

THE PRIMARY PUPILS' KNOWLEDGE LEVEL ABOUT THE WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES

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^A Study Design; ^B Data Collection; ^C Statistical Analysis; ^D Manuscript Preparation; ^E Funds Collection

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Abstract The aim of this research was to find out the primary pupils' knowledge level about the Winter Olympic Games in Banská Bystrica. The research file consisted of 261 second stage primary pupils, 145 boys and 116 girls at the age from 10 to 15, who filled in the questionnaire ten days after finishing of the Winter Olympic Games held in Sochi. We used 14 questions in the questionnaire, consisting of the closed, half-open and open questions and 3 identification questions related to the sex of a respondent, age and respective school year of individual respondents. We can claim that among the most interesting findings there were: Firstly, more than 95% pupils knew what town was the organiser of the Winter Olympic Games in 2014. Secondly, more than 75% of the pupils were watching these Winter Olympic Games too. The most information about the Winter Olympic Games the pupils gained was via the TV and the internet. The favourite sports watched by the pupils were ice hockey, biathlon, ski-jump and snowboarding. Almost 60% of the pupils could answer the question: "Which town will be the Winter Olympic Games organiser in 2018?" What is more, it is really pleasing to note that the Winter Paralympic Games have started to be in the primary pupils' attention as well.

Key words Olympic education, knowledge level, Winter Olympic Games, primary school pupils

Introduction

Coubertin himself used the term "Sporting Education" instead of "Olympic Education" (Müller, 1986). This terminology appeared for the first time in sport education and Olympic research only by the 1970's. There is not an official concept of what it means but, even emphasising different areas, many scholars who studied the topic (Bruce-Culpan, 2008) agree that it is completely based in the values proposed in the Olympic Charter. It is educating in the universal values through sport and culture. And for the purposes of this paper, that is the idea we will consider when talking about Olympic Values Educational programmes and initiatives.

Olympic education is a process of educating and developing the individual according to universal values and ideals of Olympism. The principles and values of Olympism as special life attitudes and behaviours can be

understood, accepted and assimilated by means of a pedagogical approach, notably through sporting and cultural activities (Georgiadis, 2009).

Gessmann (1992), among others, emphasizes that “Olympic education” must be capable of the most positive association possible with the Olympic Games as an event. This is not self-evident, since the public – in view of the violations of the Olympic philosophy and the tangle of political, commercial and drug-related intrigue surrounding top-level sport – perceives the Olympic Games as an event that is rarely exemplary and is not to be taken seriously educationally. The negative examples cannot basically erase the validity of Olympic values as an educational idea. Ideals are never completely achieved – there are always compromises. So the battle for meaning has to be constantly re-thought. What educational models can be created by the Olympic Games as an event? People of all nations come together, some as competitors and others as spectators, in the utmost spirit of friendship. Through the media, the Olympic family at the venue of the Games becomes the symbol of the Olympic concept of universalism. The great achievements of the participants symbolize the striving and achievement of all humanity. If this symbol is also associated with fair play and mutual respect, the athletes set an example of successful coexistence between people in critical situations. The ceremonial character of the Olympic Games gives their achievements particular significance. It is in this context that the Olympic Games, as an event, must be critically considered and put to educational use (Gessmann, 1992; Booth, 1999; Culpan, 2002).

The Olympism as a system of ideas, principles, philosophy and visions have been formulated by Pierre de Coubertin at the beginning of the 20th century. The philosophy is not unchangeable; it is always in development what also applies to the philosophy of the Olympism which connects the physical ability, will and spirit in one unit in a well-balanced way. By connecting the sport with culture and education, the Olympism tries to create a way of life based on the joy of given efforts, on the educational value of a good example and on respecting the universal basic ethical principles. The meaning of the Olympism it is to involve sport anywhere in the process of the harmonic development of a human being, aiming to create a peaceful society, keeping the human dignity (Grexa et al., 2006).

