

## PROMOTION IN THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION LESSON OF THE THEMATIC CONTENTS PREFERRED BY THE STUDENTS

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**Abstract.** *In today's society, where the student is more and more vocal in their choices, physical education and sports have lost ground to technology, with students increasingly interested more in computer games than physical and sports activities. In this context, the present study sought to determine some effective methods, solutions, to revive the discipline of physical education and sports. The objectives of the research were to identify the differences in perception between the children and the specialized teachers, regarding their preferences for approaching certain contents of the physical education and sports lesson. In order to find out which subjects are most appreciated by students, a questionnaire was used, targeting 207 teachers of physical education and sports. Also, the questions regarding the topics valued in the physical education and sports lesson were addressed to a number of 81 children between the ages of 11 and 13. Through the use of the questionnaire, the students' preferences in completing the lesson assignments from the school curriculum were observed. After analyzing the recorded data, we can state that the achievement of the lesson's objectives is closely related to the student's degree of satisfaction. Previous studies have shown that an adequate provision of large, bright, airy spaces, in which to stimulate creativity, increase the emotional state and motivation to move both students and those who carry out the educational process, improving learning results. Restrictive sports activities, based on simplistic ways of conducting the lesson, remove the child from movement and even from spending free time in an active way. As a result of this study, it was found that the students did not have a predisposition for a certain motor quality, but chose all the motor qualities and skills in close proportions, while having a greater preference for sports games. The differences in perception between students and teachers were relatively small. The reluctance of teachers regarding children's perception in approaching resistance or strength as lesson topics has not been generally covered by what children want, the variety of contents being essential for children. Such research approaches are very useful, both for a good diagnosis of the lesson from both perspectives, allowing the possibility of intervention regarding the improvement of the perception and the results obtained by the students. What the teachers perceive from the students during the didactic activity and the ease of students approaching certain contents is a point of interest that needs to be subjected to a wider future research.*

**Keywords:** *physical education, technology, motor skills, creativity*

### Introduction

Developing a healthy lifestyle and physically active behavior is a goal for all physical education and sport teachers (Pate et al., 2006). Current guidelines recommend that children get at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity that is developmentally appropriate and involves a variety of activities on most days of the week (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2008) but no more less than 30 minutes per day (Dishman, et al., 2022; Haskell et al., 2007). Most scientific research has examined the impact of physical education and sports including on negative psychological states such as depression and anxiety (Wipfli et al., 2008). There are several meta-analyses showing the positive effects of physical education and sport on mental health (Kanning & Schlicht, 2010). However, age-related declines in physical

activity are evident. They occur throughout adolescence and early childhood, and recently these declines are evident in very young children (Sallis et al., 2000).

Children in Romania spend quite a bit of time in the school environment, compared to other European countries, the attractive framework in which healthy behaviors are promoted being reduced to physical education classes. Possible approaches within counseling and personal development classes or as an extracurricular activity carried out by teachers being necessary. Thus, promoting physical activity among children has become a universal challenge. The subject of the study of the present work research of the situations that have the effect of decreasing the physical activity of the child both from the point of view of the activities carried out in the school and extracurricular environment is the subject of the study of the present work.

