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Published in the Slovak Republic

European Journal of Contemporary Education

ISSN 2304-9650

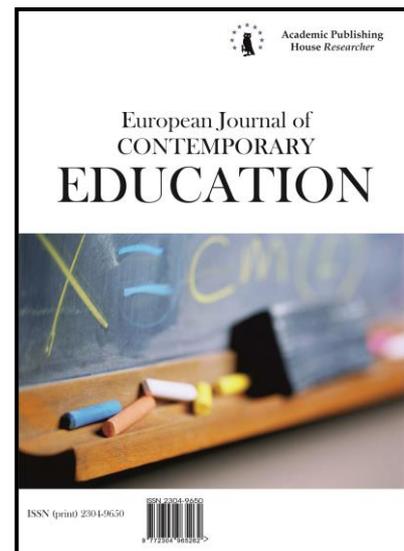
E-ISSN 2305-6746

2017, 6(4): 664-673

DOI: 10.13187/ejced.2017.4.664

www.ejournal1.com

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Attitudes and Preferences of Children Living in Orphanage Towards Physical Education Lessons

Elena Bendíková^a, Dagmar Nemček^b

^a Matej Bel University, Faculty of Arts, Banská Bystrica, Slovakia

^b Comenius University, Faculty of Physical Education and Sports, Bratislava, Slovakia

Abstract

Background: The key factor that affects the success of shaping positive attitudes towards the regular life-long performance of a physical activity is the students' level of inner motivation. This is influenced, among other things, by their family background, the educational institution that they attend and the educator's competencies. **Objective:** The purpose of this study was to describe and analyse the attitudes of children (students) who are living in orphanage in physical education (P.E.) classes. **Method:** We analysed the data of 50 orphan students (22 boys and 28 girls, age 14.5 ± 2.13 years) attending the second stage of elementary schools in Slovakia. **Results:** P.E. is among the students who are living in orphanage popular teaching subject. Almost half of orphan students considered P.E. to be an important subject, expressed having high evaluation of their feelings and are assiduous during P.E. classes. They prefer mostly team sports. There were not any significant differences between orphan boys and girls with regards to their attitudes towards P.E. lessons, neither from the view of preferences in P.E. classes. We discovered that there were not any significant differences between boys and girls living in orphanage with regards to their attitudes towards P.E. lessons, neither from the view of preferences in P.E. classes. **Conclusion:** The present study suggests that P.E. teachers create a space to integrate orphan students among the other students to be fully socialised. This will increase the popularity of P.E. and allow physical activities to become a regular part of students' leisure activities. *The scientific paper was supported by grant projects VEGA nr. 1/0726/17 & 1/0242/17.*

Keywords: orphan students, physical activity, popularity, importance, feelings and effort.

1. Introduction

The most accepted definition of orphan is "a child who has lost both parents through bereavement. However, this definition is often extended to include the loss of parents through desertion or abandonment where the parents are unable or unwilling to provide for the child"

(Skinner, 2008). According to the joint report of UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), about 153 million children are orphans worldwide, 17.8 million of them have lost both parents. UNICEF estimates that at least 2.2 million children in the world live in orphanages (USG, 2010). Children living in orphanages are one of the most vulnerable groups of children in a society: many of them live in a state of repeated neglect, abuse or fear (Lassi et al, 2010; Sameena et al., 2016).

In the Slovak Republic is currently registered and certified about 90 orphanages, which are located approximately 4750 children and adolescents (Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, 2014).

In terms of education, even among children who are placed in children's homes in Slovakia for various objective reasons plays an important role in education through the prism of physical education, which at present has undergone many changes (Bendíková, 2016). School in both qualitative and quantitative terms has for the children in the children's homes one of the key position to influence their attitudes, beliefs and preferences of interest with regard to the implementation of physical activity (Štulajter, 2007; Bendíková, 2009, Dobay, 2015; Kolofík, 2015; Rozim, Marko, 2015). Researches in Slovakia do not only demonstrate general deterioration of physical performance and fitness of pupils, but also health oriented fitness (Labudová et al., 2012). This ultimately can have a negative impact on economy, health or social policy of country from various angles. Therefore, we believe that current transformation of the physical and sport education in Slovakia in the field of the education through modules creates a space for the pupils to prefer the physical activity for the health (Labudová et al., 2015), fitness and mainly meet the interests of the movement (Bendíková, 2014), by an active approach to their own health.

