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### **Emotional Skills Among Senior High School Age Students in Physical Education Classes**

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#### **Abstract**

The aim of this study was to analyse and compare the peculiarities of emotional skills among senior high school age students in physical education classes because the significance of emotional intelligence for students is a subject of continuous scientific discussions. The independent random sample consisted of 212 (15 – 16 years old) students and 189 (17 – 18 years old) students, of which there were 198 boys and 203 girls. Schutte Self-Report Inventory (SSRI) was employed. This instrument divides emotional skills into four separate components, namely: ability to use personal positive emotional experience, ability to assess and express emotions, ability to understand and analyse emotions and ability to manage emotions. It was found that 17 – 18 years old students have better ability to use own positive emotional experience than those of 15 – 16 years old and girls have better ability to understand and analyse emotions in physical education classes than boys.

**Keywords:** emotional skills; students; physical education classes; senior high school age.

#### **Introduction**

The significance of emotional intelligence for students is a subject of continuous scientific discussions. The emergence of the emotional intelligence term received a great deal of attention from the scientists and inspired a number of articles. It is a proven fact that the „emotionally gifted” people have inner advantage both in terms of personal and professional life, and therefore they are happier and more successful. It was even suggested that it is the emotional intelligence rather than IQ or cognitive abilities that matters more when predicting and assessing academic and professional achievement [1].

Students with higher emotional skills tend to perform better in school [2], have better quality relationships [3], resolve conflict in more constructive ways [4], solve social reasoning problems more effectively [5], and engage less frequently in unhealthy behaviors [6].

In contrast, students with poor emotional skills are more at risk of experiencing learning difficulties and engaging in such behaviours as anti-social behaviour, substance abuse, violence and criminality, and to leave school without any certification or vocational skills, with consequently poor employability opportunities [7, 8, 9].

Physical education classes, where intense emotional situations take place and individuals' characters are tested, are the proper places for the development of students' social and emotional skills [10, 11]. Physical education classes involve many varied and intense emotions. Student's character and personality can be tested in competitive games, and the positive management of feelings may be governed by a particular ability [12].

**Scientific novelty:** the present research will provide the first thorough analysis of the components of emotional skills among senior high school age students in physical education classes.

**The aim of the research** is to analyse and compare the peculiarities of emotional skills among senior high school age students in physical education classes.

### Research methods

*Instruments:* data collection and analysis. Schutte Self-Report Inventory (SSRI) was employed. This instrument divides emotional skills into four separate components [13], namely: ability to use personal positive emotional experience, ability to assess and express emotions, ability to understand and analyse emotions and ability to manage emotions [14, 15].

The Lithuanian version of the SSRI shows internal consistency value 0.79 and a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.84 for the overall questionnaire [16]. The statistical hypotheses were tested by applying the Student t-test.

*Sample and procedure.* The research was carried out during 2013/2014 academic years. According to the earlier research carried out by Mayer, Salovey & Caruso [17] results that the emotional intelligence also alter with age, senior high school age students were divided into two different age groups. The independent random sample consisted of 212 (15 – 16 years old) students and 189 (17 – 18 years old) students, of which there were 198 boys and 203 girls. The survey was conducted in compliance with the ethical principles and applicable legislation, i. e. each respondents was explained the goal of the study and was ensured that the questionnaires were anonymous. The duration of the survey was 20 minutes.

### Results

The research started from the analysis of the ability of 15–16 years old students and 17–18 years old students to use personal positive emotional experience in physical education classes. The analysis of the ability to use personal positive emotional experience resulted in the following averages:  $50.65 \pm 5.32$  in case of 15–16 years old students and  $51.72 \pm 5.48$  in case of 17–18 years old students. The application of the Student's t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in the ability of 15–16 years old students to use own positive emotional experience in physical education classes and that of 17–18 years old students:  $t(399) = -1.98$ ;  $p < 0.05$ . The obtained results are summarized in table 1.

Table 1: Mean scores of emotional skills among 15 – 16 years old and 17 – 18 years old students of senior high school age in physical education classes ( $M \pm SD$ )\*

Emotional skills	15 – 16 years old students (N=212)	17 – 18 years old students (N=189)	<i>t</i> ; <i>p</i>
Ability to use personal positive emotional experience	$50.65 \pm 5.32$	$51.72 \pm 5.48$	-1,98 $p < 0.05$
Ability to assess and express emotions	$21.67 \pm 2.91$	$21.83 \pm 3.25$	-0,52 $p > 0.05$

Ability to understand and analyze emotions	31.48±3.79	32.09±3.91	-1.58 <i>p</i> > 0.05
Ability to manage emotions	15.95±2.84	16.27±2.96	-1.10 <i>p</i> > 0.05

\*Note (M ± SD) – mean and standard deviation.

