

# THE INTEREST IN SPORTS ACTIVITY AMONG FIRST YEAR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE YEARS 1995–2001

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## Abstract:

The aim of the research was to determine the tendencies of change in interest in sports activity among students over the period of a few years. In order to achieve this aim, we diagnosed the interest in sports activity among students in particular years (1995 – 2001). The research was conducted seven times in the seven consecutive years (always in the first grade during the first PE lesson in the school year. We diagnosed interest in the cases of 1,693 students (906 female, 787 male) of grade 1 in the Secondary School No. 7 in Wrocław over a period of the consecutive seven years. By means of the Chi-square Pearson's test and Chi-square test of highest credibility we verified the hypothesis of the independence of interest in sports activity of first-grade students (separately for females and males) and the year when the research was done. It turned out that on the level of significance  $\alpha = 0.05$  the year of the research influenced the choice of 7 forms of sports activity in the case of males, whereas it did not affect the choice of the remaining 14 sport activities. We noticed a slight degree of growth of interest of the boys in basketball, handball and ring-play, whereas it declined in the case of volleyball, badminton and bodybuilding. As a result of the conducted statistical analysis we also noticed that on the level of significance  $\alpha = 0.05$  the year of the research influenced the choice of 12 forms of sports activity in the case of females, whereas it did not affect the choice of the remaining 9. We observed a uniform growing tendency in interest in cycling. We noticed a growing interest of girls in football, gymnastics, tennis, badminton, ring-play, dancing, judo/karate and other forms of sports activity not mentioned in the survey, whereas it declined in the case of skiing, horseback riding, roller skating and archery. Upon conducting the statistical analysis we noticed that interest in sports activity of first-grade secondary school students is subject to change with the subsequent measurements.

**Key words:** *interest, sports activity of students, secondary school*

## INTERESSE DER ERSTKLÄSSLER EINER MITTELSCHULE, JAHRGÄNGE 1995-2001, AN SPORTIVER BETÄTIGUNG

### Zusammenfassung:

Unsere Forschungsarbeit hatte das Ziel, die Tendenzen wechselnden Interesses der Schüler an sportiver Betätigung während ein paar Jahren zu untersuchen. Um das zu erzielen registrierten wir in jedem Jahr innerhalb des betreffenden Zeitintervalls (1995 – 2001) das Interesse von Schülern an sportiver Betätigung. Die Untersuchung wurde sieben Mal durchgeführt (immer in der 1. Klasse während des Sportunterrichts, und zwar an der ersten Stunde in betreffendem Schuljahr. Wir untersuchten das Interesse 1693 Erstklässler (906 Schülerinnen, 787 Schüler) am Sporttreiben in der Mittelschule 7 in Wrocław im Laufe der folgenden sieben Jahre.

Mittels des Pearson Chi-Quadrat-Tests und Chi-Quadrat-Tests der höchsten Verlässlichkeit, wurde die Hypothese bestätigt, dass zwischen dem Interesse der Erstklässler an sportiver Betätigung (Mädchen und Jungen getrennt) und dem Forschungsjahr ein Zusammenhang besteht. Die Untersuchung ergab, dass bei dem Signifikanzniveau von 0,05 das Forschungsjahr die Wahl 7 Sportarten beeinflusste, wobei die Wahl der übrigen 14 unter keinem Einfluss stand. Leicht steigendes Interesse der Schüler an Basketball, Handball und Wurfring-Spiel machte sich bemerkbar, aber an Volleyball, Badminton und Bodybuilding sind die Schüler immer weniger interessiert. Anhand von Ergebnissen einer von uns vorgenommenen statistischen Analyse konnten wir auch feststellen, dass beim Signifikanzniveau  $\alpha = 0,05$  das Forschungsjahr die von den Schülerinnen gezeigte Wahl beeinflusste, und zwar, von 12 Sportarten, nicht aber von übrigen 9. Ein allgemein steigendes Interesse am Radfahren ist festzustellen. Die Mädchen interessierten sich zunehmend für Fußball, Gymnastik, Tennis, Badminton, ring-play, Tanzen, Judo – Karate und für andere in der Untersuchung nicht erwähnten Sportarten. Das Interesse am Skilaufen, Reiten, Rollschuhlaufen, Bogenschießen nahm ab. Die statistische Analyse zeigte ein wechselndes Interesse der Erstklässler der Mittelschule an sportiver Betätigung.

