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Lifestyle and physical activity of primary school pupils

Abstract

The author of this paper deals with analysis of the impact of physical activities on creating a healthy lifestyle. An analysis of lifestyle of the primary school pupils attending selected primary schools in the districts of Banská Bystrica, Zvolen and Žilina is discussed in the paper. The study involved 855 respondents. A questionnaire was used to collect facts and data. The main results of the study indicate that only 32.17% of the respondents performed physical activity. Statistically highly significant relations were observed in the variable “interest in PA” and in the variable “evaluation of respondents’ lifestyle” – significance level of 0.001***.

Key words: lifestyle, physical activity, primary school pupils.

Introduction

Because of the progressive development of society, there are changes not only in the conditions for human social life, but also in demands from members of the society, which are constantly increasing. Life quality, lifestyle and physical activity are increasingly discussed topics in the media, medicine, politics, the economy and other areas of social life.

Many studies carried out within the scope of physical activities, correct living and experiences with drugs, whether for primary school students, or high school and college students, confirmed that the current situation in the investigated characteristics is not satisfactory. Students prefer computers, cafe bars, and other free-time activities instead of physical exercise. Physical activity is disappearing from the daily schedules of the pupils.

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Following much monitoring and subsequent analysis of the obtained facts, we've found out that there is a connection between a healthy lifestyle of young people as well as adults and the quality of their learning and later professional activities [18], [19].

Nowadays, there are many views of lifestyle, which give different definitions of lifestyle, but their characteristics are not related, or partially overlap. Lifestyle is a complex of diverse activities that are affected by a particular value orientation.

- Lifestyle is a set of human activities, which they maintain and restore [8].
- Lifestyle is a dynamic way of being an individual who determines factors such as hereditary disposition, social, gender, cultural and professional factors [10].
- Lifestyle is a group of a norms, values and behaviours of individuals, which vary in relation to age, needs and variable influence of a social environment [14].

Paveleková-Peterková [17] have devoted themselves to the research of young people lifestyles, focusing on the differences between gender, age and type of school.

We agree with Bunc [5], Cooper [6], Valjent [20] that an important part of a right lifestyle is individual physical activity. The right lifestyle is a response to the increasing average load of intellectual work of the Slovak population and recognition of the fact that reduction of body burdening of human organisms leads to their reduced physical condition.

According to Michal [15], an integral part of a healthy lifestyle is regular repetition of physical activities, leading to higher levels of physical condition and mental resilience. Similarly Kratochvílová [11] maintains that physical activity contributes not only to improved physical condition and self-confidence, but it also has beneficial effects to the health of young people, and especially their well-being. In the opinion of Hrčka [9], permanent physical vigorousness emphasizes sustainability of health.

We agree with the authors like Hrčka [9] that movement plays an important role in the ontogeny of an individual, so it is important to support children, youth and adults in improving their lifestyle in terms of including physical activity into their exercise routine (PR).

Authors who have studied the matter in question directly in the educational process are [1], [7], [10], [13], [14], [15].

Objective

The objective of our research is to provide an analysis of the involvement of primary schools pupils in the districts of Banská Bystrica, Zvolen and Žilina in physical activities and to analyse their lifestyle.

Methodology

The research sample consisted of randomly selected 8th class pupils of primary school in the districts of Banská Bystrica, Zvolen and Žilina. The research group consisted of 19 randomly selected primary schools.

855 respondents – 48.55% girls and 51.45% boys – participated in the study. Out of the total number of respondents, 52.20% respondent came from the city and 47.80% respondents came from rural areas. We determined the current level of lifestyle of the members of the sample group and their involvement in physical activities.

The study took place in selected primary schools in October and November 2013.

A questionnaire was used for collecting facts. The selected individual items in the questionnaire were reviewed by experts in pedagogy, psychology and physical education. The questionnaires were distributed and administered personally by us and we achieved 100% response rate. The questionnaires were anonymous and spaces to fill in the questionnaire were not time-limited.

The questionnaire consisted of 22 questions. We preferred closed type questions with the possibility of alternative responses. The questions were divided into area sections: physical activity and lifestyle of the respondents. The questions were simply phrased. Our aim was testing the possibility of filling the questionnaire by students of the 2nd grade of primary school, so we tried to ensure its objectivity.

