

## SENSE OF LIFE SATISFACTION AND ATTITUDE TOWARD PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OF POST-SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

The relationship between a sense of satisfaction and chosen components of attitudes towards physical activity and physical education was the main object of this study. 229 students of one of public post-secondary schools in Opole was examined for this research, using SWLS-test (scale of life satisfaction - adaptation Z. Jurczynski 2001) and author survey questionnaire.

The study shown a statistically significant correlation between the perceived level of life satisfaction and behavioral component of attitudes towards physical activity and emotional - to quantity of physical education.

It is worth to promote physical activity as a way of improving the quality of human life.

**Keywords:** physical activity, physical education, quality of life

### INTRODUCTION

In developed countries, health is treated as social capital that conditions an increase in the quality of life of their populations. Subjective indicators of health and well-being are becoming increasingly noticed and employed in prevention and health promotion strategies.

Global trends in contemporary globalised culture reveal a strong pressure on consumerism, high standard and quality of living, liberal lifestyle as well as promoting hedonistic values as the primary purpose and meaning of life (Kawecki, 2011).

The analysis of various concepts that define quality of life seems to justify the understanding of quality of life suggested for the purposes of this article, i.e. as the perceived degree of the satisfaction of diverse and important human needs (Trzebiatowski, 2011).

Physical culture (training) is a part of general culture designed to meet not only biological human needs, including those related to physical health, but also mental ones, including those related to psychosocial and spiritual life.

Essential human values generated by physical culture, such as physical activity, quality of life and health, precondition one another (Nowak, 2012a). Many researchers stress that adherence to the principles of a healthy lifestyle, whose main component is physical activity (Blomstrand, 2009), creates an opportunity to improve one's health and quality of life. While focusing on the pragmatic aspects of a healthy lifestyle, one should pay attention to physical activity as its key element, which also proves to be the most difficult one to put into practice (Dębicki, Kuśnierz 2004).

As regards mental well-being, physical activity remains of essential value for both the individual and the collective, and can have both a direct and indirect impact on the feelings described as satisfaction and self-realisation by those who engage in physical activity.

According to Kliszcz et al. (2004), life satisfaction is a feeling of satisfaction with one's own achievements and environment. Individuals derive satisfaction through making an assessment that results from comparing their situation with the standards they have set for themselves.

The aim of the study is to demonstrate a correlation between life satisfaction and selected components of an attitude towards physical activity and physical education.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

For the purposes of the study, 229 students of one of the state-owned post-secondary schools in Opole were examined, 108 male (47%) and 121 female (53%). The study employed the Satisfaction with Life Scale (adapted by Juczyński 2009), a tool consisting of 5 statements whereby respondents evaluated, on a scale from 1 to 7, to what extent each of these statements referred to their previous life. Their of overall life satisfaction ratio was obtained by summarising the value of all the statements. The obtained test results were within the range of 5 to 35 points. The higher is the ratio, the higher is level of life satisfaction. The overall ratio was converted to a sten (Standard Ten) score. The obtained sten scores of 1-4 were interpreted as low, of 5-6 as average and of 7-10 as high. For the purposes of the study, the original questionnaire was extended with several closed questions designed by the author of the study. A [R] Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated with Statistica 10, the significant differences between the means were examined with the Student's t test, the statistical significance of the correlation between variables was determined with the Chi-square test. In the analysis, we considered significant those results for which the probability value was less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ) of the accepted level of significance.

### Analysis

Male respondents scored higher (SWLS = 23.08) than women (SWLS = 22.17) in terms of their life satisfaction index, but no statistically significant difference between the means was identified. No statistically significant difference in terms of gender was identified for each category of indicator levels based on the sten scale (low, medium, high). The largest number of respondents (44.2%) scored high in terms of their level of life satisfaction indicator, 38.6% achieved moderate results, and 17.2% displayed a low level of life satisfaction.

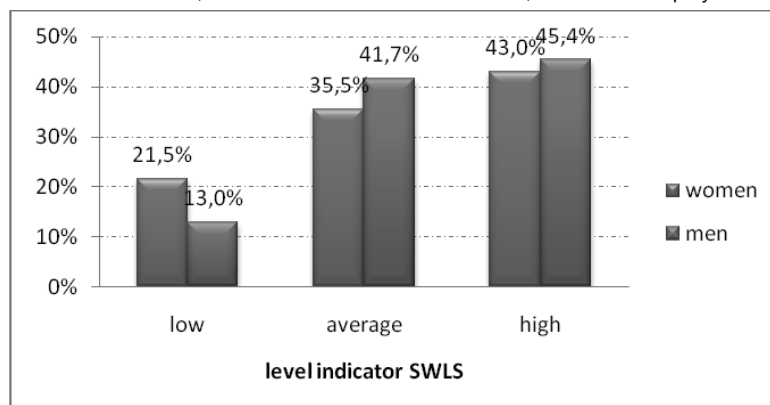


Fig. 3  
Level of life satisfaction indicator

More male (38.9%) than female (18.2%) respondents would like to increase the number of physical education classes at school, see Fig. 4. While the majority of female respondents (56.2%) were in favour of leaving the number of classes unchanged, as much as 25.6% would like to reduce the number of physical education per week. Statistically significant differences:  $\chi^2 = 13.087$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.005$ .

