

MOTIVATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN THEIR FREE TIME

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ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE

Abstract: The aim of this research was to examine whether and to what extent the socio-pedagogical characteristics of upper elementary school students contribute to their level of motivation for physical education in their free time. The defined socio-pedagogical characteristics of students include gender, the grade they are in, school performance, and students' involvement in extracurricular sports activities. The population consists of students from the "Branko Copic" Elementary School in Prnjavor (Republica Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina). The sample comprises a total of 133 students, including 45 (33.80%) fifth-grade students, 42 (31.60%) seventh-grade students, and 46 (34.60%) ninth-grade students. To achieve this, a quantitative research approach was carried out. The defined research objectives represent fundamental components of the problem and the subject of the study. In the research, a self-created five-point Likert scale: "Students' Attitudes towards Physical Education in Their Free Time" was applied to assess the students' motivation for physical education in their free time. The reliability analysis yielded a satisfactory level of reliability with $\alpha=0.92$. Using the survey questionnaire "Student Survey," information about the socio-pedagogical characteristics of the respondents was obtained, as well as how students spend their free time and the time intervals they have available for leisure activities during the day. The results indicate that the motivation of elementary school students for physical education is weak. A mild level of motivation for physical education is observed only in very good students.

Keywords: physical activity, elementary school students, student motivation, post-obligation time

INTRODUCTION

In the age of digitalization, there is a growing concern about the frequency of physical activity among children and the prevention of a sedentary lifestyle. The school age of students from 7 to 15 years is characterized by the process of growth and psycho-physical maturation, socialization, education, and schooling. The health status and quality of life during this period are influenced by numerous factors, including the attitude towards physical activity (Đokić et al., 2014). Free time represents a significant phenomenon in modern society but also one of the

fundamental problems. Free time is a factor that can play a role in enhancing modern culture (Previšić, 2000). It is a time "outside all professional, family, and social obligations, in which an individual freely chooses activities for rest, recreation, and creativity" (Potkonjak, 1989). One of the first consequences of media proliferation is the transmission of certain cultures and lifestyles (Simić & Letić, 2021). Parents and schools have a crucial role in organizing children's free time (Scruggs et al., 2003). Modern schools participate in organizing creative leisure activities for students through cultural and artistic achievements and inculcating healthy living habits (Hasanbašić, 2022). Early childhood experiences contribute to the formation of personality and, in the future, the development of attitudes in adulthood (Marković et al., 2022).

An active lifestyle and daily physical activity play a significant role in preventing the onset of obesity and other diseases (DiPietro, 1999). Physical activity is an important health factor. Its role is reflected in the prevention of many chronic diseases, slowing down and reducing the symptoms of illnesses (Stoiljković et al., 2011). In addition to this role, physical activity also affects a person's mental stability (Nikolić & Pandurević, 2017). Insufficient levels of physical activity lead to the development of obesity. Obesity is the most harmful consequence of inactivity (Prentice & Jebb, 1995). Obesity is a chronic disease characterized by excessive accumulation of body fat and an increase in body weight. In clinical practice, it is most commonly expressed through the body mass index (Tsigos et al., 2008). Every child should be motivated and encouraged to work and achieve psychophysical progress to prevent the onset of current diseases (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005).

Motivation is what drives people and helps them accomplish tasks (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Each individual has personal intrinsic and extrinsic motives that propel them into specific activities (Vujanović, 2015). Intrinsic motivation is described as an inherent tendency to engage in personal interests and hone one's skills, resulting in a sense of satisfaction. In contrast to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation involves various rewards, recognition, and social status (Reeve, 2010). In the motivation structure of every person, one group of motives is dominant. These motives are consistently manifested in different situations. Therefore, it is essential to analyze and determine which motives are most significant, or what drives students to engage in physical activity (Vujanović, 2015).