**Schlüsselwörter:** *Interesse, Sporttreiben der Schüler, Mittelschule*

## Introduction

Interests are usually presented in an individual-environment interaction. The factors that determine the development of interests can be arranged as follows: (1) from the factors exerting a generalised influence on an individual as an element of the society, to the factors influencing an individual being, i.e. acting in an individualised way, (2) from the factors whose action in its essence takes into account a student's activity, to the factors that do not consider this, and (3) according to whether the consciousness of the student or the educator as the architect of the development does or does not constitute the essence of the factor (Gurycka, 1989). If we assume school is one of the factors, it will occupy, according to the presented criteria, the most responsible position. The characteristic feature of school is the consciousness of the educators and teachers, based on appropriate education, effectiveness dependent on the student's activity, and the assumption that its great influence has to take into consideration the rule of individualisation.

'From among all the other developmental factors, the role of the school in the development of children and teenagers is greatly emphasised in our culture and civilisation. However, in practical terms this impingement is assessed either as positive or as negative. School is the place of intellectual improvement and where talents and personalities are developed. On the other hand, the school is also accused of failures and incorrectness. The plan of the impingement of the school is contained in its statute (articles) which perceives as its duty the enlargement of its aims and curricula along with the development of the society. If we assume that the school influences the whole personality of the human being including his/her interests, we must seek sources of this influence first of all in its curricula and the employed teaching methods. The student ought to be provided with the necessary knowledge and skills – instrumental dispositions, but also his/her emotional and volitional sphere of the personality must be impinged upon through the formation of particular attitudes' (Gurycka 1989, p. 145).

It seems that in the process of educating and raising young people it is unusually important to evoke and consolidate the students' interests. It is equally significant to develop predilections in youth, especially in raising them to physical education. It is a broadly known fact that predilections are a psychological feature of possessing a positive attitude towards specific activities, carried out by the person (Gurycka, 1989).

Thus, in order to realise the aims of physical education at school (especially in secondary schools), one should diagnose the students' interests in sports activity and satisfy them, inducing predilections to specific forms of sports activity (Rokita, 2001).

When analysing literature on the subject one can conclude that youth interests in sports activity differ depending on sex, place of residence, age, season and many other factors (Gurycka, 1989; Carroll & Peng, 1999; Frömel, Formánková, Bartoszewicz, & Koszczyc, 1996; Frömel, Powolny, & Ludva, 1996; Rokita, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001; Sigmund, Vasendova, Neuls, Frömel, & Skalík, 2000). It seems that the social and economical changes occurring across the country as well as significant achievements in sport which are shown and popularized in the media (radio, press, television) may influence human interests. Therefore, we decided to diagnose interests in sports activity of students by the subsequent research measurements (1995 – 2001) and determine the changes which occur in these interests. There are not any reports in literature regarding these changes. That is why the author, when conducting this cross-sectional research (1995 – 2001), attempted to determine their tendencies (Rokita, 2000, 2001). That is why it was advisable to diagnose the state of interests in sports activity among students within the chosen years. Hypothetically it was assumed that the students' interests in sports activity would differ in a few subsequent measurements (Rokita, 2000, 2001). In order to verify the hypothesis, the author decided to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the interests in sports activity of first-grade students of secondary school in the years 1995 – 2001?
2. What sort of tendencies occur in the changes in interests in sports activity of male first-grade students of secondary school in the years 1995 – 2001?
3. What sort of tendencies occur in the changes in interests in sports activity of female first-grade students of secondary school in the years 1995 – 2001?