According to Grexa et al. (2006), the Olympic Games may be considered as an important tool of education in the schools. It is therefore necessary that the Olympism becomes a part of the curricula in the elementary and secondary schools and that it is an unchangeable part of the curricula not only of physical and sport education, but also of the subjects where the ideas of the Olympism have their position. An important step to promotion of the Olympic ideas in the schools in Slovakia was realised during 1995–1997 where the topic of the Olympism became a part of the curricula in the elementary and secondary schools. It is a pity that this topic is only comprised in the subject of Physical and Sport Education; it is not comprised in other subjects. Except for the Physical and Sport Education, practically all the educational subjects may participate in the introduction of the Olympic education into the schools. We state following subjects and topics as the examples:

1. **History:** ancient Olympic games in the context with the cultural development of the Old Greeks, sport in the Middle Age, personality of baron Pierre de Coubertin.
2. **Geography:** scenes of organising the Olympic games, their demographic, climatic conditions, inhabitants, regional geography.
3. **Biology:** fauna and flora in the scene of the Olympic games, biological rudiments of the training process, nutrition of a sportsman, doping.
4. **Mother tongue:** sport terminology, creation of new names.

5. **Foreign language:** communication of the sportsmen from various countries, foreign languages learning.
6. **Graphic Art education:** graphical presentation of the sport events.

Aim

The aim of this research was to find out the primary pupils' knowledge level about the Winter Olympic Games in Banska Bystrica. We based on the content standard of the thematic unit of knowledge from the physical education and sport which is a part of the subject Physical and Sport Education in the 5th through 9th year of elementary schools (Mikuš, Beččáková, Sivák, 1999).

Methodology

We realised our research in the Elementary school Bakossova, Elementary school of Slobodného slovenského vysielača and Elementary school Radvanská which are located in Banská Bystrica. The questionnaire was distributed among 300 pupils of thesecond grade of the elementary schools ten days after the end of the Winter Olympic Games. We received 261 correctly filled questionnaires out of the total number of the questionnaires that we evaluated. There were in total 145 boys and 116 girls in the age of 10 to 15 years evaluated. 59 children were from the 5th year, 42 children from the 6th year, 59 children from the 7th year, 65 children from the 8th year and 36 children from the 9th year.

We used 14 questions in the questionnaire, consisting of the closed, half-open and open questions and 3 identification questions related to the sex of a respondent, age and respective school year of individual respondents.

Results

The first question was aimed at finding whether the pupils watched the happening at Winter Olympic Games 2014. Out of the total number of the questioned pupils, 85 pupils (32.6%) answered definitely yes, 116 pupils (44.4%) more yes, 46 pupils (17.6%) more no and only 14 pupils (5.4%) answered they did not watch the Winter Olympic Games 2014 at all. We can be pleased by this fact because it is the evidence that the Winter Olympic Games are an event within the sphere of interest of the school population.

Table 1. Answers for the first question

	Definitely yes	More yes	More no	Definitely no
N	85	116	46	14
%	32.6	44.4	17.6	5.4

The second question was aimed at finding whether the pupils know which country hosted the Winter Olympic Games 2014. Basing on the answers from pupils we can claim that as many as 242 pupils (92.7%) knew the correct answer. Incorrect answers were given by 9 pupils (3.5%) and 10 pupils (3.8%) did not know the answer.

Table 2. Answers for the second question

	Correct answer	Incorrect answer	No answer
N	242	9	10
%	92.7	3.5	3.8

Even better results were achieved by the question: “Which city organised the Winter Olympic Games 2014?” There were only 4 incorrect answers (1.5%), 7 questioned pupils did not know the answer (2.7%). As many as 250 pupils (95.8%) gave the correct information.

Table 3. Answers for the third question

	Correct answer	Incorrect answer	No answer
N	250	4	7
%	95.8	1.5	2.7

Next question was related to the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympic Games. 134 pupils watched it in a live transmission (51.4%), 34 pupils watched it from the tele-recording (13.0%), 93 pupils (35.6%) did not watch it.

