# The Self-determination Theory (SDT) Approach in PE Learning

Physical Education (PE) plays an essential role in learning development of students. There are numerous benefits reaped from its learning, which ranges from mental fitness, educational prowess, and decision making and, physical wellbeing. As PE involves the use of massive volumes of energy in most instances, there is need to nurture an environment of motivation among the students to enable them to participate in PE classes. Self-determination theory provides a methodological approach to cultivating and enhancing motivation among learners in a PE class. By giving a real-life approach in explaining motivation and performers of participants, the SDT theory has become the most critical approach in redefining PE learning pedagogy. There is need to adopt SDT approach In PE class as autonomy support nurtures positive emotions that propel behavioral engagement and self-directed motivation among the learners.

Motivation is perceived as the factors, which enhance or guide a particular behavior. Vidosavljević, Krulj-Drasković & Lakušić (2015) argue that actions, ambition levels, personality goals and needs, beliefs and world beliefs are the main factors that determine motivation among the learners. In their argument, they hold that motivation is the methodology through which individuals achieve various motives within them (Vidosavljević et al., 2015). Motivation is either intrinsic or extrinsic. Inherent motivation relates to the individual inclination regarding preferences, needs, personality, and desires. On the other hand, external motivation relates to the environment of an individual that determines the motives and decision-making process of the individual (Vidosavljević et al., 2015). The SDT theory regarding PE learning places the motivation of the student on the polarization of intrinsic motivation of the student. This paper seeks to expound on motivation in SDT theory and its significance in improving the performance of PE class.

Students engage in various activities based on specific reasons. These reasons are recognized as motives. Self-determination theory focuses on reviewing these reasons or motivations and their actualization in performing different operations among the individuals. As a result, motivation plays a vital role in understanding the application of Self-determination theory in PE learning. There are specific factors, which facilitate the development of motivation among learners during the learning process. Vidosavljević et al. (2015) identify these factors as the structure of the learning process, the content of the learning material, learning activities used during the class session, assessment method used by the instructor, and the teacher's pedagogical methodology. There is need to enhance a comprehensive and appropriate knit of these different factors that cultivate motivation among the students to improve the performance of students during the class session. The inclusive merge requires the instructors to adopt SDT approach in teaching the PE classes. The reason for this approach is based on the fact that the conventional mechanisms of learning have proven inefficient and have led to the diminished performance of students over time.

Various studies have been conducted to assess the applicability of Self-determination theory in the field of physical education learning. Scholars and researchers across the divide conduct multiple experiments to determine the impacts of using this argument in modifying physical education learning. In these investigations, the researchers identify the significance of SDT theory when compared to the conventional approach of PE learning. Research by Chang et al. (2016) among PE students from Taiwan, learners, who were exposed to the SDT approach of education demonstrate higher levels of motivation in contrast to their counterparts, who were under the conventional learning methodologies. This observation indicates that the traditional methods of teaching PE classes have become inefficient.

In the research, Chang et al. (2016) realize that the SDT mechanism of teaching PE classes empowers the learners and enhances their motor responses. This situation enables the learners to demonstrate a high level of motivation. Unlike the traditional approaches, SDT approach used by Chang et al. (2016) incorporates a comprehensive environment of manipulation to nurture intrinsic motivation among the learners. Students had a freedom of choosing their partners and the content of the class rather than the teacher controlling everything during the course. From this study, the free environment provided for by the teacher nurtures the intrinsic motivation among the learners. Rather than dictating everything during the class, the teacher left the students to decide certain aspects of the course while at the same time conforming to the standards of the lesson. Through this approach, the students were involved in the decision-making process and felt engaged in the class activity. Due to this environment cultured by the SDT approach, the learners performed better than those, who underwent conventional training. Thus, by proving a certain level of autonomy to students, the instructors nurture intrinsic motivation among the learners and enhance their performance.

