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Postoje žiakov cirkevnej školy k inklúzii žiaka s telesným postihnutím do vyučovania telesnej a športovej výchovy

Attitudes of Church School Pupils Towards Inclusion for Pupil with Physical Disability in Physical and Sports Education

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to analyse the attitudes of pupils of a church school towards the inclusion of a pupil with a physical disability in physical and sport education (PSE) and to compare in terms of gender, grade-level, in-school and out-of-school experiences, and type of school. The research sample consisted of 156 pupils attending the Piarist Combined School of František Hanák in Prievidza. In collecting the research data, we were inspired by a standardized diagnostic tool, the CAIPE-R. Pupils of a church school are aware that the presence of pupil with physical disability can negatively affect the flow of the PSE lessons. The highest level of positive attitude was shown by the pupils in full acceptance of a pupil in a wheelchair in the PSE class. Girls are significantly more likely to perceive inclusive PSE as an important to integrate a pupil with physical disability for his/her successful integration into society. Pupils of the lower grade-level (6th and 7th) are significantly more inclined to believe that the inclusion of a wheelchair pupil in PSE lessons can in no way disrupt the flow of the lesson, and that inclusive PSE is important for the pupil's successful integration into society. Pupils who have out-of-school experience of a person with physical disability are significantly more positive about the inclusion of a pupil in a wheelchair in the areas of wheelchair pupil acceptance by classmates, common goals achievement, and higher success rates of inclusion in society. Pupils with in-school experience declare a significantly more positive attitude in the success of learning motor skills acquisition in inclusive PSE. No differences in attitudes were showed in terms of the type of school.

Keywords: Inclusive physical and sport education. Intact pupils. Wheelchair pupil. Gender. Grade-level. Out-of-school experience. In-school experience. Type of school.

Introduction

Inclusion as a trend that brings innovation, can observe exceptionally, and it is still an extraordinary process in education (Bendíková, 2014). Inclusion is considered an innovative educational process where every student can provide a complete education. At the same time, inclusion can be viewed as a particular innovation to increase the quality of the educational process at school (Maliňáková, 2022). Currently, all European countries are moving towards inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. The development in this direction is based, firstly, on the belief that inclusion of pupils with special educational needs is beneficial for all and, secondly, on a critical analysis of the role of segregated education and its impact on the personality of this pupil (Geršicová, Porubčanová, 2020). The term inclusion can be understood as a new, different, higher quality in the educational approach, where the heterogeneity of groups of pupils is considered as normality. In addition to the humane effect, this way of working is also intended to facilitate the work of the teacher in a regular school. The need to achieve the same goal with all pupils is eliminated. The important thing turns out to be the journey and not the result in mutual interaction, acceptance and cooperation (Koštrnová, Ustohalová, Verešová, 2020).

A pupil with a physical disability is categorised as a pupil with a special educational need, specifically a sub-category of pupils with a disability (Vladová, Lechta a kol., 2017). One of the options for the education and learning of a pupil with TP is mainstream school. Parents decide where a child with TP will be educated and may choose a mainstream school for their child, but in this case, it is necessary to apply for inclusion of the child as an intact pupil within the framework of school integration. Here, the mutual cooperation of parents with the school, counselling facilities and other professionals is essential to bring the parents closer to the essence of inclusive education, to acquaint the parent with his/her rights, but also with his/her obligations (Krčahová, Šestáková, 2013). A pupil with physical disability using a wheelchair for mobility is classified as a pupil with a more severe degree of physical disability. In the conditions of the Slovak education system, inclusive education of pupils with a mild degree of disability takes place predominantly, while pupils with more severe disabilities are mostly transferred to special classes or special schools (Škoviera, 2017). However, several studies confirm that inclusive education for students with more severe disabilities helps them to achieve much better academic performance and success in school (Arthur-Kelly et al., 2008; Downing, 2010; Fyodorov et al., 2019; Strnadová, Arthur-Kelly, Foreman, 2021). Similarly, in the subject of physical and sport education

(PSE), the inclusion of a pupil in a wheelchair, greatly assists him/her in acquiring basic motor skills, developing motor abilities and socialising such a pupil into a group of able-bodied classmates (Nemček, Wittmannová, 2021; Nemček, Bumbera, 2021a). In this context, we were interested in how pupils of a church school educated at the secondary level of education (ISCED 2) would perceive a classmate using a wheelchair for mobility in physical and sport education classes.

Study aim

The aim of the study was to analyse the attitudes of pupils of a church school towards the inclusion of a pupil with a physical disability in PSE and to compare in terms of gender, grade-level, in-school and out-of-school experiences, and type of school.

