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The dynamics of the teacher-pupil interaction in relation to the self- and the foreign-concept of the P.E. teacher

Introduction

After a long time of »objective» (psychometric) measurement of personality variables, educational research is in the midst of a paradigm shift. No longer are the personality traits seen as the main source of a person's behaviour but his cognition of himself, i.e. his self-concept. The type and the quality of the interaction in the school is assumed to be a function of the self- and the foreign-concept of teachers and pupils, respectively.

The data to be presented here are part of a research project whose theoretical perspective is situated within the frame of this reorientation of educational research. The aim of the study was an investigation of the educational and the professional situation of the P.E. teacher in the German speaking part of Switzerland. Special reference was given to the teachers' self- concept and the real and the ideal foreign-concept of them as seen by the pupils. We expected high correlations between the self- concept of the teachers on the one hand, their foreign-concept on the other hand and other variables of pedagogical importance such as educational attitudes and professional problems of the teachers, the pupils' interest in and satisfaction with the P.E. lessons.

Methods

The self- and the foreign-concepts have been investigated by means of a Q-sort. The Q-sort was constructed with reference to the scientific literature on the personality of the P.E. teacher and the athlete. It contains 56 adjectives, written on separate cards. The subjects are asked to arrange the cards on a 7-point scale in a manner making up a quasi-normal distribution. The endpoints of the scale mean approvement and disapprovement, respectively. The reliability and the validity of the Q-sort is satisfactory (rtt = .76) ([1]). Further data, concerning professional identity,

([1]) More details are given in Herzog & Klauser, 1981, pp. 4-19.

professional problems, educational attitudes, quality and quantity of interaction, satisfaction with the P.E. lessons, etc., have been investigated in both groups - the teachers and the pupils - by standardized interviews. The teacher sample consisted of the P.E. teachers of six Swiss cantons (n=235). The pupils were a representative sample of the High School students of the canton Zürich (n=220). The average age of the pupils was 18 years. The data have been collected in 1978 (2).

Results

The analysis of the data shows on a global level a high correspondence of the self-concept of the teachers and their foreign-concept as seen by the pupils (see table 1).

Nevertheless, there are some discrepancies. The most obvious one concerns the item »likeable». The pupils see the P.E. teachers as much more »likeable» than do the teachers themselves. The other differences are less favourable: The pupils see the P.E. teachers as more »conceited», more »moody», more »martial», more »stubborn», more »dogmatic» and as less »adaptable», less »content», less »poetic», less »trustworthy», less »sympathetic» and less »imaginative» than the teachers see themselves. These data indicate a sphere of potential conflicts in the teacher-pupil relation. In the opinion of the pupils, the teachers seem to be too inflexible, unsympathetic and authoritarian. The pupils would like to have a P.E. teacher with a more harmonious disposition and with more of a creative competence.

This interpretation is supported by a comparison of the real and the ideal foreign-concept of the P.E. teacher as seen by the pupils. Compared with the »real» P.E. teacher, the ideal teacher should have more of the following traits (see Herzog & Klauser, 1981, pp. 339-341): »imaginative», »just», »considerate», »sympathetic», »tolerant», »patient», »humorous», »poetic», »spontaneous», »adaptable», and »likeable». He should have less of traits such as »moody», »martial», »dogmatic», »conceited», »stubborn», »touchy», »aggressive», »authoritarian», »ambitious», »conservative», and »suspicious».

When we leave the level of the global data we can get a more detailed picture of the teacher-pupil relationship by an analysis of group differences. For that purpose, the self- and the foreign-concept data were processed by cluster analyses. With the self-concept data, we get a two-groups solution. The characterization of these two groups is given by an interpretation of the statistically significant differences of the mean scale positions of the two groups on the Q-sort items. Accordingly, the *first* group shows high scores on the following items (see Herzog & Klauser, 1981, pp. 69-73): »anxious», »adaptive», »modest», »sympathetic», »touchy», »patient», »unstable», »poetic», »considerate», »calm», »shy», »sensuous», »likeable», and »tolerant». This group of P.E. teachers could be circumscribed as having a *»tender»* self-concept. The *second* group shows high scores on the following items: »aggressive», »active», »persevering», »authoritarian», »ambitious», »vigorous», »industrious», »martial», »courageous», »selfconfident», »vital,» and »trustworthy». This group could be called to have a *»tough»* selfconcept.

