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ATTITUDES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS FROM CRACOW
TOWARDS SELECTED ASPECTS
OF PHYSICAL CULTURE

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This paper is an attempt to identify the attitudes of young people towards physical culture and determine the types of attitudes towards the studied reality.

Methods: The research included 1st (16 y.o.) and 3rd grade (18 y.o.) students from 3 types of secondary schools in Kraków. Diagnostic survey was selected as the research method.

Results: The studied students of secondary schools in Kraków declare positive attitudes towards physical culture, i.e. they mostly present the full and the selective types of attitude. The least desired attitude towards the studied reality was observed among fine arts secondary school students, who showed the elements characteristic of the full and the selective types most seldom.

Conclusions: The positive attitude towards physical culture approved and applied by most of the studied students serves as an antidote for the civilisation threats of the present day.

KEYWORDS

youth, school, physical culture, attitudes, sociology

INTRODUCTION

Progress triggers many threats, both in the individual and collective dimensions. However, people make numerous attempts at mitigating the negative consequences of the progress of civilisation. Physical activity may be one of the many proposals for crossing boundaries in the existing environment, which allows to create and implement new values, as well as combat one's own weaknesses¹. Physical activity undertaken in one's spare time, with an appropriate frequency and intensity, may be one of the remedies against the present-day threats². The positive influence of physical activity on relations in a group allows, among others, to build proper social interactions, and on an individual level, allows people to find their sense of living in the course of building their own identity. This aspect is particularly important for schoolchildren. Some theories highlight the importance of physical activity that becomes the main means of manifesting one's active attitude towards the external world. Such activity may be an anticipation of utilitarian deeds, which determines the direction of civilisation and cultural development³.

Physical activity is strongly related to the vision of a full and comprehensive (multi-dimensional) human being. It expresses the need for self-fulfilment. Such way of highlighting an individual's presence in the surrounding world may be expressed through the changes that occur in him/her, which is definitely one of the conditions of achieving social progress⁴. This attitude implies the necessity of searching for effective methods of conscious education and developing appropriate attitudes, especially among the representatives of the young generation⁵.

¹ J. Szczepański, *Elementarne pojęcia socjologii*. PWN, Warszawa, 1972; M. Demel, *Pedagogika zdrowia*. WSiP, Warszawa, 1980; H. Grabowski, *Teoria fizycznej edukacji*. WSiP, Warszawa, 1999.

² H. Szwarc (1985), *Wpływ ruchu i rekreacji fizycznej na somatyczne i psychiczne zdrowie człowieka*, [w:] K. Dąbrowski (red.) *Zdrowie psychiczne*. PWN, Warszawa.

³ H. Sekuła-Kwaśniewicz, *Z badań nad rolą kultury fizycznej w wypoczynku kobiet pracujących zawodowo*, „Kultura i Społeczeństwo”, nr 1, s. 127–144., 1984.

⁴ J. Kozielecki, *Człowiek wielowymiarowy*. Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”, Warszawa, 1996.

J. Kozielecki, *Transgresja i kultura*. Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”, Warszawa, 1997.

⁵ W. Osiński, *Teoria wychowania fizycznego*. AWF, Poznań, 2011.

AIM OF THE STUDY

This paper aims at identifying the attitudes of young people towards physical culture, through determining the **types of attitudes towards physical culture**. The following set of questions was used – What is the young people’s **attitude** towards physical culture? What **type of attitudes** towards physical culture dominates in the studied environment of secondary school students? Do the **attitudes** towards physical culture, as well as the **types of the attitudes** depend on sex and type of school?

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The subjects of this study were young people from Kraków who attend 3 types of secondary schools. The schools were as follows: general secondary schools, technical and vocational secondary schools, as well as fine arts secondary schools. From the above-mentioned school types, only the 1st and 3rd grade students were included in the study. The sample size was determined on the basis of the general sample – 22.000 of male and female students. The random layer sampling method was used, and as a result 506 participants were selected. The “school types” were used as the layer and the “school grades” were the random component. In the adopted selection procedure, the common position of the students in their school environment and their common experience resulting from age and knowledge level were considered. The pre-selection of surveys included in the analysis resulted in qualifying 488 students (256 girls and 232 boys). According to the sample distribution, in the general population, the percentage of general secondary school students (LO) amounted to 49.18%, the percentage of technical and vocational school students (SZ) was 33.4% and the percentage of fine arts school students (SA) was 17.42%.