Methods

The research sample consisted of 156 pupils attending the second grade of Piarist Combined School of František Hanák in Prievidza. 84 boys and 72 girls of participated in the research (Table 1).

Table 1: Basic categorisation and numbers of respondents

| CATEGORY (n=156) | | Number | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------|------------|
| | | (n) | (%) |
| Gender | Girls | 72 | 46,2 |
| | Boys | 84 | 53,8 |
| Out-of-school experience | With experience | 60 | 38,5 |
| | Without experience | 96 | 61,5 |
| In-school experience | With experience | 57 | 36,5 |
| | Without experience | 99 | 63,5 |
| Grade-level | 6 th – 7 th | 89 | 57,0 |
| | 8 th – 9 th | 67 | 43,0 |
| Type of school | Primary school | 82 | 52,6 |
| | 8-year gymnasium | 74 | 47,4 |

Only pupils without special educational needs (intact/ able-bodied pupils) were included in the research. Excluded from the research were pupils with special educational needs (n=3). The distribution of pupils from different aspects is presented in Table 1. Intact pupils were informed about the purpose of the research and the procedure for completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire was completed with the consent of the pupil's legal guardian, in the presence of the teacher and the researcher. The research was approved by the Ethics

Committee of the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport of Comenius University in Bratislava (No. 10/2019).

In collecting the research data, we were inspired by a standardized diagnostic tool, the CAIPE-R (Children's Attitude Towards Inclusive Physical Education-Revised) questionnaire, which examines students' attitudes towards inclusion in physical and sport education, developed and validated by American researcher Martin Block (Block, 1995). The CAIPE-R is generalizable to more than one disability and is a valid and reliable instrument for measuring intact children's attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities in PSE. The Czech version (CAIPE-CZ) of the questionnaire (Kudláček, Ješina & Wittmannová, 2011) was translated into Slovak, modified for the purposes of our research, and validated in the conditions of Slovak schools (Nemček & Wittmannová, 2021). The questionnaire consisted of questions about the pupil's personal data, such as gender, the school and grade-level they attend, experience with a person with physical disability outside school and at school, and information about whether they are an intact or a SEN pupil. The next section of the questionnaire consisted of a detailed description of a pupil with physical disability using a wheelchair to get around. The last part of the questionnaire consisted of the following 7 statements regarding attitudes towards the inclusion of a pupil with physical disability in the PSE classroom: (1) A pupil in a wheelchair will be fully accepted by his/her able-bodied classmates (wheelchair pupil acceptance), (2) In no case can the participation of a pupil in a wheelchair interfere with the flow of the PSE class (disruption the flow of the teaching), (3) The advantage of the pupil in a wheelchair exercising together with intact classmates is that all pupils together (healthy pupils and pupil with physical disability) will learn to work together to achieve common goals in the PSE lessons (common goals achievement), (4) The pupil in a wheelchair and intact pupils exercising together in the PSE lessons motivates the intact pupils to do so, to empathise with the situation of the pupil with physical disability and thus actively participate in movement activities together (motivation), (5) The pupil in a wheelchair will learn new movement skills much faster if he/she is included in the PSE lessons together with intact classmates (motor skills acquisition), (6) The self-confidence and self-esteem of the pupil in a wheelchair is strengthened in joint PSE lessons with intact classmates (self-confidence / self-esteem), (7) I consider the inclusion of a pupil with physical disability (wheelchair user) in PSE lessons together with intact pupils to be important for his/her successful integration into society (inclusion into society). For each statement, the intact students expressed their agreement or disagreement on a 5-point Likert scale, with point 1 being strongly disagree (strongly disagree), point 2 being disagree (disagree), point 3 being neutral (don't know), point 4 being agree (agree), and point 5 being strongly agree (strongly agree). Intact students' attitudes towards inclusion were calculated by arithmetic mean (mean score) and standard deviation (\pm SD) for each statement separately, as well as for the assessment of overall attitude towards inclusion

(MEAN) by summing the scores of all 5 statements. Higher mean scores indicated more positive attitudes toward inclusion and lower mean scores indicated more negative attitudes toward inclusion of students with physical disability in PSE lessons. We considered a positive attitude toward inclusion when a statement had a mean score of 5.00-3.50 points, an indifferent attitude toward inclusion when a statement had a mean score of 3.49-2.51 points, and a negative attitude toward inclusion when a statement had a mean score of 2.50-1.00 points. Comparisons of attitudes towards inclusion of students with disabilities in PSE lessons were made in terms of gender (boys versus girls), out-of-school and in-school experience (with experience versus without experience), grade-level group (6th-7th / *príma*, *sekunda* grade-level pupils versus 8th-9th / *tercia*, *kvarta* grade-level pupils), and school type (primary school versus 8-year gymnasium). To determine the level of statistical significance, we applied the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-test for two independent samples. Statistical significance of differences was set at the 5% level ($p \leq 0.05$).

