

# Egyetemi doktori (PhD) értekezés tézisei

## IMPLEMENTATION OF EVERYDAY PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN THE NORTHERN GREAT PLAIN REGION

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## **Dissertation objectives, delimitation of the subject**

The wide spectrum of frameworks for the research of the implementation process define the interpretation possibilities of the educational policy intervention that have led to the introduction of everyday physical education from September 2012. The revolutionary nature of the curricular implementation justifies the analysis of the perceptions and opinions of the actors involved in the process. The dissertation seeks to answer what role calling to profession, prestige, different value preferences and institutional impacts play in the development of supportive attitudes of pedagogues.

Political and economic reforms have pervaded educational policy concepts in all historical times. The curriculum, which is the document governing the selection and layout of educational content as well, has always changed according to the value system of different power and interest groups. The National Core Curriculum and the framework curricula introduced in 2012 have posed new challenges for physical education teachers, as matching and compliance with the expectations described within them often encounter difficulties.

Education for a healthy lifestyle, the foundation and awareness-raising of health consciousness, and the understanding of protective factors are reinforced by additional domestic and international strategic measures in addition to the curriculum. As the primary social scene

of education for healthy lifestyles and health awareness, public education institutions, especially schools, have become the focus of social and professional attention. In the reform process, it was assumed that the compulsory physical education lesson at school could shape and develop the students' sense of health and leisure. In this area, teaching efficiency is based on knowledge and insights gained in the field of natural, social and health sciences, in which the quality of physical education is provided on the one hand by the well-structured content elements, and on the other by the areas of change in learning standards (Révész - Csányi 2015). The curriculum documents set as primary goal the realization of a new kind of physical education, in which the relationships between physical literacy, health, community values and knowledge of body culture come together as a central value. This terminology has faithfully represented the social expectations that influenced educational policy processes (Rétság 2015).

In the theoretical chapters of the dissertation, I focus on implementational research and the role of pedagogues in this process based on contemporary specialised literature. In pursuit of the objectivity criterion, I strive for a multi-faceted approach, a critical approach to the implementation process. My analysis shows the introduction of the process model and critical factors (Fullan 2015), the context (Fazekas 2012), the time factors (Mourshed-Barber-Chijioke 2010) and the role of impact-pay-off (Halász et al.). The great significance of the function of teacher engagement is also a focus in the analysis of pedagogical research and the theoretical

approaches to physical education. Therefore, in my empirical research, one of the priorities is set on examining the attitudes of groups formed by multi-dimensional scaling of teacher perceptions regarding the introduction of everyday physical education and the realization of its goals. By describing the historical perspectives of the physical education subject, I outline the social and subject expectations of everyday physical education and of the physical education and sports literacy field. Productivity is enhanced by the fact that the physical education subject, not only for the individual, but also for society, has among its objectives with specific educational content to shape and establish the positive emotional and psychomotor foundation of physical activity and sports by students using games and competition, while adapting to social needs, and taking into account age and other specificities. The subject pattern of the physical education subject is also influenced by the prestige of the subject of physical education and its structural and motivational differences. Physical educators are important role carriers, important tools for school health education, and their role as predictors for role-fulfilment is unquestionable.

The actuality of my dissertation is gained by getting acquainted with the intervention process of the latest change to the curriculum. This is on the one hand current because it deals with an issue affecting the whole society globally, and on the other hand because it examines a whole new situation, the process of making the physical education subject part of everyday life. The international aspect of the topic is also substantial, since in the

countries of the European Union there is a compulsory everyday physical education only in Hungary, so the results of the research are also significant in international terms.