The study method used was the diagnostic survey and a custom version of the survey, after prior procedure of reliability and relevance testing, was the technique. Calculations were made on the basis of the percentage values, as well as the Kruskal-Wallis (H) non-parametric test for independent random samples⁶.

The young people’s attitudes towards physical culture were measured with the use of 4 questions: Q1) was about the importance of physical education in the hierarchy of other school subjects; Q2) was about the function of phys-

⁶ G.A Ferguson., Y. Takane, *Analiza statystyczna w psychologii i pedagogice*. PWN, Warszawa, 1997.

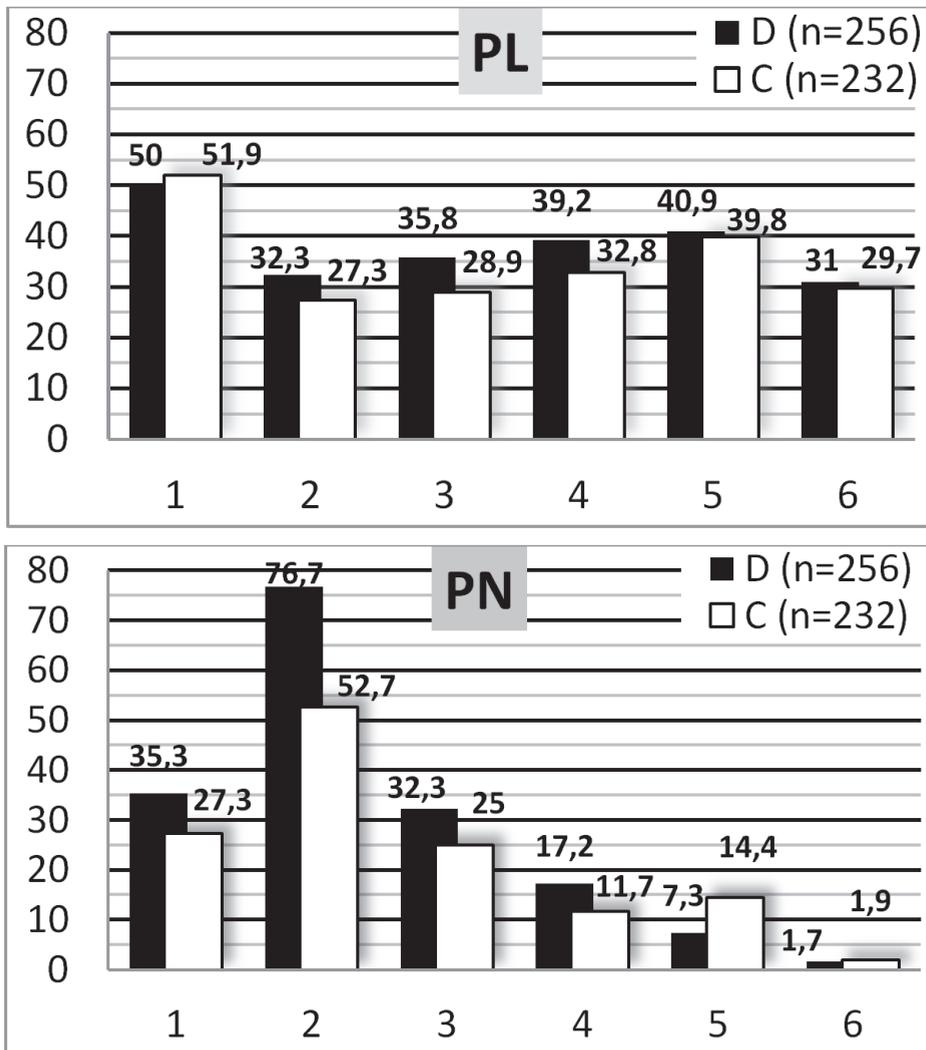
ical education in individual development; Q3) concerned the frequency of sports and recreational activity, and Q4) was about the preferred spare-time activities. The answers were expressed in the form of a cafeteria-style checklist. While constructing the index of the types of attitudes towards physical culture, for each question the negative answers were selected: Q1) Does not recognise physical education; Q2) Does not see any function in physical education; Q3) Does not undertake sports and recreational activity; Q4) Prefers passive forms of recreation), as well as the positive ones [respectively, Q1 Recognises physical education; Q2) Recognises the functions of physical education; Q3) Is physically active; Q4) Prefers active forms of spending his/her leisure time].