## Methods

In the research, the method of diagnostic sounding was applied, as well as the technique of questionnaire (the questionnaire title: *My favourite forms of sports activity, which I would like to do during physical education lessons*) (Rokita, 1998). The questionnaire contained a list of 20 different sports activities and one open question in order to allow students to enter their optional sports activities that were not enumerated in the list. The respondent's task was to X-mark all the forms that they would like to do during physical education lessons and, optionally, to add other sports activity. The research was conducted seven times (always in the first year, during the first lesson of physical education within the school year), in the subsequent seven years (1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001). In this way it was possible to diagnose the interests of 1,693 first-year students (906 girls, 787

boys) of the Secondary School No. 7 in Wrocław within the seven subsequent years (Table 1). The mean age of the students tested was 15 years and 3 months.

Table 1. Number of the tested first-year students of secondary school in particular years

Sex/ Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Σ
Boys	115	117	113	114	116	110	102	787
Girls	113	116	119	112	124	168	154	906
Σ	228	233	232	226	240	278	256	1,693

## Results

The Chi-square Pearson's test and Chi-square test of greatest reliability were applied to verify the hypothesis concerning the independence of the first year students' interests in sports activity from the year of conducting the research. The analysis of the interests in sports activity in the first-year male students of secondary school in the years 1995-2001 was carried out on the basis of the data obtained from the 787 boys using a questionnaire. As a result of the statistical analysis it turned out that, on the level of significance of  $\alpha = 0.05$ , the year of research influenced the choice of 7 sports activities (basketball, volleyball, handball, table tennis, badminton, ring-play<sup>1</sup> and bodybuilding), but did not influence the choice of the 14 sports activities left. Although the linear dependencies were not analysed between the students' interests and the year of the research, various tendencies were observed among these interests. The boys' interest concerning the 7 sports activities mentioned does not present any homogenous tendency (rising or falling) in the years 1995-2001.

Within the seven years of the study (1995-2001), it was always basketball that gained the greatest interest in the boys tested (66-84%). An over-60% students' interest was also ascribed to football (63-73%). Besides, boys were much interested (years 1995-2001) in swimming (48-66%) and in table tennis (39-53%). The least popular forms in the tested group were: gymnastics (2-6%), ring-play (2-10%), dancing (3-10%) and roller-skating (3-12%) (Table 2).

The analysis of the interests in sports activity in female first-grade students of secondary school in the years 1995-2001 was carried out on the basis of the data obtained from the 906 girls using a questionnaire. As a result of the statistical analysis it turned out that, on the level of significance of  $\alpha = 0.05$ , the year of research influenced the choice

of 12 sports activities (football, gymnastics, tennis, horseback riding, badminton, ring-play, roller-skating, dancing, judo/karate, cycling, archery and other sports activities, not mentioned in the questionnaire), but did not influence the choice of the 8 sports activities left. Although the linear dependencies were not analysed between the students' interests and the year of the research, a homogenous rising tendency was observed concerning the girls' interest in cycling.

Within the seven years of the study (1995-2001), it was always swimming that gained the greatest interest in the girls tested (69-80%). An over-50% students' interest was also ascribed to volleyball (62-74%) and basketball (56-66%). Besides the girls were greatly interested (years 1995-2001) in ice-skating, skiing, and horseback riding. The least popular sports activities in the tested group were: ring-play (3-19%), bodybuilding (5-12%) and other sports activities, not mentioned in the questionnaire (Table 2).

## Discussion and conclusions

Considering the inclination angle of the straight line created out of the dispersion of the students' interest results in particular years, one can clearly note the boys' rising interest in basketball, handball and ring-play on the one hand, and a falling interest in volleyball, badminton and body-building on the other (Table. 2). It seems that the popularity of basketball stems from the fact that this game is so promoted in the media (broadcasting of NBA matches). It is surprising to note a slight growth of interest of the boys in handball and ring-play. On the other hand, a declining tendency is noticed (till 1998) in the interest of boys in volleyball which may have stemmed from the fact that it was not so popularised in the media then. Since 1999 we can observe a growth in the interest of boys in volleyball. It might have been connected with TV broadcasts of the World League (where Poland participated too) or with the World Championship success of the Polish junior team. It also seems that the significant decline in the popularity of bodybuilding among boys may be connected with the nature of this form of sports activity (numerous repetitions of the same exercises, long-term wait for the effects) which might lead to a general feeling of monotony and weariness.

