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Attitudes and reasons for in difference of children living in orphanage towards physical education lessons

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Abstract

The most accepted definition of orphan is a child who has lost both parents through bereavement. In the Slovak Republic is currently registered and certified about 90 orphanages, which are located approximately 4750 children and adolescents. The objective of this study is to analyze the attitudes of children who are living in orphanage (22 boys and 28 girls, age 14.5 ± 2.13 years) attending the second stage of regular elementary schools in Bytča (Slovakia). The attitudes towards physical education (P.E.) of orphan students were examined in the sense of a school subject, reasons for P.E. lesson indifference in schools with regard of genders. The level of the amount of effort required by P.E. was very high (4.36 points); orphan students (96%) consider the P.E. lesson as very easy and easy teaching subject. 48% of orphan students are always happy and often happy when for some reason the P.E. lesson is cancelled, and only 28% of them are upset if P.E. has to be cancelled. The biggest reason for inactivity in P.E. lessons in orphan students was their laziness. There are not any significant differences among genders with regards to the amount of effort required by P.E. lessons. There are not any significant differences in opinions expressed by orphan students if for some reason a regular P.E. lesson is cancelled. The results did not show significant differences as for the reasons for P.E. lesson indifference among the genders.

Keywords: Orphan students, amount of effort, P.E. lesson cancellation, reasons for P.E. lessons indifference, orphan boys and girls

1. Introduction

The most accepted definition of orphan is “a child who has lost both parents through bereavement. However, this definition is often extended to include the loss of parents through desertion or abandonment where the parents are unable or unwilling to provide for the child” (Skinner, 2008) [8]. According to the joint report of UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), about 153 million children are orphans worldwide, 17.8 million of them have lost both parents. UNICEF estimates that at least 2.2 million children in the world live in orphanages (USG, 2010). Children living in orphanages are one of the most vulnerable groups of children in a society: many of them live in a state of repeated neglect, abuse or fear (Lassi *et al.*, 2010; Sameena *et al.*, 2016) [22]. In the Slovak Republic is currently registered and certified about 90 orphanages, which are located approximately 4750 children and adolescents (Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, 2014) [7].

The aim of education in general is, to educate students so that they can develop their own compensation mechanisms as much as possible, can fully perceive and live their own lives, create values and to be fully socialized (Bendíková, 2009; Bendíková, 2011) [2, 3]. One of the options for integration and inclusion orphan children is the field of sports, which may be implemented in the form of compulsory school physical education (P.E.) in both mainstream (Bendíková, 2014; 2016; Smoleňáková & Bendíková, 2017) [4, 5, 24] and special schools and should fulfill certain goals (Kurková, Scheetz, & Stelzer, 2010; Nemček & Bergendiová, 2013) [14, 20]. One of the objectives of P.E. in mainstream of regular as well as special schools is not only establish a constant and definitive relationship with PE, sport and health, prepare the orphan students for accomplishing tasks in society, their lives and at work, but mainly to develop continuing interest in doing exercise (Labudová, 2011; Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, 2007) [15, 18]. For many individuals, developing sound life-long habits resulting in regular physical activities during the course of compulsory school attendance is the only source of skills and knowledge from the given area and P.E. at school establishes their motion

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literacy (Dieringer & Judge, 2015; Petrášová *et al.*, 2016)^[9, 21]. The objective of this study is to map the attitudes of children who are living in orphanage towards P.E. in the sense of a school subject (the amount of effort required by P.E.; response when a P.E. lesson is cancelled), reasons for P.E. lesson indifference in regular and special schools.

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Participants and procedure

The research sample comprised 50 students (22 boys and 28 girls, age 14.5 ± 2.13 years) attending the second stage of regular elementary schools in Bytča (Slovakia). Only those students who lived in orphanage were included in the research. Students were informed of the purpose of the research and the procedure for filling out the questionnaire, which was to be completed in the presence of their head teacher and the researcher. Consent of the legal representatives of the students at school regarding the students' participation in the study was obtained well in advance.