With the use of the processed dichotomous categories of answers (yes-no), **4 theoretical types of attitudes** towards physical culture have been determined: **TYPE 1** (full) - physical education is one of his/her favourite subjects, sees the positive functions of physical education, practices sports regularly, chooses active ways of spending his/her free time; **TYPE 2** (selective) - physical education is one of his/her favourite subjects, sees the positive functions of physical education, practices sports at least sporadically; **TYPE 3** (limited) - physical education is one of his/her favourite subjects, sees the positive functions of physical education, does not practice sports, chooses passive ways of spending his/her spare time; **TYPE 4** (negative) - physical education is not one of his/her favourite subjects, cannot see the positive functions of physical education, does not practice any sport or spend his/her spare time in a physically active way. In this way, in order to achieve a more holistic view of the analysed elements, 4 typologies were constructed, taking into consideration the behaviours connected to physical culture. Despite the simplifications that result from analysing the total indices, their interpretation allows to obtain an image of the analysed elements.

RESULTS

The obtained hierarchy of school subjects shows that 51.0% of students point human science subjects as their favourite ones. The other choices were: foreign languages (40.4%), vocational subjects (35.9%), as well as biology, chemistry and related subjects (32.2%). Physical education was only classified in the fifth position (30.3%). However, the positive conclusion is that only 1.8% of students do not accept physical education.

CHART 1. SEX AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN THE HIERARCHY OF SCHOOL SUBJECTS (STATISTICALLY INSIGNIFICANT CORRELATION)



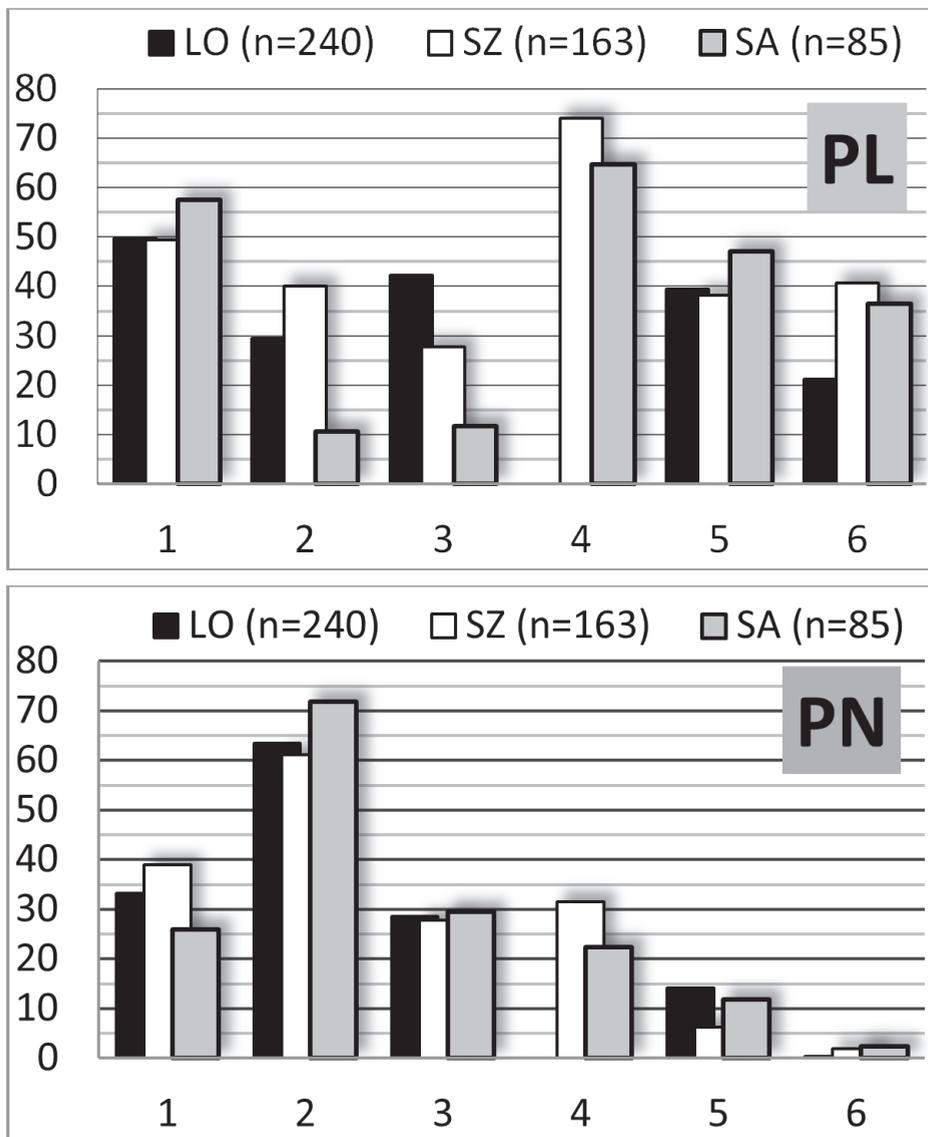
Legend (%):