In recent years, more and more parents choose to drive their children to school in a car, thus reducing the time, but also the opportunity for the child to increase his daily minutes of physical activity (Pellegrini & Bohn, 2005). The playgrounds around the living spaces have been taken over by parking lots and housing complexes, so extracurricular free play has almost disappeared. Television, computer/console games, watching sports on television all occur more on weekdays than on weekends and are all sedentary (Sleap & Warburton, 1996). Other activities that include participation in sports classes as part of a club, art, music and dance are welcome for a harmonious development of the child. While homework is a necessary part of the behavior after school, it is of sedentary nature and thus, this time must be alternated with active breaks, which can aid the child in solving homework problems much more effectively (Marshall et al., 2002). Television and video gaming were largely uncorrelated with physical activity. Children do not play to be healthy, to master social skills, or to better master academic content. They run, throw, spin, and jump because it is fun (Locke & Graber, 2008). Motor skills are considered important for the physical, mental and social development of children (Goodway et al., 2019) and may even be the foundation of an active and healthy lifestyle, as many studies have shown a positive association between good motor skills and higher levels of physical activity. For example, a good index of the level of motor skills has been shown to have positive effects on health, effectively influencing the improvement of cardio-respiratory capacity, maintaining an optimal body weight, improving the level of practice and daily activities (Lubans et al., 2010; Fisher et al., 2005; Williams et al., 2008; Krombholz, 2013). Neagu, (2012) stated that, "although skills largely belong to the genetic portfolio of an individual, they have in their composition a series of phenotypic elements (under the influence of the educational environment, for example), participating in their translation (through processes of development) from predisposing primary forms to more and more refined, superior forms, defined in the form of talent, skill, etc. The motor capacity of an individual is added to a series of motor manifestations (skills), which, depending on their level of acquisition, influence the level of efficiency in the execution of a series of acts or motor actions. That is why our study includes the perception of both the teachers in what they observe in the students, but also the perception of the students in terms of the qualities and preferred motor skills. While the introduction of technology is also welcome in the lessons, the two methods of information are not mutually exclusive, but on the contrary, they enhance each other (Drăgan, 2019). To test motor skills (Thomas et al., 2020) applied a program of sports activities to a group of 672 subjects, children aged 10-12 years, which included cognitive elements,

subsequently testing various motor skills. The study showed that an enriched sports activity, in the form of structured warm-ups, in addition to the physical activity practiced by each child, was able to improve some aspects of physical fitness among the subjects. As sports ability improves, interest in exercise also increases. Also, through sports games, mental activity is stimulated, which greatly influences the development of intellectual processes. In particular, the so-called divergent thinking that is at the heart of creative abilities and game effectiveness (Claver et al., 2016; Koryagin et al., 2018). All this affects the speed of assimilation of the sports technique, as well as its subsequent stabilization and various applications appropriate to the situation, thus increasing the degree of satisfaction of the subject. The use of didactic games for understanding the teaching material relies in part on the collaboration between children to find solutions and solve tactical problems, which is essential in learning games (Light, 2009). Mulvihill et al., 2000, explored the factors influencing children's involvement in physical activity. Many activities and programs internationally list "enjoyment" among their goals of increasing physical activity. Research findings suggest that interventions designed to improve, among other things, the perception of enjoyment lead to a maintenance and increase in children's physical activity levels (Weiss, 2000). The results of the study by Moisescu, P., (2022) highlight the ways to increase the efficiency of the physical education lesson, through the information obtained from secondary school students, regarding the increase in the level of motivation necessary to practice the physical education lesson. To bring about changes in children's physical behavior we will need to know what their current behavior patterns are and also their enjoyment levels, as well as the physical activities they enjoy participating in.

These approaches emphasize the role of movement in the child's life, on his physical and mental health, a good perception of the child's interest in movement, improving his involvement in the activity. A limitation of the present research stems from the fact that the results obtained cannot be generalized to the entire school population represented by students between 11-13 years old, nor to the number of responding teachers.

## **Methodology**

### *Objectives.*

- Identifying the differences in perception between children and specialist teachers, regarding their preferences for addressing certain contents of the physical education and sports lesson.
- Determination of methods, means, solutions to improve the activity in school physical education.

### *Scope*

The purpose of this paper is to identify the differences between teachers' and students' perceptions regarding students' preferred topics. Depending on the results obtained, effective methods will be determined, solutions for revitalizing the discipline of physical education and sports resulting in improved well-being and a harmonious development of children.

### *Participants*

The research participants were 207 physical education and sports teachers. Also, the present study involved a number of 81 students aged between 11-13 years from the "Buzești Brothers" National College in Craiova, of which 35 were boys (43%) and 46 were girls (57%). Their distribution by gender is shown in Figure 1.