The research also addressed the ability of 15–16 years old students and 17–18 years old students to assess and express emotions in physical education classes. It was determined that 15–16 years old students and 17–18 years old students were similar in terms of the ability to assess and express their emotions. The analysis of the ability to assess and express emotions resulted in the following averages: 21.67±2.91 in case of 15–16 years old students and 21.83±3.25 in case of 17–18 years old students, there was no statistically significant difference between 15–16 years old students and 17–18 years old students.

The research results revealed that there no significant differences between 15–16 years old students and 17–18 years old students in terms of their ability to manage emotions and to understand and analyze their emotions in physical education classes (*p* > 0,05).

It was found that girls have a higher ability to understand and analyse emotions in physical education classes than boys: *t* (399) = -1.97; *p* < 0.05. The analysis of the ability to understand and analyse emotions resulted in the following averages: boys – 31.49 ± 3.68 and girls – 32.22±3.74. The obtained results are summarized in table 2.

Table 2: Mean scores of emotional skills among boys and girls of senior high school age in physical education classes (M ± SD)\*

Emotional skills	Boys (N=198)	Girls (N=203)	<i>t</i> ; <i>p</i>
Ability to use personal positive emotional experience	51.24±6.04	52,01±6.28	-1.24 <i>p</i> > 0.05
Ability to assess and express emotions	21.63±3.03	21.87±3.34	-0.75 <i>p</i> > 0.05
Ability to understand and analyze emotions	31.49±3.68	32.22±3.74	-1.97 <i>p</i> < 0.05
Ability to manage emotions	16.01±3.01	16.22±3.12	-0.68 <i>p</i> > 0.05

\*Note (M ± SD) – mean and standard deviation.

## Discussion

The carried out research helped assess the intensity of the components of emotional skills among senior high school age students in physical education classes. The results of this research do not contradict with the results obtained in the earlier research that the emotional intelligence also alter with age [17]. The results of this study showed that 17 – 18 years old students have better ability to use own positive emotional experience in physical education classes than 15 – 16 years old students (*p* < 0.05). As the findings of this research proved that emotional intelligence improves with age and experience, the researcher would agree with Daniel Goleman author of „Working with Emotional Intelligence“ that claims the growth of emotional intelligence increases with maturity [18]. Based on research findings provided by the Reuven Bar-On.org, emotional intelligence of older groups usually scored significantly higher than the younger groups and respondents in their late 40s obtained the highest mean scores [19].

The results of the present study also revealed that girls have better ability to understand and analyse emotions in physical education classes than boys ( $p < 0.05$ ). Murphy [20] did not look for senior high school age students but determined that the female respondents had better ability to understand and analyse emotions than the male respondents in that particular research. Emotional intelligence researchers frequently conclude that female respondents score higher than male respondents on emotional intelligence measures [21]. This conclusion is supported by an extensive literature on gender differences in emotional aspects, showing, for example, that females are more capable of decoding nonverbal emotional information [22], have greater emotional understanding [23], are more sensitive to the emotions of others [24], and are more expressive and show greater interpersonal competencies [25].

Emotional skills can be developed in physical education classes via specially designed programs and teaching methods. Therefore, it is worth investigating the relationship between students' social and emotional competencies and skills and other psychological parameters in physical education classes and in other school settings.

### Conclusion

1. The comparison of emotional skills among 15 – 16 years old and 17 – 18 years old students revealed that 17 – 18 years old students have better ability to use own positive emotional experience in physical education classes ( $p < 0.05$ ).

2. The comparison of emotional skills among boys and girls revealed that girls have better ability to understand and analyse emotions in physical education classes than boys ( $p < 0.05$ ).

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### **Эмоциональные навыки учащихся старшего школьного возраста на уроках физкультуры**

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**Аннотация.** В статье рассматриваются эмоциональные навыки учащихся старшего школьного возраста на уроках физкультуры. Независимая случайная выборка учащихся старшего школьного возраста включала 401 респондента: 212 учащихся 15–16 лет и 189 учащихся 17–18 лет, из которых было 198 парней и 203 девушки. Для решения поставленных задач был использован опросник эмоциональной компетентности Н. Шутте с соавт. SSRI, направлен на измерение четырех показателей эмоциональных навыков: способности эмоционального содействия мышлению; понимания и анализа эмоций; идентификации эмоций; управления эмоциями. Установлено, что учащиеся 17-18 лет имеют лучшую способность использовать эмоциональное содействие мышлению, чем учащиеся 15-16 лет, а девушки имеют лучшую способность понимать и анализировать эмоции на уроках физкультуры, чем парни.

**Ключевые слова:** эмоциональные навыки; учащиеся; уроки физкультуры; старший школьный возраст.