

# MOTIVES TO BEGIN PHYSICAL EDUCATION STUDIES

## Comparative analysis in Algeria and Wallonia

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### ABSTRACT

There are many reasons explaining why students choose one professional project and/or an academic programme. Usually, they consider higher education according to various aspects focusing on the content of the programme as well as on professions to which the latter leads. This study is in the field on comparative education. It offers a comprehensive reading of two education systems in a spirit of openness and expansion of knowledge. With inspiration from two studies conducted in the education of physical educators in very different cultural contexts (Research Group MJS, 1993, for Algeria – Groupe de recherche inter universitaire, 2003, for Wallonia), we have assumed that the students' motives for registering in studies, in physical education, should differ considerably. The purpose of this research has therefore been to determine the reasons motivating students to begin a physical education programme at university or at a non- university context.

Our research was based, firstly, on the analysis of official texts concerning the organization of higher education in the field of physical education and, secondly, on data collected from the actions involved in four educational institutions, two in the Algiers region and two in the Liege region. In both cultural contexts, one institution belonged to one university and the other one was organized in a non university context. Our results relate to a total sample of 290 subjects (40 members of teaching staffs, 108 students and 142 graduates). The staff members were interviewed while the subjects of two other groups responded to questionnaires. The Arabic version of each instrument was translated from an original French version. One expert has assured the validity check. In this paper, we are focusing our attention on the analysis of the responses provided by the three types of actors to a question aiming to identify, through four levels Lickert scales, the degree of importance accorded by subject to nine reasons of registration for studies in physical education. Answers were encoded in a computer database and processed using the Statistica software (Stat Soft, 2006).

No significant difference was identified when comparing the answers of respondents. However, we noticed that the love of sport and the desire to do sport belonged to the most important reasons for the registration of the new students for training programs in physical education. Cultural context does not seem to affect the opinions of the subjects.

**Keywords:** Physical education students; Physical education socialization; Comparative analysis.

### INTRODUCTION

There are many reasons explaining why students choose one professional project and/or an academic programme. Usually, they consider higher education according to various aspects focusing on the content of the programme as well as on professions to which the latter leads. This study is in the field about comparative education. It offers a comprehensive reading of two education systems in a spirit of openness and expansion of knowledge. According to the idea of Perrenoud (2010) on the training of future teachers in PE, "We will retain ten reasons here, unequally related to recent developments and ambitions of education systems. In all cases they reflect a vision defined the profession:

- Compensates the lightness of professional occupation;
- Promotes the accumulation of experimental knowledge;
- Accredits a trend towards professionalization;
- Prepares to assume political responsibility and ethics;
- Allows you to cope with the increasing complexity of tasks;
- Helps to live an impossible trade;
- Provides the means to work on yourself;
- Encourages the confrontation of the irreducible otherness of the learner;
- Opens a cooperation with colleagues;
- Enhances capacity for innovation" (Perrenoud, 2010, 46).

The problem of selection occupies currently a very important place in debates on issues related to teaching. The democratization of education, diversification of industries which followed the development of knowledge and changing conceptions of work, and that higher performance requirements grow to define specific profiles and to retain only those that correspond most. (Alem, J. 2003) said that "some programs of study at university quotas for the number of enrollments far exceed the carrying capacity. You must select the best among the candidates standing for admission" (p. 1). So it would be desirable that these programs have selection criteria with satisfactory predictive value for success in university courses and the career chosen by candidates. Researches addressing this issue are relatively rare. Most of them are found in the more general themes of socialization into the profession and the theory of social learning. The term of socialization is taken in one of its meanings used by the Anglo-Saxon. This is a process that leads a

person to exercise a profession or a specific practice. Socialization to the teaching profession is a long-term process, beginning well before the training. Indeed, it is under the influence of experiences in the field of physical education and sport (and out of school), school organization and culture.