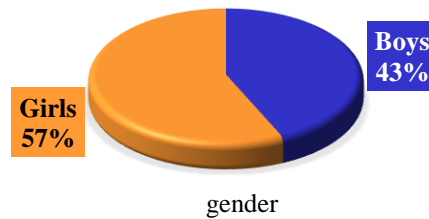


Figure 1. Distribution of participants according to gender

### *Instruments*

Specific data was collected using a set of questions about teachers' teaching environment, their specialization, and teachers' and students' perceptions of students' preferred subjects. An example of a question: "Strength, speed, endurance, skill are basic motor qualities for the harmonious development of the body. Choose one motor quality that you like the most in physical education and sports lessons." Socio-demographic data was collected using, in the case of teachers, a question regarding the environment in which they are placed in the didactic activity, and in the case of children, two questions about age and sex, which were included in the first section of the questionnaire (created by us).

### *Procedure*

Data were collected during 2022 using an online questionnaire applied to 207 physical education and sports teachers. Also, the questionnaire questions were adapted and applied to the 81 children. The operation was carried out by means of the statistical analysis program Microsoft Excel. After entering the data into the program, the correlation calculation between the items was made, after which the internal consistency of the questionnaire was calculated, using the alpha Cronbach index. Informed parental consent was obtained for participation in the study.

### *Results*

For question 1 regarding the environment in which teachers carry out their activity, it is observed that a percentage of 37.3% of teachers teach in rural areas, and 62.7% teach in urban areas. I chose this question because it is well known that students from rural areas have a greater predisposition for movement than those from urban areas, and thus teachers' answers based on

their practical activity may be influenced. From the responses of the respondents, however, there were no differences in the perception of teachers who teach in rural versus urban areas regarding students' options. The students surveyed were all from the urban environment.

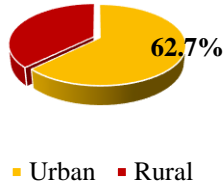


Figure 2. The environment in which physical education teachers work

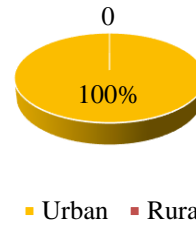


Figure 3. The environment from which the surveyed students come

Question no. 2 requires the specification of the training level of the teachers at which they are assigned in the educational unit where they work. We observe that 18.2% of the teachers teach in the primary cycle, 60.1% teach in the secondary cycle and 21.7% of the responding teachers teach in the high school cycle.

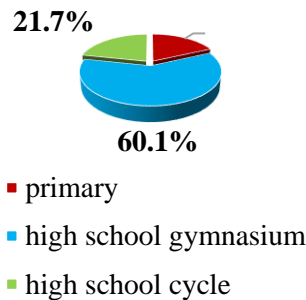


Figure 4. Teacher recruitment

Question no. 3 is laid as follows: "The basic motor qualities influence the harmonious growth of the human body. Choose two of the basic motor skills that students are happy to accept in physical education and sports lessons". Given the fact that two of the children's preferred motor qualities are chosen, the percentages are arranged differently. Of the 207 teachers, 197 of them, respectively 95.6%, indicated that their preferred motor quality is speed, followed at a short distance by the coordination skills 77.9%, 159 respondents. The strength registers a small percentage of 25%, respectively 51 respondents, and endurance 3.9%, respectively 8 respondents.

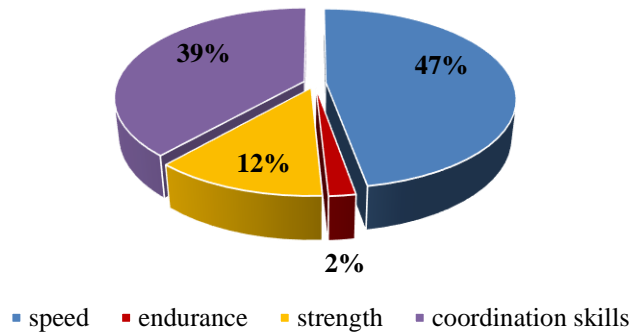


Figure 5. Choose two of the basic motor skills that students gladly accept in physical education and sports lessons

For the students, the question was structured in such a way that they mentioned the main motor quality they prefer in physical education and sports classes, and the preferred secondary motor quality being a separate question. Thus, 34% of students prefer skill (coordinative abilities) to be addressed mainly in physical education lessons, 24% prefer speed, 12% endurance and 11% strength. Secondary motor quality preferred by students where we have close percentages: 23% prefer speed, 23% prefer strength, 18% skill (coordinative abilities) and 17% prefer strength. Also, the ranking was general, not being influenced by the number of girls or boys.