The purpose of this study was to describe and analyse the attitudes in orphan students attending the second stage of regular elementary schools in P.E. classes. A partial objective was to compare the attitudes and preferences for various physical activities by orphan students in P.E. classes.

2. Methodology

Participants

The research sample comprised 50 students (22 boys, height = 165.8±4.84 cm, weight = 58.3±4.1 kg; and 28 girls, height = 164.1±3.22 cm, weight = 52.6±3.9 kg; average age 14.5 ± 2.13 years) attending the second stage of regular elementary schools in Bytča (Slovakia). Table 1 shows the primary characteristics of the groups.

Table 1. Characteristics of the groups (n = 50)

Factors	N	Age	Height/cm	Weight/kg	BMI
Boys	22	14.1±1.92	165.8±4.84	58.3±4.1	21.3±3.5
Girls	28	15.2±2.22	164.1±3.22	52.6±3.9	20.1±2.4

Legend: BMI – Body mass index

Only those students who lived in orphanage were included in the research. Students were informed of the purpose of the research and the procedure for filling out the questionnaire, which was to be completed in the presence of their head teacher and the researcher. Consent of the legal representatives of the students at school regarding the students' participation in the study was obtained well in advance.

Data collection and data analysis

A non-standardized questionnaire was used to collect the data, of which five questions were selected that were related to the indicators of the popularity of P.E. (Antala, 2012). These questions included the importance of P.E., the students' efforts and feelings towards P.E., as well as preferences for various physical activities during P.E. classes. In four questions, the students who lived in orphanage, expressed their subjective opinions using a 5-degree scale (1 was the highest level and 5 was the lowest level of popularity). The lower the average value of the replies, the higher the attitude level. In the fifth question, the students could mark with circles a maximum of three sports that they most enjoy during the P.E. classes. The data were quantified on a percentage basis.

To carry out cross-group statistical testing of differences between boys and girls, we applied a ratio analysis with the help of the Chi-square test. The level of statistical significance was set to $p < 0.05$.

3. Results

Perception of physical education by orphan students

The results showed that P.E. is among the students who are living in orphanage popular teaching subject when they marked P.E as very popular (36 %) and popular (36 %). Only 8 % of students living in orphanage had dislike of this subject (Figure 1). The level of popularity of P.E. was stated by orphan students by 2.00 of the point score.

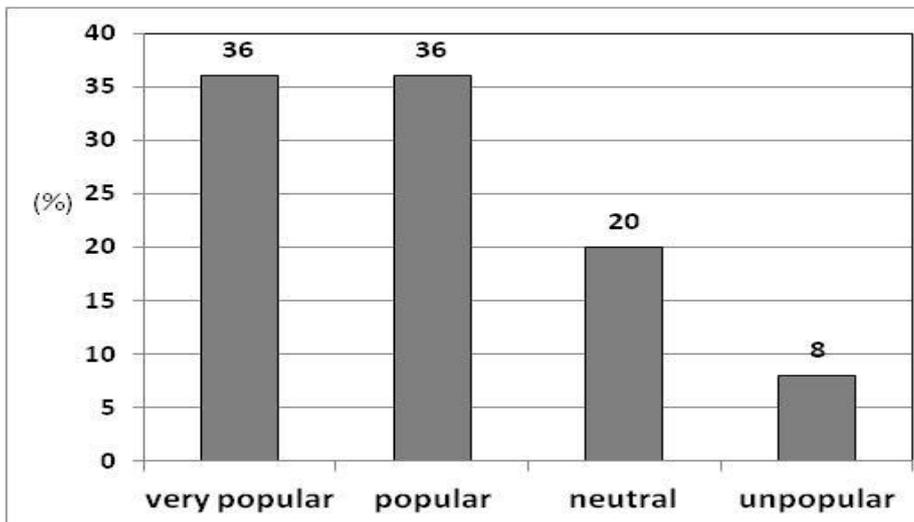


Fig. 1. Popularity of P.E. among students living in orphanage (n = 50)

The results further showed no statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) difference in the popularity of P.E. from the point of view of the respondents' gender. When comparing the differences between boys and girls, boys (54.5 %) marked P.E. as their favourite subject. 14.3 % of girls stated they had a dislike of this subject (Figure 2).