Table 4. Answers for the fourth question

	Live transmission	Tele-recording	Did not watch it
N	134	34	93
%	51.4	13	35.6

Through the fifth question we found out that the pupils acquired the majority of information about happening at Winter Olympic Games from the television – 86.6%, from the Internet – 48.7%, from the discussions with friends – 34.5%, from the discussions with family relatives – 32.2%, from the broadcasting – 16.1%, from the press – 8.4%, from the discussions with the coaches – 6.1%, from the discussions with teachers – 5.0% and from other resources – 1.5% (here the mobile phones applications prevailed). These answers are the evidence that the media have a premium position in the source of information on Winter Olympic Games. Friends and family also play the role. We were very surprised by a small percentage of answers related to the information from teachers. The issue of information from the coaches cannot be analysed as we did not find out how many out of the questioned pupils active sportsmen were.

Table 5. Answers for the fifth question

	Television	Internet	Friends	Family	Broadcasting
%	86.6	48.7	34.5	32.2	16.1
	Press	Coaches	Teachers	Other resources	
%	8.4	6.1	5.0	1.5	

Out of the individual sports at the Winter Olympic Games, majority of respondents - 89% watched the hockey, 65% stated biathlon, 39% ski jumping, 38% snowboarding, 32% Alpine skiing, 29% speed skating, 28% figure skating, 25% bobsleigh, 19% Nordic skiing, 12% curling, 10% luge, 7% Nordic combined. The smallest number of respondents watched the short track – 4% and skeleton – 3%. It is obvious from these answers that the absolute dominance in the watching was confirmed by the hockey; however biathlon also became a part of the sphere of interest.

Table 6. Answers for the sixth question

	Hockey	Biathlon	Ski jumping	Snowboarding	Alpine skiing
%	89	65	39	38	32
	Speed skating	Figure skating	Bobsleigh	Nordic skiing	Curling
%	29	28	25	19	12
	Luge	Nordic combined	Short track	Skeleton	
%	10	7	4	3	

The next question was aimed at finding out the performance of which Slovak sportsman/woman or collective team at the Winter Olympic Games are considered by the pupils as the best ones. As many as 224 pupils (85.8%) stated the biathlete Anastasiya Kuzmina. Except for her, 34 pupils (13%) stated the Alpine skier Adam Žampa and 13 pupils (5%) stated goalie Ján Laco.

Table 7. Answers for seventh question

	Anastasiya Kuzmina	Adam Žampa	Ján Laco
N	224	34	13
%	85.8	13	5

The biggest disappointment from the Slovak representation at the Winter Olympic Games was stated for the performance of our ice hockey players (78%). Further, the pupils stated the disappointment from the performance of Zdeno Chára (5.8%), Marián Hossa (1.9%), biathlon relay of women (1.5%) and Alena Procházková (1.2%).

Table 8. Answers for the eighth question

	Ice hockey players	Zdeno Chára	Marián Hossa
%	78	5.8	1.9
	Biathlon relay of women	Alena Procházková	
%	1.5	1.2	

Ice hockey players of Canada were considered as the most successful sportsmen of the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi by 23.8%, biathlete Darya Domracheva 6.1%, biathlete Ole Einar Bjørndalen 3.8%, ice hockey

players of the USA 3.5% and short track representative Viktor Ahn 1.9% of pupils. As many as 48.7% of the total number of respondents could not specify any sportsman / woman or collective team.

Table 9. Answers for the ninth question

	Ice hockey players of Canada	Darya Domracheva	Ole Einar Bjørndalen
%	23.8	6.1	3.8
	Ice hockey players of the USA	Viktor Ahn	
%	3.5	1.9	

Even bigger number of pupils – 69.3% could not specify a foreign sportsman who was the biggest disappointment at the Winter Olympic Games. Russian ice hockey players were stated by 10.3%, Czech ice hockey players by 3.5% and figure skater Evgeni Plushenko by 1.2% respondents.

Table 10. Answers for the tenth question

	Russian ice hockey players	Czech ice hockey players	Evgeni Plushenko
%	10.3	3.5	1.2

The question: „Which country won the medal balance of the countries at the Winter Olympic Games 2014?“ was correctly answered by 114 pupils (43.7%). Incorrect information was given by 133 pupils (50.9%) and 14 pupils (5.4%) did not know the answer.

Table 11. Answers for the eleventh question

	Correct answer	Incorrect answer	No answer
N	114	133	14
%	43.7	50.9	5.4

The question which city will be organising the next Olympic Games 2016 was correctly answered by 144 respondents (55.2%). Incorrect answer was given by 69 respondents (26.4%) and 48 respondents did not know the answer (18.4%).