In my research I also study the social judgment of pedagogues, and the prestige of physical educators along the lines of several social agents and variables. Value preferences were shaped by gender, age, sporting habits, rank, and settlement type. In addition, I include in my examination institutional impacts and features such as infrastructure, student and pedagogue numbers. I look at the views of the actors involved in the process (parents, pedagogues, physical education teams, institution leaders) about introducing everyday physical education, the prestige of physical educators, and the assessment of the physical education subject along different preference variables. In addition, I gauge the supportive attitude of the pedagogue groups, established through multidimensional scaling, towards the introduction of everyday physical education, the social judgment of pedagogues and the physical education subject, and the realization of the goals of physical education and sports literacy.

## **Methods used**

I formulated the research questions and hypotheses of my dissertation along two question groups. For the quantitative analysis of the first question group, I have learnt the opinion of the actors in the process as a result

of analysing data from questionnaires from four (parent, institution leader, physical education team, pedagogue) surveys. During the examination of the other group of questions and hypotheses, I analyzed the conditions of the supportive attitudes of pedagogues by processing the self-developed questionnaire for educators.

In the parental sample, data collection took place in the framework of the January 2014 national omnibus survey (first sample and data survey). The sampling procedure used was probability sampling, so every adult Hungarian resident had the same chance of getting into the sample. Thus, the conclusions drawn from the data collected through the sample - within the scope of the statistical sample error - can be generalized to the full adult parental population. A multi-stage, proportionally stratified, probability sampling procedure was used to produce the sample. The survey of omnibus research took place in 81 settlements and in Budapest (all districts). In order to ensure that the proportion of gender, age group, educational level and type of settlement groups is the same as the proportion of these groups in the adult Hungarian population, the sample was weighted so that the weighted sample matches well the gender, age, type of settlement and educational level distribution of the 2011 census data of the adult population.

The institution leader sample (second sample and survey) was gathered through online inquiry in a primary research project which was designed to establish the development concept of the Hungarian Student Sport

Association on school physical education. The survey took place between 15 July and 6 September 2013. Questionnaires were sent to 3214 institutions, some of these institutions did not undertake physical education, so in the sample 3071 institutions remained. The sample was representative for the regions and their institution managers, and weighting was carried out according to the institutional data of July 2013 of the Education Office. From this sample, I have filtered and analyzed the responses of the institution leaders of the Northern Great Plain region.

The survey of physical education teams (third sample and survey) was done in the framework of a national survey (Northern Great Plain region). The data collection was made in May 2016 by adapting the questionnaire prepared by Rétság et al. (2016). I sent the on-line questionnaires through the institution leaders to the physical education teams of every institution maintained by the Klebelsberg Institution Maintenance Centre (KLIK) (325 institutions, 160 questionnaires returned).

To get acquainted with the pedagogues' opinions (fourth sample and survey), I asked the participants of the survey in the Northern Great Plain region through a self-developed questionnaire. The selection of institutions and pedagogues was made through a multi-stage, group stratified sampling method. The sampling probability was ensured through a method of proportioning: in my case the number of interviewees was proportional to the number of pedagogues teaching in each institution. As a

result, all the pedagogues in the region had a known (and nearly identical) likelihood of being sampled, so the sample could be called a probability sample at institutional level. The quantitative research was conducted between January and March 2016, and all primary schools in the three counties of the Northern Great Plain region reported their sampling set.

In the first step, I analyzed the county-level proportions of the region, i.e. how to set the proportion of respondents chosen in each of the three counties separately. In the second step the settlements were sampled according to the specificities of the settlement structure of the counties. In the last step of sampling, I selected a school within a settlement with simple random sampling, and teachers of that the school were fully included in the sample. Of the 15 schools in the three counties, 492 questionnaires returned. After the data capture I found 29 questionnaires that were either fully or very incomplete, so the total sample size was 463.

When analyzing the first question group, I processed the purified data filtered for common questions from the four databases. Data collection in the databases differ timewise (2013-2016), but each reflects the results of the situation after the introduction of everyday physical education, based on the different approaches of respondents, of those who were questioned and of varying actors. The data received was processed using SPSS 21. Data was analyzed through descriptive and correlation examining statistical methods, during which I

carried out frequency examinations, cross-tabulation analyzes, cluster analysis, factor analysis and regression analysis.