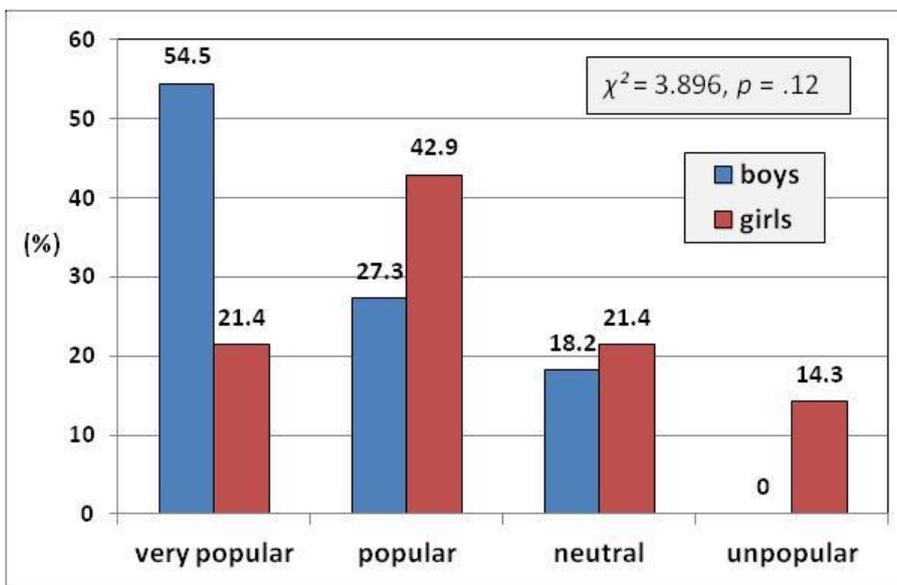


Fig. 2. Differences in P.E. popularity between boys (n = 22) and girls (n = 28)

Importance of physical education among students living in orphanage

40 % of students living in orphanage considered P.E. to be an important subject, 24 % took a neutral and 28 % of students living orphanage even negative view. Only 8 % of the students from orphanage considered P.E. to be very important teaching subject (Figure 3). The level of importance of P.E. was stated by students living in orphanage by 2.72 of the point score.

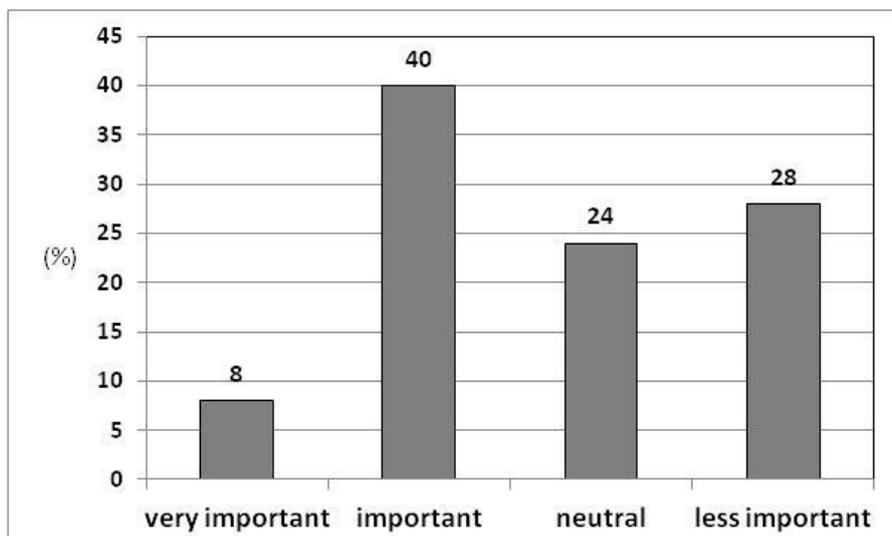


Fig. 3. Importance of P.E. among students living in orphanage (n = 50)

When evaluating the opinions regarding the importance of P.E. between boys and girls, no significant differences ($p > 0.05$) were proven. A percentage evaluation of responses, however, points to a greater degree of importance expressed by boys, of which 63.6 % considered P.E. to be an important or even very important subject, as opposed to 35.7 % of girls. They took a neutral (21.4 %) or even negative view (42.9 %) at a higher percentage (Figure 4).

