

THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF FUNCTIONAL USE OF THE STUDENTS' LEISURE

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Abstract

The paper deals the question of the importance of the physical education in function of the students' free time. As a very important segment in people's life, physical education aims to preserve, stimulate and advance the growth, the development and the health of the individual. Namely, physical education can greatly contribute to the functional use of free time, as oppsed to today's great passivity imposed by the social media, the Internet, video games, etc. In fact, the development of an "active lifestyle" that includes the acquisition of healthy habits, skills and knowledge, aims to reduce the passiveness of the student and improve their health and physical activity. The subject of our research is the free time of students as an educational as well as life style problem in today's digital society. The purpose of the research was to examine students' attitudes and opinions from 4th and 5th grades in two primary schools in the Republic of Macedonia about the usage of their free time as well as how often they are physical active in their leisure time. The sample consists of 100 pupils (50 female and 50 male). In accordance with the purpose and assigned tasks, we applied the research technique: Surveying and following instrument: Questionnaire with 12 closed-type questions. For the statistic data processing we used the standard package SPSS1.7.

Key words: physical education, importance, leisure, students

Introduction

A study of students leisure is one of the most important issue studied by social as well as pedagogical sciences in the recent decades. (Vucica and others, 2020). The habits of using leisure time with physical activity should be developed in students from the early age. As a very significant segment in people's life, physical education aims to preserve, stimulate and advance the growth, the development and the health of the individual. However, physical education not only ensures proper development of the body, but also affects the emotional state, by creating a clear mood, happiness and life joy. A healthy and physically active person is a happy person. So, we had a great motive to investigate students leisure in the context of physical activities.

The importance of physical education in pedagogical theory and practice

The significance that the physical education has in pedagogical theory and practice arises from the tasks that this educational area needs to realize. Namely, in the textbooks for pedagogy the tasks of physical education are divided into 4 groups: health-hygienic, educational, educational and recreational tasks. (Popova-Koskarova, 2019)

Although all the tasks are significant, however, we can separate the educational and recreational tasks as the most important. Particularly, the educational tasks contribute to the development of certain moral characteristics and qualities of the person. First of all, they contribute to the enrichment of the emotional life, the strengthening of the will and character, determination, endurance, self-discipline, solidarity, responsibility. However, one can not ignore the fact that sports and other competitions open up space for egoism, intolerance, and we are often witnesses of violence. Therefore, in realizing the tasks of physical education from the earliest age, the class teachers and then all the others need to develop positive emotions, not a negative ones.

Thus, we recommend that physical activities be developed with a positive and humanistic orientation, and with a cosmopolitan feeling. Recreational tasks are particularly important, because they raise awareness of the importance of physical activity as a prerequisite for a healthy and happy life.

These tasks aim to make the physical and sports activities part of the everyday life of the young people. For this purpose, healthy and before all, useful entertainment is provided, which affects students' leisure time to be used effectively and rationally. It is known that in today's informational society, students spend most of their time in front of a computer in a sitting position, and as a result, large number of deformities of the spine, especially scoliosis, lordosis and kyphosis appear. Thus, this task aims to build up the habits and create a need for students to spend their free time in nature, in clean air, and to do different sports as a recreation such as basketball, football, swimming, gymnastics and handball. This will result in strengthening of the psychophysical abilities of young people. The creative potential of an individual requires a certain environment and conditions in order to be able to freely develop and update (Mlinarević, V., Brust, M., (2009).

The importance of physical education is great in terms of education about healthy dietm which is still on a very low level, especially among children. Fast food, pizzas, a variety of fat-rich sandwiches affect children's obesity, and not doing sports leads to health disorders among the young population.

From the second half of the 20th century new priorities appear regarding physical education. The tendency for quality realization of the course in this subject, as well as an increase in the fund of classes, is especially advanced. With the introduction of the ninth year in the Republic of N. Macedonia in 2007, among the major changes in the curriculum was the increase in the fund of classes in the subject of physical education from the previous 2, to 3 hours per week from first to third grade. However, still in rural areas there are no adequate conditions for teaching this subject in sports halls, and there are also class teachers who replace physical education with some other "more important" subjects. In the developed educational systems, especially in Scandinavia, physical education has been elevated to an exceptionally high pedestal. Namely, in Sweden, every child must learn to swim, just as he/she becomes literate. It is similar in the Netherlands, where each school has a swimming pool that must be used at least 3 times a week, and each student should learn to swim in different ways (freestyle, backstroke and so on).