### **Summary list of results**

When analyzing the responses from actors in the implementation process, I came to the conclusion that the agreement with the introduction of everyday physical education appears through a positive attitude in the opinion of all actors. Leaders of institutions and parents are the strongest supporters of the process. Although the opinion of the physical education teams is characterized by full agreement, the average of their responses remained below the values of the two groups mentioned above.

Despite expectations to the contrary, the impact of good infrastructure shows an inverse link to satisfaction. In well-equipped institutions there is less acceptance for the introduction of everyday physical education. Such institutions are usually found in the county seat or in larger settlements and have a higher number of students. This relative dissatisfaction can be explained by the principle of Merton's relative deprivation. The schools of small settlements are the most trusting adopters of the introduction of everyday physical education.

Parents fully agree with the rise in the prestige of pedagogues and the subject, the greatest rejection comes from the physical education teams. In this respect as well, the responses of parents of pupils in schools of villages

with fewer students showed an attitude with the highest acceptance.

Based on the analysis of the answers of the pedagogues, through the examination of the issues related to the introduction of everyday physical education, it can be concluded that the teachers agree with the need for everyday physical education introduced in primary and secondary education institutions in an ascending system in 2012. They consider that the most important task of the process is to educate students about health awareness, to which statement the proportion of teachers who did sports in their childhood or still do so at present agree in a significantly higher proportion than their non-athletic colleagues. It can be highlighted that pedagogues also think that already in the lower grades physical education should be taught by pedagogues trained in the subject. The highest degree of agreement to this can be shown among the pedagogues teaching physical education and skills subjects. Based on the opinions it can also be stated that the infrastructure conditions necessary for the introduction of everyday physical education are not fully available in the institutions. There is a complete agreement in the sample on this, and the correlation analyses of the background variables (gender, subject, age) did not show any significant deviation either when analyzing this statement. However, infrastructure as an independent variable influenced the expectations of better sporting results, the appreciation of subject prestige, and the extracurricular role of physical educators. Regarding these statements, pedagogues of institutions with weaker infrastructure think that

everyday physical education can help them raise the role of the physical education subject, that it will increase the extracurricular tasks of physical educators and that the introduction also brings about improvements in sporting results.

I have interpreted the groups formed in the cluster analysis as rejective, supportive due to health consciousness, professionally supportive and sympathetic.

Physical educators are mostly from the sympathetic group of teachers, while pedagogues teaching humanities are mostly from the group that is supportive due to health consciousness, although they are also numerous in the rejective group. Pedagogues teaching skills subjects are part of the group that is professionally supportive as well as part of the rejective group; and pedagogues who teach sciences are largely rejective in statements related to the introduction of everyday physical education. Rejective pedagogues do sports just occasionally and the largest portion of professionally supportive teachers never do or used to do sports either.

Based on the results, I studied the predictive ability of the explanatory variables for the dependent variables (i.e. the pedagogue groups) with a multi-step logistic regression. The results of logistic regression have confirmed the explanatory power of the specialisation and sporting frequency of pedagogues in the case of the professional supportive group to the introduction of everyday physical education against the reference group rejecting the

introduction. Moreover, the better the infrastructure, the greater chance is for becoming part of the sympathetic group, while with worse infrastructure, there is a greater the chance to end in the group supportive due to health consciousness. Accepting the rise in the subject's prestige increases the entry into both groups. In examining the process of implementation, pedagogues' supportive attitudes, which also represent their calling to and commitment to profession, as well as appropriate capacity conditions, appear in the formulation of groups about the introduction of everyday physical education.

Based on the results of the social assessment and examination of the physical education subject and of the pedagogues, it can be stated that the most significant differences in the prestige of subjects and occupations are due to the type of settlements and the number of students in the schools. In the case of pedagogues, teachers in cities appreciate their own status greater in comparison to those teaching in other types of settlements, while the social judgment of the lawyer, doctor and pedagogue profession is higher in the villages.

