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Primary School Students' Attitudes Towards Physical Education and Sports in Central Slovak Region

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ABSTRACT. Results of the survey are presented in this report. The survey was aimed at determining 9th year students' attitudes towards physical education (PE) and sports at selected primary schools in Central Slovak region. The research group consisted of 1110 respondents from 13 primary schools located in cities and 12 primary schools located in villages. As many as 57,39 % of respondents adopted indifferent attitude. Author found out that indifferent attitudes towards PE and sports prevailed with boys and girls. Both boys and girls adopted almost the same attitudes towards PE and sports. Village primary school students adopted more positive attitude towards PE and sports than students from city primary schools.

Keywords: physical education; sports; attitudes.

Introduction. Attitudes fulfill important functions in people's mentality – they contribute for mental stability, eliminate anxiety, reinforce self-validation, serve as plausible rationalization for culturally unacceptable ambitions and behavior, they help justify or reason one's own selfishness and preserve threatened self-respect etc. [1].

Some psychologists define attitudes as permanent form of reactions, which characterizes an individual or a group. It is normally a relatively stable and consistent way of giving response. The term attitude is often understood as certain viewpoint taken by an individual [2].

One is not born with attitudes – attitudes as such are not innate. They are gradually formed as we experience new situations in life, at around 3-4 years of age [3].

Value orientation forms at the early age in childhood and throughout the stage of primary socialization when a child leaves behind the world of innate empirical values and starts to make familiar with values of its social environment. Every individual creates his own pattern of attitudes in comparison with other people, the society, its institutions, organizations and mechanisms.

It is very important for PE teachers and coaches to realize, that dynamic and sports skills acquired during puberty, around the 12th year of age in particular, can in a large extent affect attitudes, which a young person adopts towards dynamic activities and sports itself [4].

According some research results at primary schools 72,35 % of students adopted very positive attitude, 26,4 % declared indifferent attitude and only 1,17 % of students thought they had a negative attitude towards PE. Boys were more positive about PE than girls, with 79,22 % of boys declaring positive attitude and 66,66 % of girls accordingly declaring positive attitude [5].

Successful enforcement of a new PE conception at primary and secondary schools depends to a great extent on knowledge of framework and on the nature of teenagers' interest in sports and dynamic activity. Youth's sports interest and dynamic activity diagnostics has therefore greater significance not only in sports science, but also in school practice itself [6].

Materials and methods. The aim of the survey was to analyze primary school students' attitudes towards PE and sports and to determine differences in intensity of these attitudes among boys and girls as well as differences between students attending village primary schools and city primary schools.

13 primary schools located in cities of Banská Bystrica, Krupina, Hriňová, Zvolen and 12 primary schools located in the country – Banská Bystrica, Brezno, Detva, Krupina and Zvolen regions took part in the survey in total. Total number of respondents reached 1110.

Sex	City	Village	Altogether
Boys	408 52,71 %	160 47,62 %	568 51,17 %
Girls	366 47,29 %	176 52,38 %	542 48,83 %
Altogether	774 69,73 %	336 30,27 %	1.110 100 %

Table 1: Students – research sample

Author's main research method was an attitude questionnaire for 9th year primary schools students [7]. It contains 51 items, 17 of which are focused on cognitive, further 17 focused on emotional and the remaining 17 focused on conative aspect of attitudes. A respondent can obtain a maximum of 102 points. Intensity of student's attitude (a boy or a girl) towards PE is determined by the maximum number of points as follows:

- negative attitude - from 0 to 34 points
- indifferent attitude – from 35 to 68 points
- positive attitude – from 69 to 102 points.

Discussion.

Analysis results of respective questionnaires are shown in Table 2

Primary schools	Attitude (boys and girls)			Attitude (boys)			Attitude (girls)		
	+	i	-	+	i	-	+	i	-
City primary schools (13) %	276 35,65	480 62,02	18 2,33	137 33,57	265 64,95	6 1,48	139 37,98	215 58,74	12 3,28
Village primary schools (12) %	176 52,38	157 46,72	3 0,9	95 59,37	65 40,63	0 -	81 46,02	92 52,27	3 1,71
City and village primary schools %	452 40,72	637 57,39	21 1,89	232 40,84	330 58,10	6 1,06	220 40,59	307 56,64	15 2,77
City and village primary schools	n = 1.110			568			542		

Explanatory notes:

n = number of respondents

+ = positive attitude

- = negative attitude

i = indifferent attitude

Table 2: Analysis results of respective questionnaires

Out of 1110 respondents (568 boys and 542 girls) - 9th year students from selected 25 primary schools located in Central Slovak region 452 respondents (40,72 %) adopted positive attitude towards PE and sports, 637 respondents (57,39 %) adopted indifferent attitude and 21 respondents (1,89 %) negative attitude. It is alarming to discover, that as many as 57,39 % of respondents adopted indifferent attitude towards PE and sports. We think there are several causes for this: non-existence of family upbringing; parents' insufficient interest in encouraging their children to spend their free time doing dynamic and sports activities; students' insufficient interest in PE leading to preference of cushier activities, such as watching television or playing computer games; insufficient level and quality of education at numerous schools; insufficient use of sports activities which are unconventional but interesting for students; insufficient equipment at numerous schools in terms of space and material.