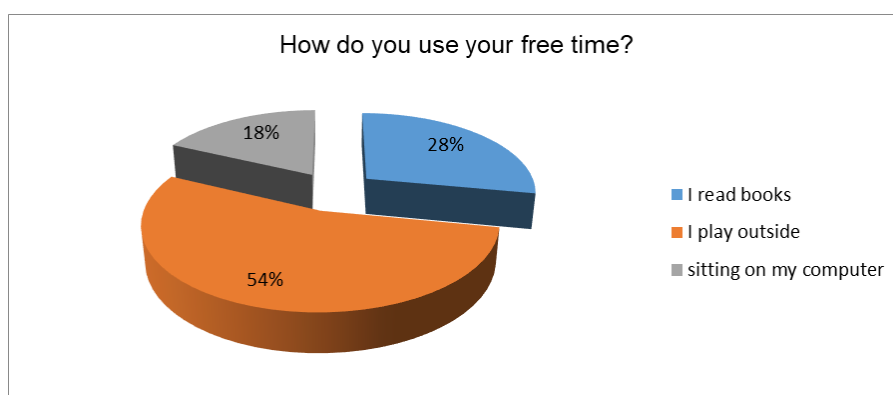
Methodology of the research (subject, purpose, tasks)

The subject of our research is the free time of students as an educational as well as life style problem in today's digital society. The purpose of the research was to examine students' attitudes and opinions from 4th and 5th grades in two primary schools in the Republic of Macedonia about the usage of their free time as well as how often they are physical active in their leisure time. The sample consists of 100 pupils (50 female and 50 male). In accordance with the purpose and assigned tasks, we applied the research technique: Surveying and following instrument: Questionnaire with 12 closed-type questions. For the statistic data processing we used the standard package SPSS1.7. One main and several auxiliary hypotheses were set in our research.

In that context, our main hypotheses is: Students do not use enough free time for physical activity.

For the purposes of this paper, four questions that we believe are essential in the context of the subject of research were analyzed.

The first question from the questionnaire for the students was: *How Do You Use Your Free Time?*

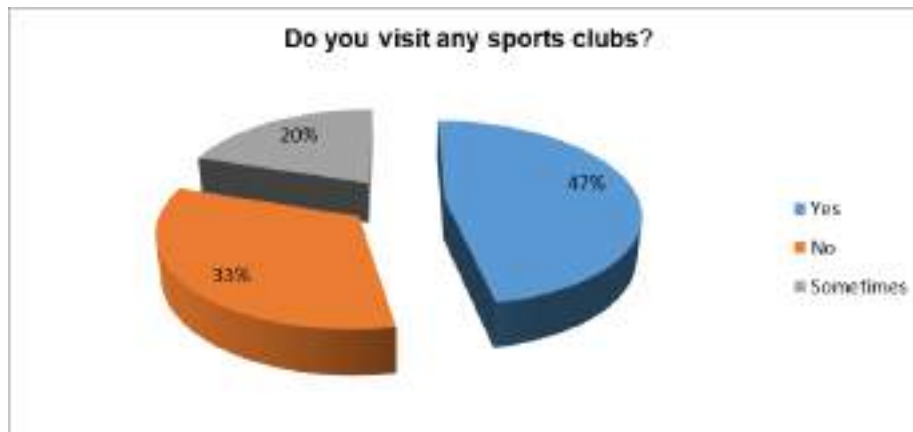


From the graphical presentation of the obtained data, it can be concluded that: according to the obtained data, 54% of the students answered that they spend free time outside, playing with their friends, 28%

answered that they read books and 18% students answered that they spend their free time in front of a computer or TV.

What is interesting is that most of the respondents answered that they fulfill their free time with their friends. We are witnesses of the Internet and computer-generated swing, but in spite of this, these students prefer to associate outside with friends.

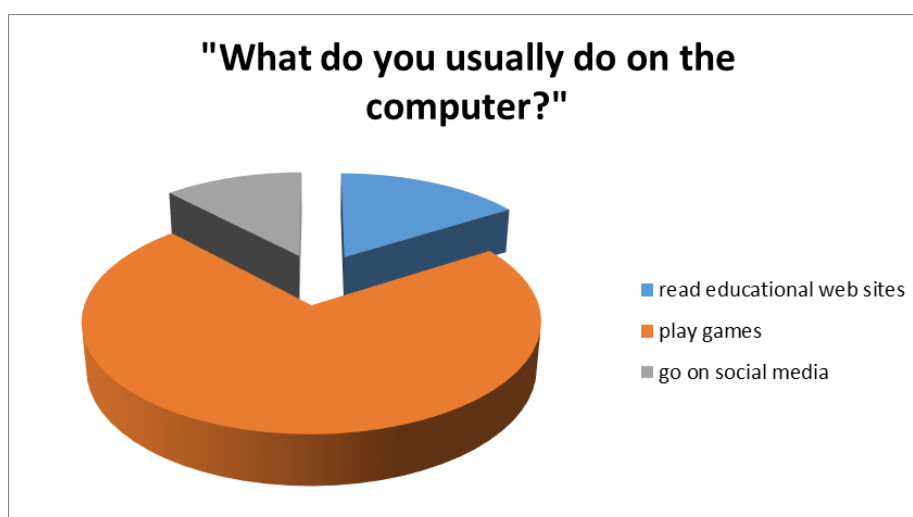
The next question was, "*Do you visit any of the sports clubs*"?