- a) PL – liked subjects, PN – disliked subjects, D – girls, C – boys,
- b) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 – types of subjects⁷: 1) humanities [liked: 51.0% / disliked 31.1%], 2) maths and physics [29.7% / 64.1%], 3) biology and chemistry [32.2% / 28.5%], 4) vocational [35.9% / 14.3%], 5) foreign languages [40.4% / 11.1%], 6) physical education [30.3% / 1.8%], 7) other subjects [8.9% / 11.9%], 7) no answer [4.3% / 6.8%]⁸,

⁷ The percentages do not add up to 100%, as the participants were allowed to select more subjects.

⁸ The remaining categories were: other subjects [liked: 8.9% / disliked 11.9%], no answer [4.3% / 6.8%].

CHART 2. SCHOOL TYPE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN THE HIERARCHY OF OTHER SUBJECTS (PL – H = 7.06, $p < 0.001$; PN – H = 5.52, $p < 0.01$)



Legend (%):

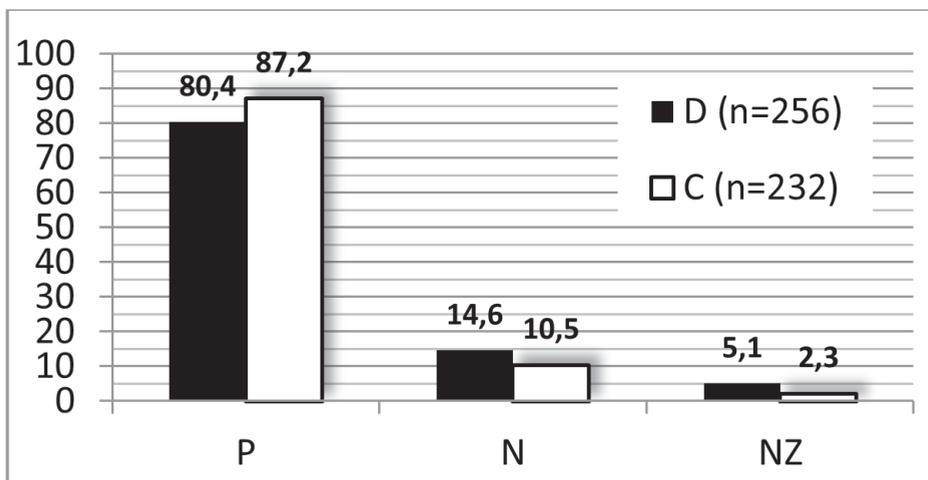
- a) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 – types of subjects: 1) humanities, 2) maths and physics 3) biology and chemistry, 4) vocational subjects, 5) foreign languages, 6) physical education,
 b) LO – general secondary schools, SZ – vocational secondary schools, SA – fine arts secondary schools. Other abbreviations – see chart 1.

The subject preferences were similar in both sexes. Girls selected physical education slightly more often than boys (31.0% vs. 29.7%). Physical education ranked very low on the list of disliked subjects.

The type of school was a significant differentiator in the category of liked subjects. Physical education was most appreciated in the vocational and fine arts secondary schools, i.e. by 40.7% and 36.5% of the students, respectively. This subject was the least popular among the general secondary schools students (21.2%). Physical education was listed among the disliked subjects the least often by students of all school types (LO - 0.4%, SZ - 1.8%, SA - 2.3%). It is quite surprising that it was the general secondary school students who disliked physical education the least often, which leads to a conclusion that they are inconsistent in their choices.

The analysis of the importance of physical education classes in individual development shows that 83.7% of the respondents saw benefits for themselves in undertaking physical activity during those classes. Having analysed the qualitative aspects of the answers obtained, we can say that physical education can be 'an opportunity to relax and undertake physical activity', 'a way of entertainment and adding variety to other activities' or 'a retreat from other scholarly duties.' A little bit more than 11.6% of students consider physical education classes to be 'a waste of time' or 'an additional break between other classes.'