The cluster analysis of the foreign-concept data leads to a three-groups solution.

(2) Further methodological and sociographic information is given in Herzog & Klauser, 1981, chap. 2.

TABLE 1. Self-concept and real-foreign-concept of the p.e. teacher: mean values and ordered differences of the Q-sort-items

	MSC	MRFC	d
adaptable (anpassungsfähig)	2.92	3.83	-.91
content (zufrieden)	2.94	3.67	-.73
poetic (musisch)	3.74	4.43	-.69
trustworthy (zuverlässig)	2.65	3.32	-.67
sympathetic (einfühlsam)	3.40	4.03	-.63
imaginative (phantasievoll)	3.64	4.21	-.57
optimistic (optimistisch)	2.94	3.43	-.49
tolerant (tolerant)	2.80	3.25	-.45
touchy (empfindlich)	3.79	4.20	-.41
honest (ehrlich)	2.53	2.90	-.37
considerate (rücksichtsvoll)	3.29	3.66	-.37
spontaneous (spontan)	3.28	3.63	-.35
practical (praktisch)	3.19	3.51	-.32
sensuous (sinnlich)	4.20	4.50	-.30
industrious (fleissig)	3.38	3.67	-.29
persevering (ausdauernd)	3.10	3.38	-.28
just (gerecht)	2.97	3.22	-.25
anxious (ängstlich)	5.33	5.57	-.24
earnest (ernst)	4.12	4.36	-.24
vigorous (energisch)	3.49	4.69	-.20
active (aktiv)	2.71	2.90	-.19
aggressive (aggressiv)	4.90	5.07	-.17
self-confident (selbstbewusst)	3.50	3.66	-.16
shy (schüchtern)	5.17	5.31	-.14
patient (geduldig)	3.34	3.44	-.10
keeping distance (distanziert)	4.60	4.67	-.07
under control (beherrscht)	3.67	3.73	-.06
modest (bescheiden)	4.10	4.16	-.06
friendly (kollegial)	2.96	3.01	-.05
sober (nüchtern)	4.13	4.16	-.03

(continued)

TABLE 1 (continued)

	MSC	MRFC	d
conservative (konservativ)	4.72	4.73	-.01
rebellious (rebellisch)	5.31	5.31	.00
calm (ruhig)	3.77	3.71	.06
authoritarian (autoritär)	4.29	4.21	.08
sociable (gesellig)	3.50	3.41	.09
neat (ordentlich)	3.60	3.48	.12
unstable (labil)	5.23	5.10	.13
courageous (mutig)	3.74	3.60	.14
suspicious (misstrauisch)	4.99	4.85	.14
ambitious (ehrgeizig)	4.03	3.85	.18
envious (neidisch)	5.48	5.27	.21
intelligent (intelligent)	3.50	3.27	.23
materialistic (materialistisch)	4.92	4.68	.24
extravert (extravertiert)	4.23	3.99	.24
vital (vital)	3.38	3.09	.29
sexy (sexy)	5.11	4.76	.35
humorous (humorvoll)	3.54	3.17	.36
dependent (abhängig)	5.22	4.78	.44
instinctive (triebhaft)	5.25	4.78	.47
dogmatic (rechthaberisch)	5.04	4.45	.59
stubborn (eigensinnig)	4.77	4.18	.59
manly (männlich)	4.37	3.71	.66
moody (launisch)	4.90	4.23	.67
martial (militärisch)	5.33	4.56	.77
conceited (von sich eingenommen)	5.23	4.39	.84
likeable (sympathisch)	3.76	2.57	1.19

MSC = Mean values of the self-concept items (p.e. teachers, n=218)
MRFC = Mean values of the real-foreign-concept items (pupils, n=220)
d = MSC - MRFC
The items were measured on a 7-point Q-sort-scale with "1" = "fully agree" and "7" = "fully disagree".

