

## ATTITUDES OF SCHOOLGIRLS TOWARDS PHYSICAL AND SPORT EDUCATION

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**Abstract.** This paper presents the results of research focused on the attitudes of schoolgirls at the 5th and 9th grade of primary schools towards physical and sport education. The aim of this project was to find out the level of the attitudes of schoolgirls at primary schools in the Bratislava Region. The research sample consisted of 247 schoolgirls attending urban and village primary schools. The basic research tool we have used was the standardized attitudinal questionnaire designed for the primary schools pupils. We have found out that in the 5th and 9th grade of primary schools the positive attitudes toward physical and sport education prevail over the indifferent attitudes. At primary schools in the Bratislava Region, the schoolgirls in the 5th grade showed more positive attitudes than schoolgirls in the 9th grade.

**Key words:** attitudes, physical and sport education, schoolgirls, primary school

### Introduction

Many literary sources and practical research results show, that the current generation of children and young people do not have such a positive attitude towards sport and movement as it was in the past and do not have enough physical activities. Their interests but also duties are much wider than they were in the past. Once, playgrounds full of kids waiting for “their turn” are much more abandoned. Today we do not see young girls playing volleyball, dodge ball, jumping over an elastic rope or doing other physical activities.

Antala (2014) also thinks that in the last 20 years, there has been a considerable increase of kids and the lesson of physical and sport education at school is the only place where they can do some physical activities. At present, there are about 25 % of boys and girls, in comparison with the past; on average, it was only 8.5 % of boys and 11.3 % of girls. Unlike in the past there is a threefold increase in boys and more than double among girls. At present, we can observe the trend in children between 11-15 years old that with increasing of age there is an increase of number of boys and girls for whom the lessons of physical and sport education are the only places where they can do some physical activity.

Research also shows that 70 % of schoolchildren and youth spend more than four hours of free time working on computers, using the internet, watching TV, playing computer games and playing with cell phones (Antala 2014). Psychology defines the attitudes as a relatively permanent system of positive or negative evaluation, feelings and tendencies to act for or against social objects (Oravcová 2004).

By Boroš (2001) attitudes are relatively permanent characteristics of individuals, which express their attitudes (positive or negative) to a certain area of reality and reflect not only the basic cognitive orientation but also the value system and aiming his effort at them. This means, that to all things, phenomena, people and us we produce a certain position – we have certain opinion (we evaluate the object of attitude), we have a relation to something (we like it or dislike it), and we have a different attitudes towards them (we try to get it or we escape from it). In this sense, factors are in the position, which strongly influence the behaviour of an individual. Poliach (2003) states the attitudes influence the behaviour of the children. Attitudes are closely related to personal values and have something common with knowledge, experience and motivation. The attitude has several components. In the literature, they show mostly these components of attitude (Boroš 2001; Bartík 2005; Oravcová 2004):

- *The Cognitive component (exploring)* - is associated with a rational assessment of the subject position. This includes what knows the entity object knows about its position. It consists of thoughts, opinions of the individual about a subject or phenomenon, and it is regarded as the most complex view on the evaluations, which includes comments regarding of the evaluation, which involves desirable and undesirable characteristics.

- *Emotional component (emotional, affective)* - refers to the emotions associated with the object or phenomenon, while emotions express dynamics of attitudes to favourite or non-favourite subject. It expresses the emotional relationship to the subject position within the meaning do love and do not love, joy and sadness, sympathy and antipathy.

- *Conative component (behavioural predisposition)* - it is about the reaction of behaviour associated with the attitude. Attitudes formed in connection with activity are clearly defined, stable in time, better fixed in memory and thus more change resistant. This is reflected in the tendency to act, react in some way to the subject of attitude, in aspect of what I want and what I do not want.

Research shows that physical and sport education no longer belongs among the most popular subjects as it was in previous years. This is demonstrated in the attitudes of pupils towards physical and sport education. They vary from positive to indifferent. So it is in decreasing of physical performance, increasing number of not participating pupils (pupil sitting on the bench) and exempt pupils. It is significant especially in girl's groups. Many research results in this problem area show, that in the vast majority of schoolgirls, they have less positive attitude toward physical and sport education than boys have, that girls are less active in locomotion than boys are and also the increase of not participating pupils is mostly in girls' way (Bartík 2009/a, b, c; Bendíková 2009, 2011; Zapletalová et al. 2011).