The results obtained through empirical research methods were processed and evaluated by means of qualitative and quantitative research methods (graphical representation, the percentage expressions, the median expressions, descriptive statistics, chi-square χ^2 test of independence).

Results

Analysis of self-assessment results contained the answers of our 855 respondents that they have a very good lifestyle living (14.86%), good lifestyle living (18.51%) average lifestyle living (43.95%), weak/poor lifestyle living (6.42%) and very poor lifestyle living (16.25%) respondents.

The way of life in which our young people live primarily depends on the pupils' parents. We wondered whether attained educational level of parents related to the current lifestyle of respondents. On the basis of the statistical testing of connections between selected variables (lifestyle of respondents and educational level of parents) one can establish the existence of a statistically significant addition according to the level of significance $p < 0.001^{***}$ (Figure 1). The results show that the individual educational level of parents has different representations of life. Similar findings were also extended by research of Bartík [2]. After

confrontation of our research results with the findings of author Michal [14], the conclusion is that the level of lifestyle respondents depends on the educational level of the parents.

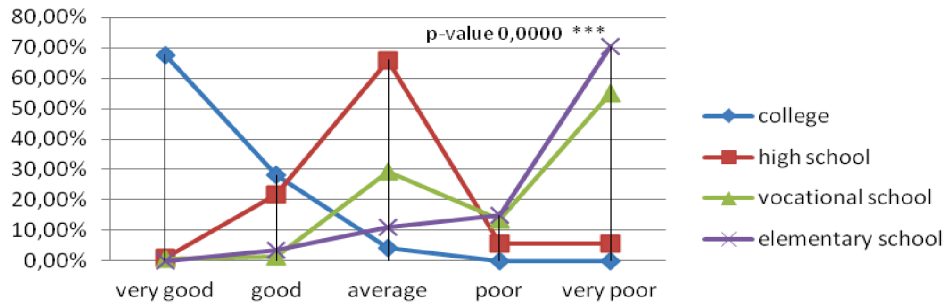


Figure 1. The relationship between the lifestyle of a respondent and educational level of parents

Analysis of the results of research and subsequent comparison of the respondents in terms of residence, city and countryside (Figure 2), showed different trends in lifestyle of respondents. However, the result of χ^2 test of independence ($p = 0.9197$) was shown to be statistically insignificant, thus there is no significant relationship between lifestyle and place of residence of respondents.

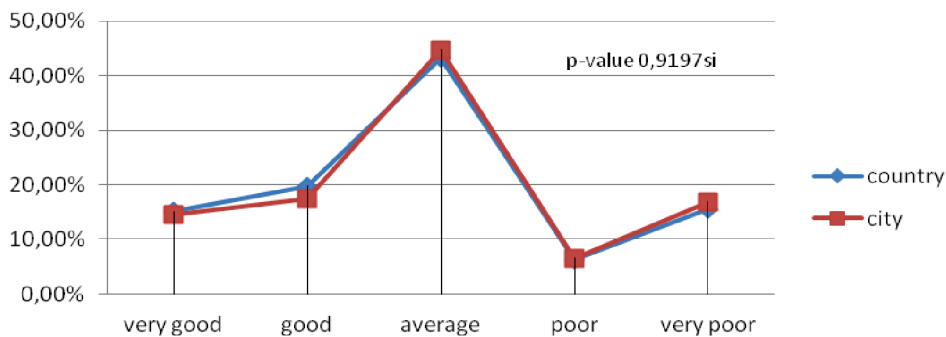


Figure 2. The relationship between lifestyle and place of residence of respondents

Many studies of primary school pupils' lifestyle and application of physical activity in their daily routine brings finding that boys live healthier lifestyles than girls [2], [4]. From the results of our research it's obvious (Figure 3) that there are some intersex differences in levels of lifestyles of respondents in favor of boys. Result of χ^2 test of independence ($p = 0.10790$) tells us that there is no statistically significant relationship between gender and lifestyle, that differences in lifestyle of respondents according to gender are not significant.

