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THE ROLE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN THE WELL-BEING AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS

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Abstract. *The ever-changing ideals of modern society often tend to set too bold goals based on theoretical knowledge that can lead to great results. All these can have negative influences on mental health, characterized by a high degree of stress, exaggerated emotional reactions, reduced cognitive activity, inappropriate behaviors in the educational and social environment. Under these conditions, the practice of physical activities can be the optimal alternative for primary school pupils in order to eliminate the mental tension accumulated during the theoretical classes held in the classroom. We can say that through these activities pupils can develop their ability to adapt to various conditions, thus being able to control the emotions that appear as a consequence of the harmful influences of a civilization characterized by nervous exhaustion. Physical activity, practiced in different forms can put condition on the multidimensional development of the human being, because physical exercise develops and trains. The practice of motor activities on medium and long term, has a essential role in maintaining an optimal state of health, in promoting the sets of values, behavioral, social and personal attitudes.*

The purpose of this research is to find out through a questionnaire, what are the options for pupils in primary education. The questionnaire will highlight issues regarding the way of conducting the physical education class and whether it manages to increase the level of satisfaction, generating a state of relaxation and good mood.

Keywords: *pupils, primary school, mental health, emotions, physical education.*

Introduction

In the specialized literature related to the field of physical education and sport, we find in a very well-argued and understandable way the edifying explanations related to the importance of physical exercise, which can be an incentive for the body, a way of relaxation, in the sense of removing mental stress and achieving the state of balance. Physical activity can act as a way of compensating for the harmful influences of a civilization characterized by psychological stress, sedentary instability and super reating [3].

The sustained efforts of all stakeholders involved in the field of education, especially in the field of motor activities, are focused on

increasing physical and mental capacity, with a view to increasing school performance on all levels. Over-requests to which pupils are subjected during school hours, but also during extra-curricular activities (learning activity, themes, projects, competitions, etc.), to which the demands of teachers, parents and last but not least their own aspirations, fears, etc. are added, are considered stressors, which over time will generate states of increased fatigue, inappropriate conduct of the educational and social environment, anxiety, failure.

Based on the Hippocratic statement, quoted by [12], who considers it necessary to know about positive experiences such as pleasure of joy, laughter, play on the one hand

and suffering, sadness, discontent on the other, departs strictly from the brain.

Thanks to him we manage to think, so that we can distinguish between right and wrong, pleasant and unpleasant, etc., we try to do an analysis of the mental states that pupils try when participating in daily courses.

Thus, for Epuran mental states are manifestations of a psycho-behavioral nature, triggered by concrete situations from the specific activity, which can be expressed through experiences and conduct. Instead the authors D. Byrne and K. Kelley (1981), defined the mental state as "a temporary condition, which fluctuates over time in response to situational changes", and A.V. Petrovsky and M.G. Yaroshevsky (1985), define the mental state "a relatively momentary state of the individual's psyche, in opposition to the term "psychic process" which emphasizes the dynamic aspects of the psyche, and with the "psychic attributes" that indicate the stable manifestations of the individual's psyche, persistent and reproductive in the personality structure" [4].

Popescu-Neveanu P. [8] says about affectivity that it has different degrees of complexity, and the emotional responses are the result of the biological and cultural characteristics of each individual.

The same mental states have come to the attention of many authors in various fields (psychological, educational, sports), who have studied this phenomenon, thus they point out that the leaders of the instructional – educational, both teachers working in the educational field, but also the coaches responsible for motor education, are obliged to observe and take into account the pupils' inner experiences, the fragile connection between the mind – body on the one hand and emotions on the other, because education cannot be done in a smart way if the emotional problems of children are not well understood, and achieving well-being is of particular

importance in situations with a strong emotional charge [5, 10, 11].