In this study, "the motivation for an educational activity is defined as a dynamic state that has its origins in perceptions that a student has of himself and his activity proposes and encourages him to engage and persevere in his accomplishment to achieve a goal" (Viau & Al, 2004, p. 165), and to address problems of motivation of students towards their university education, the faculty is invited to rethink their pedagogy and to opt for innovative teaching activities in which students must engage more actively. The professional training is based on values, beliefs and motivations that the beginner student in physical education brings with him on the representations, (values and beliefs) about the future profession. The choice of profession may be based on an attraction to teaching physical education as a result of a deep personal involvement in a sport which we may imagine an extension in the studies and future profession. This is considered in terms of a clear concern for the technique sport. Incentives such as vacation time, the absence of a demanding job as soon as we left the school are common. Less demanding studies and a lack of essential qualities needed in courses leading to occupations of a higher status are reasons of a choice by default rather than by a strong motivation (Groupe de recherche inter- universitaire de l'UCL et l'ULg, 2002, 3). Also, the high rate of failures and dropouts DEUG leaves no surprise. We can, again, sinking into pessimism, saying that students have no career plan and there are just passing through. Yet, DEUG first year, in Amiens, during each academic year for seven years, over 90% of students enrolled in STAPS claim to have a clear career plan (for about 80%, this is the professorship of PES, CAPEPS) (Bordes, P & AL, 2007, 57). The work of Schön affects all sorts of trades. They leave open the question of whether the teacher will become a reflective practitioner. Two specific questions arise:

- Why to train teachers reflect on their practice?
- How to act effectively in this direction in training? (Perrenoud, 2010, 45)

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this descriptive research was to analyze a survey of members of the teaching staff, students and graduates of various training institutes for educators in PES in Algeria and in Wallonia. Our goal was thus:

- Identify the motivations, ambitions and characteristics (expectations) of students in various courses in physical education. Our intention is to determine what level are the profiles of young people who choose to become teachers or educators in PE today, to clarify how they succeed in understanding how they live their first experience in the training. The answers to these questions should enable us to provide them with adequate space to adapt the training requirements of the company but also to give them the opportunity to develop their individual and collective operational or academic;
- Enable researchers to exchange on programs and current teaching methods of training in sport and physical activity to suit better the requirements of our time.

## METHODOLOGY

This study was based in the one hand, on the analysis of official documents relating to the organization of higher education in the field of physical education and, secondly, on data collected from stakeholders in four training institutions, two of the region of Algiers (Algeria) and two in the Liege region (Wallonia). It should be remembered that in each cultural context, a university structure and a non-university structure were selected as sites of analysis.

### a) Subjects

Our results thus relate to a total sample of 290 subjects (40 members of teaching staffs, 108 students and 142 graduates).

**Table 1:** The subjects who participated in the study

	Wallonia		Algeria		
Subjects	University	Non-university	University	Non-university	Total
Staff	7	5	16	12	40
Students	11	20	54	23	108
Graduates	31	14	64	33	142
<b>Total</b>	49	39	134	68	290

### b) Instruments

Trainers (Staff) were interviewed while the subjects in both groups responded to questionnaires. The Arabic version of each instrument was translated from French language tools. One expert has assured the validity check.

### c) Data processing

In this publication, we will focus on the analysis of responses from three types of actors with two closed questions of identification, through Lickert scales at four levels, the degree of importance given by subjects to proposals corresponding to the reasons for registration in PE and future professional project. The responses were coded into a computer database and processed using software Statistica (Stat Soft, 2006).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part will be devoted to analysis and discussion of results obtained from the respondents of various institutes, we will return to the main findings of our research and analysis with reference to the conception of the cultures of both countries studied.

### 1. The reasons for registration in the training program in physical education

In this step, we analyze the responses to closed questions. The tables where the values are expressed as percentages for proportions of the various samples that participated in this study either staffs, students or graduates who chose each category for the degree of importance. This question should address the main reasons for the choice of school physical education for students beginning their training cycle. All these reasons have been grouped into eight items.

