

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASS IN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS OF CARUARU- PE:  
REQUIRED OR OPTIONAL CURRICULUM COMPONENT?**

**AULAS DE EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA NO ENSINO MÉDIO DA REDE PÚBLICA  
ESTADUAL DE CARUARU: COMPONENTE CURRICULAR OBRIGATÓRIO OU  
FACULTATIVO?**

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**ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study was to investigate the context of PE classes in a representative sample of high school students of public schools of Caruaru/PE. Through a questionnaire, previously validated 600 students were interviewed. Students participation, offering of classes, content and waiving classes were investigated. The data was analyzed in SPSS 15.0 using chi-square and chi-square for tendencies tests ( $p < 0.05$ ). In schools where the discipline was offered only 37.6% students participate and the others claimed to be exempt. However, only 34% of the students qualified to be legally exempt. Only 14.3% of the classes were offered during regular school hours. Whenever classes are not offered during regular school hours, the participation drops significantly and increases the number of exemptions not permitted by law. It has been observed that physical education has lost its class status, and in reality it has become optional, despite being a mandatory curricular component.

**Keywords:** Physical Education; Training. Students. Adolesc.

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**INTRODUCTION**

In the last decades Physical Education (PE) in Brazilian schools is going through a process of analyses and investigations about its role on the formal education. The problems are concerning the discussion of the contents and its condition as a curricular component in the basic education program (BRAZIL, 1996; BRAZIL, 2001; BRAZIL, 2003; FERRAZ, 2001; NAHAS et al., 1995; OLIVEIRA et al., 2000; PEREIRA et al., 2004). Throughout last decades, several authors have investigated the approaches and the systematization of the contents for the individual's formation during school years, thus justifying its importance (FERRAZ, 2001; NAHAS et al., 1995; OLIVEIRA et al., 2000; PEREIRA et al., 2004).

It is a consensus of opinion in the national and international literature the importance of PE in the school program for the education process and for the youths' formation.

At the end of 90s the International Olympic Committee (IOC) carried out a survey in 126 countries, with the objective of investigating the regulation of PE in schools, the teachers' perception, the developed contents and its status as curricular component in the school. In 71% of the countries PE is regulated and is part of the basic education program (HARDMAN, 2000).

In Brazil, according to the Law of Guidelines and Bases of the National Education of 1996 (LDB), PE is integrated to the proposal of the school, it is a curricular component of the Basic Education, but it is optional in the night courses and, besides that, it has to be adjusted to the age groups and the conditions of the school population (BRAZIL, 1996). In 2001 there

was a change in the text and it was added the term "obligatory" after the expression "curricular component" (BRAZIL, 2001). However, in 2003 a new change turned optional the participation of those students that work more than six hours a day, that are 30 years-old or over, have children or some medical problem that disables them (BRAZIL, 2003). Among the boys, those in age for the military service are also spared by law.

However, along the years it seems to have reduced the students' participation, especially in High School and in the night shift, even in situations that are not within the criteria of legal dismissal (BRAZIL, 2003). in spite of being regulated and be part in the Basic Education in a large number of countries, it is a consensus of opinion that PE has been losing the status of discipline in the schools, for several factors, such as of administrative and structural (BETTI, 1995) order, of offer (DARIDO, 1999) and of sistematization of the contents (BARBIERI; PORETTI; MELLO, 2008).

In the face of a urgent need to discuss and reflect upon the aspects that directly permeate the offer and the students' participation in the PE classes, especially in High School period of Brazilian public schools, the present study has the objective of investigating among High School students of the state public system of the municipal district of Caruaru/PE: (a) the students' participation in PE classes, (b) how the classes are offered; (c) the content of the classes; (d) and finally, the reasons related to the dismissal of the discipline, for legal reasons.