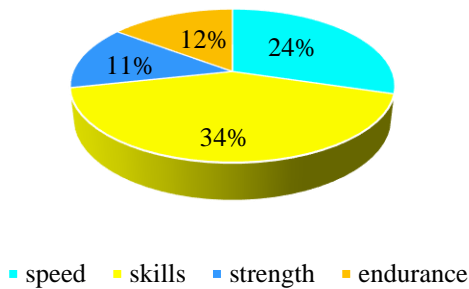


Figure 6 The motor quality you like the most in physical education and sports lessons.

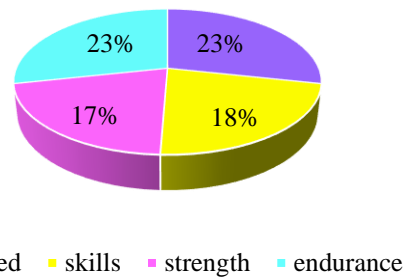


Figure 7. The secondary motor quality you love in physical education and sports lessons

Question no. 4: "Choose two skills from the sports branches that the students accept with pleasure in the physical education and sports lessons".

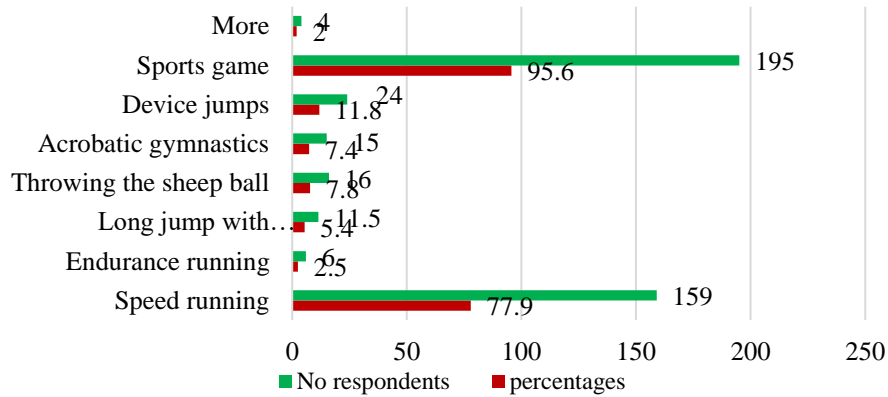


Figure 8. Choose two sports skills that students gladly accept in physical education and sports lessons

Teachers' perception of students is that they have a primary preference for sports games and any activity where competition and speed are central. Even if for the other motor skills we have much lower percentages, they were chosen by a small part of the responding teachers as motor skills that stimulate children's pleasure. Thus, these percentages will be appreciated accordingly. The students had three questions related to their preferred motor skills, namely: "What is the primary motor skill that you prefer covered in the physical education lesson?", "What is the preferred secondary motor skill in the physical education lesson?", "What is the third option regarding the preferred motor skill in the physical education and sports lesson?".