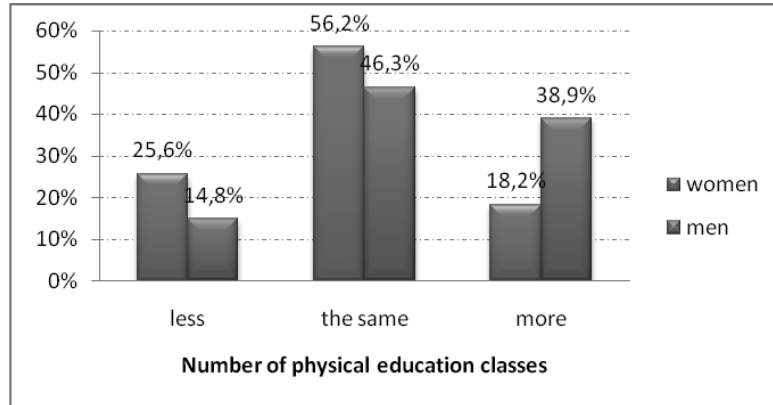


Fig. 4  
Attitude of students to number of physical education classes

At the time of the study, 40.7% of male respondents declared that they were regularly engaged (at least 2 times a week) in physical activity of their choice. The proportion of female respondents is much lower in this respect, and amounts to 21.5%. It is disturbing that a staggering proportion of 39.7% of female and 32.4% male respondents is not practising and has never practised physical activity. Statistically significant differences:  $\chi^2 = 10.223$ ;  $df = 2$ ,  $0.01 > p > 0.005$ .

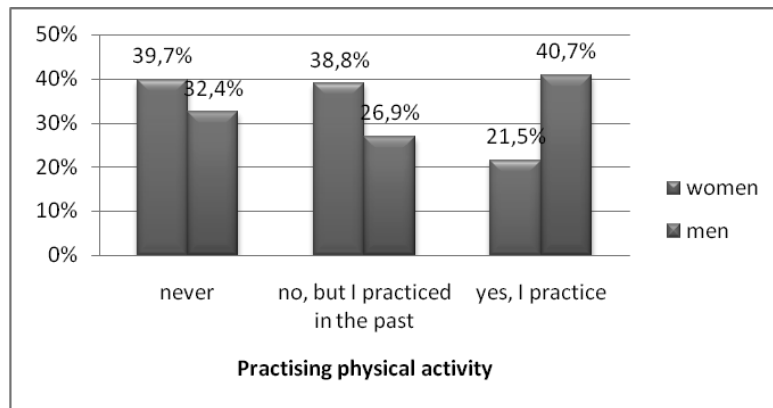


Fig. 5  
Attitude towards physical activity of examined students

In the course of the search for a correlation between the analysed variables, it was revealed that an increase in the positive attitude towards physical activity leads to an increase in life satisfaction indicator levels, see Fig. 6. A similar relationship was also identified with regard to an attitude towards the temporal dimension of physical education, see Fig. 7. It should be noted that established correlations are weak, see Fig. 1.

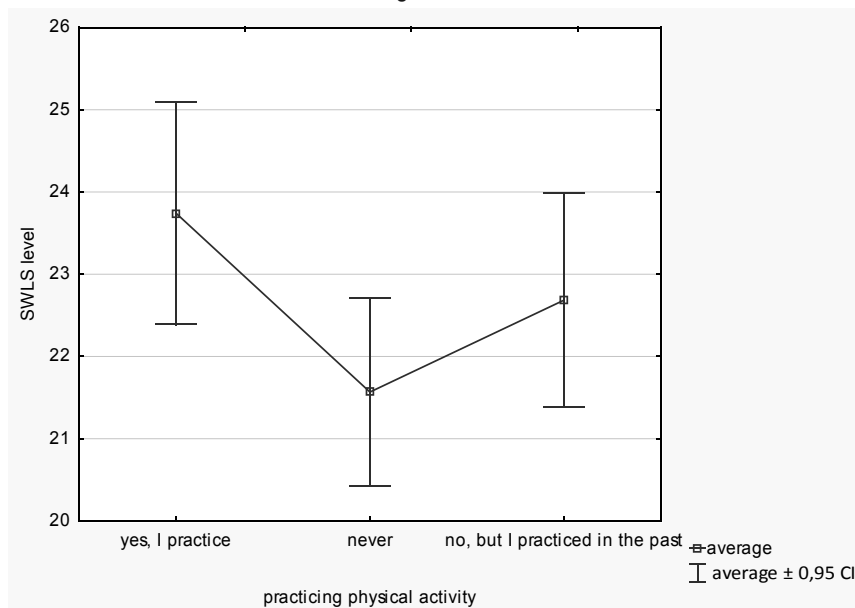


Fig. 6  
Correlation between the level of life satisfaction and the level of physical activity