## METHODS

The present study, of descriptive type and transversal character was submitted to the Committee of Ethics in Research with Human Beings of the Associação Caruaruense de Ensino Superior, under the protocol number 44/2007. It was approved in July 2007. All the ethical aspects foreseen in the Resolution 196/96 of the National Council of Health were respected. The present research had the approval of the Secretariat of Education and Culture (SEDUC) of the State of Pernambuco, which supplied the data referring to the school census (PERNAMBUCO, 2007).

The municipal district of Caruaru is located in the rural area of Pernambuco, 120Km from the State capital named Recife. It is considered the "capital of the rural Pernambuco" and, according to the census of 2007, it had 289,086 inhabitants. The municipal district is divided geographically in three areas - north, center and south - in which, according to SEDUC administrative data, there are 15 state public schools that offer High School Education (PERNAMBUCO, 2007). The studied population was composed by 8,833 High School students of the state public schools.

For the calculation of the sample size the following parameters were adopted: population ( $n = 8,833$ ); a confidence interval of 95%; maximum acceptable error of five percentile points; effect of a sample design of 1.5; and for working with a wide project of investigation with several issues, the prevalence was arbitrated in 50%.

Based in those parameters, the size of the sample was estimated in 541 subjects. Additionally, foreseen eventual refuse, it was decided to multiply the sample by 1.2, totaling a final sample of 649 subjects. In the process of selection the students' proportional distribution was considered according to the geographical area of the municipal district, the size of the school and the school shift (day and night). Students enrolled in the morning and afternoon periods were grouped in one category (students of the daily shift).

The selection of the sample was done by group in two stages, being the entire accomplished assortment carried out in an aleatory way. In the first stage, the sample unit was the school. All of them were public High Schools of Caruaru considered eligible to participate in the study. The selection was randomized and the following stratified criteria were

considered: (a) density of the school and of students in each microregion of the municipal district and (b) the school size (small, medium and large). The classification adopted to determine the size of the school was: large - 500 students or more enrolled; medium - between 200 and 499 students; and small - less than 200 students.

In the second stage, all the groups (smaller sample unit) of the assigned schools were considered eligible for the study. The used sampling was the simple at random, and as stratification criterion, it was considered the density of groups in each assigned school and of the quantitative of students enrolled in the day and night periods. According to the school census, in 2007 each High School group had, on average, 41 enrolled students, and thus 16 groups of 8 schools were assigned (58,6% of the total of schools) (PERNAMBUCO, 2007).

For the collection of the information it was applied the questionnaire entitled "Risk Behaviors used in Adolescents in Santa Catarina State (COMCAP)", previously validated in students of the public Brazilian school system (BARROS, 2004) and applied in a experimental study with a population of the same age group, presenting measures of reproducibility from moderate to high. The questionnaire contains information related to the adolescent's lifestyle, composed by a session of general information (sociodemographic and related to work) and five sessions related to health (eating habits, physical activity, risk behaviors, preventive behaviors and perceptions of health). The session regarding physical activity contains subjects related to the PE classes which are the focus of the study.

The procedures adopted for the collection of data were: (a) a previous contact with the directors regarding the terms of consent and to set an appointment; and (b) training of the procedures of data collection among the evaluators. Data collection was carried out in October 2007, and it involved all the students that were present the day the groups were assigned.

To proceed with the data collection, initially the researcher informed the objectives of the research, assuring the students that the supplied information would be kept private, that it would not influence their school performance and that it would be used only for research purposes. Besides that, the students were told not to identify themselves and to sign the Term of Free Consent. After the distribution of the questionnaires, the researcher proceeded a reading of each question. Following, the students answered all the questions. When there was any doubt, the reading was interrupted and the doubts were cleared, as previously set in the training. The time to answer the questionnaire varied from 30 to 40 minutes.

The investigated variables were divided into sociodemographical (genre, chronological age, marital status, place of residence, and living with the family or not), questions related to economic status (work and monthly family income) and to school (offer of PE classes, series and period). In relation to PE classes it was asked the student if the school offered PE classes (YES, in the curricular program; YES, as an after school program, and NO), if the student attended PE classes (YES; NO; or NO. I am exempt). It was asked the direction of the schools which did not offer PE classes the main reason for not doing that. Besides those questions, an open question was included: "Mention three contents that you like the most and three that you like the least in PE classes".