Systematic practice of motor activities has positive effects in terms of physical and biological (cardiopulmonary, muscular, etc.) are developed, psychological (reaction speed to various stimuli and their recognition), development of intellectual processes (thinking and imagination), improvement of attention, communication ability, develop ambition, strength of character, builds a better self-image, develops ideomotricity and body scheme, helps to better control emotional states and stimulate creativity [9].

The classification of psychiatric states by M., Epuran [9] and E., Verza, F.E., Verza, [16] are:

a) Cognitive: attention (concentration, distraction, vigilance), perception of (perceptive-anticipatory or orientation sets), thinking (clarity, confusion, lucidity), imagination of (dreaming with open eyes), memory (blockage);

b) Affective: provisions (emotional states preceding a test, anxiety before and during a contest), affective reactions both in case of success, but also of a failure, frustration, (enthusiasm, joy disappointment, overappreciation, self-dissent), feelings (pride, attachment, collaboration);

c) Volitive: judgment, determination, risk-taking, aggression, abandonment, cowardice, etc. On a simple analysis, it can be easily observed that mental states are not only influenced by the psychic sphere, these were also strongly influenced by intrasystemic relationships, in which rational evaluation, affectivity and will can be combined in various ways.

Panksepp J., quoted by Neacsu I., Suditu M., presents a synthesis of triangulation reactions stimulus-emotion-behavior (Figure 1), in an attempt to highlight the emotional manifestations of the child [7].

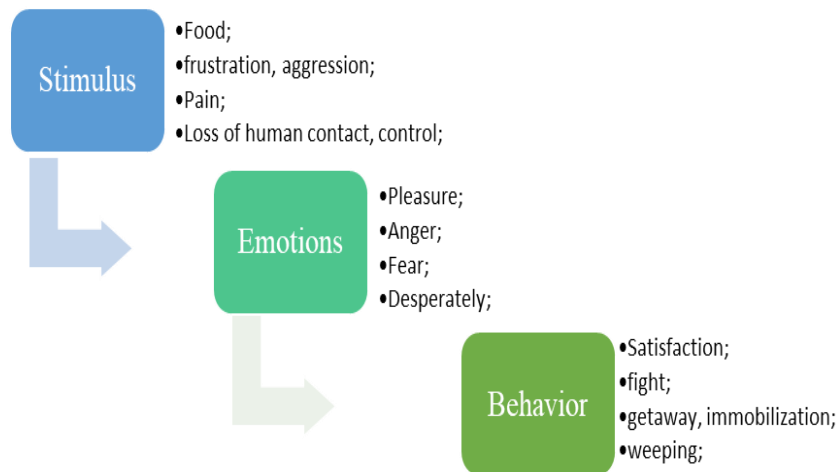


Fig. 1. Triangulation reactions stimulus-emotion-behaviour after Panksepp J.

It can therefore be said that personality is a product of factors, especially cognitive ones, which result in human creativity. In view of these statements, we can say that pupils can be in a position to create, invent, solutions to solve problematic situations. Dillon (quoted by Șerban M.). Another important aspect is the problematization of creativity based on the discovery and recognition of invention. This

aspect entitles us to connect with motor skills, which are structured into elementary cognitive operations that are divided into cognitive subprocesses [14].

Sterenber R. (2005, quoted by Cosma G.), presents cognitive operations and their subprocesses (Figure 2), during the course of physical activities as follows [1]:

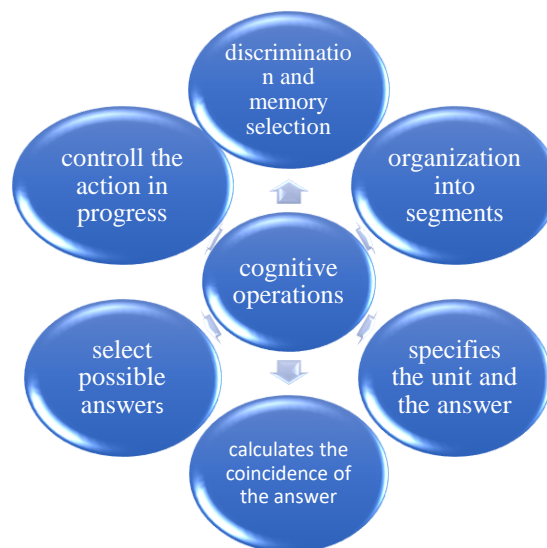


Fig. 2. Cognitive operations and their subprocesses during physical activities (Stereber R., 2005)