The issue of the survey of attitudes of pupils to school physical and sport education in primary schools in the past dealt with such. Antala and Dorošová (1996); Görner and Starší (2001); Bartík (2005, 2007, 2009/a, b, c); Bartík and Mesiarik (2009, 2011); Palička (2009, 2010).

Bartík and Mesiarik (2009) exploring attitudes of pupils in the primary school level to the physical and sport education, the Banská Bystrica Region. They found that for more than 60 % of the respondents prevail indifferent attitudes.

One of the strong points how we could give children reason for movement is their participation in physical and sport education lessons at school. Physical and sport education as a subject is a space where you can influence their values, attitudes and beliefs of pupils towards healthy and active lifestyle consisting of regular physical activities.

We incline to the opinion of Dobrý (2006) that the most effective formation instrument of positive attitudes of children towards physical and sport education is well-maintained process characterized by versatility, adequate intensity, originality and proper emotionalism. The teacher of physical and sport education, who significantly affects his pupils to follow physical activities, plays an important role in this process. It happens many times, that the less physically fit child performs better than his performs technically and tactically better teammate. The difference is in the attitude, i.e. in ambition, combativeness, in action in the performance of tasks. Therefore, it is very important that the teachers of physical and sport education are aware of the fact that the importance to get sports and physical

experience gained during puberty, especially around the 12<sup>th</sup> year of age, may significantly affect attitudes that young person will adopt an approach to physical activity and to exercising in general (Dobry 2006).

School age, especially period of child development in primary school, is the key period for obtaining positive attitudes towards physical and sport education and it is a good baseline for physical performance. Therefore, we focus our attention on girls attending 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> class of primary schools. The aim of our research was to identify attitudes toward school physical and sport education of schoolgirls from the fifth and ninth class of selected urban and village primary schools in the Bratislava Region. We assume that schoolgirls from 5th classes of primary schools will have more positive attitudes toward schools physical and sport education than schoolgirls from 9th classes of primary schools.

### **Methodology**

Our sample consisted of schoolgirls from 5th and 9th class of primary schools. Research took place in village primary schools in the Bratislava's Region and urban primary schools in Bratislava. Overall, the research involved 247 schoolgirls. 145 of these schoolgirls were from class 5 and 102 from class 9 (Table 1).

*Table 1*  
*Sample characteristics*

	<b>URBAN</b>	<b>VILLAGE</b>	<b>TOGETHER</b>
<b>CLASS 5</b>	88 66.66%	58 50.43%	146 59.11%
<b>CLASS 9</b>	44 33.33%	57 49.57%	101 40.89%
<b>TOGETHER</b>	132 53.44%	115 46.56%	247 100%

The main research method was attitudinal questionnaire showed by Sivák et al. (2000) approved by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic on the 6th of July 2000 as an educational standard for the 2nd stage of primary school with effect from the 1st of September 2000. The questionnaire contains 51 items and focuses on three separate components attitude - cognitive, emotional and conative components of attitudes. For each of these components is for 17 items. The maximum number of points for the entire questionnaire is 102 points. The intensity of attitudes towards physical and sport education determines the overall score points, namely:

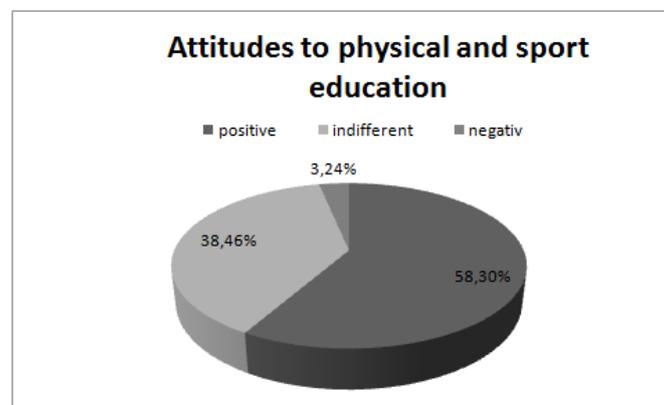
- negative attitude – 0-34 points,

- indifferent attitude – 35-68 points,
- positive attitude – 69 - 102 points.

The results of the questionnaire were evaluated at the percentage of analysis and we applied relational analysis and used the chi-square test ( $\chi^2$ ) to find links between selected indicators.

