

THE READINESS OF PROSPECTIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS TOWARDS UPGRADING THE TEACHING PROFESSIONALISM

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the significant differences in terms of preparedness of health based physical fitness and the mastery levels of subject content in physical education among trainee or prospective teachers in Teacher Education Institutions (IPG) based on gender. The sample size is 300 people from nine IPGs which have the right to offer Physical Education major programs by the Teachers Education Institute Malaysia (IPGM). The respondents are 151 prospective male and 149 female teachers. The methodology is by using the ex- post facto' static group comparison using the "Prudential FITNESSGRAM®" battery. The descriptive analysis showed the readiness in terms of health based physical fitness and the mastery of the subject content is satisfactory and increased at every level. Inferential analysis of overall readiness in the level of physical fitness based on gender showed significant differences, where $t(298) = 22.940$, $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). The male trainees ($M = 56.03$, $SD = 5.89$) and female trainee teachers ($M = 45.00$, $SD = 3.34$). While the readiness level of the contents in Physical Education Major subject as a whole, showed a significant difference between men and women. The value of $t(298) = -7.020$, $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). The male trainees ($M = 80.75$, $SD = 2.94$) and female trainees ($M = 82.94$, $SD = 2.43$). This study proved that gender should be given proper attention in the process of teaching and learning in the IPGs so that this difference can be reduced or completely resolved.

KEYWORDS: Readiness, Physical Fitness, Subject Content

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a profession which aims to form perfect human beings who would understand their roles and responsibilities towards themselves, family, community, the environment they inhabit and towards their Creator, the God. In the context of today's modern communities the term teacher gives a wide understanding. Every individual who engages themselves in formal or non-formal education process that involves the delivery of knowledge or skill to an individual or group of individuals are called teachers (Atan Long, 1984).

It is undeniable that the responsibility and the role of teachers are very challenging in the era of a borderless world. Now the role of teachers is not just limited to teach, educate and guide students, but more importantly to control the moral and ethical balance among students as well (Zamri Mahamod, 2010). This statement is supported by Wan Zahid Nordin (1993), as described by Sulaiman Daud, "the role of teachers has changed and will continue to turn out to be more complicated in the future. Thus, teacher education programs should not only provide them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes but should also enable them to become sensitive agents of change".

To achieve the goals of our national education, it should start with teachers because teachers are responsible for

teaching, guiding, fostering and shaping behavior and become role models for their students. Thus, prospective teachers should be of quality, ethical, character and noble personalities (Mohd. Aziz Mohd. Din, 2010). For the Ministry of Education as employers who train and prepare prospective teachers, certainly would want teachers who have and practice good values or work ethics. According to Kraska (1991), Montague (1986) and Oimoneri (1984), employers want employees who have good values or work ethic because they have been found to show satisfaction in their work and a positive attitude in decision making.

Teaching is a field that involves teaching. Members of this profession are known as the teachers and are responsible for helping the community understand their cultures, acquiring knowledge that has accumulated over the age-old and prepare them for the challenges of the future. To produce teachers of quality, excellence and able to lead challenges towards uplifting teaching professionalism, the prospective teachers should be sensitive towards the needs of the features of the teaching professionalism. In this research, the focus is centered on the prospective teachers of physical education in order to improve the teaching professionalism especially in the field of physical education, however more than often we find stumbling blocks in trying to achieve this goal. Among the essential needs to achieve this goal that often become obstacles are the problems in terms of health and fitness as well as lack of knowledge in subject content.

Preparedness in terms of good health and fitness frequently become a problem in focusing and commitments towards teaching and learning. According to Lon Seiger & James (1977), individuals who want to enjoy a healthy lifestyle should inherit well being components such as physique, psychology, spiritual, vocational and environment. Physical health is staying physically active, practice exercises; practice good nutrition and having enough rest and sleep. On the excuse of being busy, the practice of at least three times exercise for thirty minutes in a week is often ignored. As a result, many diseases often perch as cardiovascular disease (Bijnen, 1994; Young & Steinhardt, 1993; Berlin, 1990), the problem of excess body weight (Baumgartner, 2002 Haywood, 1993) or obesity (Corbin & Lindsey, 2001; Gibbon, 1989), the problem of stress or pressure (Blix, Cruise & Mitchell, 1994), the problems of burn out that lead to mental problems.