The same Sterenberg R. (2005) [16] is of the opinion that the education system emphasizes the in-set and assessment for achieving specific competences based in

particular on memory and analytical skills and tends to disregard the well-being and strengths of the pupils.

The laden instructional-educational process leaves its strong imprint on the small school by making it more orderly, to control its reactions and to be able to develop new ones in its relationship with colleagues and teachers. At the same time, these pressures can act positively, in the sense of making more efficient use of all skills to resist competition specific to the school environment, which they perceive with uncertainty and consumption of significant energy resources. Such efforts will certainly help the pupil to learn to master their beginnings and overcome behavioral difficulties and finally manage to adapt to the social environment due to the positive personality characteristics that he has gradually acquired in the maturation process. Verza E., Verza F.E., (2000) [15], an opinion with which the authors Neacșu I., Suditu M. (2020, p. 35) agree, which states that, as they evolve and mature both from a school and existential point of view, pupils become increasingly aware about the ability to feel everything that is natural and normal, from the perception of well-being, to the "critical importance of negative emotionality". Maintaining the same trend of previous authors Stan Z. and Baștiurea E. (2020), states that "there is a balance between emotion, stress and successful tasks" [13].

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), physical activity has an impact on cognitive abilities, such as concentration and attention, while also improving attitudes and behaviors in the classroom, all of which are important components of academic performance. Numerous studies have shown positive associations between physical activity, well-being, cognitive function and academic performance. The results of these studies have indicated that physical activity has a strong

influence on parts of the brain that support complex cognitive processes during physical activities [2, 6, 17, 18, 19].

In view of the foregoing, we can say with conviction that the physical activities practiced by children do not only have beneficial effects in the sense of achieving well-being but have beneficial effects on cognitive processes and behavioral conduct adapted to the situations encountered.

Methods and procedure of research

The methods used that formed the basis of this research were as follows:

- a) Method of bibliographic study, this being responsible for most of the information found in the material presented;
- b) The questionnaire-based survey method that played an important role in obtaining and highlighting data that we consider valuable for the design of this scientific article;
- c) Statistically-mathematics method;
- d) Graphic method.

In this scientific article, we considered determining the main experiences of the pupils during the instructional-educational process, so according to them, the conduct of the physical education class can be a "skilled therapist" who can prevent any depressive states that may arise due to the stress caused by the pressure exerted by the family and social environment.

The investigation was carried out by applying a questionnaire containing ten questions with predefined answers, to evaluate the emotions felt by the pupils of the third grade, after the physical education class, but also after another (theoretical) class.

In order to present the results of the questionnaire we will analyze the most relevant responses given by the pupils, as follows:

Table 1. The answers to item 2

I.2 When you're upset, do you make offensive statements about others that you then regret?	frq	%
Yes	8	25%
Not	13	41%
I don't now	11	34%