Results

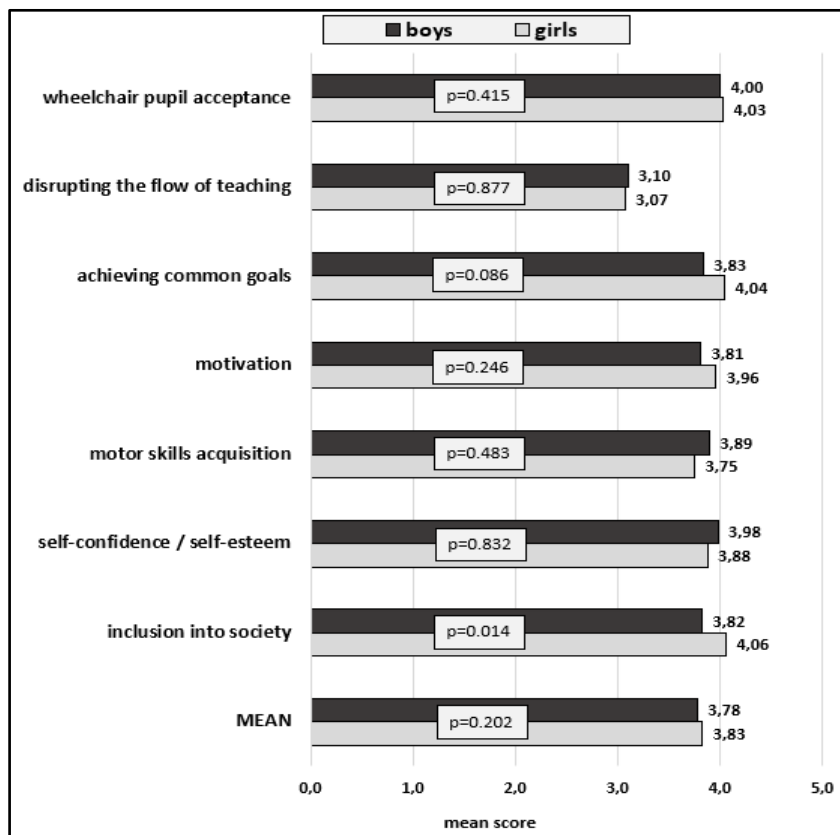


Figure 1: Comparison of attitudes towards inclusive PSE in terms of gender

Analysing the attitudes of intact students towards the inclusion of a wheelchair user pupil in the PSE classroom in terms of gender, we found that both boys (4.00 ± 0.81 points) and girls (4.03 ± 0.98 points) expressed the most positive attitudes towards the acceptance of a pupil with physical disability by their intact classmates in the PSE classroom. Both genders of pupils agreed that a pupil in a wheelchair would be fully accepted (accepted into the group) by his/her intact classmates in PSE lessons. On the other hand, both groups of gendered pupils held an indifferent attitude of disruption to the flow of the class, where they were not able to be completely clear about the statement that the participation of a pupil in a wheelchair could in no way disrupt the flow of the PSE teaching. The mean values of all other statements, as well as the overall attitude towards inclusion, fell within the range of positive evaluation of the inclusion of a pupil in a wheelchair in the PSE classroom. However, comparative analysis further revealed that girls showed significantly more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of a pupil in a wheelchair through inclusive PSE ($U=2390$, $p=0.014$), where they were significantly more likely than boys to believe that including a pupil with a physical disability in PSE lessons, together with able-bodied pupils, is important for their successful inclusion in society (Figure 1).