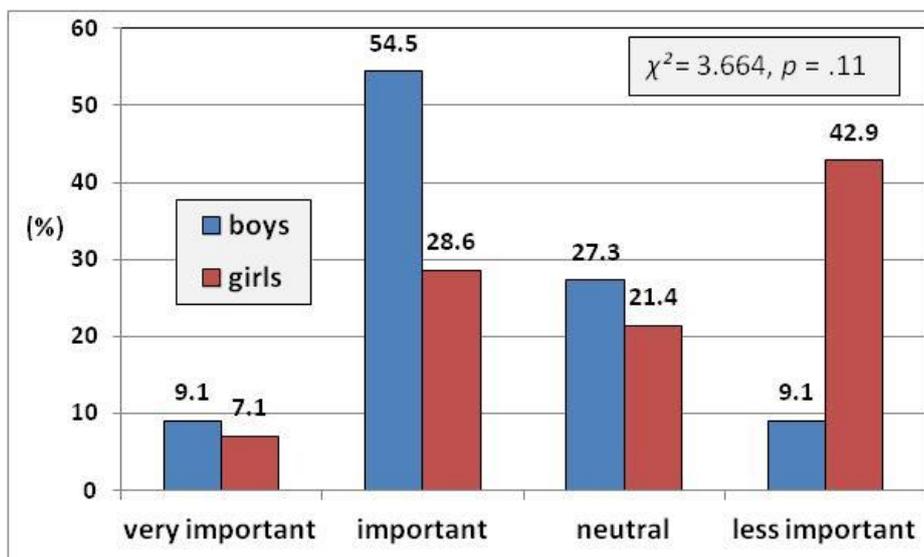


Fig. 4. Differences in importance of P.E. between boys (n = 22) and girls (n = 28)

Feelings of students living in orphanage during P.E. classes

Students living in orphanage expressed having high evaluation of their feelings during P.E. classes when 48 % of them feel during the P.E. always good and 20 % mostly good. On the other hand 32 % of students from orphanage took a neutral view (Figure 5). High level amount of feeling during P.E. classes is showing the achieved average level of the responses (1.84 of the point score).

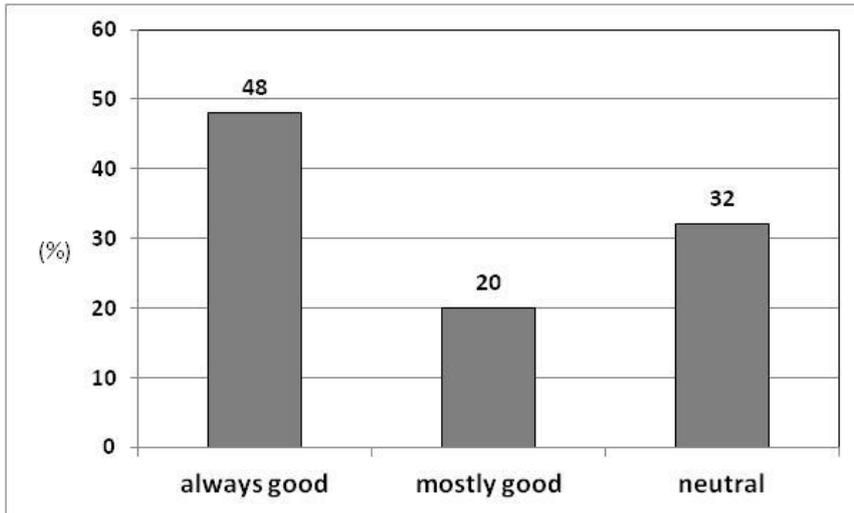


Fig. 5. Feelings during P.E. classes of students living in orphanage (n = 50)

Even though girls have a good feeling (mostly good and always good) about themselves while in P.E. classes (64.3 %), boys expressed having a bit higher evaluation of their good feelings (72.8 %). A comparison of the opinion towards P.E. between boys and girls proved to be not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) (Figure 6).