Experts in the field of physical education and sports aim to address the issue of increased body weight in children and poorly developed motor skills due to insufficient physical activity (Muminović et al., 2022). Motor skill is a part of general psychophysical ability related to the level of development of basic motor latent dimensions of a person that influence successful movement (Mekić & Mavrić, 2016). Consequently, the problem of this research is the level of motivation of older elementary school students for physical education in their free time. In previous studies, a significant difference was observed regarding active involvement in sports (sports-oriented time), with younger adolescents assigning more importance to these activities compared to older adolescents. The study included respondents in middle and late adolescence, aged from 14 to 19 years (Matić-Tandarić, 2019). Based on the previously determined research problem, the aim of the research was to determine the attitudes of elementary school students regarding motivation for

physical education in their free time in relation to the socio-pedagogical characteristics of students. General hypothesis: we assume that there is a statistically significant difference in the attitudes of elementary school students regarding motivation for physical education in their free time.

RESEARCH METHOD

Sample of Participants

The sample for this research consisted of 133 students from the " Branko Ćopić " Elementary School in Prnjavor (Republica Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina). Out of this, there were: 45 (33.80%) students from the fifth grade, 42 (31.60%) students from the seventh grade, and 46 (34.60%) students from the ninth grade. In the total sample of this research, there were 74 (55.60%) boys (male gender) and only 59 (44.40%) girls (female gender).

Sample of Measurement Instruments

For the purposes of this research, two instruments were independently created. As part of the scaling technique, a five-point Likert-type scale was used as an instrument. The first scale, "Student Attitudes about Motivation for Physical Education in Free Time (SUFVSV)," was composed of 33 statements. For each of the listed statements, students expressed their level of agreement with the given statement on a scale from 1 to 5. The numbers represented the following: 1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 - Agree, 3 - Not Sure, 4 - Mostly Agree, and 5 - Strongly Agree. The reliability analysis yielded a satisfactory level of reliability with $\alpha=0.92$.

As part of the survey technique, the second instrument used was the "Student Questionnaire (AUU)." The questionnaire consisted of 9 questions of a combined type.

Data Collection and Analysis

The research and data collection were conducted during the 2019/2020 school year. Students from the fifth, seventh, and ninth grades of the "Branko Ćopić" Elementary School in Prnjavor (Republica Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina) were surveyed. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, as well as the anonymous nature of the study. After a detailed explanation of how to fill out the five-point Likert-type scale and the questionnaire, students had an average of 15 to 20 minutes to complete them. Statistical data processing was performed using the statistical software package SPSS 20 for Windows, through which the following parameters were calculated: frequencies and percentages, mean (M), standard deviation (SD), chi-square (χ^2), contingency coefficient, t-ratio, and F-coefficient.

RESULTS

Based on the defined socio-pedagogical characteristics of students and also the dependent variables of this research: students' gender, the grade they attend, school performance, and students' involvement in extracurricular sports activities, the following section will present the research results in tabular form, showing the

statistically significant differences in students' attitudes regarding the time period, organization, and motivation for physical education in their free time.

Table 1 presents the obtained results related to students' attitudes about the time they have during the day to organize their free time.

Table 1 Students' Attitudes about the Time Period They Have During the Day for Spending Their Free Time.

Time period	Sex			λ^2	df	Sig.
	Male	Female	Total			
I don't have time	1	1	2			
Less than 1h	5	8	13			
2h to 3h	22	31	53			
Up to 4h	19	14	33			
More than 4h	27	5	32			
Total	74	59	133	16,62	4	0,00**

**Statistically significant difference at the 0.01 level

When it comes to students' attitudes about the time period they have during the day for spending their free time, a statistically significant difference was found only concerning the students' gender, with a significance level of 0.01. The results are displayed in Table 1. The highest percentage of male students responded that they have more than 4 hours of free time, while for female students, it was a period of 2 to 3 hours daily.

Regarding students' attitudes about the time period they have during the day for spending their free time in relation to the grade they attend, school performance, and students' involvement in extracurricular sports activities, the statistical analysis of the data did not reveal any significant differences.