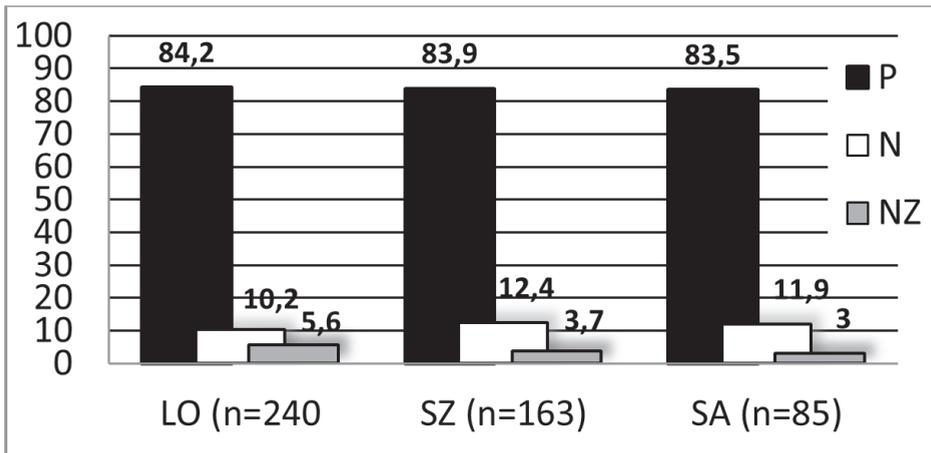
CHART 3. SEX AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLE (FUNCTION) OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT (H=6.88; $p < 0.001$)



Legend (%): P – positive, N – negative, NZ – no opinion, D – girls, C – boys.

Recognising any role of physical education varies depending on sex ($p < 0.001$). Significantly more boys than girls can see its positive role in their development, as opposed to the negative influence, where girls were more dissatisfied than boys (14.6% and 10.5%, respectively).

CHART 4. SCHOOL TYPE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT (STATISTICALLY INSIGNIFICANT CORRELATION)

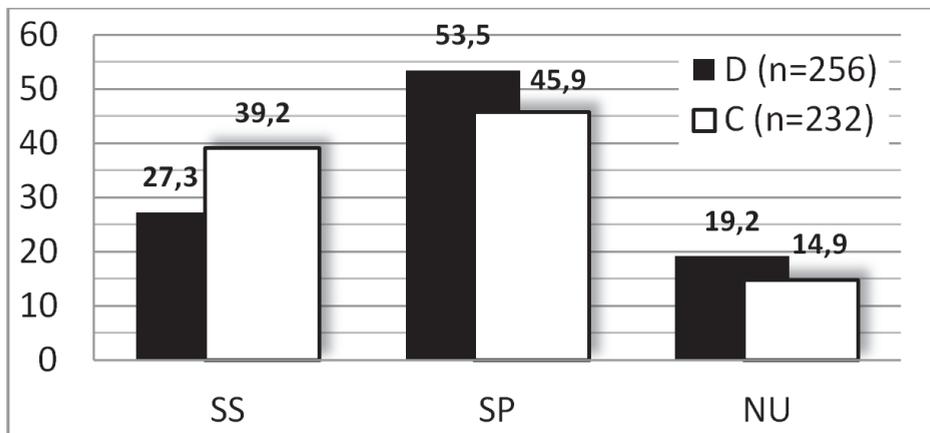


Legend (%): LO – general secondary schools, SZ – vocational secondary schools, SA – fine arts secondary schools. Other abbreviations – see chart 3.

The function of education in individual development is perceived similarly, regardless the type of the school one attends. This evidences approval and recognition for the importance of the content of the physical education classes.

82.8% of participants undertake physical and recreational activity. Within this group, 33.0% practice sports regularly and 49.8% do it sporadically. The remaining percentage of the participants (17.2%) do not practice sports or any form of recreation.

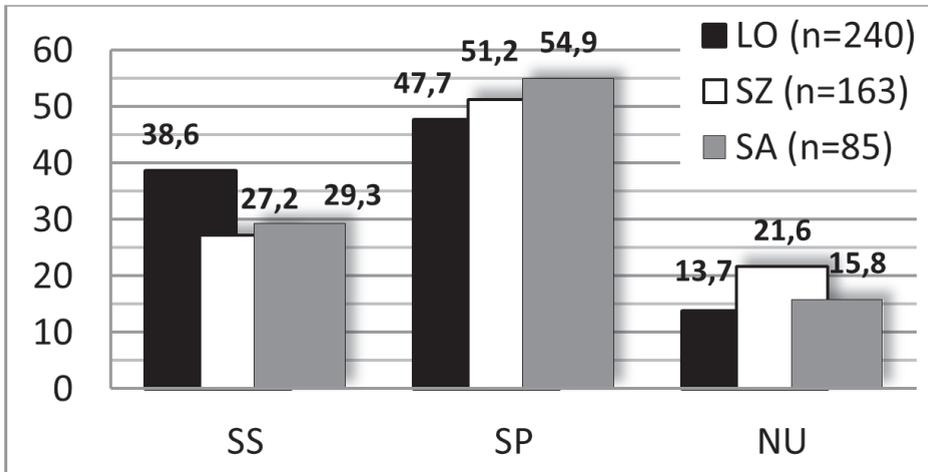
CHART 5. SEX AND THE FREQUENCY OF SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY
($H = 9.28$, $p < 0.001$)