2.2 Data collection

A structured questionnaire (Antala *et al.*, 2012)^[1] was used to collect the data, of which three questions were selected. Those questions were related to attitudes towards P.E. lessons and assessed: a) The amount of effort required by P.E. (Question 1: For me, Physical Education as a school subject is: very difficult, difficult, neither difficult nor easy, easy, very easy); b) The orphan students' opinions when a P.E. lesson is cancelled (Question 2: If a P.E. lesson is cancelled: I am always happy, I am often happy, I am indifferent about it, I

usually get upset, I always get upset); c) Reasons for indifference (Question 3: If you do not like a PE lesson, what is the most frequent reason? In two questions, the orphan students expressed their subjective opinions using a 5-degree scale (5 was the highest level and 1 was the lowest level). In the third question, the orphan students could mark a maximum of three reasons for P.E. lesson indifference.

2.3 Data analysis

Statistical analysis was undertaken using SPSS version 16.0 for Windows. The data were differentiated from the point of view of the gender. The data were quantified on a percentage basis. To carry out cross-group statistical testing of differences, we applied a ratio analysis with the help of the Chi-square test. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

3. Results

Results discovered that the orphan students considered P.E. to be the easiest, while nearly 40% of the students found this subject "very easy", and 56% of the orphan students "easy". The level of the amount of effort required by P.E. was stated by orphan students by 4.36 of the point score what really means very high score.

Having evaluated the differences in the amount of effort required by P.E. lessons in orphan students, we did not find significant differences in opinions between boys and girls who are living in orphanage. 100% orphan boys found P.E. as a school subject that is "easy" to "very easy", and this opinion was shared by 92.9% orphan girls (Figure 1).

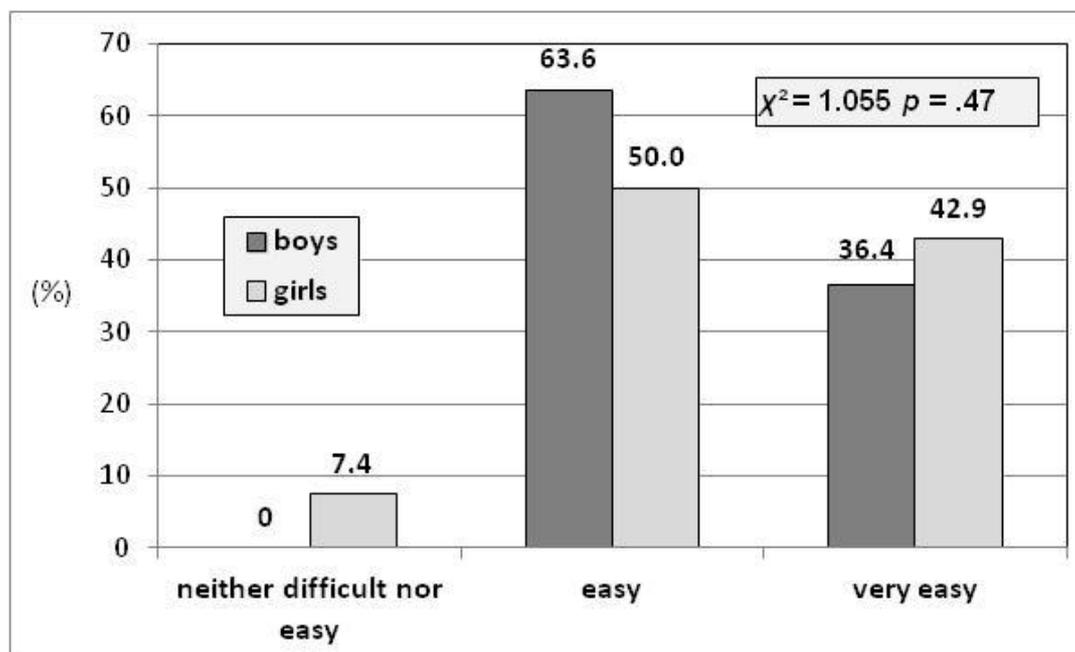


Fig 1: The amount of effort required by P.E. between orphan boys and girls

Results further discovered that there were the same percentage of orphan students who are always happy (24%), often happy (24%), indifferent about it (24%) and upset (24%) when a P.E. lesson is cancelled. Only 4% of orphan students are upset when for some reason a P.E. lesson is cancelled. The level of the reaction among students living in orphanage when a P.E. lesson is cancelled was stated by orphan students by 2.6 of the point score.