The presented results of the research (Table 2) are very similar to the research by Karkosz (1994) and Górna (1997). According to them, the sports activity such as basketball, football and swimming are employed most frequently by secondary school students.

<sup>1</sup> Ring-play is a game which consists of throwing a small (cca 15 cm in diameter) rubber ring, which is empty inside, over the net. It is played in teams of 1 - 1 or 2 - 2 players on the court similar to the badminton court.

Table 2. Interests in sports activity of the first-year secondary school students in the years 1995-2001 (in %).

Sports activity	Girls								Boys							
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	p-value	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	p-value
Football	14	15	14	16	16	20	29	<b>0.00898</b>	63	63	66	66	63	60	73	0.61537
Basketball	56	56	56	58	58	61	66	0.54339	70	84	67	66	78	78	77	<b>0.01493</b>
Volleyball	64	70	66	72	62	74	74	0.17012	58	57	52	25	45	52	59	<b>0.00000</b>
Handball	18	20	16	20	24	21	31	0.08794	10	18	11	9	21	27	37	<b>0.00000</b>
Swimming	74	75	80	75	72	75	69	0.58396	62	65	48	66	53	55	57	0.05146
Ice-skating	50	46	58	44	47	43	56	0.08284	18	10	11	9	13	8	13	0.27821
Gymnastics	34	30	32	33	22	42	42	<b>0.00645</b>	6	6	2	2	4	2	5	0.43839
Athletics	22	20	18	20	20	21	25	0.88277	18	24	21	19	20	17	23	0.79857
Skiing	48	50	54	47	42	36	41	0.05077	35	20	34	34	38	33	36	0.08850
Table tennis	50	48	50	46	51	58	60	0.15669	40	57	42	53	39	68	48	<b>0.00006</b>
Tennis	42	44	44	48	41	60	62	<b>0.00022</b>	28	29	26	28	25	33	35	0.69278
Horseback riding	52	50	58	46	41	40	42	<b>0.02756</b>	18	10	16	16	12	13	18	0.47031
Badminton	30	40	40	30	36	46	55	<b>0.00205</b>	15	33	12	9	12	21	12	<b>0.00000</b>
Ring-play	5	6	4	9	3	17	19	<b>0.00000</b>	10	2	5	2	3	8	10	<b>0.01393</b>
Roller-skating	32	34	34	22	16	20	34	<b>0.00035</b>	12	10	7	3	6	5	8	0.16395
Dancing	35	38	36	35	16	34	51	<b>0.00000</b>	10	8	5	3	5	4	5	0.27870
Bodybuilding	12	10	10	6	9	5	5	0.42723	35	31	18	19	13	17	26	<b>0.00024</b>
Judo/karate	26	24	26	30	22	31	41	<b>0.00876</b>	26	31	19	16	18	27	20	0.05866
Cycling	16	16	18	18	30	34	40	<b>0.00000</b>	30	29	22	25	30	34	34	0.37733
Archery	27	30	28	14	10	13	25	<b>0.00001</b>	25	18	29	20	16	25	31	0.07779
Other	8	10	6	15	12	16	22	<b>0.00318</b>	16	10	22	10	18	16	13	0.13948

The significance in the Pearson's test on the level of  $\alpha \leq 0.05$  was bolded.

In each subsequent test (starting with 1995), the girls' interest in cycling turned out bigger than or at least the same as that obtained the year before. Possibly, it is linked with the development of mountain cycling which is promoted in the media, and perhaps it is associated with a pleasant and active form of spending one's free time on a bike. Considering the inclination angle of the straight line created in the same way as for the group of boys, one can clearly note, on the one hand, the girls' rising interest in football, gymnastics, tennis, badminton, ring-play, dancing, judo/karate, and other sports activities, not mentioned in the questionnaire, and, on the other hand, a falling interest in skiing, horseback riding, roller-skating and archery. The growth in the interest of girls in football may seem surprising. Perhaps, it is connected with the development of this sport among women (a state league in Poland, female football Championships of Europe and of the world), and also with the achievements of the local team in the football Championships of Poland (University Sports Association - AZS Wrocław).