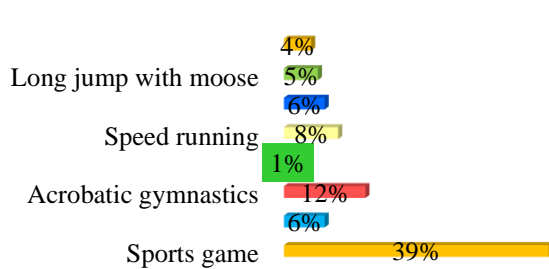


Figure 9. What is the primary motor skill you prefer addressed in the physical education lesson

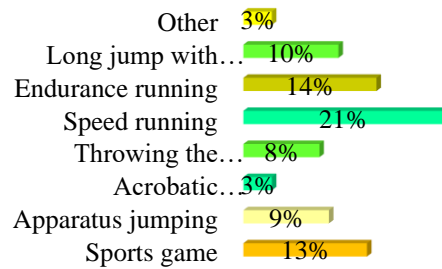


Figure 10. What is your preferred secondary motor skill addressed in the physical education lesson

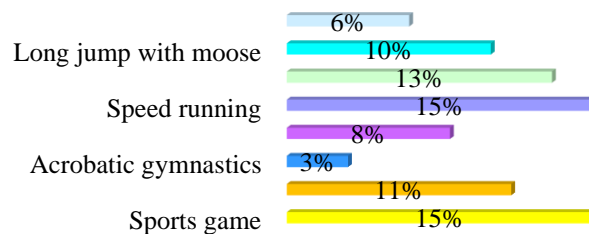


Figure 11. What is the third option regarding the preferred motor skill in the physical education lesson

The questions addressed to the students show us their preference especially for sports games, 39% of respondents mentioning it as the main motor skill, 12% prefer acrobatic gymnastics, 8% speed running, 6% apparatus jumping and endurance running, 5% jumping in length with moose, 4% other motor skills than those mentioned in the questionnaire and 1% throwing the sheep ball. The secondary motor skill in the preferences of students where we have close percentages: 21% prefer speed running, 14% endurance running, 13% playing sports, 10% long jump with elk, 9% jumping on apparatus, 8% throwing the sheep ball, 3% acrobatic gymnastics and other motor skills. The third favorite skill of students is also in close percentages in student preferences, 15% for sports games, 15% speed running, 13% endurance running, 11% apparatus jumping, 10% long jump with elk, 8% throwing the sheep ball, 6% other motor skills, 3% acrobatic gymnastics. It is thus noted, a variety of skills accepted with pleasure by the students, which proves to us that the students are interested in the widest possible development, the action systems and the personal style of each teacher being essential. Practically and directly expressed, an instrument is reliable and consistent when we apply known and efficient statistical procedures. In the case of the items researched in this paper, we calculated the value of the Cronbach alpha index. The value of the Cronbach alpha index has a range of variation between 0 and 1, with the level of 0.70 being accepted as the threshold, but not lower than 0.6. After the calculation formulas were applied, a value of 0.7 resulted, the reliability measure of the test being reached.

To the last question in the questionnaire addressed to the teachers, namely the suggestion of some measures for the revival of school sports in Romania, the answers were mostly related to the insufficient number of hours, especially in the high school cycle, where most classes have only one hour of physical education. Other answers mentioned by the respondents: "modernizing the fields, improving the sports facilities with modern materials and equipment", "creating gyms in every school", "establishing free school clubs for practicing mass sports in all sports branches in big cities with branches in important communes", "investments in children's and junior centers and in the material base", "the number of students in a class should not exceed 25", "monthly assessment of motor skills to highlight the progress of students and implicitly the work of the teaching staff, the performance obtained having the role of reflecting the stage in which the student is. It would no longer be necessary to mark, but only to appreciate the interest and the effort put in.", "the organization of distinct sports competitions for non-legitimate students and for legitimized students", "involvement from the state, massive government investments in sports", "modernization of the bases sports in schools, the reintroduction of the subject of physical education at the Baccalaureate", "the development of a National Strategy and a new law in the field of sports, a new Law of Physical Education and Sports, the inventory and clarification of property issues related to the sports infrastructure, the modernization and the development of the network of sports bases within schools in each rural locality, supporting local administrations to complete the works on sports bases already started, as well as building new ones in localities where there are no such investments", "promoting performance at all levels of sport, for all citizens; promoting the concept of active life, which involves cooperation with the health and education sectors; the development of strategic projects at the local, county and sports club levels; the material endowment of educational