The criteria to be exempt of PE classes were those foreseen in law: for the boys, to be a father, to be over 30 years old, to work more than 6 hours daily, and to be rendering military service, in situation of practice of physical education in the army; and for the girls, to have children, to be over 30 years old, to work more than 6 hours a day (BRAZIL, 2003). Dismissal for medical reasons was not investigated due to difficulties of collecting the information, once most of the schools do not register the certificates of medical dismissal. The final data tabulation was made through the program Epi it Dates (version 3.1). In order to detect mistakes, the information was typed twice in different computers. From the program

"VALIDATE" of Epi Data a file was generated, containing information on the data entry mistakes, in order to correct them and to guide the revision process and cleaning of the database. After inspection, data was exported to the analysis program (SPSS, version 15.0).

In the plan of data analysis, some variables were grouped and others were created. The chronological age was transformed in four categories: 14-16, 17-18, 19-29 and 30 years or over. The item "having a child" was dichotomized in "YES" (independent of the number of children) and NO. The variables work and daily hours of work were transformed in an only variable, being the answer categories: I don't work; I work less than 6 hours daily; and I work for 6 hours daily or more.

Furthermore, other two variables were created: legal dismissal for boys and for girls, grouping the information related to the legal dismissal in order to identify the proportion of students that were not released by reason foreseen by law. The open questions were grouped in order to be introduced in frequency form and proportion.

In the descriptive analyses the frequency distribution for the categorical variables and the average and standard deviation for the continuous variables were used. In the inferring tests, the proportions were compared by the chi-square test and chii-square for tendency, when necessary. A level of significância of 5% was adopted.

## RESULTS

Altogether, 8 schools and 16 groups were visited, as it was mentioned in the section of methods. From the total of the students that was present in the days of collection ( $n = 624$ ), 24 refused to participate (3.8%). The final sample was composed by 600 students (62.5% girls), with an average and standard deviation of 17.5 and 1.6, respectively.

In its majority, the students told to be: without children, living with the parents, in the urban zone, and working. The average daily time and standard deviation among those that told to have a work was  $6.8 \pm 1.8$ . The other socio demographic information and related to school are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1** - Socio demographic and economical distribution related to the students' school.

Variables	Boys		Girls		Both	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Age						
15	6.2	14	11.5	43	9.5	57
16	19.0	43	22.5	84	21.2	127
17	27.4	62	22.7	85	24.5	147
18	18.1	41	20.3	76	19.5	117
19	14.6	33	11.0	41	12.3	74
20	14.6	33	12.0	45	12.3	78
Status						
Single	97.3	219	94.0	353	95.2	572
Married	0.4	1	3.3	12	2.2	13
Other	2.2	5	2.7	10	2.5	15
Children						
No	97.3	219	95.7	358	96.3	577
One child	2.7	6	3.2	13	3.0	19
Two children	0	0	1.1	4	0.7	4
Local of residence						
Rural	10.9	24	10.6	40	10.7	64
Urban	89.1	201	89.4	335	89.3	536
Leaves with family						
Yes	97.3	219	95.1	356	95.9	575
No	2.7	6	4.9	19	4.1	25
Work <sup>a</sup>						
Yes	70.6	159	57.8	216	62.6	375
No	29.4	66	42.2	159	37.4	225
Daily working hours <sup>ab</sup>						
Less than 6	28.5	46	48.9	105	40.1	151
6 hours or more	71.5	113	51.1	110	59.9	224
Family monthly income						
Up to R\$ 500.00	37.3	85	38.2	142	37.8	227
R\$ 501.00 – R\$ 1.000,00	30.0	69	36.5	135	34.0	204
R\$ 1.001.00 – R\$ 2.000,00	20.5	46	19.5	73	19.9	119
R\$ 2.001,00 or more	12.3	27	5.8	23	8.3	50
School grade						
1 <sup>st</sup> of High School	44.1	101	49.1	183	47.3	284
2nd	31.9	73	31.3	116	31.5	189
3rd	23.9	53	19.6	74	21.2	127
Shift <sup>a</sup>						
Day	35.3	80	50.3	188	44.7	268
Night	64.7	145	49.7	187	55.3	332

a -  $p < 0.05$  for the correlation test; b - Analysis considering only the students who work.