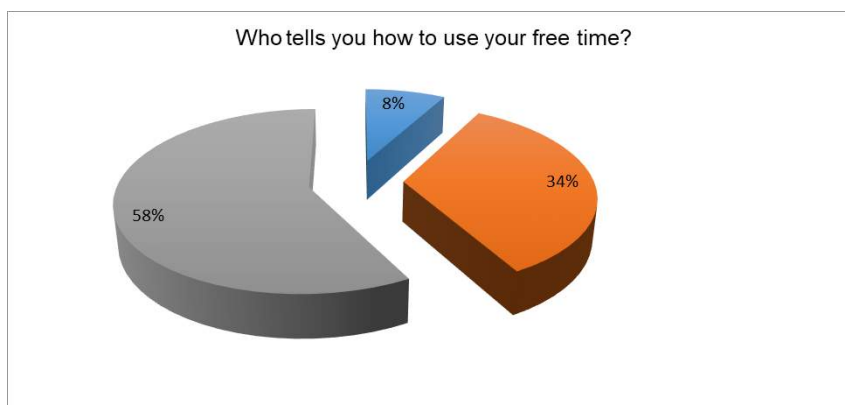
The data obtained from the graphic display shows that 47% of the respondents answered positively, 33% answered that they don't do sports, and the remaining 20% reported that they do it occasionally, or sometimes. Can we be satisfied with this result? If we combine the answers with no and sometimes, then the data show that half of the students, or 53% of the students do not do sports at all, or they do it occasionally.

It is known that regular physical activity is an important part in maintaining the health. In addition, sports and recreational activities enable young people to create good habits and skills in order to continue to be active throughout their lives. Also, physical activity increases the level of self-esteem and self-confidence among students as well as their socialization through hanging out with friends. That will motivate students to engage in and participate in sports and recreational activities with pleasure. As already stated above, sports activities, as part of the students' leisure time positively affect the formation of their characteristic, moral and physical characteristics

The next question was, "*What do you usually do on the computer?*"



The analysis of the data shows that 16% of students questioned spend time on educational web sites, 72% prefer to play games, and 12% say that what they most is being on a social networks. In this modern times, computers and internet technology takes a great part in the free time of all the people in general, and especially in the free time of the students at the age of 10 and 11.



Question number 4: Who tells (direct) you how to use your leisure? Only 8 % answered that teachers do it, 34% answered –parents and great number of students -58% answered - no one. According to the answers, in the most cases the students are left on their own, without much guidance from their students as well as parents for the functional use of their leisure.

Discussion

The analysis of the data shows that 16% of students questioned spend time on educational web sites, 72% prefer to play games, and 12% say that what they most is being on a social networks. In this modern times, computers and internet technology takes a great part in the free time of all the people in general, and especially in the free time of the students at the age of 10 and 11. Regarding the very important question : how much students do sports in their free time, the results show that less than 50 % do some sports activity. It is obvious that they spend most of their time on a mobile phone, playing games on a computer, tablet, etc. and spend less of their free time with some physical activity. It is no coincidence that obesity is more and more evident even at youngest school age, precisely because of the sedentary way of life. The school directs students a little how to properly use their free time. Parents have a greater influence there, but not enough.

Conclusion

Our research confirmed the main hypothesis that students do not engage enough in physical activity in their free time. So, the general conclusion is that playing on a computer, or using social networks, and watching TV fills students' free time more than reading a book or playing sports. For these reasons, students should be encouraged to be more physically active.

Physical education should be present more in the leisure time of students from the very young age. Namely, this is definitely a big task and the parents and the school should give their best for a successful realization. The data we obtained from the research showed that it is not at a dependent level nowadays. Actually, the students use it in various ways, but doing sport and sports activities should be a priority. The research has shown us that students should be directed from the lowest school age to use their free time functionally.

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