Table 12. Answers for the twelfth question

	Correct answer	Incorrect answer	No answer
N	144	69	48
%	55.2	26.4	18.4

Little bit better results were achieved by the question which city will be organising the next Winter Olympic Games 2018. The correct answer was stated by 154 respondents (59.0%), 46 respondents provided incorrect answer (17.6%) and 61 respondents (23.4%) did not know the answer.

Table 13. Answers for the thirteenth question

	Correct answer	Incorrect answer	No answer
N	154	46	61
%	59	17.6	23.4

The last question was investigating whether the pupils know what important world event takes place in the place of the Winter Olympic Games from 7th until 16th March 2014. It was correctly answered by 187 pupils (71.6%), 59 pupils (22.6%) did not know the answer and 15 pupils (5.7%) stated incorrect information. Based on this answer we can claim that the Winter Olympic Games are starting to get into the sphere of the focus of our youth.

Table 14. Answers for the fourteenth question

	Correct answer	Incorrect answer	No answer
N	187	15	59
%	71.6	5.7	22.6

Discussion

Similar researches but with other age categories and other questions were realised by Hrčka (1998), Beččáková, Mikuš (1999), as well as Glesk (2000).

However, the results of our research can partially be compared only with the research of Görner (2001, 2002, 2004), who dealt with the retrospective of the Olympic Games 2000 and Winter Olympic Games 2004 in the same age category. Of course, we can only compare those questions where we can omit the fact that in one case there were the Olympic Games, in other case there were the Winter Olympic Games.

Within our research, the correct answer to the question which city was organising the Winter Olympic Games was given by as many as 95.8% respondents. Within the Görner's research (2001) the correct organiser of the Olympic Games was given "only" by 75.5% respondents. Both the researches further revealed that the pupils got more information on the Winter Olympic Games Sochi in comparison to the Olympic Games Sydney from the television (increase from 72 to 86.6%) and the Internet became a very important source of information in the meantime (increase from 3 to 48.7%). On the contrary, discussions with friends were stated as less valuable sources of information (drop from 64 to 34.5%), discussions with family relatives (drop from 49 to 32.2%), broadcasting (drop from 44 to 16.1%) as well as discussions with teachers (drop from 22 to 5%). The opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Sydney was watched by more respondents – 62% of respondents watched it in live transmission while the opening ceremony in Sochi was watched "only" by 51.4% of respondents. We can also compare the answers to

the question which city will be organising the next Olympic or Winter Olympic Games. Definitely bigger success rate of the correct answers was achieved by pupils in our research (59% in comparison to 15.6%). Similar results were achieved in the question what important event takes place after the end of Olympic or Winter Olympic Games in the place of their happening. The correct answer in our research was given by as many as 71.6% of the pupils, while in Görner's research (2001) it was only 16.9 of the pupils.

Based on this short comparison we can assume that the Olympic topic gradually gets into the sphere of attention of our youth more and more.

Conclusions

The aim of this research was to find out the primary pupils' knowledge level about the Winter Olympic Games in Banská Bystrica. We are aware that based on the questionnaire method through which we gained the data from 261 pupils we cannot provide generally binding conclusions. Despite the stated facts we assume that we managed to realise the goal that we defined and we can fully submit the results of our research.

We can claim that among the most interesting findings belonged: Firstly, more than 95% pupils knew what town was the organiser of the Winter Olympic Games in 2014. Secondly, more than 75% of the pupils were watching these Winter Olympic Games too. The most information about the Winter Olympic Games the pupils gained was via the TV and the internet. The most favourite watching sports were ice hockey, biathlon, ski-jump and snowboarding. Almost 60% of the pupils could answer the question: "Which town will be the Winter Olympic Games organizer in 2018?" What is more, it is really pleasing to note that the Winter Paralympic Games have started to be in the primary pupils' attention as well.

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Cite this article as: Görner, K., Kolofík, T. (2016). The Primary Pupils' Knowledge Level about the Winter Olympic Games. *Central European Journal of Sport Sciences and Medicine*, 16 (4), 33–41. DOI: 10.18276/cej.2016.4-04.