About three in each ten students (29.3%) reported to attend weekly PE classes, while a great number of them do not attend (61.6%), for they were dismissed (46.8%) or because the school do not offer the discipline (21.6%). Considering only the students that study at schools that offer the classes, it was observed that 37.6% attend it regularly. It was verified that 14.3% offer them in the curricular program, and 85.7% offer it as an after class program.

In PE classes a significant association was verified between the non-participation caused by dismissal, and the variables: age group, residence place, living with the family, work, school shift, school series and offer of PE classes. The students from 19 to 29 years of age that reside in the rural zone and do not live with the parents, the ones that work and the ones that study at the night, they present a smaller participation in PE classes, when compared with the younger ones, the residents in the urban zone, the ones that live with their parents, the ones that don not work and the ones that study during the day. No significant difference was observed for the variables genre, having children and monthly family income.

It was also observed an association of linear tendency between PE classes and school year. The frequency is significantly reduced from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> and from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> years of High School. When the classes are offered in the curricular program, the students' participation is better than ever, as well as the students' proportion with legally dismissed was significantly smaller, according to display the Table 2.

**Table 2** - Association between PE classes with the socio demographic variable related to the school.

Variables	Yes		No, I was dismissed	
	%	n	%	n
Gender				
Male	34.6	62	65.4	117
Female	39.5	115	60.5	176
Age				
14 – 16	61.0	94	39.0	60
17 – 18	31.3	63	68.7	138
19 – 29	18.4	121	81.6	93
30 years or more	0	0	0	0
Son				
No	36.5	38	63.5	66
Yes	46.7	8	53.3	9
Local of				
Rural	24.1	13	75.9	41
Urban	39.5	164	60.5	251
Lives with family				
Yes	38.4	174	61.6	279
No	11.8	2	88.2	15
Work				
No	54.4	165	45.6	85
Yes. less than 6	40.9	52	59.1	75
Yes. 6 hours or	13.6	21	88.4	133
Family monthly				
Up to R\$ 500.00	40.6	69	59.4	101
R\$ 501.00 – R\$	32.7	53	67.3	109
R\$ 1.00 1.00 – R\$	35.9	35	61.1	55
R\$ 2.001.00 or	43.2	16	56.8	21
Shift				
Day	66.5	153	33.5	77
Night	8.6	20	91.4	213
School grade				
First	50.7	116	49.3	113
Second	25.6	34	74.4	99
Third	17.4	15	82.6	71
School offers 600				
Yes in the	45.9	28	54.1	33
Yes. extra-class	37.4	148	62.6	275

a-  $p < 0.05$  correlation test; b-  $p < 0.05$  chi-square test for linear tendency.

In Tables 3 and 4 it is shown the results of the activities that the students like best and the ones they like the least in PE classes, stratified by genre. Among the activities, soccer was the one reported as the most and least wanted. A larger proportion of girls told to prefer volleyball and physical exercises in general, while the boys prefer soccer.

**Table 3** - Activities students like the most in PE classes.

Atividades	Boys		Girls		Both	
	%	n	%	N	%	n
Soccer <sup>a</sup>	65,5	38	22,8	26	37,2	64
Basketball	6,9	4	4,4	5	5,2	9
Team Handebol	8,6	5	7,9	9	8,1	14
Volleyball <sup>a</sup>	6,9	4	37,7	43	27,3	47
General Physical Exercises <sup>a</sup>	12,1	7	27,2	31	22,1	38

a -  $p < 0,05$  sex differences

Concerning the activities which the students like the least, a significant proportion of girls told not to like soccer comparing to boys. The opposite was observed in the volleyball activity (Table 4).