After analyzing the time period that students have for spending their free time, the results about how students most commonly spend their leisure time are presented. Statistically significant differences were found in relation to the grade of students and their involvement in sports activities. Gender and students' academic performance do not influence the way they organize their free time.

Table 2 and Table 3 display the obtained research results where statistically significant differences were found in the way older elementary school students organize their free time.

Table 2. Ways of Spending Students' Free Time in Relation to the Grade They Attend

Method	Grade			Total	λ^2	df	Sig.
	V	VII	IX				
Watch TV	5	7	2	14			
Read books	4	2	3	9			
Surf the	6	8	16	30			

internet							
Engage in sports	15	20	12	47			
Something else	15	5	13	33			
Total	45	42	46	133	16,03	8	0,04*

** Statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level

At the level of the sample of students in the fifth, seventh, and ninth grades in relation to the way they spend their free time, statistical analysis revealed that students spend the least amount of their free time on reading books. The most common way of spending free time for fifth and seventh graders is engaging in sports, while for ninth graders, it is surfing the internet (Table 2).

Table 3 Ways of spending free time and students' involvement in sports

Method	Involvement in sports			λ^2	Df	Sig.
	Yes	No	Total			
Watch TV	6	8	14			
Read books	2	7	9			
Surf the internet	17	13	30			
Engage in sports	41	6	47			
Something else	11	22	33			
Total	77	56	133	30,80	4	0,00**

** Statistically significant difference at the 0.01 level

According to the results from Table 3, it can be concluded that students who are involved in sports most often spend their free time engaging in sports activities, with as many as 41 out of 77 students doing so. Out of the 77 students involved in sports, only 2 students indicated that they read books in their free time, and 6 of them watch TV (Table 3).

Further analysis of the data did not reveal any statistically significant differences in terms of gender and students' academic performance among older elementary school students regarding the way they organize their free time.

After analyzing the data obtained through the questionnaire, an analysis of the results was conducted using the second instrument of this research. By using a five-point Likert-type scale, the degree of motivation of students for physical education in their free time was determined.

Gender, the grade students attend, and their academic performance do not affect their desire to engage in physical activities. The only statistically significant difference in students' motivation for physical education was found in relation to their involvement in extracurricular sports activities. Table 4 presents the obtained results.

Table 4 Students' Motivation for Physical Education in Their Free Time in Relation to Their Involvement in Extracurricular Sports Activities

Involvement in Sports	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.
Involved	77	107,70	17,69			
Not involved	56	84,38	27,04			
Total	133			6,01	131	0,00**

** Statistically significant difference at the 0.01 level

In the total sample of older elementary school students, consisting of 133 students, 77 students are involved in extracurricular sports activities, while 56 are not involved in sports. The established statistical difference is 0.01.

Based on the overall results, it can be concluded that the motivation of older elementary school students for physical education in their free time is weak. There is not a high level of motivation for physical education in their free time. A mild level of motivation for physical education was only observed in very good students (M=99.70 and SD=26.00).

DISCUSSION

The goal of this research was to examine whether and to what extent the socio-pedagogical characteristics of older elementary school students contribute to their motivation for physical education in their free time. The defined socio-pedagogical characteristics of students include gender, grade level, academic performance, and involvement in extracurricular sports activities. For this purpose, a quantitative research was conducted. A statistically significant difference in the results related to the time period students have for organizing their free time was observed only when it comes to the students' gender (Table 1). When it comes to the way older elementary school students spend their free time, a statistically significant difference was found only in relation to the socio-pedagogical characteristic of the grade level they are attending and their involvement in sports activities (Table 2 and Table 3). A statistically significant difference in the motivation of elementary school students for physical education in their free time concerning socio-pedagogical characteristics exists only in one case. The obtained results indicate a difference in the involvement of students in extracurricular sports activities (Table 4). Despite the positive impact of physical education on the functional and motor skills of students, especially during the puberty period, students are not sufficiently motivated to participate (Mekić et al., 2021). The obtained results suggest that the motivation of older elementary school students for physical education in their free time is weak. A mild level of motivation for physical education was observed only in very good students.