Two of these groups correspond fairly well with the two self-concept groups. Again, the description of the groups is based on those Q-sort items whose scale positions in the two groups show statistically significant differences. The *first* foreign-concept group is characterized by high scores on the following items (see Herzog & Klauser, 1981, pp. 321-325): »like- able», »patient», »tolerant», »sympathetic», »considerate», »adaptable», »friendly», »just», »imaginative», »humorous», »under control», »sexy», and »calm». The second group has high scores on the following items: »dogmatic», »martial», »aggressive», »authoritarian», »moody», »stubborn», »conservative», »keeping distance», »ambitious», »suspicious», »touchy», »rigorous», »conceited», and »materialistic». As with the self-concept groups, the differences of these foreign-concept groups are situated between a *tough-tender* polarity.

This correspondence between the two self-concept and the two foreign-concept groups gives us the possibility to look for further relations between the self-concept groups and other teacher data, on the one hand, and the foreign-concept groups and other pupil data, on the other hand. In this way, a much more instructive picture of the teacher-pupil relationship comes into existence. Sure, our data are correlational in nature, and, therefore, we cannot make causal inferences. But, as a description of the teacher- pupil relation, the following interpretations should be valid (3).

The tender-minded P.E. teachers emphasize such educational aims as tolerance and self-reliance, they refuse to discipline the pupils and to be rough. They are rather generous in their marks-giving practice and have liberal political attitudes. On the other hand, they have some problems with their professional role, especially concerning their pedagogical competence. The pupils with a »tender» foreign-concept of the P.E. teacher see his teaching style as open, individualized, supporting, social-integrative, and animated. Their behaviour is spontaneous, courageous, without restraints, and they like the P.E. lessons.

On the other hand, the tough-minded P.E. teachers have restrictive educational attitudes. They emphasize discipline and roughness, they are rigorous in their marks-giving practice, and they are rather conservative in their political attitudes. But they have less role problems than their tender-minded colleagues. The pupils with a »tough» foreign-concept label the behaviour of their teachers as narrow, not inspired, surpressing, and emotionally cold. Very often, they feel inhibited and overcharged, and their enthusiasm and satisfaction is small.

To summarize, we have two different types of teacher-pupil relationship. The focus of the first type is the perception of a tough-minded P.E. teacher, and the focus of the second one is the perception of a tender-minded P.E. Teacher. The tough-minded teachers could be characterized as authoritarian in their personality as well as in their attitudes and their behaviour. On the other hand, the tender-minded teachers could be called liberal or social-integrative.

Grounded on this analysis it could be supposed that the tender-minded P.E. teachers are much closer to the ideal P.E. teacher as desired by the pupils. When we compare the two foreign- concept groups with the *ideal* foreign-concept of the P.E. teacher, this supposition is clearly confirmed (see table 2).

This result may not be surprising. Furthermore, it corresponds with studies done outside the context of Physical Education (see, e.g., Gerstenmaier, 1975). Nonetheless, it is an important fact. There is a tendency in the P.E. literature to over-emphasize the

(3) A detailed analysis is given in Herzog & Klauser, 1981, pp. 350-351 and passim.

TABLE 2. Ideal-foreign-concept of the p.e. teacher and real-foreign-concepts of the two subgroups: mean values and differences of the Q-sort-items