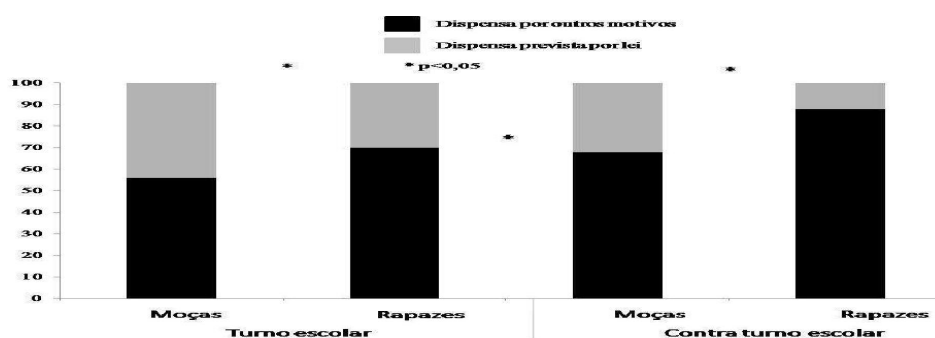
**Table 4** - Activities students like the least in PE classes.

Atividades	Boys		Girls		All	
	%	n	%	N	%	n
Soccer <sup>a</sup>	32,1	18	63,0	68	52,4	86
Basketball	17,9	10	11,1	12	13,4	22
Team Handebol	8,9	5	4,6	5	6,1	10
Volleyball <sup>a</sup>	28,6	16	10,2	11	16,5	27
General Physical Exercises	12,5	7	11,1	12	11,6	19

a -  $p < 0,05$  entre o sexo

Altogether, 296 students of schools that offer PE in the program reported not to participate for they were released. A double-check of information was accomplished between the answer (a) "I am dismissed" and the information that justify a legal dismissal (except for the medical dismissal). It was found that 66.0% of the students are not inserted in none of the legal dismissal criteria. It was also verified that the proportion of boys that present justification (are rendering military service or, in similar situation, having children, being more than 30 years old and working 6 hours daily or more) is significantly larger in comparison with the girls' justified dismissal (having children, more than 30 years old and working more than 6 hours a day).

When the analyses of PE classes were stratified by the offer form (in the regular shift or as after class activity), it was verified that the proportion of justified dismissals of students from schools that offer classes in the after school program is significantly lower when compared with the ones that study at schools that offer classes in the regular school program. When the classes are offered as an after school program, only 32% of the boys and 12% of the girls in fact have a legal dismissal, while the others were spared by other reasons, according to display in Figure 1.

**Figure 1** - Distribution of justified dismissal or dismissal for other reasons, stratified by the shift that the classes are offered at the school and by genre (n = 296).

## DISCUSSION

The present study had the purpose to investigate the context of PE classes, the offer of that discipline in the school, the students' perception in relation to the classes and the reasons related to the legal dismissal, in students of public High Schools of the municipal district of Caruaru/PE. The sample analysis allows affirming that the size of the sample was representative of the number of schools and of enrolled students in the municipal district. The collection of the data followed the planning, respecting the proportion of students enrolled by shift and the size of the school, what allows us to indicate the dimensions of the results for the students.

In spite of the regulation and inclusion of PE in the Basic Education in a great number of countries, it is consent that PE has been losing the discipline *status* in the schools for several factors (HARDMAN, 2000). The difference of *status* of the PE observed between the countries and the Brazilian states it is a reflex of the presence of one of those factors or of the combination of several of them.