## Results and discussion

Our research in the area of attitudes toward physical and sport education shows, that on the sample of 247 schoolgirls we found out predominantly positive attitudes toward physical and sport education (58.3 %) over the indifferent attitudes (38.46 %). Negative attitudes was experienced occasionally (3.24 %) (Figure 1).



**Figure 1**

*Attitudes of schoolgirls from primary schools to physical and sport education*

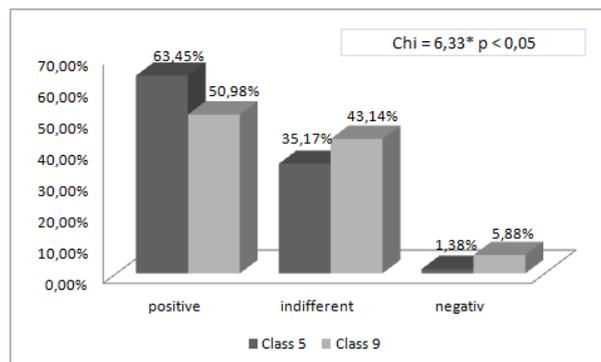
In that respect, we showed the predominance of positive attitudes of schoolgirls toward physical and sport education over indifferent attitudes in the 2nd stage of primary schools, which is consistent with the results of several studies in Slovakia.

Görner and Starší (2001) dealt with examining attitudes toward physical and sport education for pupils from classes 6 and 8 in selected primary schools of the Central Slovakia Region. Using attitude questionnaire and the questionnaire's sheet, which the authors themselves compiled, they identified in pupils in the 6th and the 8th class of each school their predominantly positive attitudes toward physical and sport education. Comparing the results in the 8th class schoolgirls from selected urban and village primary schools have documented the positive attitudes of indifferent attitudes toward physical and sport education far outweigh girls from village schools compared to girls from urban schools.

Bartík (2005) in his research has found in the 2nd stage pupils at selected schools in Eastern Slovakia in Stara Lubovna and Jakobovany predominance of very positive and positive attitudes over indifferent attitudes, negative and very negative.

Based on data from Figure 2 we can see the difference in attitudes toward physical and sport education at schools and sport among schoolgirls from the 5th and 9th class of the primary schools in the Bratislava Region. Of the total number of schoolgirls from the 5th class of the primary schools, 92 respondents adopt a positive attitude what is 63.45 %, 51 respondents with indifferent attitude, it means 35.17 % and two schoolgirls took a negative attitude it means 1.38 % (Figure 2).

By schoolgirls from the 9th class of primary schools, we considered the negative fact that only 43.14 % of respondents have an indifferent attitude toward physical and sport education and 5.88 % of respondents had negative attitude. Of the total number of schoolgirls from 9th class of primary schools, just over one half of schoolgirls adopted a positive attitude it means 52 respondents what is 50.98 % (Figure 2).



**Figure 2**

*Attitudes of schoolgirls from primary schools toward physical and sport education according to classes*

The attitudes of pupils from the 9th class to physical and sport education and physical activity at the primary schools in Martin and its surroundings was examined by Bartík (2009/a). From all of the surveyed schoolgirls from 9th class in villages and urban primary schools in the region of Martin 41 respondents showed positive attitudes what is 70.7 %, 17 was indifferent what is 29.3 % and no pupil took a negative attitudes.

In further investigations Bartík and Mesiarik (2009) while examining the attitudes of 1 110 pupils, and Bartík (2009/b,c) who examined 1 606 pupils from 9th class of schools in the Central Slovakia, they found out mostly indifferent attitude to physical and sport education.

Attitudes of pupils in the 9th class of the primary schools in the Spiš Region to school physical and sport education was also concerned by Palička (2009, 2010). Of the 460 girls had toward the school physical and sport education a positive attitude only 29 %, 56 % had indifferent attitude and negative attitude had 15 % pupils.

Comparing the results of schoolgirls from the 5th and the 9th class, we can see the differences in orientation of attitudes toward physical and sport education. The results of relational analysis confirmed a significant relation between the attitudes of schoolgirls according to the age or class they attended. When comparing the attitudes of schoolgirls in the 5th and 9th class from schools in the Bratislava Region, the results show, that more older the schoolgirls are, the less they have positive attitudes towards schools physical and sport education and sport, on the other hand there is an increase of mainly indifferent attitudes, but also negative attitudes.