Legend (%): SS, SP, NU – sports and recreational activities: SS – regular, SP – sporadic, NU – no activity. Other abbreviations – see chart 3.

Boys turned out to be more active (sports and recreation) than girls ($p < 0.001$), especially when it comes to practising sports or recreation regularly. Moreover, girls more often than boys indicated that they do not undertake any physical activity (19.2% vs. 14.9%). A slight advantage of girls over boys was visible only as far as sporadic physical activity is concerned (53.5% vs. 45.9%).

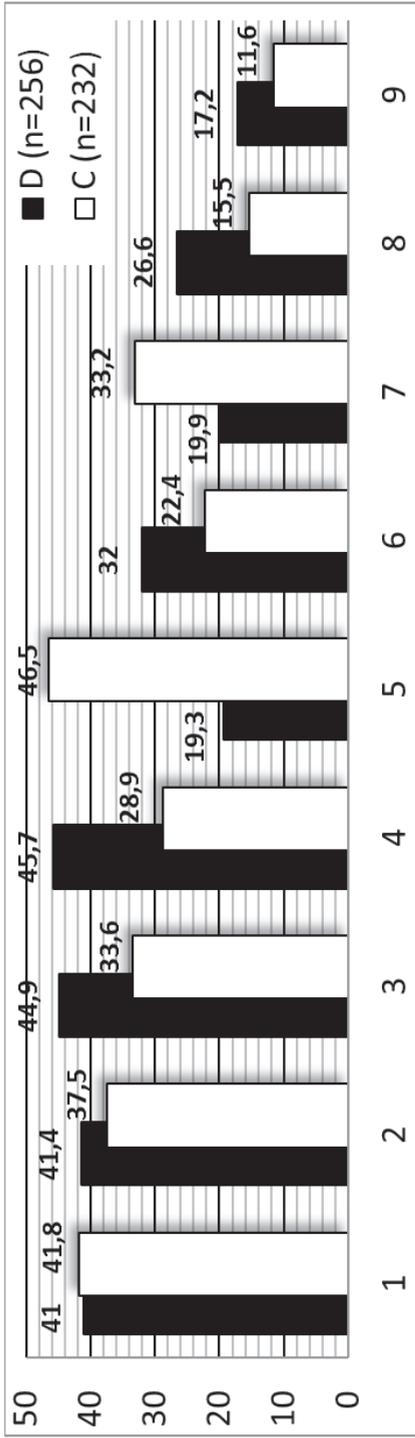
CHART 6. SCHOOL TYPE AND THE FREQUENCY OF UNDERTAKING SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY (H=9.28 P<0.001)



Legend (%): see charts 2 and 3

Among the representatives of the given schools, the highest sports and recreational activity was declared by the general secondary school students. Nearly 10% more of them regularly practice sports, as opposed to participants from the other school types. Among students who do not practice any sport at all, technical and vocational secondary school students constitute the majority (21.6% vs. 15.8% and 13.7%), whereas the fine arts school students are in between. However, they showed higher results when it comes to practising sports and recreation sporadically.

Unfortunately, among the spare-time activities, the passive ones take prevalence. As far as practising sports or recreational activities is concerned, only 26.2% of the participants answered positively.