In spite of the students and teachers consider there is a need of PE classes in the Basic Education (BETTI, 1995; BETTI, 2003; DARIDO 2004), the reality in the schools seems to be the opposite, because when compared PE with the other disciplines, the students and teachers consider it a discipline of little importance on the formation (DARIDO, 2004; BETTI, 2003). Such fact represents an important aspect related to the loss of status of the discipline, as observed by Pereira and Moreira (2005) in a study with High School students of the private schools of São Paulo. The student that was absent for too many classes could do a research on a theme proposed by the teacher to have his absences excused, but, the according to the author's report, not always the teacher and the coordination of the school collected the research (PEREIRA; MOREIRA, 2005).

In Brazil, this process of loss of *status* can be explained historically, because subjects of order administrative, structural, (BETTI, 1995; DARIDO, 1999), epistemological and of systematization of the contents (BARBIERI; PORETTI; MELLO, 2008) are elements that contribute to this loss, above all for it has been reported in the last two decades. This process ended up that PE, even being a required curricular component, has become optional in its practice, mainly in the High School program.

In the present study, only 29.3% of the students told to go regularly to the PE classes. Compared with two surveys of state representativity, this proportion was inferior to the one of the State of Santa Catarina (54%) (BARROS, 2004) and similar to the study accomplished at the state public schools of Pernambuco (35%) (TASSITANO et al., 2010). This reality is also inferior when compared to surveys accomplished at other countries - for instance, the proportion of participation in PE classes in the United States is of 52% (CDC, 2004), and in Canada is 70% (CDC, 2007).

Besides the low participation, it was also observed that 21.6% of the students do not attend the classes because the schools do not offer them in at least one shift, even knowing it is required by law. The main reasons were the lack of teachers/resources during the investigation period ( $n = 1$ ) and the fact that they are offered in the night period ( $n = 1$ ).

Problems of structural order in the public schools of the state of Pernambuco were revealed in a report published in 2002 by the System of Educational Evaluation of Pernambuco (SAEPE). This report pointed that 55.8% of the state public schools do not possess court or gym, 35% of them have it, but they are in terrible conditions, and only 9.2% have it in satisfactory conditions (PERNAMBUCO, 2002).



Issues of administrative order also influence this scenario, because, in spite of the significant increase of courses of PE teachers' formation in the last years, there is still a lack of prepared ones in the interior towns of the country. INEP data indicate an increase of PE courses of PE around 300% between 1991 and 2004 (UNGER et al., 2006). In Pernambuco the observed increase was of 150%. Part of the new courses was implemented in the capitals and in its great majority they are only a bachelor degree (UNGER et al., 2006).

The factors that were associated to the non-participation in the PE classes were: age group, residence place, living with the family, work, shift, school series, and how the school presents the classes. If on one side it was expected that the students that work did not participated, on the other, for the other factors it was expected there was no significant difference. There was less participation among the older students, the ones that do not live with the parents, the residents in the rural zone, the ones from night shift, the ones of the final years of Hig School and in the classes offered after school hours.

No student interviewee was over 30 years old, what would justify a dismissal; however, as the student is aging, his participation in PE classes decreases. It was observed that only 18.4% of the students between 19 and 29 years of age come to classes. The results observed with the variable "living with the family" can be explained in general by the fact that of most of the students who do not live with their parents are married, with children, what is inserted in the dismissal criterion foreseen by law.

A more recent discussion concerns the offer of classes in the night period, whose practice since 2003 stopped being optional and became obligatory, but it seems still to invigorate the law of 1996, that turned optional the classes in this shift. In the present study, a school in fact does not offer classes in the night period for understanding that its offer is optional. However among those schools that offer in this shift ( $n = 7$ ), the students' perception is that the classes are optional, because only 86% attend them. This proportion is considered low, even when one knows that the profile of the student of the night shift is of a worker. Oliveira's study (2000), accomplished at the schools of Maringa (PR), reveals that among the teachers, the motivation and intention of working in the night period is due more to the need of complementing the hourly load (73.8%) and the income (17.4%) than for the will of working with a student of hard-working profile (4.4%) and for the diversity of the work (4.4%). This information suggests that the night teaching of PE and the perception of the students and of the school is different in comparison with the ones of the other shifts.