There were no significant differences between boys and girls with regards to their opinions in the case that for some reason

a regular P.E. lesson is cancelled. Happier group was orphan girls, who are always happy (35.7%) or happy very often (21.4%) if a P.E. lesson is cancelled comparing orphan boys, who are always happy or happy very often if a PE lesson is cancelled about 20% less than girls; on the other hand, the group of orphan boys shows the highest level of indifference towards such a situation (45.5%). Higher degree of pity in relation to a cancelled P.E. lesson was declared by orphan girls, since 28.6% of them feel upset or very upset (7.4%) (Figure 2).

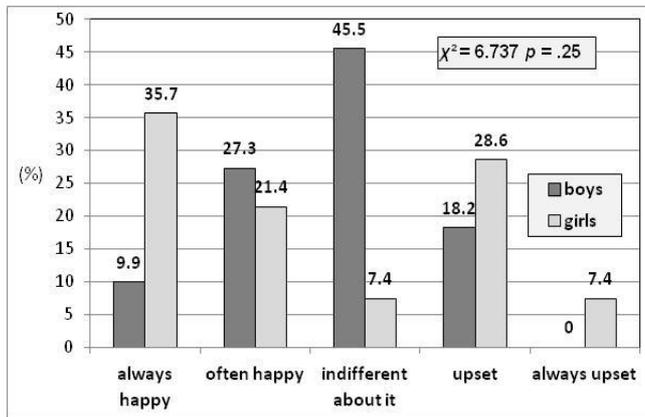


Fig 2: Reaction between orphan boys and girls when a P.E. lesson is cancelled.

The results indicate that the biggest reason for inactivity in P.E. lessons in orphan students was their laziness. The “I don’t want to do exercise” opinion was declared by 24% of the orphan students. To a considerable degree, their lack of interest in doing exercise reflects by inconvenient conditions, which was expressed by 20% of the orphan students. The third biggest reason for P.E. lesson indifference in orphan students was tediousness of the lessons (16%). Having further analyzed the reasons for P.E. lesson indifference in the orphan students, they equally don’t want to exercise because of unattractive content (12%), lack of interest on the teacher’s side (12%), assessment method (12%), lack of interest on the classmates’ side (12%) and more skilled students are favored by the teacher (12%).

Having analyzed the reasons for P.E. lesson indifference between boys and girls there were not found significant differences (Figure 3). The results indicate that the biggest reason for inactivity in P.E. lessons in orphan boys was their laziness, when that opinion was declared by 36.4% of orphan boys comparing 14.3% orphan girls. The most frequent reason for P.E. lesson indifference in orphan girls were inconvenient conditions, which was expressed by 35.7% of them. 21.4% of orphan girls just did not want to do exercise in P.E. lessons by the fact that the teacher favored more skilled classmates. 18.2% of orphan boys consider P.E. lessons tedious, and the same number of them said that there is often unattractive content of P.E. lessons. The biggest differences between boys and girls in reasons for P.E. lesson indifference we found in three reasons (number 8, 10, 11) when only girls considered inconvenient conditions, more skilled students are favoured by teacher and occupancy with thoughts about the next lessons as reasons for P.E. lesson indifference.

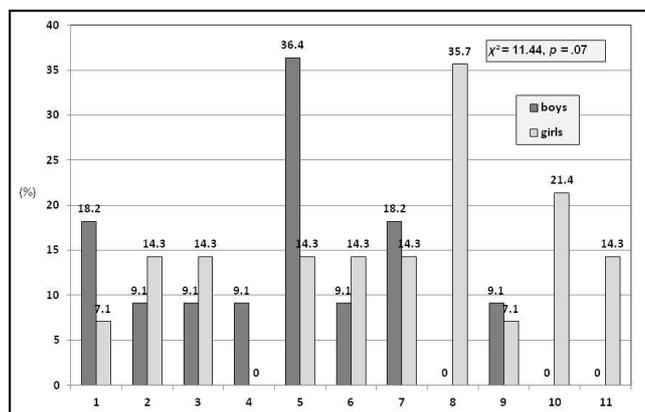


Fig 3: Reasons for P.E. lesson indifference between orphan boys and girls.

