tend to pay more attention to goal no.13 (providing opportunities for satisfactory participation in classes to all students regardless of ability, gender or social and cultural background) and goal no. 8 (developing students' ability to evaluate their own and others' performance), details can be found in Fig. 3.

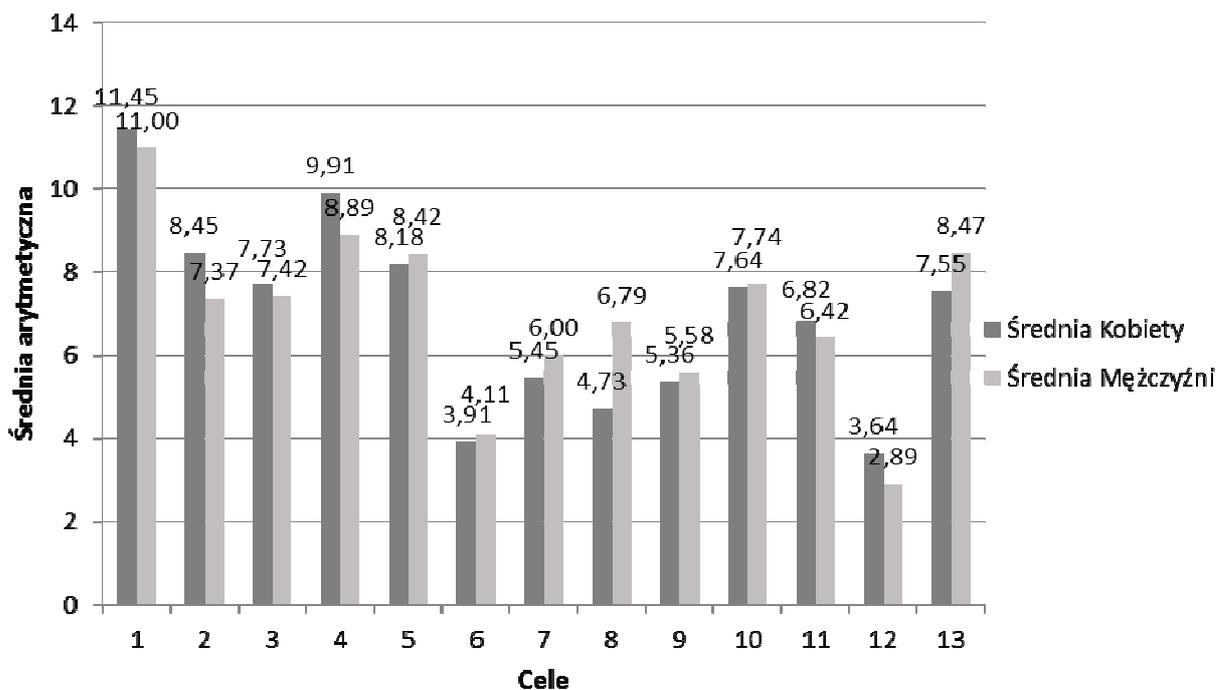


Fig. 3. Hierarchy of goals of physical education on the basis of comparison of male and female academic teachers

By comparing the hierarchy of goals reported by the teachers of the particular universities, we can note that all of them indicated goal no. 1 to be the most important; however, there are some differences with regard to the hierarchy of the remaining goals. For instance, goal no. 4 regarding ensuring safety is more highly valued by teachers from Racibórz

and Opole compared to Katowice and a similar situation is noted with regard to goal no. 11. Concurrently, in comparison to the teachers from Racibórz and Opole, the staff from Katowice university tend to give higher priority to goals no. 9 and 11. We can also note that with regard to goals no. 6 and 12, there is a strong consensus among the interviewed academic staff from the

universities participating in the studies (see Fig. 4).