232 (40,84 %) out of 568 boys adopted positive attitude towards PE and sports, 330 (58,10 %) boys adopted indifferent attitude and 6 (1,06 %) assumed negative attitude towards PE and

sports. 220 (40,59 %) out of 542 girls gave positive indication towards PE and sports, 307 girls (56,64 %) adopted indifferent attitude and 15 girls (2,77 %) posed negative attitude towards PE and sports.

Table 2 shows differences in attitudes between city and village primary schools: Indifferent attitudes (62,02 %) prevailed over positive ones (36,65 %) at city primary schools, whereas positive attitudes (52,38 %) prevailed over indifferent ones (46,72 %) at village primary schools. Negative attitudes constituted only a minor number of respondents addressed, 2,33 % at city primary schools and 1,89 % at village primary schools. As we can see there are considerable differences between students from city primary schools and those from village primary schools. Students attending village schools tended to adopt markedly more positive attitude towards PE and sports than those attending city schools.

With 9th year students (boys) from selected city primary schools indifferent attitudes (64,95 %) prevailed over positive ones (33,57 %), whereas with 9th year students (boys) attending from selected village primary schools positive attitudes (59,37 %) prevailed over indifferent ones (40,63 %).

There were only 6 students in this region who demonstrated negative attitude towards PE and sports, all of them attending city primary school. On the contrary, no village primary school students in this region expressed negative attitude towards PE and sports. This was not the case with girls (9th year) when we compared attitudes between city and village schools. Indifferent attitudes (58,74 %) towards PE and sports prevailed over positive ones (37,78 %) in both types of schools. With girls attending city primary schools indifferent attitudes prevailed over positive ones as was the case with girls attending village primary schools (Indifferent – 52,27 %, positive – 46,02 %). There were only 3 girls (1,71 %) from village schools who adopted negative attitude, which is the number smaller than the number of negative attitudes of girls from city schools (12 girls – 3,28 %).

1. Our survey showed, that with 9th year primary school students indifferent attitudes towards PE and sports prevail.

Out of 1110 respondents (568 boys and 542 girls), 9th year students at one of the 25 selected primary schools in Central Slovak region (13 city primary schools and 12 village primary schools), 637 respondents (57,39 %) adopted indifferent attitude towards PE and sports. It is an alarming discovery and it reflects limitations in family upbringing and PE education at schools.

2. Boys and girls adopted roughly the same attitudes towards PE and sports.

232 (40,84 %) out of 568 boys declared positive attitude towards PE and sports, 330 boys (58,10 %) adopted indifferent attitude, 6 boys (1,06 %) adopted negative attitude. 220 (40,59 %) out of 542 girls adopted positive , 307 (56,64 %) indifferent and 15 (2,77 %) negative attitude towards PE and sports. Indifferent attitudes prevailed with both boy and girl respondents.

3. Village primary school students adopted more positive attitude towards PE and sports than city primary school students.

At city primary schools indifferent attitudes (62,02 %) prevailed over positive ones (36,65 %). On the contrary, with village primary school students positive attitudes (52,38 %) prevailed over indifferent ones (46,72 %). Great differences were discovered between boys from village primary schools and boys from city primary schools. Only 33,57 % of boys attending city primary schools declared positive attitude towards PE and sports compared to 59,37 % of boys attending village primary schools.

4. **In reference to practice** we recommend that the quality of educational process in school PE be improved, unconventional dynamic and sports activities be implemented, the curriculum be updated along with forms and methods of work. Equipment should also be improved on the field of space and material. Make the cooperation between schools, parents and sport clubs more active for the purpose of improving students' attitudes towards PE, sports and regular dynamic and sports activities.

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Отношение учеников начальных школ в регионе Центральной Словакии к физкультуре и спорту

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Аннотация. В статье представлены результаты исследования ориентированного на отношение учеников 9 класса начальных школ в регионе Центральной Словакии к физкультуре и спорту. В исследовании приняли участие 1100 респондентов из 13 городских и 12 сельских начальных школ. Автор установил факт, что у школьников и школьниц преобладали преимущественно равнодушные отношения к школьной физкультуре и спорту. Апатическое отношение указалось у 57,39 % респондентов. Школьники и школьницы имели приблизительно идентичный уровень отношений к школьной физкультуре и спорту, хотя ученики сельских начальных школ имели более положительный посыл чем городские учащиеся.

Ключевые слова: школьная физкультура; спорт; отношения.