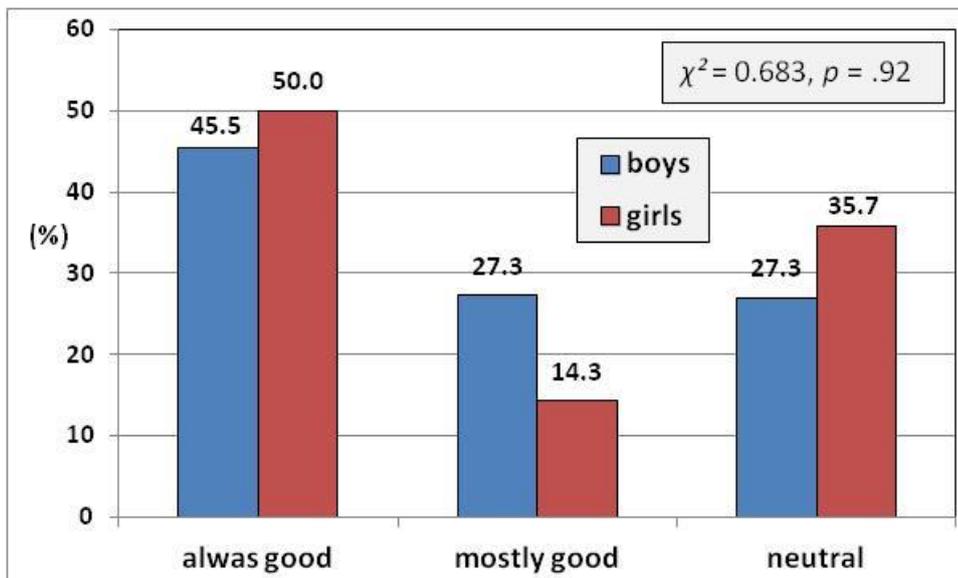


Fig. 6. Differences in feelings during P.E. classes between boys (n = 22) and girls (n = 28)

The above-mentioned statement is closely related to the attitudes of orphan students regarding their displays of effort during the classes (Figure 7).

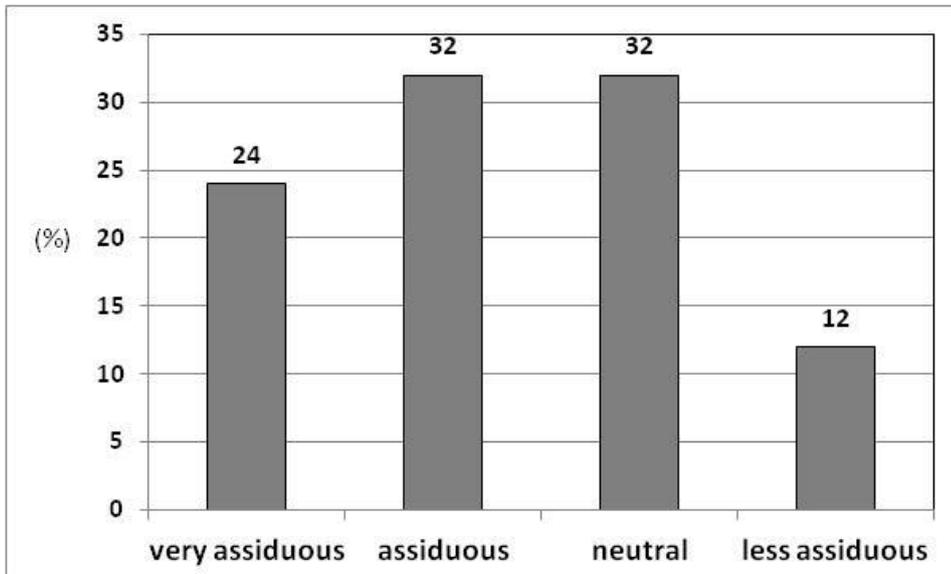


Fig. 7. Displays of efforts during P.E. classes by students living in orphanage (n = 50)

Students living in orphanage are mostly just assiduous (32 %) or had a neutral attitude (32 %). This is clearly shown by the percentage evaluation of the indicator of effort invested in exercises. The amount of effort shown during P.E. classes is probably dependent on what they are doing at the moment, thus sometimes they make effort and sometimes they do not. Lower level amount of effort expended when participating in P.E. class can also be inferred from the achieved average level of the responses (2.32 of the point score).

The very assiduous and assiduous group mostly consists of girls (57.1 %), not boys, who are mostly less assiduous or had a neutral attitude (45.5 %). These results showed no statistically significant difference ($p > 0.05$) in displays of efforts during P.E. from the point of view of the respondents' gender (Figure 8).