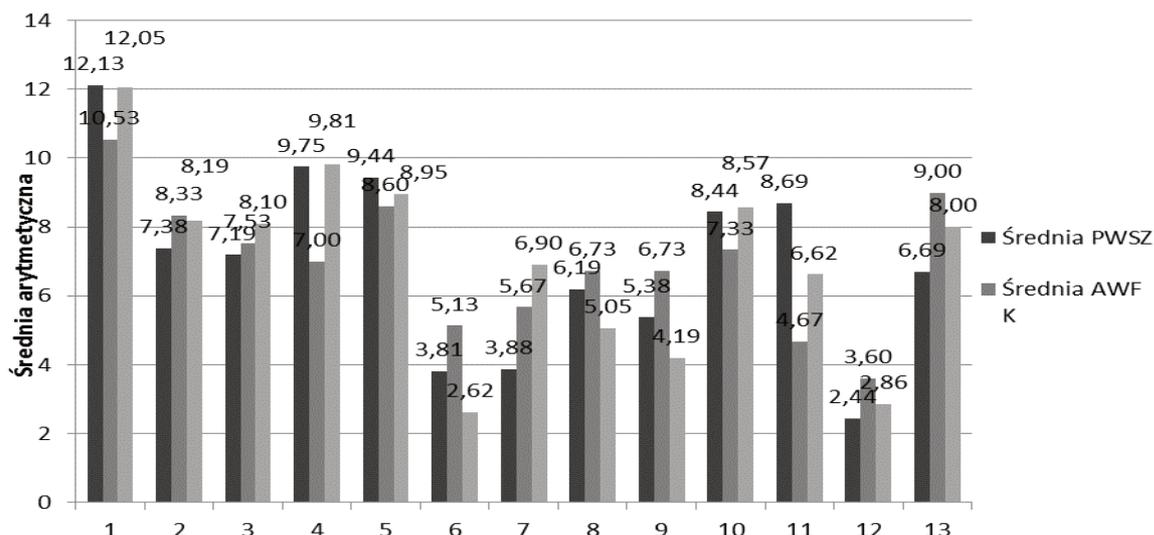


Fig. 4. Hierarchy of goals of physical education – a comparison of teacher opinions from various universities.

A statistical analysis was also performed with the purpose of determining the differences in the hierarchy indicated by the academic staff teaching theoretical and practical courses. The statistically material differences could only be observed with regard to goal no. 9, which was given a higher rank by the staff teaching practical

courses and goal no.11, which is more respected by theoreticians (Table 1). On the basis of statistical analysis regarding the gender-related variations, only differences were noted with regard to goal no. 8, which was given a higher rank by male teachers (Table 2).

Table 1. Hierarchy of goals based on classification of staff teaching theoretical and practical courses.

Goal no.	Mann-Whitney U test with regard to variable: theory/practice. Statistically material differences ($p < 0.05$) are marked by bold font				
	Overall rank theoreticians	Overall rank practitioners	U	Z	P
1	854.0	524.0	248.0	1.56	0.11
2	715.5	662.5	280.5	-0.96	0.33
3	868.5	509.5	233.5	1.83	0.06
4	719.0	659.5	284.0	-0.90	0.36
5	777.5	600.5	324.5	0.15	0.87
6	716.0	662.0	281.0	-0.95	0.33
7	783.0	595.0	319.0	0.25	0.79
8	720.0	658.0	285.0	-0.88	0.37
9	657.5	720.5	222.5	-2.03	0.04
10	835.5	542.5	266.5	1.22	0.22
11	888.5	489.5	213.5	2.20	0.02
12	738.5	639.5	303.5	-0.54	0.58
13	684.5	693.5	249.5	-1.53	0.12

Table 2. Gender-related hierarchy of goals.

Goal no.	Test U Mann-Whitney U test with regard to variable: theory/practice. Statistically material differences ($p < 0.05$) are marked by bold font				
	Total rank F	Total rank M	U	Z	p
1	610.0	768.0	303.0	0.49	0.62
2	660.5	717.5	252.5	1.42	0.15
3	631.5	746.5	281.5	0.88	0.37
4	654.5	723.5	258.5	1.31	0.18
5	556.0	822.0	303.0	-0.49	0.62
6	499.0	879.0	246.0	-1.54	0.12
7	544.0	834.0	291.0	-0.71	0.47
8	475.5	902.5	222.5	-1.98	0.04
9	566.0	812.0	313.0	-0.30	0.75
10	513.0	865.0	260.0	-1.28	0.19
11	614.5	763.5	298.5	0.57	0.56
12	616.0	762.0	297.0	0.60	0.54
13	596.5	781.5	316.5	0.24	0.80