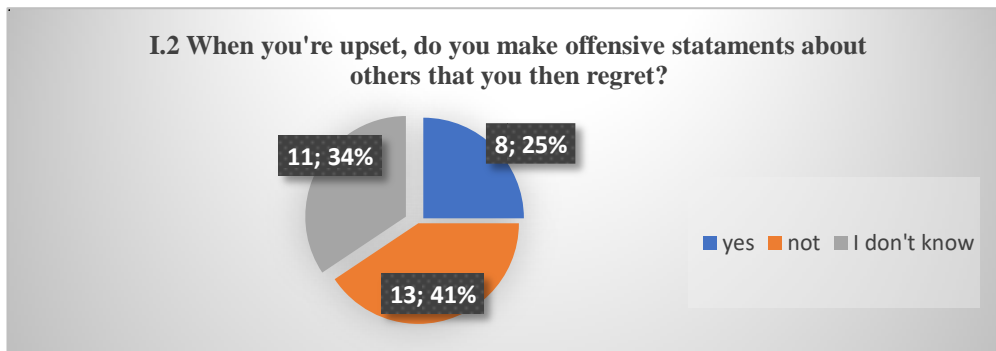


Fig. 3. Graphic representation for responses to Item 2

To this question the pupils answered 25% of them for making offensive statements, which they then regret, 41% answered that they did not have a habit of reacting in this way, and 34% that they did not know if they were reacting in this way, because they did not

have a habit of being mischievous. From the answers obtained we can conclude that when positive and negative reactions are discussed and explained in the classes, pupils want to transfer these skills to other situations.

Table 2. The answers to item 3

I.3 When conflicting discussions arise in the classroom do you get involved in these disputes?	frq	%
Yes	2	2%
Not	12	41%
It is up to those involved	15	52%

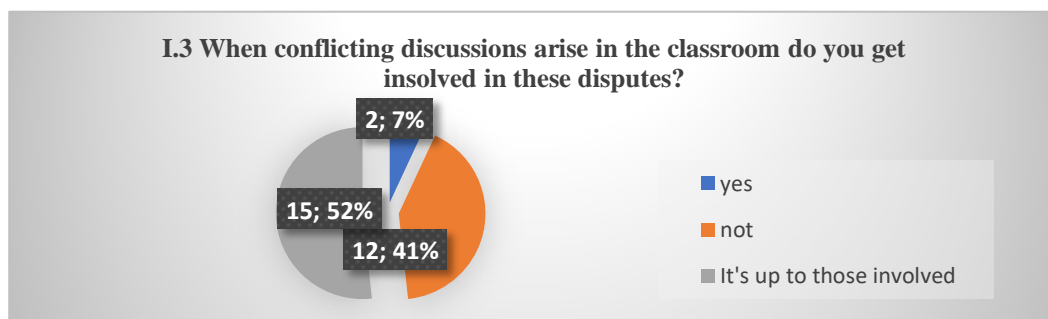


Fig. 4. Graphic representation for responses to Item 3

For this question the pupils offered the following answers: 2% are involved in classroom disputes, 41% choose not to get involved, and 52% get involved, but it is up to those involved. So, the conclusion that

emerges is that pupils are involved in resolving disputes, only when they are emotionally involved (sympathies or dislikes), to balance the final verdict.

Table 3. The answers to item 4

I.4 Are there any activities that cause you to be nervous or upset?	frq	%
Yes	19	66%
Not	10	34%

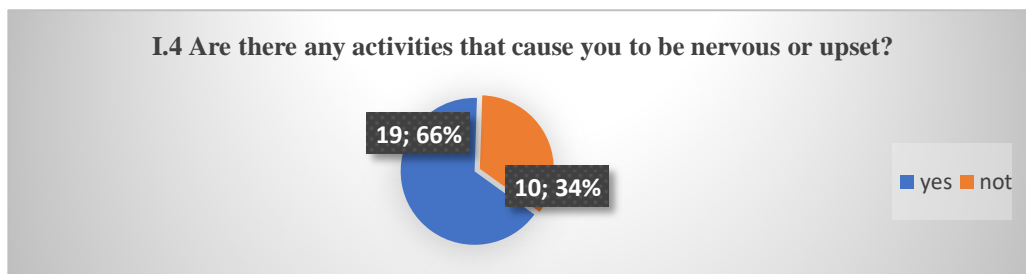


Fig. 5. Graphic representation for responses to Item 4

For question number four, 66% of the pupils answered that there are activities that cause negative feelings in the course of the school program, while 34% say that for them there are no activities to cause them such

states. We can say with certainty that these experiences do not occur in all pupils, but only in certain situations, depending on the perception of each individual student and the degree of each development.