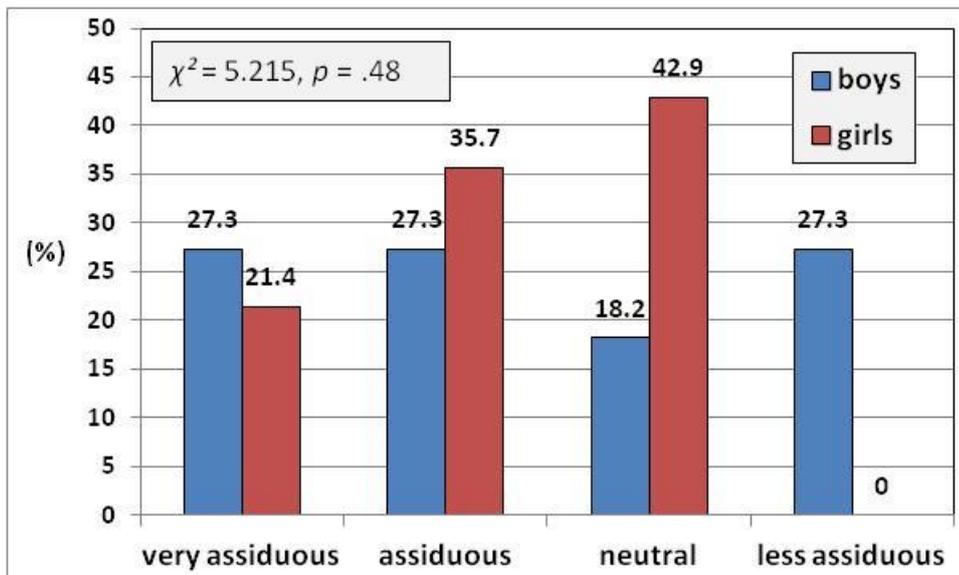


Fig. 8. Differences in effort displays during P.E. classes between boys (n = 22) and girls (n = 28)

Preference for various physical activities among students living in orphanage

Students living in orphanage were most interested in soccer (48.0 %). The second most preferred physical activity at the P.E. classes is dancing (36 %) and other very popular activities in

P.E. classes for students who are living in orphanage covered volleyball, tennis, swimming and basketball (Figure 9).

When comparing the differences in the preference of various physical activities and exercises in P.E. classes, boys were most interested in soccer (81.8 %), whereas girls opted for the dancing (Figure 10). Other very popular activities in P.E. classes for girls covered various sports (volleyball, tennis and adapted physical activities) which were, however, less popular among boys. These results showed no statistically significant differences in the preferences for various physical activities between boys and girls – orphan students.