A large number of studies conducted over the past two decades have yielded similar and concerning results. Researchers have drawn the following conclusions through their studies (Mahan, 2004; Bitar et al., 2006; Ilić et al., 2009): the prevalence of overweight children is significantly increasing, obesity is the second most significant risk factor for childhood health disorders, health issues often arise

during childhood and adolescence, physical activity plays a crucial role in managing excess body weight in children, and society must actively promote physical exercise to prevent diseases and encourage healthy psychophysical development in children. Engaging in sports activities is a contributing factor to developing sports motivation. Involvement in sports allows individuals to fulfill various personal needs such as communication, socializing, gaining recognition, and experiencing happiness and satisfaction. Participating in sports can elevate an individual's value orientation towards sports to a personal level. The development of motivation depends on how an individual perceives their sports activities, responds to successes and failures, feedback, competitions, and more. All of this depends on their interests, abilities, habits, desire for improvement, and the aspiration for success (Dundjerović, 1996).

Đokić et al. (2014) conducted a study on a sample of older elementary school students with the aim of assessing extracurricular physical activity and physical fitness. Analyses were carried out based on gender, school age, and extracurricular physical activity. Unfortunately, the final results of this study also indicated that cardiorespiratory fitness was generally below good levels compared to optimal criteria and that physical inactivity significantly affected obesity and the poor health of students. These data are causally related to the level of motivation among students for physical education in their free time, as indicated by the conducted research. The development of achievement motivation through sports activities allows for the fulfillment of various other motives. These motives are essential for meeting personal needs, and thus contribute to a positive attitude towards the value of sports (Popadić & Ćorluka, 2016). Cardiovascular diseases are not typical in childhood, but research suggests that children with lower physical activity levels are predisposed to the risk of these diseases (Wedderkopp et al., 2003).

The aim of the next study was to determine differences in motor skills among students who were divided based on their level of physical activity in their free time. The research results showed that students engaged in additional physical activities in their leisure time achieved better results in their motor skills (Badrić et al., 2015). The development of children and adolescents can be more comprehensively understood from the perspective of their immediate and broader social environment. The environment significantly influences their social acceptance and habit formation (Tubić, 2006). Successful child development requires interaction between the individual and a positive environment. Leisure activities and free-time pursuits can be associated with numerous positive educational and social goals (Valjan-Vukić, 2013).

Based on the presented research results, it can be concluded that the quality of children's free time is one of the fundamental issues of today. Inadequate organization of free time directly affects psycho-physical development and health. Analyzing how students spend their free time provides insight into a very important aspect of young people's daily lives (Ilišin, 2007).

In future research, efforts should be made to include a larger sample of students to obtain more comprehensive data and a broader picture of students' motivation for physical education in their free time. Additionally, conducting mixed-methods research might be beneficial. Combining quantitative data with qualitative

information could help better understand what motivates children to engage in physical activities and what demotivates them.

Educational institutions and society as a whole should work to raise awareness among young people about the importance of improving and maintaining their health (Brooks & Magnusson, 2006). By engaging in physical activities during their free time, students can contribute productively to their psycho-physical development and create positive lifelong habits (Paspalj et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

Physical activity is an essential factor for the proper and comprehensive psycho-physical development of children. Special attention should be given to organizing the free time of students. The most significant factor in children's upbringing is the family. The family is an irreplaceable environment in which a child forms their personality. In addition to the family, schools should aim to creatively and sportively organize students' free time. Based on the obtained results, it can be concluded that the motivation of older elementary school students for physical education is weak. It is essential for society, through collaboration between parents and schools, to work towards motivating students to engage in physical activities in their free time. This approach is likely to have a positive impact on the development of students' motor skills, their overall psycho-physical development, and their quality of life while preventing current health issues.

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