Discussion

The goals of physical education play a role in the shape of physical culture and hence a diagnosis with regard to them can be extremely important. The interviewees participating in the survey play professional roles concerned with training future teachers and this was the rationale for the selections made by the respondents. The current study can be considered as an initial pilot study and it can form a starting point for a further analysis of the issue of the hierarchy of goals. The impact of the work of a physical education teacher is relative to the formation of a value system in the area concerned with care for health and fitness as well as consistency in attitudes that are manifested (and not only declared) by teachers and their students (Bronikowski 2005). A solution to this issue should require a consistent approach among teachers to the overall objectives and the tasks of physical education that stem from them. It was stated by Sulisz (2005) that the particularly good effectiveness of the education can be achieved in conditions when a coherent educational system is formed by an education and training environment that is based on shared and respected values. Nevertheless, it seems that the durable outcome of education is not related

to the apparent respect for value systems declared by teachers. An educational outcome can only be achieved as a result of an approach involving professional and emotional commitment. Physical education does not only form a teaching process; in contrast, it is principally based on an educational process (Kuśnierz 2015).

The objectives of physical education in accordance with Crum (2007) should be stated in such a manner that the effects they produce should take the form of an introduction to movement culture. As a result, the participants can gain the needed competence to achieve an independent, conscious, durable and satisfying participation in physical culture. The selection made by academic staff with regard to goal no. 1: 'to encourage students to follow an active and healthy lifestyle' demonstrates the correct interpretation and approval for the humanist idea of the theory of physical education. This goal was also selected to be the most important one in the studies reported in various European countries (Hardman, Green, 2011) as well as by teachers based in schools in the southern part of Poland (Kuśnierz 2015). Such an outcome can also demonstrate similar tendencies observed among the developmental tendencies in physical education as well as the common educational

priorities followed in many countries in Europe. Further analysis conducted by Crum revealing a varied hierarchy of goals reflected by remaining choices with regard to goals of physical education registered are attributed to a diversity of versions of the theory of physical education followed by PE teachers. The professional experience gained by PE students during their apprenticeships in schools can have a considerable outcome in the form of recognition of the principles observed and followed in this profession. We can predict that through apprenticeships accompanied by observations made by students during physical education classes, many students were able to learn about the principles of the traditional biotechnology approach to physical education. Consequently, this leads to a professional approach among new teachers that mainly reflects the ideas concerned with the general development of exercise and game-playing tasks (Crum 2007). Even if a PETE program succeeds in accomplishing the desired PE teaching perspective, there is a great chance that these changes will appear to be cosmetic once student teachers or new teachers confront the constraints of real work in schools. Because many supervising cooperating teachers, older colleagues, principals, parents and students hold non-teaching perspectives and expectations concerning PE, the old perspectives will be reinforced (Dodds, 1989; Griffin, 1985; O'Sullivan, 1989; Placek, 1983; Tannehill, 1989). Research indicates that the approach to this subject plays the principal role in the prediction of future physical activity (De Bruijn et al., 2006, Kuśnierz, 2005,2006,2008,2009). The positive experience derived from PE classes will have an effect in the form of a stimulus to undertake various types of exercise and practice sport. In contrast, a negative experience can produce a reverse effect, and can discourage students from involvement in sport activities in the future. Knowing the sources of student satisfaction, teachers often tend to meet students'

expectations, which positively affects the level of activity during class but has a detrimental effect on the teaching function played by PE classes. Other reports focus on the fact that meeting of the adopted goals by the students is related to the way in which curricula are followed and the achievement of the maximum effect depends on the selection of particular types of physical activity (Kuśnierz, 2015). A model that can be derived from a study by Fisher et al. (2011) is close to a suggestion that a goal of the subject that is close to the students' needs leads to the better realization of the adopted objectives.

Conclusion

The results representing the opinions of academic teachers regarding the hierarchy of goals of physical education have considerable implications both for theory and scientific practice. The hierarchies indicated by the interviewees are in accordance with the values established in the humanist concept of the theory of physical education and the latter emphasizes the role of an active and healthy lifestyle. A comparison of the academic staff teaching theoretical and practical courses demonstrates that statistically material differences are only noted with regard to two goals, which involve the development of group management skills and the ability to organize others' work and developing the capacity to apply and develop skills in specific forms of physical activity. The only gender-related differences could be observed with regard to one objective and this can mean that gender does not have an effect on the hierarchy followed by the academics interviewed. The results of the pilot studies need to be confirmed by studies involving a wider group of interviewees, preferably a study extending to all Polish universities teaching physical education at Master's degree level. It would also be necessary to extend the scope of the investigated variables and perform a wider statistical analysis of the results.

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