#### Staff

##### Analysis by institutes

**Table 2.** The reasons for listing in the training program in physical education and sport

Percentages of positive opinions of staff members to the proposed items	Institutes				p
	I U Liège (%)	I N U Liège (%)	I U Algiers (%)	I N U Algiers (%)	
Love of sport	85.7	100	87.5	100	0.49
Willingness to work in the field of PE	100	80	87.5	100	0.35
Willingness to practice sports	100	100	68.8	75	0.21
Positive image of sports occupation	57.1	80	43.8	100	0.01
Desire to work outdoors	14.3	60	50	41.7	0.35
Search to achieve easier studies	28.6	40	43.8	8.3	0.22
Ease of later jobs	28.6	0	31.3	75	0.01
Willingness to maintain ones' fitness	28.6	40	18.8	25	0.80

Based on (Table 2), members of the teaching staff of the various formations indicate that the primary reason to register students for training is the "Love of Sport", with higher percentages of members of two training non-university. Follow in order of importance, "Willingness to work in the field of PE", the "Willingness to practice sports" and "Positive image of sports occupation". No significant difference was marked among these items. The staffs also respond with a very low level of importance for the following: "Research to achieve easier studies" and "Ease of later jobs" where they differ significantly according to their training with a high degree of importance for non-university institute of Algiers. The analysis across countries shows that members of the teaching Belgian team give more importance to "Willingness to practice sports" where they differ significantly with their Algerian counterparts ( $p = 0.03$ ). Although, the students' majority and graduates of various institutions consider the "love of sport" among the most important items selected, this choice shows that "students and young teachers use often to talk about their love of the discipline studied at the university, the register of love and passion" (Obin, 2002, 14). This followed by the "Willingness to work in the field of PE" and "Willingness to practice sports" among the reasons for studying in this training, there are still some students who say that the "Positive image of sports occupation" and "Search to achieve easier studies" as among the reasons for listing where they differ significantly with a high percentage for Algerian students.

#### Students

##### Analysis by country

**Table 3.** The reasons for listing in the training program in physical education and sport

Percentages of positive opinions of students to the proposed items	Country		
	Wallonia (%)	Algeria (%)	P
Love of sport	96.8	96.1	0.86
Willingness to practice sports	93.5	93.5	
Willingness to work in the field of PE	93.5	88.3	0.41
Desire to work outdoors	45.2	80.5	0.00
Willingness to maintain ones' fitness	64.5	71.4	0.48
Positive image of sports occupation	64.5	62.3	0.83
Ease of later jobs	29.0	27.3	0.85
Search to achieve easier studies	03.2	09.1	0.29

No significant differences have been declared, all the samples mentioned the "love of sport" as the most important reason (96.8%). Other items proposed, in order of importance the "Willingness to practice sports" (93.5%) and "Willingness to work in the field of PE" (Table 3). Less emphasis is placed on the grounds "Ease of later jobs" and "Search to achieve easier studies", which is also the case for the reasons members of the teaching team. From the results obtained by respondents of different trainings, we can see that love of sport and willingness to practice sport, followed in order of importance by the desire to work in the field of physical education are the most important reasons for registering new students at training in physical education in Algeria and in Wallonia

## 2. Degree of importance of various professional projects among students at the training registration

The tables, where the values are expressed in percentages, are proportions of the various samples that participated in this study either teachers, students and graduates have chosen for each category the degree of importance.

### Analysis by country

**Table 4.** The various professional projects desired by the students during a training registration

Percentages of positive opinions of subjects to the proposed items	Country		
	Wallonia (%)	Algeria (%)	P
<b>Education (Teaching)</b>			
Staffs	91,7	96,4	0,52
Students	90,3	94,8	0,39
Graduates	86,7	94,8	0,09
<b>Coaching</b>			
Staffs	75,0	96,4	0,03
Students	83,9	83,1	0,94
Graduates	84,4	85,6	0,86

<b>Leisure of sport</b>			
Staffs	41,7	42,9	0,94
Students	51,6	23,4	0,004
Graduates	60,0	23,7	0,000
<b>Sport Management</b>			
Staffs	00	17,9	0,12
Students	51,6	29,9	0,03
Graduates	28,9	30,9	0,80

### a) The staff

From (Table 4), no significant difference was pronounced among members of the teaching team on the degree of importance of various professional projects desired by the students during registration training. The "Teaching" is the most important job as a professional project desired by students beginning their training, followed in order of importance by the "Coaching", the jobs of "Leisure" and lately the "Sports Management". Note that the latter choice is more important for members of the teaching staff of both Algerian institutes for their counterparts in Belgium.