units; the organization of competitions with the awarding of rewards to the beneficiaries (medals, diplomas, etc.), a flexibility on the part of all the decision-making factors (teaching staff, management) regarding the conduct of the competitions and the support/ensuring of the necessary support for the representative team of the school unit in the competitions; exercising the social role of sport", "all educational units should have a hall for sports games and a field for athletics; centers for the additional training of students with skills in practicing a sport", "the teacher should be more involved in sports lessons, not to offer a ball and let them play in the yard. To guide children towards performance sports", "a real involvement from the authorities, ensuring the material base, infrastructure, etc.", "the introduction of a student stimulation program through which, following active and continuous participation in sports class, they benefit from certain advantages in society or in various extracurricular activities.", "increasing the number of sports competitions supported by MEC and endowed with significant prizes, creating school scholarships to support studies based on sports results".

The results obtained for this last question show us the shortcomings in the system and the teachers' desire for change, to improve the conditions in which they work, being the primary need in obtaining superior results with students.

The students were also given this question. We can tell that they went for what they would like more in the next school year. The vast majority mentioned that they would not want lesson content changed. Others wanted a greater variety of sports games covered in lessons, extra hours of physical education, very few mentioned the material basis. We consider this to be the result of the fact that all the students surveyed come from the "Buzești Brothers" National College in Craiova, an educational unit where the physical education lesson conditions are very good. Criteriile de includere a participanților la studiu au fost aleatorii. Pentru profesori, nu a contat specializarea sportive a acestora și nici statutul didactic.

## Discussions

One of the results that emerged from the data indicated that children like to interact socially with each other, engage in competition and have an overwhelming preference for group activities such as team sports. Carr & Weigand, 2001 in their research concluded that, like teachers, parents and peers also influence children's goal orientations and subsequently their behavior and participation in physical education lessons. This finding, as well as the results of the study carried out by (Mulvihill et al., 2000), suggest that a more in-depth analysis of how children construct learning in the context of friendships is needed. Specifically, collaboration and collective activities serve as a social bridge that enables children to learn (Carr & Weigand, 2001). If at the end we have examples like, "I'm not good at hitting the ball, but I like to play. And for that I have to practice as much as possible. Then I will become a better player." At that moment we consider the objective of the lessons to have been achieved.

Therefore, understanding how children acquire the discipline-specific elements of physical education and sport and beyond must include a focus on these complex dynamics of social interactions between children, teachers and parents.

Scientists emphasize that the modern methodology of the physical education lesson must be based on the way of practicing dynamic exercises and the intensive development of mortician

qualities (Kliziene et al., 2018). The most popular activity in physical education classes is playing sports, with elements from gymnastics being the least popular (Adamcak et al., 2020). Experts also note that aerobic games programs in the school environment improve the general condition of children (Bodnar et al., 2019; Latorre Román et al., 2018).

## Conclusions

Small group game to get everyone into action where the teacher creates new group compositions for each lesson using different methods so that each student is in a variety of groups throughout the semester. Children need to interact with almost all their peers during the lesson and collaborate in a wide variety of games with classmates or schoolmates. The analysis of the data presented in the present study suggests that interactions between students play an important role when they develop different motor qualities or tactical tasks.

Also, restrictive sports activities lead to the removal of the child from movement and even spending free time in an active way. The teacher must have in mind the objectives of the lesson, without neglecting the fact that no competence will be achieved if the student does not enjoy the tasks he assigns.

The inclusion criteria of study participants were random. For teachers, their sports specialization was not a selection criterion in the present study. Students were selected on a voluntary basis with parental consent to participate in the study. The level of education of the participants was secondary school. And last but not least, we consider the fact that the answers of the surveyed teachers are really useful and necessary for an improvement of the activity in school physical education. We consider such approaches very useful, both for a good diagnosis of the lesson from the student's perspective, and through intervention programs to improve the results obtained by students in this discipline. Last but not least, we would like to emphasize the need to continue this study, with a much larger target group, from diverse environments, to be able to provide additional information on the recorded results.

## Authors' Contribution

All authors have equally contributed to this study.

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