Table 4. The answers to item 5

I.5 What are the activities you do when you're stressed and can't concentrate?	frq.	%
Rest	12	25%
use modern technology	9	18%
physical activity (dance, games, cycling, rollers)	13	27%
discussions with friends	10	20%
read or listen music	5	10%

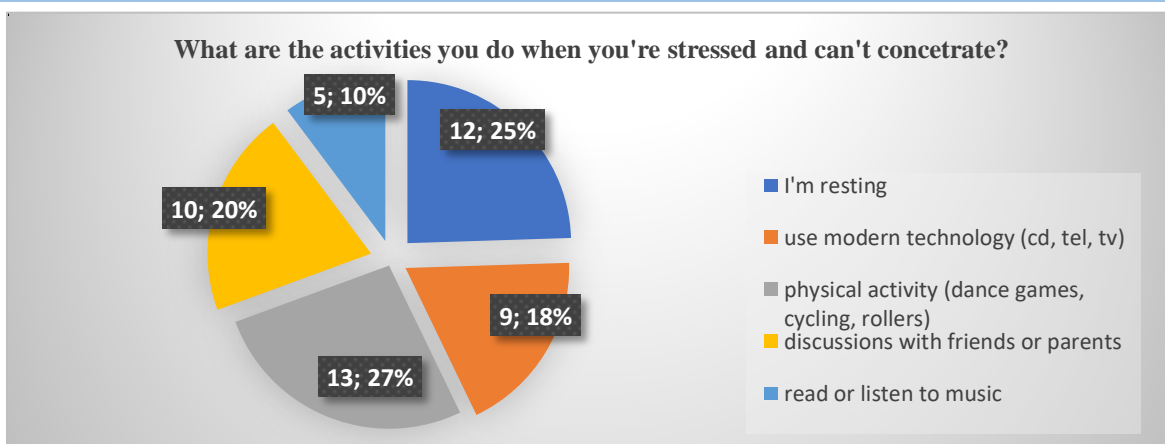


Fig. 6. Graphic representation for responses to Item 5

Question number five is relevant, as it reveals how demanding the school program is for pupils - but also their need for relaxing activities - but also for rest. So, to this question they answered that 25% rest, use 18% of modern technology, carry out a 27% physical activity form, talk to friends or parents, and 10% read or listen to music. We must also take into account the clarifications made by the pupils for each answer offered, because they rest and listen to music, it gives them a state of well-being, they use modern technology with their parents or friends (they play on the

computer, they watch documentaries together to carry out school projects, they perform physical activities with friends and they listen to music at the same time). The conclusion that can be drawn from the answers to this question is that the skills acquired in the physical education class also affect the lives of pupils outside of school, which can only please us. Regarding question number six "What are your favorite relaxation activities? List some of these", the pupils had roughly identical answers as to question number five, which is why we chose not to present it.

Table 5. The answers to item 7

I.7 How do you feel after your physical education class?	frq	%
Enthusiast	27	93%
Angry	0	0%
It doesn't affect me in any way	2	7%