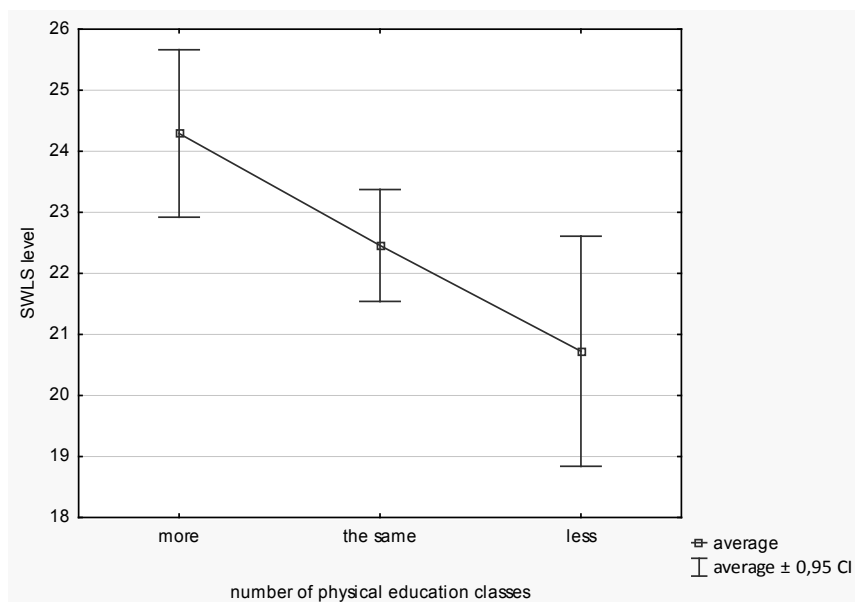


Fig. 7

Correlation between life satisfaction levels and an attitude towards the number of physical education classes

Tab. 1 Identified correlation results

Marked correlation rates significant for $p < 0.05$ ; $N=229$					
	$\bar{X}$	SD	summary indicator SWLS	number of physical education classes	physical activity
summary indicator SWLS	22.60262	5.575966	-----	0.217411	0.159621
number of physical education classes	2.07424	0.693763	0.217411	-----	0.363329
physical activity	1.94323	0.817200	0.159621	0.363329	-----

## DISCUSSION

The aim of modern physical education is to develop a positive attitude towards physical activity (Grabowski 1997). This is an important objective in the context of meeting a biological human need for motion at the time when civilisation rapidly develops together with its negative phenomena, such as hypokinesia. An insufficient level of physical activity contributes to the deterioration of mental and physical well-being, which also affects subjective life satisfaction levels (quality of life) (Booth 2002). An attitude towards physical activity comprises three components: a) cognitive component, b) behavioural component c) emotional component (Mądrzycki 1977). If one of these components is missing or its level is low, this precludes or severely restricts the meeting of a need for motion, which remains essential for contemporary people. The genetically hard-wired need for physical activity, which, as ontogenetic development progresses, manifests itself by an increase in mobility, is gradually reduced (Przewęda 1981). It has been demonstrated that the high level of physical activity in childhood conditions health-related behaviour in adulthood (Nowak 2008). If appropriately shaped in childhood, a positive attitude towards physical activity, as one's natural mobility and need for motion decrease, tends to enforce rational habitual actions driven by the necessity to administer an appropriate dose of physical activity that specialists recommend for a particular age group (Kuśniercz 2008). Practising physical activity helps to improve self-esteem and satisfaction with oneself and one's life (Nowak 2012b). It is possible to foster positive feelings of happiness, success and satisfaction through sports. Our own research has shown that a positive attitude towards physical activity correlates with higher life satisfaction levels. Similar results were obtained by American researchers (Valois et al. 2004). Despite the fact that physical activity has the potential to make a positive impact on one's perceived mental well-being levels, it is worth noting that a lot depends on the type, form and mode of one's participation in it, including external factors such as weather conditions, infrastructure and other participants.

## CONCLUSIONS

- The study demonstrates a significant statistical correlation between one's perceived life satisfaction levels and both behavioural components of an attitude towards physical activity and emotional components of an attitude towards the number of physical education classes.
- It is worth promoting physical activity as a means of improving quality of human life.

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