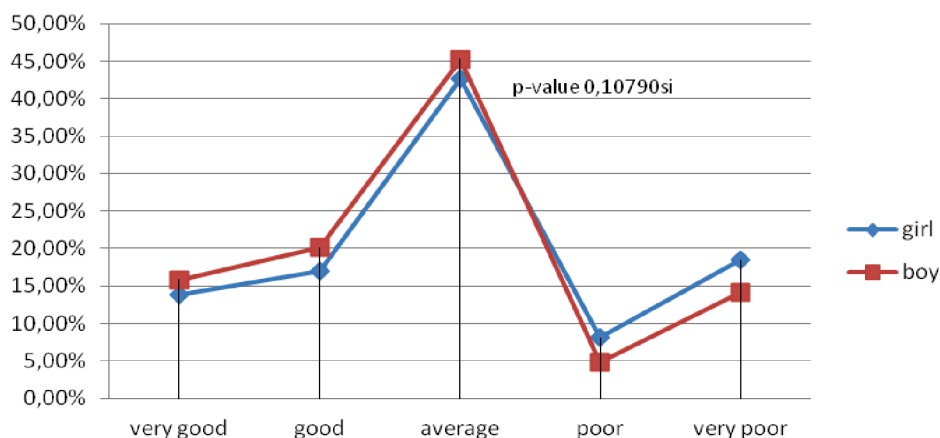


Figure 3. The relationship between lifestyle and sex of respondent

One of the preconditions for participation in physical activity (PA) within the school, is interest shown by the students and their positive attitude towards movement. Through the analysis of the questionnaire, we found out that 32.17% of the respondents attend physical activity, compared with 67.83% of those who do not attend PA. The complexity of the facts indicates that all primary schools propose to our research to pupils the recreational interest TV.

In the results of the research, there are visible differences in lifestyle of respondents according to involvement to PA, whereas the p-value of χ^2 test of independence ($p = 0.000$), tells us that there is a statistically significant difference in significance level of 0.001*** among lifestyle of respondents, involved in PA and lifestyle of respondents not involved to PA (Figure 4).

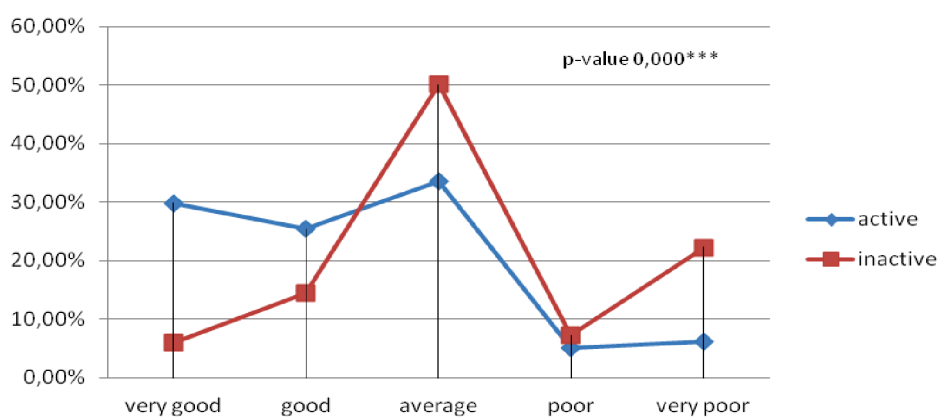


Figure 4. The relationship between primary school respondents and their involvement to PA

After a more detailed analysis of the results of a questionnaire given to the variable PA, we present the distribution of respondents who attend or are attending PA, based on gender, community and educational level of their parents.

The association between PA and *place of residence of respondents*

The results show that there are differences in involvement in PA between respondents from the city and respondents from countryside while the p-value of chi-square test of independence ($p = 0.0289$) for the two variables indicates. It shows that the relationship between place of residence and involvement in PA is statistically significant at a significance level of 0.05*. The higher incidence of involvement in PA was reported by respondents from the rural areas. It is logically justified particularly by the fact that students from rural areas do not have such a wide range of sports facilities in resort when compared with pupils from the city. For that reason, pupils in rural areas spend time in hobby groups focusing on physical activities that the school probably offers them. A negative finding is that the prevailing percentage of respondents are not interested in PA at the ratio of 58.37% of the respondents from rural areas in comparison to 65.36% respondents of the city.