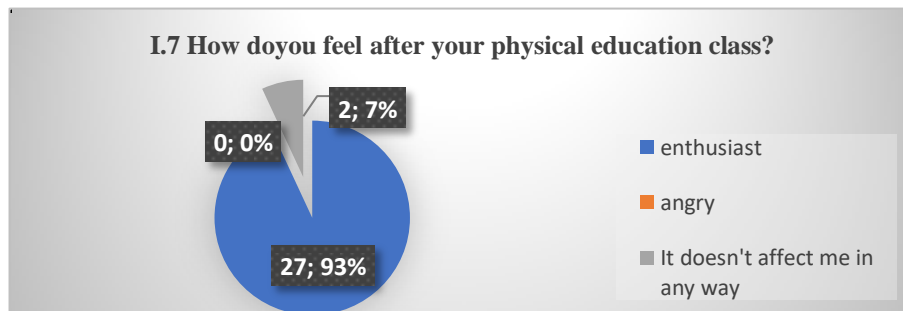


Fig. 7. Graphic representation for responses to Item 7

Question number seven is a question relevant to physical education discipline, because pupils answering that they feel enthusiastic after this hour, which can only please us, but not the same answer they gave in the case of the same question but related to the mathematical discipline. In this case, the pupils responded that after the class of this discipline they feel 68% upset, 24% enthusiastic, and do not influence them in any way in 4%. The pupils justified the answer that

they are upset after math class, because it is not as dynamic as the physical education class. Therefore, it is necessary that the instructional - educational process has a more exciting and creative development, so that pupils do not get bored and find the classes carried out in the classroom at least as interesting as the physical education class. It is important to listen to the pupils' opinion as well, because they show us the best way for effective education.

Table 6. The answers to item 8

I.8 When do you like to have physical education class? At the beginning of the program, in middle, at the end?	frq	%
At the beginning	12	42%
In the middle	3	10%
Towards the end	14	48%

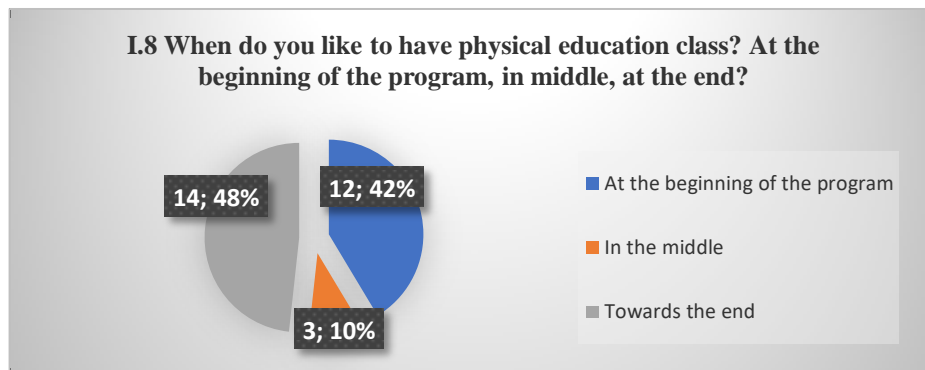


Fig. 8. Graphic representation for responses to Item 8

To question number eight the pupils answered that they like that physical education to be at the beginning of the school program 42%, 48% want to be at the end of the program, and a 10% answered that they want to be in the middle of the program.

Conclusions

The fact that the education system is a laden and over-demanding one for pupils in general, but especially for primary school pupils, it is not a direction that today's society seems to need. Society's requirements seem to be satisfied by a general conception of intelligence, which offers to guarantee success in all educational directions (intelligence sides), aiming not only at general intelligence (IQ), but rather at a cumulation of skills, which guarantees success in life, both personally, socially and professionally.

The beginning of schooling brings to the fore various school subjects that initially do not seem to be strong stimuli for small schools, but along the way some of them are

attracted to subjects such as music because it brings good mood and pleasant affective states, the same beneficial effects can be observed in other disciplines, the most representative being physical education, which in addition to the positive effects it brings harmonious development on the body, it also brings positive emotional states, often associated with success. Learning skills under pressure, by association with negative affective states, leads to their updating together with the same states, which may explain the refusal to some school activities, the difficulties of employment. A source of negative affective states is the repetition of situations of failure that create distrust of oneself, remembering only the negative aspects gradually leading to the gained helplessness. The teacher's intervention consisted in valuing the students, refraining from generalizing the goal, providing realistic feedback with direction and hope, forming optimism.

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