### b) Students

Like the results of staffs, the degree of the highest importance for students of different institutes is the "Teaching" followed by "Coaching". This item differs significantly between students in non-university training institutes of both Belgium and Algeria (100%) and students from university institutes of both countries. Regarding the "Sports' Management" we noticed a low priority given to this item in Algerian students in university education. Recently, the trades of " Sport Leisure " are less important among students in university education in Belgium and Algeria.

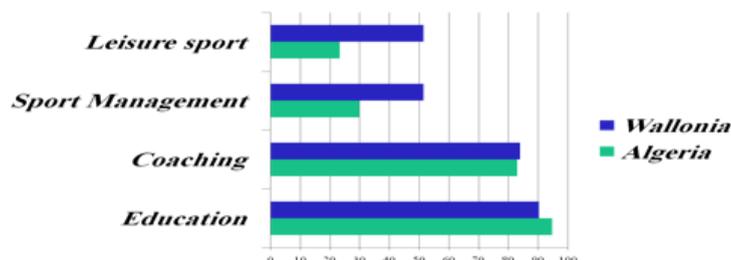


Figure 1. Profile of the professional projects expected by the students

### c) Graduates

As we reported for the staffs and students, the "Teaching" is, according to the graduates, among the various professional the largest projects desired by the students during registration at training. However it differs significantly for graduates of the non-university institute in Wallonia. Following order of importance of "Coaching" and the trades "Leisure" and "Sports' Management". The degree of importance of various professional projects desired by the students during registration to the training notes that "teaching" of the PE emerges mostly all the answers as a professional project desired by students starting their training. It is the highest percentage of choice of all samples surveyed, followed in order of importance by the "coaching", "Leisure" and "Sports' Management" which is the last choice of the professional project desired by the students at registration. The latter choice is, however, particularly marked in subjects in Algeria.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the results obtained by respondents of different trainings, we can see that love of sport and willingness to practice sport, followed in order of importance by the desire to work in the physical education field. The most important reason for registering new students for training programs in physical education in Algeria and in Wallonia (the French Community of Belgium). We respect the analysis by country, the "teaching" is the highest percentage among the other professional projects, and we noticed that the level of significance is higher for the Algerians, followed by "coaching" where noticing a significant difference between the staffs and also for the Algerians. For the other two projects (Leisure and Sport Management) is less important relative teaching and coaching and they differed significantly among students in institutes of the French Community of Belgium (Wallonia).

The future profession and sport are the predominant elements of the choice of training. A large majority (nearly 90%) consider

teaching as a future occupation. "The characteristics of physical education teachers that students have rubbed shoulders during their studies, are best represented in the responses related to personality and teaching skills and scientific" (Griu, 2002, 7). The teaching of sport and physical education emerges mostly all the answers as a professional project desired by students beginning their training. It is the highest percentage of choice of all samples surveyed, followed in order of importance by coaching, recreation and sports' management, which is the last choice of the professional project desired by the students during registration. The latter choice is, however, particularly marked in subjects of non-university training in Algeria.

We cannot conclude this research which reminds us that communities in network training are currently emerging and they are trying to meet an ideal of collaboration and exchange between two countries that is not often realized. The theme addressed by this study and presented in this work confirms this. These two communities are part of two different contexts which is very difficult to generalize. So by bringing these two training contexts in physical education from actors and participants from both communities we can better understand their views and expectations to further develop existing systems of access and training in Algeria and Wallonia (French Community of Belgium).

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