It seems that such a high interest of girls in swimming (69-80%) results from the health and utilitarian values of swimming. This sport activity is considered to be the most human-friendly for all age groups. Similar results were obtained by: Frömel, Formánková, Bartoszewicz, and

Koszczyk (1996), then Frömel, Powolny, and Ludva (1996), and Sigmund, Vasendova, Neuls, Frömel, and Skalík (2000), although their research was conducted not only in Poland but also in the Czech Republic. The similarities may result from the employed research techniques – a categorized survey, which in both of the cases (this one and the other quoted authors) put some restrictions on the statements of the examinees.

When comparing interests in the sports activities of boys and girls, we noticed that a high interest was enjoyed by basketball and volleyball. Similar results were obtained by Dobrzeński (1995), Karkosz (1994), Górna (1997) and Pławińska (1997). As we noticed in our thesis, such a large and growing popularity of team games was the effect of many factors, among others, of a possibility to compete and check one's own skills in a variability of situations occurring in the game, as well as of the emotions accompanying the game. It also seems that such a great interest of young people in basketball and volleyball is caused by autotelic values of these sports. They are revealed in various forms: efficiency and ability, hedonistic values – concerned purely with pleasure, emphatic. In team sport games a student gains assertive skills of 'opening' through an expression of thoughts and needs to cooperate with others – by means of these

domains the student can assess his/her own sport and intellectual value which is manifested by a conscious decision-making process as to the chosen forms of activity (Rzepa, 2001).

We have explained the location where our examinations were conducted and the practical significance of the obtained results. With a high degree of caution, we can conclude that diagnosing the students' interest in sports activities is purposeful because, by satisfying this interest during physical education classes – as was done by the author of the paper (Rokita, 1998, 1999), we motivate young people for sports activity participation throughout their lives.

The statistical analysis that was carried out confirmed the assumed hypothesis; the secondary

school first year students' interests in sports activities underwent changes within the seven subsequent years (1995-2001). We can notice a slightly growing interest of boys in basketball, handball and ring-play, whereas interest declined in the case of volleyball, badminton and bodybuilding. We can notice a growing interest of girls in football, gymnastics, tennis, badminton, ring-play, dancing, judo/karate and other sports activities not mentioned in the survey, whereas interest declined in the case of skiing, horseback riding, roller skating and archery. When performing a statistical analysis we did not observe any other significant changes in the interests of girls and boys over a period of a few years (1995 – 2001).

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## INTERES ZA SPORTSKE AKTIVNOSTI UČENIKA PRVIH RAZREDA SREDNJE ŠKOLE U RAZDOBLJU OD 1995. DO 2001. GODINE

### Sažetak

#### Uvod

Čini se da socijalne i ekonomske promjene u zemlji, kao i važna sportska postignuća o kojima se govori i koja se populariziraju u medijima (radio, novine, televizija), mogu značajno utjecati na interese ljudi. Stoga smo odlučili utvrditi interes za sportske aktivnosti učenika i učenica srednje škole na temelju niza mjerenja u razdoblju do 1995. do 2001. godine te ispitati mijenja li se interes za sport kroz godine. Proučavajući literaturu iz ovog područja nismo naišli na radove koji bi obrađivali takve promjene interesa. To je razlog zbog kojega je autor poduzeo istraživanje koje je kombinacija transversalnoga i longitudinalnog pristupa (1995. - 2001., 7 generacija učenika). Pokušao je utvrditi postoji li tendencija promjene interesa za sportske aktivnosti na uzorku učenika unutar odabranih godina, a pretpostavio je da će se interesi učenika za sportske aktivnosti mijenjati od mjerenja do mjerenja.

#### Metode

Za prikupljanje podataka autor se koristio metodom dijagnostičkog mjerenja i upitnikom pod naslovom *Moji omiljeni oblici sportskih aktivnosti koje bih volio uvijek baviti na nastavi tjelesnog odgoja* (Rokita, 1998). Mjerenje je provedeno u sedam uzastopnih godina, uvijek u prvom razredu, na prvom satu nastave tjelesnog odgoja. Utvrđen je interes za sportske aktivnosti kod 1.693 učenika (906 djevojčica, 787 dječaka), prvih razreda srednje škole br. 7 iz Wrocława kroz sedam godina.