Association between PA and gender of respondents

We've tested the significance of intersexual differences by chi-square test of independence, which was a statistically insignificant ($p = 0.2476$). There is no statistically significant association between gender and lifestyle of respondents, sex differences are not significant.

Association between PA and educational attainment of respondents' parents

On the basis of the statistical testing of associations between groups of respondents with selected levels of parental education and involvement in PA by chi-square test of independence ($p = 0.0000$) it can be concluded that the statistically significant dependence on the significance level of 0.001*** among involvement to the PA and parents' educational attainment of respondents. From the above it can be concluded that with increasing levels of parental education of respondents also increase the involvement in PA.

Discussion

Analysis of the results of the individual items of the questionnaire revealed a very unfavourable situation related to the involvement of respondents to physical activities. We found out that in the research ($N = 855$) only 32.17% of the respondents attend special recreational physical education, compared to 67.83% of

those who do not attend PA. Summarizing the results of involvement to PA by gender refers to the fact that there are some intersex differences in PA in favor of girls. The significance of gender differences, however, has not been demonstrated ($p = 0.2476$). Statistically significant differences in the involvement of respondents to PA were found depending on the place of residence of the respondents to the significance level of 0.05^* in favor of the respondents from the rural areas in average 40.91% of respondents from rural areas to 33.42% of the urban respondents. Statistically highly significant differences were observed in involvement to PA, depending on the educational level of the parents of respondents, significance level of 0.001^{***} , and involvement to PA depending on the current level of lifestyle of respondents in significance level of 0.001^{***} .

Differences in involvement to PA according to gender, are also showed in the resources of Michal [15], who report increasing percentage of participation in organized forms of sports and interest – recreational activities for boys while for girls is this trend is falling. Beťák [3] notes, that there is predominant interest in PA instead of physical education within the educational process. Similarly Mikuš, Rubická [16], who mapped the Eastern Slovakia (681 respondents) indicated that there are differences in the interest in the recreation physical education and sport in favor of boys. Adamčák-Bartík [1] also highlight the difference in involvement to PA in favour of boys. The authors found out that there is a higher incidence of involvement to PA compared to other interest groups in an average of 55.09% to 44.91%, which we see as a very flattering finding.

Close

On the basis of summarized results of the research we indicate that there are differences in lifestyles of respondents depending on involvement to PA. We confirm a statistically significant difference at a significance level of 0.001^{***} between the lifestyle of those who are involved in PA and the lifestyle of respondents not involved in PA.

In terms of research and practical experience, we believe that leadership and motivation of the young population to a healthy lifestyle is a key task of the whole society and education as well. School is one of the entities involved in the education of young population, especially by targeting students to actively use their free time. We can say that there is a connection between the involvement to PA and a positive attitude to movement, and content appropriate and attractive physical activities can influence and shape the formation of positive attitudes to school physical education.

We point out that in terms of humanization and democratization of education and teaching, it is necessary to create favorable conditions for the possibility of sporting activities based on pupil's interests and preferences. Currently, it is neces-

sary to be interested in the issue of appropriate physical activities because of the creating a healthy lifestyle. There are references to the possibility of using free time through engagement in recreational physical education. Youth population complements and enriches current lifestyle by these activities and contribute to their health.

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Styl życia i aktywność fizyczna uczniów szkół podstawowych

Streszczenie

Autor niniejszego artykułu przedstawia analizę wpływu aktywności fizycznej na tworzenie zdrowego stylu życia. Artykuł zawiera analizę stylu życia uczniów szkół podstawowych uczęszczających do wybranych szkół podstawowych w powiatach Banská Bystrica, Zvolen and Žilina. Badaniem objęto 855 respondentów. Do gromadzenia danych użyto kwestionariusza. Większość wyników badania wykazała, że tylko 32,17% respondentów jest czynnie zaangażowanych w aktywność fizyczną. Bardzo istotne, ze statystycznego punktu widzenia, relacje zaobserwowano w zmiennej „zainteresowanie AF” oraz w zmiennej „ocena stylu życia respondentów” – poziom istotności 0,001***.

Słowa kluczowe: styl życia, aktywność fizyczna, uczniowie szkół podstawowych.