Another aspect to be pointed out and discussed it is that the noticed importance of the physical education between the students and the teachers seems to be reduced from Basic to High School. That phenomenon can be related to the perspective of Brazilian youngsters of starting College, becoming a professional and looking for employment (DARIDO, 1999). Results indicate that the participation in PE classes is reduced significantly along the High School period (50.7%, 25.6% and 17.4%, respectively).

After accomplishing a combination of the answers supplied by the students that told to be dismissed, it was observed that 34% of them in fact could be released by one or more reasons, that is, 66% of those that were released did not fit in the reasons foreseen by law. In spite of the reasons of dismissal for medical reason were not investigated, the authors judge that this reason only could not represent this proportion, because, if truth, it would be a problem of public health.

The results indicate that, besides the ones discussed previously, there are two other issues that could explain the students' low participation in classes. The first is related to the content, which was investigated in this study, and to the student's

perception; the other is related to the form of the school to offer the classes (in the school hours and after classes).

The literature evidences that the systematization of the contents also represents a decisive factor in the students' participation. Evidences not only of Brazil, but also of other countries, indicate a prevalence of the sporting practice in the content of the classes, what represents a barrier on the participation of a significant proportion of students (SPORT ENGLAND, 2001, FAIRCLOUGH et al., 2005; GUEDES, 1997; SALLIS, 1997).

This perception, in the present study, seems to be plausible, because most of the mentioned contents were related to a collective sporting modality (soccer, volleyball, basketball and handball). An interesting data is that soccer was mentioned as the content which the students like the most (37.4%), and at the same time, as the content that like the least (52.4%). In Pereira and Silva's study (2004), accomplished at public and private schools of Rio Grande do Sul, it was verified that 66.7% of the contents of the classes approached the sport. Futsal was the sport more frequently played (46.7%).

In another study, Pereira and Moreira (2005), observing 80 hours/class, they verified that 75% of the contents were related to sports, which according to the authors, leaves the impression that PE is synonymous of sport, what validates the findings in the study of Celante (2000), in which the classes rarely approach contents different from the sporting ability or the formal practice of the sport. Pereira and Moreira's research (2005) revealed that in the opinion of about 57% of the students, the contents meet their expectations, but that 28.5% of them participate in the classes for they are forced to. More studies are necessary focusing the contents of PE classes in a wide perspective, and not only in isolated practices, in order to investigate the reality of the systematization of the PE contents in Pernambuco, especially in the interior of the State.

Another important aspect that should be discussed in future studies is the way the school offers the classes. Of the classes offered by the schools, most happens after school hours (85.7%). That is a recommended practice in most of the state public schools of Pernambuco. Independently of the genre, the participation in the classes offered in the after school period is significantly inferior to the participation in classes offered in the school shift.

This result was foreseen, because, for financial reasons (bus pass and lunch), it is difficult for the students to attend classes after school hours. For instance, about 10% of the students reside in the rural zone and they depend on public transportation, what makes their attendance even more difficult. It is important that the classes are inserted in the curricular program, for they are effectively taking part on the pedagogic proposal of the school, for the facilitation of the access, frequency, valorization and integration with the other disciplines.

Besides, the proportion of students that do not attend the classes because of dismissal is significantly larger when the classes are presented in the after school period, independently of the genre. Only 12% of the girls and 32% of the boys could be spared by reasons foreseen by law, when the classes are presented in the after school hours.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results, it was observed that the students' participation in PE classes was low, and that the great number of the students told to be dismissed, mainly, when the classes are offered in the after class period. This scenario allows to affirm that, even as an obligatory curricular component, PE classes happen in an

optional way, and that the offer in the after class period reduces the students' participation. In spite of having a different focus of the study, the results show a scenario of loss of *status* of the discipline in the school, even with the literature showing the importance of the discipline in the process of development of the children and adolescents. A wide discussion on the theme is suggested, not only investigating the content and the systematization of the classes, but giving a high priority to the subjects that permeate its offer in the schools.

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