Note: 1. Unattractive content; 2. Lack of interest on the teacher’s side; 3. Assessment method; 4. Inadequate requirements for performance; 5. I don’t want to do exercise; 6. Lack of interest on the classmates’ side; 7. Tediousness of the lessons; 8. Inconvenient conditions; 9. Unfriendly environment during the lessons; 10. More skilled students are favored by the teacher; 11. Occupancy with thoughts about the next lessons

4. Discussion

Comparing our results with the results from a study that focused on the attitudes of students towards P.E. lessons in mainstream schools (Antala *et al.*, 2012) [1], the mainstream school students (n=817) perceived P.E. as a school subject that did not require much effort, giving it 3.55 points on average; this subject was found to require more effort by girls (3.44 points), in comparison to boys (3.65 points). Compared to our set, we observed the highest degree of effort required by the said subject in orphan students with an average of 4.36 points. In the study of Kurková & Nemček (2016) [12] was found that students with physical disabilities expressed a higher amount of effort required by the subject in comparison to intact students, with an average 3.63 points. It was interesting that for the same age group from the Czech Republic (Hrabal & Pavelková, 2010) [11], P.E. was considered the subject almost with the same point score as our group of orphan students (4.36 points) with an average 4.23 points, and it means that our sample achieved almost the same level of the amount of effort required by P.E. as Czech students attending regular primary schools.

The results from the research among students in mainstream elementary schools done by Čillík (2012) [8] show 30.4% of students are happy if a regular P.E. lesson is cancelled. Compared to our research, number of orphan students who are very happy and happy was 48%; if a P.E. lesson is cancelled. In the research of Kurková & Nemček (2016) [12] more students with physical disabilities are happy (38.6%) compared to intact students. Another piece of research in mainstream school students (Görner & Starší, 2001) [1] revealed a smaller number of students who are happy if they cannot do exercise compared to the number of students who are happy if their lesson is cancelled.

Compared to our research, the results from the research conducted by Medeková (2012), focusing on reasons for P.E. lesson indifference in students, are similar, in particular at the point where one main reasons given by the students is laziness. Laziness was the most frequent reason for P.E. lesson indifference in students who do not do any sports in the research of Bendíková & Dobay (2017) [6]. However, it was the same in students with physical disabilities in research paper of Nemček & Bergendiová (2013) [20]. A comparison of the reasons for P.E. lesson indifference between the group of students and the group of orphan students revealed difference in the reason “Unattractive content of PE lessons”, which took second position in the students of Medeková’s (2012) [17] sample, while in our set this was expressed by only 12% of students. Our students (only girls) consider inconvenient conditions as the second main reason for P.E. lesson indifference.

Leisure time activities may significantly contribute to the development of positive attitudes towards PE in orphan students. Teachers, educationist working in orphanages, sports instructors and other pedagogues should make every effort in order to persuade orphan students to modify their daily routines so that they fulfill their leisure time in a

sensible manner (Kurková, Nemček, & Labudová, 2015) [13]. Nemček (2017) [19] found, that children living in orphanages prefer sedentary leisure time activities like watching TV, listening radio and playing on the computer, where not significant differences in types of leisure time activities were found between boys and girls.

5. Limits of study

The results cannot be generalized, they only attest to the schools within the given region. This study was limited due to one participating orphanage and the number of orphan students, as well as due to the lack of knowledge of the level of current fitness and overall health condition of the orphan students under this study.

6. Conclusion

Having analyzed the results from the research, the following conclusions were made. First, there are not any significant differences among genders with regards to the amount of effort required by P.E. lessons; however, orphan boys consider this subject easier than orphan girls. Second, there are not any significant differences in opinions expressed by orphan students if for some reason a regular P.E. lesson is cancelled; but higher degree of happiness was observed in orphan girls. Third, the results did not show significant differences as for the reasons for P.E. lesson indifference among the genders; while for orphan boys the biggest reason of their inactivity during P.E. lessons was their laziness, and for orphan girls, the biggest reason was inconvenient conditions.

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