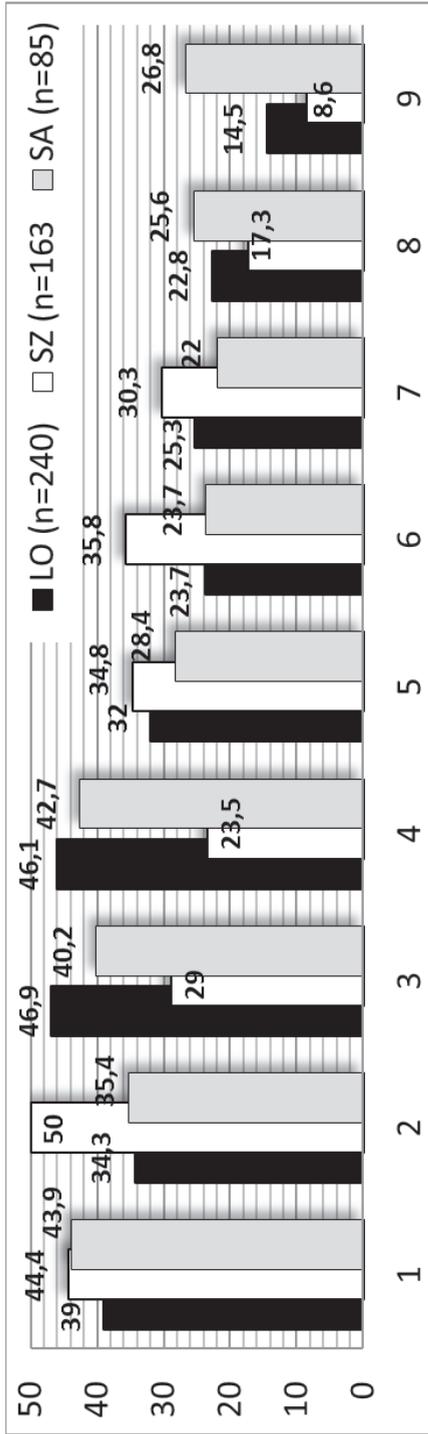
CHART 7. SEX AND THE PREFERRED SPARE-TIME ACTIVITIES ($H = 5.81, p < 0.01$)

Legend (%): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 – spare-time activities: 1) Watching TV, listening to radio (41.4%); 2) Socialising with friends (39.6%); 3) Reading books and magazines (39.6%); 4) Visiting cultural institutions - cinemas, theatres, philharmonics (37.5%); 5) Playing computer games (32.2%); 6) Going to the disco (27.5%); 7) Participating in sports and recreational activities (26.2%); 8) Walking in the city (21.3%); 9) Family trips (14.6%)⁹. For more explanations, see chart 3

The type of spare-time activities depends on sex. Girls tend to choose more varied forms of leisure. Boys significantly dominated only as far as participation in sports and recreational activities was concerned (33.2% against 19.9%).

⁹ The percentages do not add up to 100%, because there were more answers available.

CHART 8. SCHOOL TYPE AND THE PREFERRED SPARE-TIME ACTIVITIES
(H = 16.04; p < 0.001)



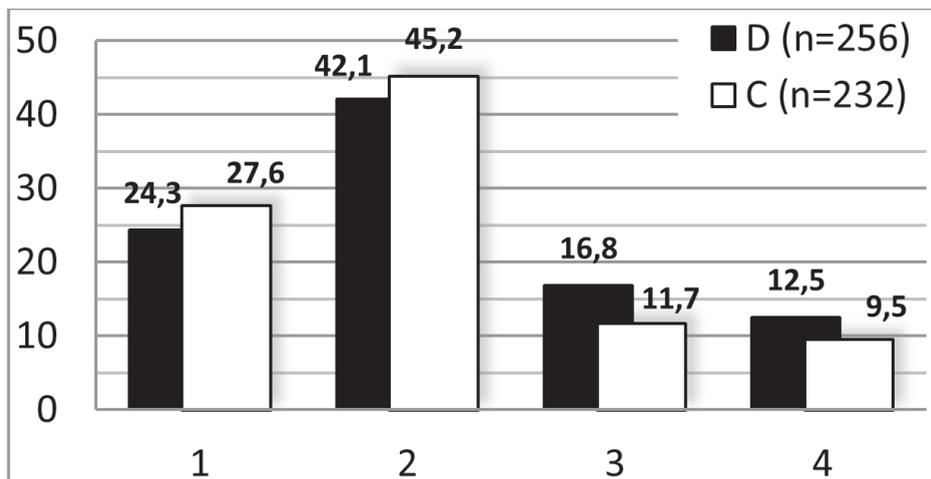
Legend (%): see chart 7.

Sports and recreational activities were most often selected by the vocational secondary school students (30.3%), then by the general secondary school students (25.3%) and the fine arts secondary school students (22%).

The analysis of the types of attitudes towards physical culture shows that in the distribution of the typologies achieved, two types tend to dominate - full (25.4%) and selective (43.2%). The results obtained can be considered fairly optimistic, as nearly 70.0% of the participants declared positive attitude towards physical culture.