	MIFC	MRFCTO	d1	MRFCTE	d2
dogmatic	5.61	2.26	-3.25	5.80	.17
martial	5.83	2.60	-3.23	5.93	.10
moody	5.58	2.66	-2.92	5.15	-.43
stubborn	5.18	2.57	-2.61	4.84	-.34
conceited	5.52	2.91	-2.61	4.71	-.81
aggressive	5.90	3.36	-2.54	5.49	-.41
concervative	5.32	3.24	-2.08	5.48	.16
authoritarian	4.94	2.94	-2.00	5.52	.58
touchy	5.12	3.32	-1.80	4.79	-.33
ambitious	4.49	2.75	-1.74	4.32	-.17
suspicious	5.40	3.91	-1.49	4.43	-.91
vigorous	4.15	3.12	-1.03	4.60	.45
dependent	5.11	4.13	-.98	5.17	.06
materialistic	4.94	3.96	-.98	5.07	.13
envious	5.47	4.49	-.98	5.37	-.10
earnest	4.64	3.75	-.89	4.66	.02
unstable	5.34	4.47	-.87	5.09	-.25
instinctive	5.02	4.19	-.83	4.96	-.06
keeping distance	4.85	4.09	-.76	5.03	.18
sober	4.42	3.74	-.68	4.65	.23
neat	3.87	3.19	-.68	3.72	-.15
rebellious	5.17	4.60	-.57	5.43	.26
self-confident	3.45	2.96	-.49	3.21	-.24
anxious	5.42	4.96	-.46	5.55	.13
industrious	3.94	3.62	-.32	3.60	-.34
shy	5.10	5.00	-.10	5.16	.06
extravert	3.94	3.88	-.06	3.99	.05
courageous	3.56	3.53	-.03	3.40	-.16
vital	3.18	3.25	.07	3.17	-.01

(continued)

TABLE 2 (continued)

	MIFC	MRFCTO	d1	MRFCTE	d2
manly	3.90	3.98	.08	3.79	-.11
persevering	3.54	3.79	.25	3.23	-.31
active	2.93	3.23	.30	2.93	.00
sensuous	4.43	4.79	.36	4.16	-.27
practical	3.33	3.70	.37	3.43	.10
optimistic	3.31	3.72	.41	3.25	.06
intelligent	3.11	3.75	.64	3.11	.00
modest	4.05	4.70	.65	4.11	.06
calm	3.55	4.22	.67	3.55	.00
trustworthy	3.01	3.79	.78	3.12	.11
honest	2.69	3.49	.80	2.79	.10
sociable	3.18	4.04	.86	3.07	-.11
content	3.31	4.27	.96	3.41	.10
spontaneous	2.82	4.06	1.24	3.13	.31
sexy	4.38	5.64	1.26	4.05	-.33
poetic	3.56	4.93	1.37	4.03	.47
friendly	2.67	4.13	1.46	2.13	-.54
under control	3.31	4.91	1.60	3.32	.01
adaptable	3.10	5.06	1.96	2.93	-.17
humorous	2.29	4.30	2.01	2.64	.35
just	2.11	4.58	2.47	2.73	.62
likeable	1.99	4.55	2.56	1.67	-.32
patient	2.54	5.12	2.58	2.31	-.23
considerate	2.55	5.17	2.62	2.89	.34
sympathetic	2.96	5.62	2.66	2.97	.01
tolerant	2.28	5.00	2.72	2.31	.03
imaginative	2.56	5.30	2.74	3.53	.97

MIFC = Mean values of the ideal-foreign-concept items (pupils, n=220)

MRFCTO = Mean values of the real-foreign-concept items, "tough" subgroup (pupils, n=53)

MRFCTE = Mean values of the real-foreign-concept items, "tender" subgroup (pupils, n=75)

d1 = MRFCTO - MIFC

d2 = MRFCTE - MIFC

material conditions of the schools as the main source of the instructional problems of the P.E. teacher. Too little attention is given to the *pedagogical relationship* between teacher and pupil. The analysis and the interpretation of our data indicate that the personality of the P.E. teacher greatly influences the quality of the teacher-pupil relationship. The tough-minded P.E. teacher is not a good promoter of a satisfying pedagogical relation- ship, at least not in the eyes of the pupils. The pupils would like to have an open-minded, just, tolerant, patient, spontaneous, emotionally warm, and sympathetic teacher. But this might be true of any human relationship. Is not everybody looking for human relations which are warm and satisfactory?

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