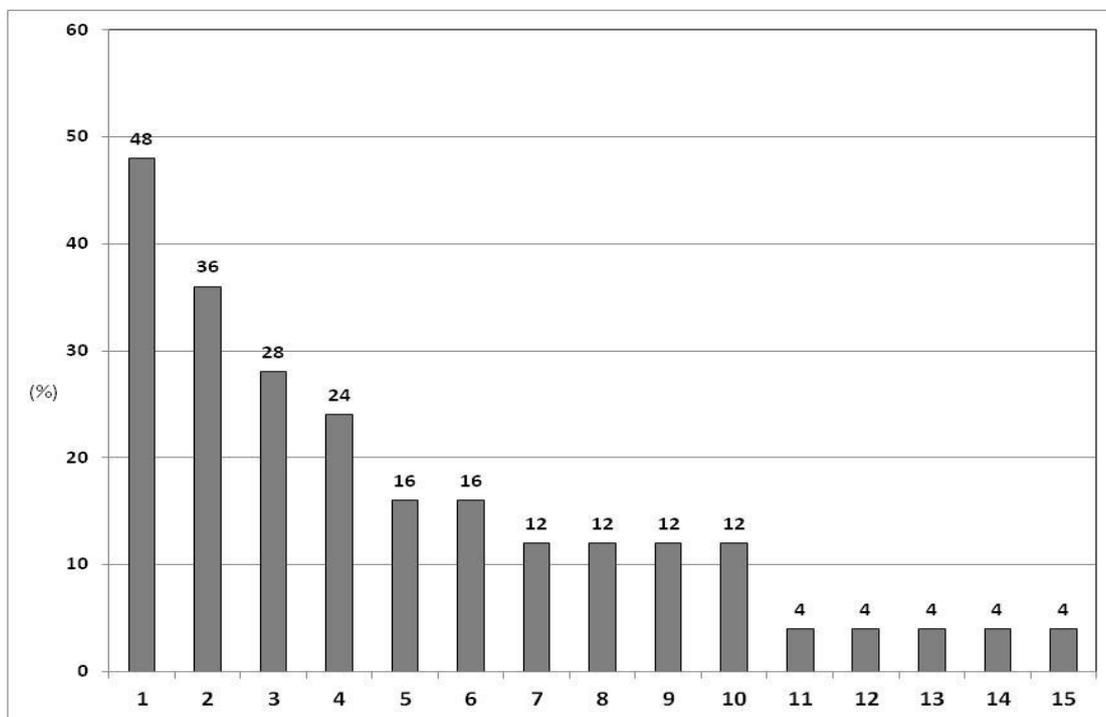


Fig. 9. Preferences for various physical activities among students living on orphanage (n = 50)

Legend: 1. soccer; 2. dancing; 3. volleyball; 4. tennis; 5. swimming; 6. basketball; 7. badminton; 8. floorball; 9. zumba; 10. adapted physical activities; 11. athletics; 12. aerobics; 13. frisbee ultimate; 14. wrestling; 15. dodge ball

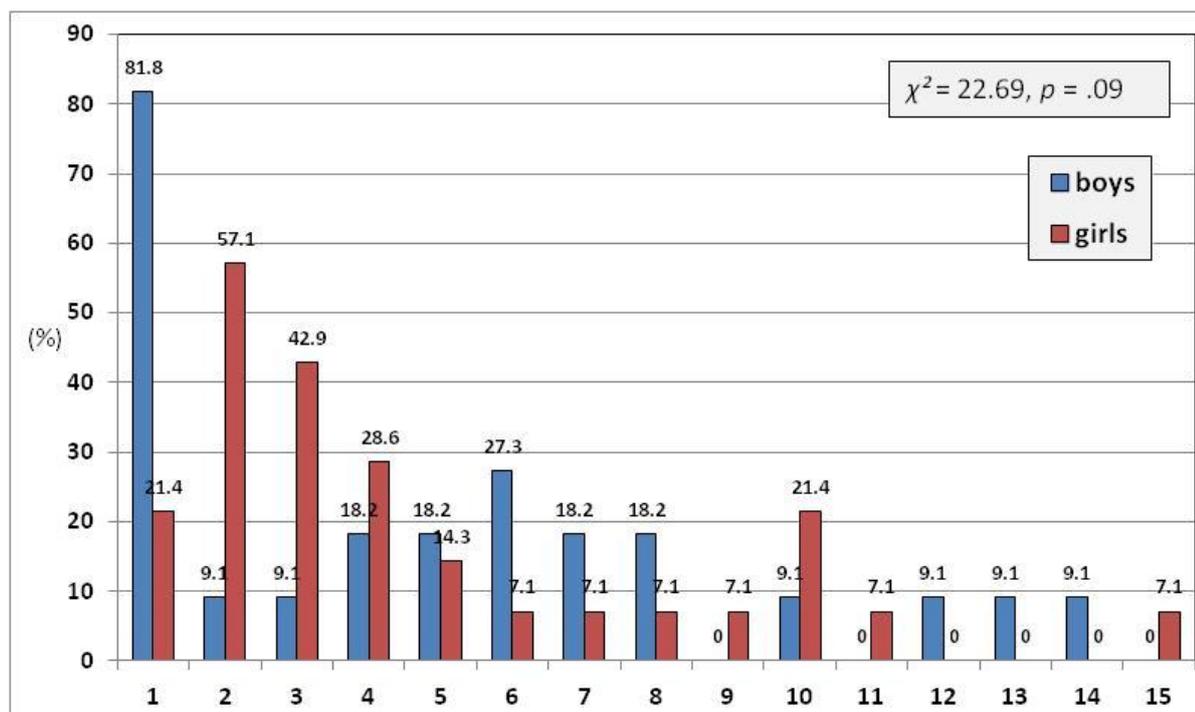


Fig. 10. Preferences for various physical activities between boys and girls

Legend: 1. soccer; 2. dancing; 3. volleyball; 4. tennis; 5. swimming; 6. basketball; 7. badminton; 8. floorball; 9. zumba; 10. adapted physical activities; 11. athletics; 12. aerobics; 13. frisbee ultimate; 14. wrestling; 15. dodge ball

4. Discussion

The aim of this study was to describe and analyse the perceptions of the attitudes of P.E. among children who are living in orphanage.