From the angle of teaching professionalism, preparedness often become a problem to teachers especially in terms of mastering the subject content that need to be taught by them. According to Julismah Jani (2006), the problematic teachers are those who fail to master the subject content that need to be taught by them. Shullman (1997), stressed that teachers often do not practice the prevailing core knowledge, process of teaching and learning for effective teaching. Academic Accountability in Physical Education is also a problem and needs to be addressed because it can cause the quality of teaching and learning of these subjects fail to achieve its objectives (Wee Eng Ho, 2010). Knowledge from the point of testing, measurement and evaluation is also a problem for the teachers, especially teachers of Physical Education in measuring the fitness levels of their students (Ahmad Hashim, 2004). The choice of the teaching profession as a last option also shows the actual dishonesty while choosing teaching as a career (Veenman, 1994).

This study would determine the extent of preparedness in terms of health based levels of physical fitness and in terms of mastering the subject content of physical education subject majors in IPG based on gender. This study would also enlighten the relationship and interactions that exist in terms of health based physical fitness levels and mastering the subject content of Physical Education majors. The results of this study would give the potential teachers the knowledge and awareness on the importance of physical fitness and mastery of subject content in moving towards uplifting teaching professionalism to ensure the quality of teaching and learning especially the subject of Physical Education.

METHODOLOGY

This study is experimental in nature and uses the “ex-post facto” experiment which is simple but has a very high internal validity (Chua Yan Piaw 2006; Thomas & Nelson, 1996). The sample is divided into groups such as gender (male & female) as it has characteristics of different variables to each other (Cicciarella 1997). In this study, the researcher uses purposive sampling. The respondents were 151 prospective male and 149 female teachers from the Teachers Education Institute (IPG) who are majoring in Physical Education.

RESULTS

Based on the descriptive analysis, the overall physical fitness levels for male respondents tested through push up, trunk lift, curl up and PACER showed, 2.64% (4 pupils) among the sample at the excellent level. 39.73% (60 pupils) were at the level of very good. 45 of them or 29.80% at the level of good and 27 or 17.88% at medium levels. Whereas 9.93% or 15 pupils were weak. The overall physical fitness levels for female trainees showed that 6.04 % (9 pupils) at excellent level. 26.17% or 39 were at the level of very good. 60 of them or 40.26% at the level of good and 27 or 18.12% of the sample at medium levels, whereas 9.39% or 14 were weak.

Inferential statistical analysis using Independent Samples t-test (Table 1), showed that there were significant differences among males and females in the overall physical fitness level. Value of $t(298) = 21.51, p = .000 (p < 0.05)$ were significant. The analysis showed male trainees ($M = 56.03, SD = 5.89$) and female trainee teachers ($M = 45.00, SD = 3.34$).

Table 1: Independent Samples t-Test

		Levene’s Test for Equality of Variance			Mean Equation for t Test	
		F	Sig	t	Df	Sig (2-t)
Overall physical Fitness	Assumed variance equation	27.84	.000	21.51	298	.000
	Non assumed variance equation			21.57	298	.000

Significance at the 0.05 level

The inferential analysis (Table 2), also showed that there were significant differences in mean and standard deviation in the level of the whole subject content between male and female. The t value $(298) = -7.020, p = 0.000 (p < 0.05)$ were significant. The analysis showed that for male trainees ($M = 80.75, SD = 2.94$) and female trainee teachers ($M = 82.94, SD = 2.43$).

Table 2: Independent Sample t- Test

		Levene’s Test for Equality of Variance			Mean Equation for t Test	
		F	Sig	t	Df	Sig (2-t)
Overall command on subject content	Assumed variance equation	3.35	.068	-7.020	298	.000
	Non assumed Variance equation			-7.029	248.68	.000

Significance at the 0.05 level

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the outcome produced by the researchers, it is clearly evident that the factor of gender gives a very high impact on the aspect of physical fitness and the level of command of the subject content. Each gender has its own strength

in the evaluated aspects. Male trainee teachers did better in physical fitness levels which were proven in this research. The outcome on mastering the subject content, the factor of gender influences the scores. The female trainee teachers seems better than men in terms of mastering subject content. Even though none of the trainees attained the excellent level, they are highly prepared in terms of subject content and always trying to upgrade themselves. The trainee teachers who are at the medium and weak levels, they should intensify their efforts and find ways to attain the highest levels in physical fitness and mastering the subject content to guarantee the teaching and learning quality. The researchers were satisfied and proud that the trainee teachers in physical education are ready to step into the working realm with much vigor and confidence towards academic professionalism and accountability.

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