#### Rezultati i rasprava

Na temelju rezultata Hi-kvadrat testa potvrđena je hipoteza o nezavisnosti interesa za sportske aktivnosti učenika prvog razreda srednje škole s obzirom na spol i s obzirom na godinu u kojoj je provedeno mjerenje. Pokazalo se da je godina prikupljanja podataka statistički značajno utjecala na odabir 7 omiljenih sportskih aktivnosti kod učenika, dok za preostalih 14 taj utjecaj generacije nije potvrđen. Vidljivo je lagano povećanje interesa dječaka za košarku, rukomet i igru prstenova, dok je pad interesa zabilježen za odbojku, badminton i tjelograditeljstvo (*body building*). Unutar ispitivanih sedam godina (1995. - 2001.), dječaci su uvijek pokazivali najveći interes za košarku (66-84%). Više od 60% učeničkih interesa za sport otpada na nogomet (63-73%). Osim toga, dječaci su ponajviše bili zainteresirani za plivanje (48-66%) i stolni tenis (39-53%). Najmanje popularnim sportovima za ovaj uzorak

ispitanika pokazali su se gimnastika, (2-6%), igra prstenova (2-10%), ples (3-10%) i rolanje (3-12%) (tablica 2). Rezultati su također pokazali da postoji statistički značajan utjecaj godine ispitivanja na odabir 12 omiljenih kretnih aktivnosti kod učenica (nogomet, gimnastika, tenis, jahanje, badminton, igra prstenova, rolanje, ples, judo/karate, vožnja bicikla i još neki sportovi koji nisu bili navedeni u upitniku), dok kod 9 preostalih sportova iz upitnika taj utjecaj nije potvrđen. Vidljivo je da postoji jasan porast interesa učenica za vožnju bicikla. Zabilježen je i lagani pad interesa kod djevojaka za nogomet, gimnastiku, tenis, badminton, judo/karate, ples, skijanje, jahanje, rolanje, streljaštvo i ostale oblike kretnih aktivnosti koje nisu bile navedene u upitniku. Unutar ispitivanih sedam godina djevojke su od svih sportova uvijek najviše izabirale plivanje (69-80% djevojaka iz uzorka). Više od 50% interesa učenica bilo je usmjereno na odbojku (62-74%) i košarku (56-66%). Osim toga, djevojke su bile zainteresirane i za klizanje, skijanje i jahanje. Najmanje popularnim sportovima djevojke su ocijenile: igru prstenova (3-19%), tjelograditeljstvo (5-12%) i ostale sportove koji nisu bili navedeni u upitniku (tablica 2).

Usporedba iskazanih interese učenika i učenica otkriva da su i jedni i drugi najviše zainteresirani za košarku i odbojku. Rastuća popularnost timskih sportova, prema mišljenju autora, može biti posljedica toga da ti sportovi pružaju puno mogućnosti za natjecanje, za provjeru vlastitih vještina u varijabilnim situacijama igre, ali i za doživljavanje emocija koje ju prate.

Uzimajući u obzir praktične implikacije ovog istraživanja, s velikim oprezom autor zaključuje da utvrđivanje interesa za sport kod srednjoškolaca ima svoju svrhu. Zadovoljavanjem interesa učenika za sport na nastavi tjelesnog odgoja, što je autor i provodio u praksi (Rokita, 1998, 1999), moguće je pozitivno djelovati na motivaciju mladih ljudi za sport, što se onda odražava i šire, na njihove životne potrebe.

#### Zaključak

Dobiveni su rezultati potvrdili početne hipoteze - interesi učenika prvih razreda srednjih škola za sportske aktivnosti mijenjali su se iz generacije u generaciju u razdoblju od sedam godina (1995. - 2001.). Zamjećuje se lagani porast interesa za košarku, rukomet i igru prstenova kod dječaka, dok opada interes za odbojku, badminton i tjelograditeljstvo. Kod djevojčica je vidljivo povećanje interesa za nogomet, gimnastiku, tenis, badminton, igru prstenova, judo/karate i još neke oblike kretnih aktivnosti, dok interes opada za skijanje, jahanje, rolanje i streljaštvo.