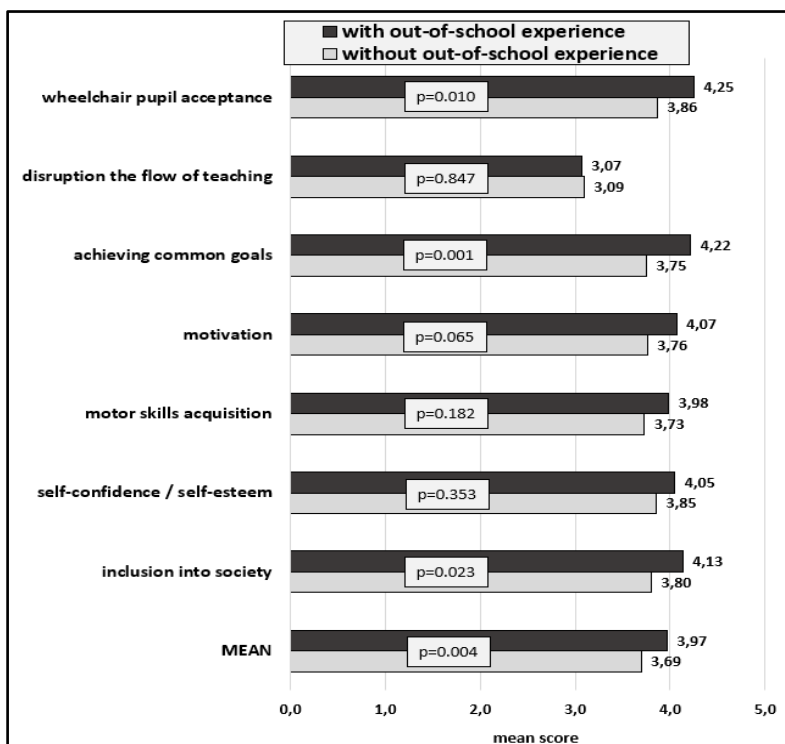


Figure 2: Comparison of attitudes towards inclusive PSE in terms of out-of-school experience

Analysing the attitudes of the intact pupils towards the inclusion of a pupil in a wheelchair in PSE lessons in terms of the experience of a person with a disability outside school, we found in all statements a positive attitude of both groups of pupils, and an indifferent attitude towards the disruption of the fluency of the lesson. Comparing the attitudes towards inclusion between pupils with and without out-of-school experience, we found that pupils with experience declared significantly higher levels of positive attitudes in three statements as well as overall attitudes towards inclusion compared to pupils without experience. From the research results, we can see that pupils who have already had an experience with a person with a disability in their lives outside of school expressed significantly more positive attitudes towards the acceptance of a pupil in a wheelchair in PSE lessons by their intact classmates ($U=2246$, $p=0.010$), towards the achievement of common goals in the PSE lessons ($U=2054$, $p=0.001$), towards the inclusion in society through inclusive PSE ($U=2308$, $p=0.023$), as well as a significantly higher rate of positive overall attitude towards inclusive PSE ($U=2089$, $p=0.004$) (Figure 2).

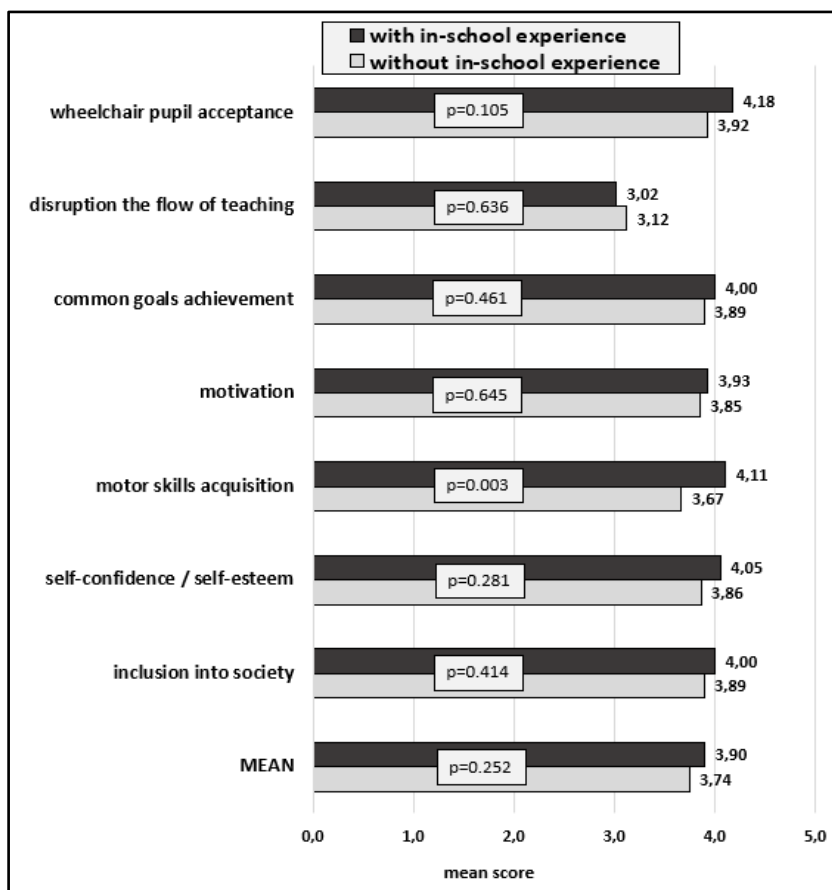


Figure 3: Comparison of attitudes towards inclusive PSE in terms of in-school experience