The results of examining the agreement with the goals defined in the core curriculum of physical education and sports areas of literacy and in the framework curriculum based on this, show the highest consensus in the pedagogues' opinion about the increase in the subject content of the classes. However, pedagogues do not find well-founded the increased popularity of the physical education subject and the influence on the educational effectiveness of students. Nevertheless, they have

confirmed that students become more skilled, have a better relationship with physical educators, and their motivation increases towards physical education activity as well as towards developing health-conscious lifestyles. The original variables were interpreted by factor analysis as positive attitudes, negative attitudes, extracurricular sports, and community attitudinal factors.

Pedagogues who have a supportive attitude have adopted health awareness and the positive attitudes towards physical education as their most important considerations related to their goals in the introduction of everyday physical education. Those who have gained negative experiences about realizing the goals of everyday physical education belong to the rejective group of pedagogues. Those supportive professionally, as well as those who are supportive due to health consciousness, highlighted the importance and appearance of sports outside the school. In the former group of pedagogues, social influences are also of outstanding value.

It can be stated that the realisation of objectives defined in the National Core Curriculum, which sets out the introduction of everyday physical education, and in the framework curriculum building on it, are fundamentally influenced by the attitudes of pedagogues. This is because attitudinal groups have emerged as an explanatory variable for all dependent variables, whereby the opinion of the supportive group of pedagogues has always shown higher values in comparison to the results of the other dimension groups. Additionally, pedagogues teaching physical education do not agree with the

improvement of community attitudes but do so with the achievement of positive goals. These results demonstrate the role of teachers' calling and commitment to profession in the implementation process.

The role of infrastructural provisions of the institutions in the success can also be demonstrated, its impact is unquestionable for the achievement of the positive objectives at schools of smaller settlements and at schools with outstanding infrastructure.

Sports activity during childhood defines adult opinions about the realization of goals related to physical education, as it has emerged with explanatory power for all dependent variables and has showed to the greatest extent correlation with the achievement of the positive goals. Pedagogues who do sports regularly now or did so in their childhood put a higher value on the achievement of the goals in comparison to their inactive colleagues, irrespective of the group of pedagogues or of specialization.

The rank of teachers also determines the outcome of educational policy changes affecting the institution. Supporting attitudes of homeroom teachers and deputy directors show a positive correlation in achieving out-of-school goals. However, the age, sex, taught subject of pedagogues and their perception of the prestige of their profession do not appear among the explanatory factors, hence their role in the implementation process cannot be demonstrated.

Summarizing the results of the dissertation, in the process of implementation of changes also affecting the curriculum, and in the introduction of everyday physical education and in the realization of its goals, the pedagogues' supportive attitudes and the objective of creating positive institutional impacts are a prerequisite for the successful impact-pay-off process. This research has shown that while the opinions and attitudes of the actors in the process are highly differentiated, agreement with the necessity of implementation can be justified, and the process of successful implementation of the intervention can be expectantly carried out despite the existing negative impacts.



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### List of publications related to the dissertation

#### Hungarian book chapters (6)

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In: A tanulás új útjai. Szerk.: Mrázik Julianna, Magyar Nevelés- és Oktatókutatók Egyesülete, Budapest, 63-74, 2017, (HERA évkönyvek, ISSN 2064-6755 ; 4.) ISBN: 9786155657016
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3. **Borbély, S.**: A testnevelők és a testnevelés tantárgy presztízse a megváltozott testkulturális környezetben.  
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*Recreation.* 5 (2), 23-26, 2015. ISSN: 2064-4981.

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Hungarian conference proceedings (1)

12. **Borbély, S.**, Fónai, M.: A pedagógus pálya, a testnevelők és a testnevelés tantárgy presztízse a mindennapos testnevelés bevezetését követően.

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