The level of popularity of P.E. was stated by orphan students reaching 2.00 of the point score. By comparing the average values of the responses provided by pupils with disabilities (receiving special education) with pupils without disabilities from regular Slovak elementary schools from study of Antala (2012), the highest level of popularity of P.E. was stated by pupils with visual disability (VD) (1.64 of the point score) as opposed to pupils without disabilities (1.92 of the point score). The lowest level of popularity was expressed in the same research by pupils who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) whose average value of responses reached 2.08 of the point scores what is close to the score of orphan students. When comparing the average values of responses by pupils from the second stage of the regular elementary schools in the Czech Republic for the given indicator (Hrabal, Pavelková, 2010), a popularity concordance was discovered with responses by the Slovak pupils with VD (1.65 vs 1.64 of the point score). There was another interesting scientific finding that students of the secondary school with physical disability (PD) expressed very high level of P.E. popularity (2.13 of the point score) (Nemček, Bergendiová, 2013).

The level of importance of P.E. was stated by orphan students achieving 2.72 of the point score. By comparing the evaluation of the importance of P.E. by pupils from other schools in previous study (Kurková et al., 2015), researchers found out that pupils with VD consider P.E. to be their most important subject (1.73 of the point score). Pupils who are D/HH in the same research considered it second most important (2.05 of the point score) and pupils without disabilities (Antala et al., 2012) considered it the least important of the three groups. The lowest degree of importance of P.E. was awarded by secondary school of students with PD (Nemček, Bergendiová, 2013), with a point score of 2.43. Czech pupils without disabilities (Hrabal, Pavelková, 2010) considered P.E. to be the most important from all evaluated schools, and their point score was 2.80 which are very close to the score of orphan students of our findings.

The level of feeling of P.E. was stated by orphan students by 1.84 of the point score. By comparing the evaluation of the feelings of P.E. by pupils from other schools in previous study

(Kurková et al., 2015), researchers found out that the highest level of good feelings express pupils who are D/HH achieving 2.14 of the point score, then students with PD with 1.90 points and the lowest level of feelings showed pupils with VD (1.52 of the point score). Our orphan students presented similar level of feeling than students with PD from study of Kurková, Nemček & Labudová (2015).

The level of effort of P.E. was stated by orphan students achieving 2.32 of the point score. By comparing the evaluation of the effort of P.E. by pupils from other schools in previous study (Kurková et al., 2015), researchers found out that pupils who are D/HH display the highest efforts during P.E. classes (2.30 of the point score) what is equally with our orphan students. The lowest degree of effort of P.E. was awarded by Czech students without disabilities (Hrabal, Pavelková, 2010), with a point score of 1.92.

The preferences for various physical activities during P.E. classes of orphan students were discovered. Children who are living in orphanage prefer team sport (soccer, volleyball, basketball and floorball) and physical activities performed in collective together with other students like dancing and zumba probably because they want to be integrated and socialized among other students. The investigation of Kurková, Nemček & Labudová (2015) found, that individuals with VD prefer individual physical activities such as athletics, swimming or gymnastics so that they can avoid direct contact with their teammates. An interesting yet quite understandable fact in the research of Kurková, Scheetz & Stelzer, (2010) was the finding that activities with music accompaniment (zumba, gymnastics and dance) are not popular in pupils who are D/HH since their ability to use rhythm as an assistive aid may not be possible. Thus, physical activities of this kind are not attractive for pupils who are D/HH. A study conducted by Kurková & Maertin (2014), however, proved that even physical activities that place high demands on rhythm perception with musical accompaniment or cues may become a life-long hobby for individuals who are D/HH regardless of their age.

We found that boys and girls living in orphanage demonstrate attitudes towards P.E. lessons as well as prefer physical activities in a very similar way.

Limits of study

The results cannot be generalized, they only attest to the orphanage within the given region. This study was limited due to the low number of orphan students, as well as due to the lack of knowledge of the level of current fitness and overall health condition of the students under this study.

5. Conclusion

The degree of popularity of P.E. is often related to the level of a student's successful gaining of movement skills, the level of intensity of specific exercises and their degree of difficulty, all which affect the student's ability to display their personality. When accepting the specific requirements of physical activities, we recommend that teachers create a space integrating orphan students among their peers to be fully socialised. This will increase the popularity of this mandatory subject and allow physical activities to become a regular part of students' leisure activities.

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