Yoo (2015), in a research paper, notes that self-determination is the vital principle held by the SDT theory. In the argument, Yoo (2015) contends that optimal motivational consequences lead to intrinsic motivation. Further, he notes that controlled motivation minimizes individual’s motivation leading to poor performance. Through this argument, Yoo (2015) introduces the case of cognitive evaluation theory as a theory in SDT. This approach seeks to identify the linkage between intrinsic motivation and social contexts. The method provides a practical explanation on how people respond to various motivation environments. Based on the theory, when people feel that they are controlled to perform a specific activity, their motivation towards that activity is diminished (Yoo, 2015). On the contrary, if they feel they have a certain level of autonomy, they feel motivated and develop intrinsic motivation towards the activity. This scenario affirms that a free environment enhances internal motivation among learners. In his argument, Yoo (2015) demonstrates that, although behavior, motivation, and cognition are three diverse aspects of autonomous motivation, these features are interdepend elements that determine the motivation level of an individual. Separate research by Karagiannidis, Barkoukis, Gourgoulis, Kosta, and Antoniou (2015) affirms this view. In their experiment, Karagiannidis et al. (2015) realized that a free environment enhances cognitive performance of the learners and increases their intrinsic motivation. In the study, learners, who were exposed to open environment demonstrated higher levels of motivation and enjoyment when compared to the control group under conventional methods (Karagiannidis et al., 2015). Further, the study realized that controlling the environment had a significant influence in increasing levels of boredom during the class session (Karagiannidis et al., 2015). Thus, there is a need for instructors to create a free environment, which enhances intrinsic motivation among the learners. Through this approach, learners will benefit from the PE classes.

Much has been discussed enhancing a free environment within the learning environment. Nevertheless, there is need to explain how this situation is developed within the learning environment. By addressing the implementation of this approach in teaching methodology, instructors should implement the findings obtained from various experiments conducted regarding the PE instruction. To begin with, PE instructors should adopt charismatic leadership approach to motivate their students. The charismatic leadership approach provides an environment of understanding, choice, creativity and active participation of the learners (Yang& Dong, 2017). Additionally, the instructors should include specific incentives within the class session. The use of incentives enhances the motivation of students, which enables them to achieve their goals. A charismatic leadership approach that embraces incentives allows the learners to address the problems they encounter during their learning with creativity and originality. Consequently, they ought to apply novel approaches to resolving these issues. This methodology enables the learners to contribute in the decision-making procedure enhancing their cognitive abilities and enjoyment of the activity.

There is a need for PE instructors to encourage their students to set goals and objectives during their training session. The Achievement Goal theory is a theory integrated into the SDT theory. Based on this approach, learners set various achievement goals based on their level of competency in the activity under review. In a research conducted by Halvari, Skjesol, and Bagøien (2011), they realize that the leaner's beliefs in achieving a particular task spurred the desire to make that specific objective. Further, they realized that when the learners feel that they cannot reach an individual goal; they become anxious leading to helplessness and distraction. This situation hinders them from achieving the goal (Halvari, Skjesol & Bagøien, 2011). This view is also held in a separate research by Cecchini et al. (2001). In their paper, Cecchini et al. (2001) realize that when teachers motivated students during the PE classes, their ego and performance significantly increased. The motivation received from the instructors enabled the students to develop intrinsic motivation, which facilitated them to achieve their goals. Hence, it is paramount for instructors during the learning process to encourage the students and provide various tips, which will enable them to achieve their goals during the class session. By adopting this approach, the instructors allow the learners to set multiple objectives and meet them.

There is a need for teachers to develop learning frameworks, which mirror Self-determination theory. The conventional approach to learning emphasizes the necessity of mastering individual disconnected aspects of the game (Moy, Renshaw &Davids, 2015). This methodology does not provide the necessary knowledge and skills, which enable the learner to develop diverse tactics of addressing distinct scenarios during the game (Moy et al., 2015). However, when the teachers develop learning frameworks, which reflect the "Constrain-Led Approach," they enhance the abilities of the learners (Moy et al., 2015). This case arises because there is task simplification, which increases the motivation of the learners. Similarly, there is need to involve the students during the learning process. The active participation of students within the learning process enables them to improve their score in the game (Chatzipanteli, Digelidis & Papaioannou, 2015). This improvement is realized because the participation nurtures intrinsic motivation within the learning environment leading to lesson satisfaction (Chatzipanteli et al., 2015). Similarly, student participation assures them on their abilities regarding various tasks (Gao, 2009). This assurance in their capabilities motivates them to ascribe particular importance to the physical activity, which nurtures interest in the game (Gao, 2009). Thus, there is a need for the instructors to develop the appropriate learning frameworks, which incorporate the participation of students to enhance their performance.

Overall, self-determination theory provides a novel approach to enhancing learning during PE classes. The strategy seeks to create a free environment, which improves decision-making among the learners, participation, and development of cognitive abilities. There is a need for the instructors to adopt this teaching approach as it enables the learners to benefit maximally from the PE class. Instructors should take charismatic leadership approach and encourage their students to achieve goals during the learning period. Through this comprehensive plan, the learners will benefit from the lesson.

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