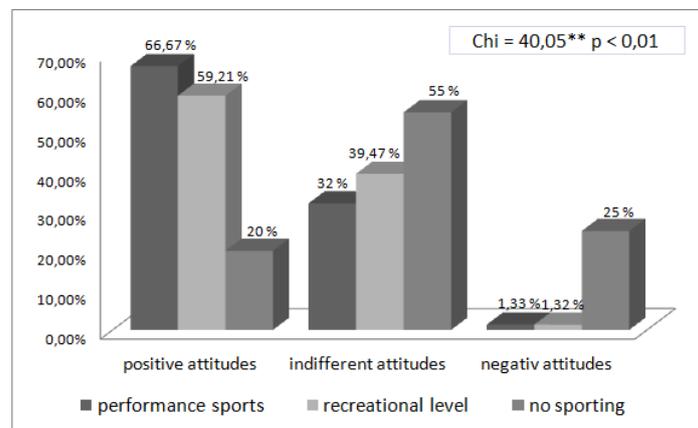
A similar research results were achieved by Bartík (2007), who dealt with the same question in the eastern part of Slovakia. Research done in primary schools in Kežmarok and surrounded area showed that pupils in the 2nd stage of the primary schools had a positive attitude to physical and sport education. Research has found out that the 5th class pupils had more positive attitudes toward physical and sport education than pupils did in the 9th class. It was particularly significant among girls.

Further research results carried out by Bartík and Mesiarik (2011) came to the conclusion: they compared the attitudes of pupils from the 4th, 5th and 9th classes of primary school. The find that when the pupils are getting older their positive attitudes towards school physical and sport education is decreasing and on the contrary, there was an increase mainly in indifferent attitudes, and negative attitudes.

In addition to the overall attitude of schoolgirls in the 5th and 9th classes of primary school to physical and sport education, we also investigated the different levels of intensity and attitudes of schoolgirls in aspect of their physical activity. The intensity of attitudes toward physical and sport education in the group of schoolgirls doing the performance sports ( $n = 75$ ) was as follows: Total 66.67 % schoolgirls had to physical and sport education positive attitudes. Indifferent attitudes had 32 % schoolgirls. Interesting fact is that in this group was a schoolgirl who showed negative attitudes towards physical and sport education (1.33 %) (Figure 3).

The intensity of attitudes toward physical and sport education in the group of schoolgirls doing sport activities at recreational level ( $n = 152$ ) was as follows: Total 59.21 %

schoolgirls had toward physical and sport education positive attitudes. Indifferent attitudes had 39.47 %. The negative attitudes had 1.32 %.



**Figure 3**

*Attitudes toward physical and sport educations in aspect of activity level*

The good news is that out of the total number of schoolgirls (n = 247) was in the category of no sporting at all only 20 girls. The disturbing fact, however, is that only 20 % of them reflected positive attitudes. Indifferent attitudes had 55% and negative attitudes towards physical and sport education reflected 25% schoolgirls who do not do any sport activity. As can be seen in figure 3, results of the relational analysis of all group confirmed significant relation ( $p < 0.01$ ) between attitudes to schoolgirls of physical and sport education for their physical activities.

## Conclusion

Our research was realized at primary schools in the Bratislava Region where the schoolgirls in the 5th and 9th classes showed their interest in physical activities. We have found some interesting facts about the relationship between schoolgirls and physical and sport education. We found that schoolgirls in the 5th and 9th classes of primary school had mostly positive attitudes (58.30 %) to physical and sport education, and less indifferent attitudes (38.46 %). One thing that teachers as well as the parents should be worried about is the finding that only 43.14 % of schoolgirls from the 9th class had indifferent attitudes toward physical and sport educations and 5.88 % of respondents even negative attitudes.

We assumed that schoolgirls in the 5th classes of primary schools would prefer positive attitudes towards physical and sport education than schoolgirls from 9th classes of primary schools. Based on the results of our research, we conclude that the hypothesis was confirmed. Schoolgirls from the 5th classes had more positive attitudes toward physical sport education than schoolgirls from the 9th classes ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Due to the decline in positive attitudes toward school physical and sport education, especially in higher classes of primary school schoolgirls, we suggest that we need to engage our pupils more in physical activities and sports for example through schools competitions. We should increase the opportunities for extra school activity groups particularly for girls and pupils of higher classes of the 2nd stage of primary schools.

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