In the studied environment, the positive types dominate, i.e. the selective (43.7%) and full types of attitude (26.0%) towards physical culture. The limited (14.3%) and negative (11.0%) types were represented by a low percentage of the respondents.

CHART 9. SEX AND TYPES OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS PHYSICAL CULTURE
(STATISTICALLY INSIGNIFICANT CORRELATION)

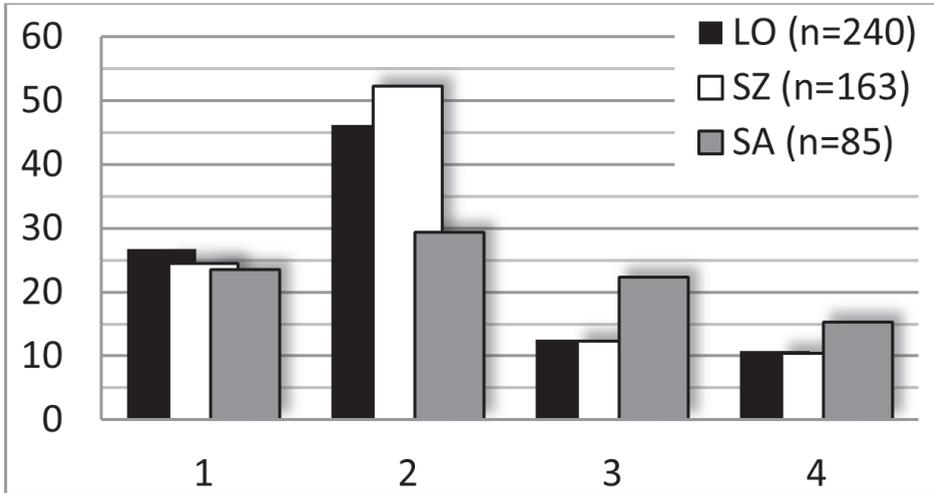


LEGEND (%): 1, 2, 3, 4 - types of attitudes towards physical culture¹⁰: TYPE 1 (full) - 25.4%; TYPE 2 (selective) - 43.2%; TYPE 3 (limited) - 14.2%; TYPE 4 (negative) - 11.5%. For other symbols, see chart 3.

Types of attitudes towards physical culture did not vary depending on sex. However, it is worth highlighting that boys more often than girls showed elements characteristic of the full and selective types. The above-mentioned results that show that boys declared regular participation in sports and recreational activities, seem to confirm this fact.

¹⁰ ,Other' situations included 5.7% of participants.

CHART 10. SECONDARY SCHOOL TYPE AND TYPES OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS PHYSICAL CULTURE (TYPE 2 - $H = 5.14$, $p < 0.001$; TYPE 3 - $H = 5.98$, $p < 0.05$; TYPE 4 - $H = 6.53$, $p < 0.01$)



LEGEND (%): see chart 6, 7.

School type had an influence on the types of attitudes towards physical culture. The 'selective' type was identified more often in the general secondary school students (46.2%) and in the vocational secondary school students (52.2%), as opposed to the fine arts school students (29.4%). The respondents representing the last category selected physical activity as their way of spending spare time the least often. It is worth mentioning that the 'limited' and 'negative' types, that express the least desired attitude towards physical culture, were mostly shown by the fine arts school students.

CONCLUSIONS

1. A positive attitude towards physical culture is shown in those young people, who like physical education classes (30.3%), regularly undertake sports and recreational activities (33.0%), recognise the benefits of participating in PE classes (83.7%) and prefer physical activity (26.2%) over other spare-time activities.
2. Connections with school type and sex were identified in the case of the frequency of undertaking sports and recreational activities and as far as the preferred spare-time activities are concerned. The function of physical

education in the individual development depended only on the sex of the respondents, whereas the importance of the physical education classes in the hierarchy of other subjects depended only on the school type.

3. The types of attitudes presented by young people towards physical culture constitute an implication of behaviours shown on various levels of activity at school, during leisure time and while practising sports. In the studied environment, the selective (43.7%) and full (26.0%) types of attitude towards physical culture tend to dominate, which is a positive sign. Types of attitudes were dependent on the school type only in the case of the selective, limited and negative types. The fine arts school students showed more negative and limited attitudes towards physical culture, as opposed to the general and vocational secondary school students. Also, they achieved significantly lower results as far as the selective type is concerned. The positive types of attitude towards physical culture, recognised and applied by the majority of the studied students, i.e. the full and selective types, may serve as an antidote for the present-day threats to our civilisation.

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Conflict of interest/competing interest

Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest about the publication of this article.