As we have already mentioned in the methodological part of the article, the Piarist Combined School F. Hanák in Prievidza are attended by three pupils with special educational needs, and therefore some of our respondents had already had experience with a pupil with a physical disability in the school they attend. We found that pupils who had in-school experience with a pupil with a physical disability showed significantly more positive attitudes towards the acquisition of motor skills by a pupil in a wheelchair compared to pupils without experience ($U=2076$, $p=0.003$). Thus, we note that pupils with experience of having a pupil with a disability in school compared to pupils with no experience are significantly more likely to believe that if a pupil in a wheelchair is part of inclusive PSE, they will be able to acquire motor skills much faster (Figure 3). Evaluating the mean scores further, we found that the attitudes of pupils with in-school experience are, in all but one statement, more positive compared to pupils without in-school experience, which is reflected in the total scores of all statements, where pupils with experience (3.90 ± 0.54 points) showed higher levels of positive attitudes towards inclusion of pupils with physical disability in PSE lessons compared to pupils without experience (3.74 ± 0.66 points), but these differences did not prove to be significant (Figure 3).

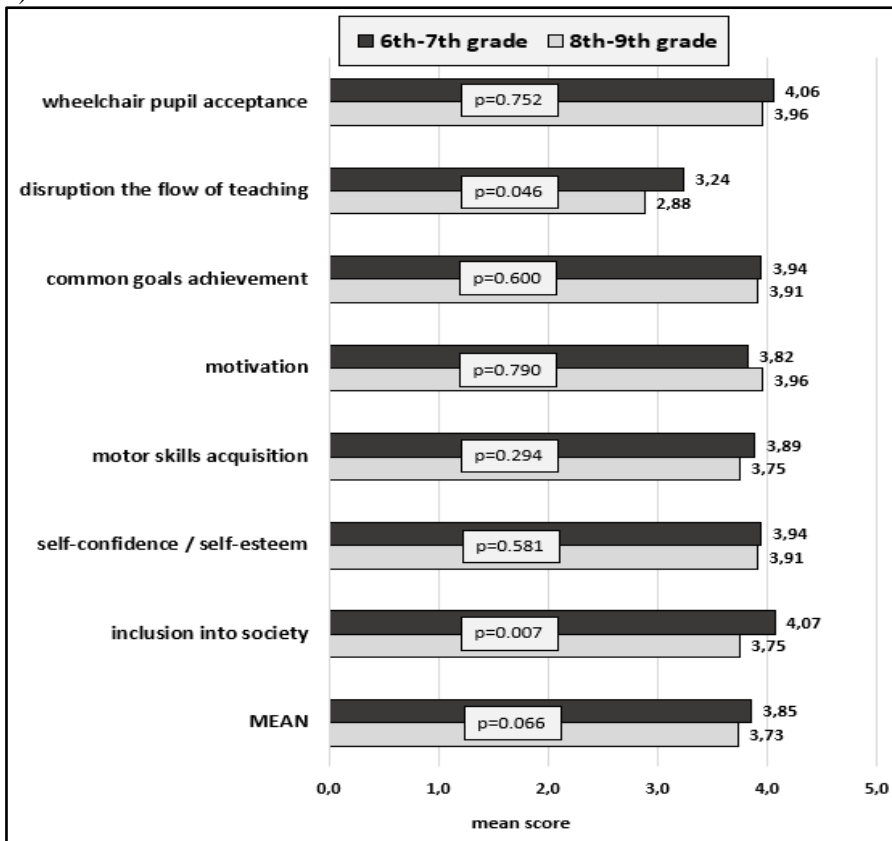


Figure 4: Comparison of attitudes towards inclusive PSE in terms of grade-level

Analysing the attitudes towards inclusion of a pupil in a wheelchair in the PSEV, we found more positive attitudes in the group of lower-grade-level pupils, where these pupils showed a more positive attitudes towards inclusion in three statements compared to the higher-grade-level pupils, and in addition, in two statements, significant differences were found in favour of the more positive attitudes of the pupils in the lower grades compared to the pupils in the 8th and 9th grades. The younger pupils agreed to a significantly higher extent that the inclusion of a pupil in a wheelchair in PSE lessons can in no way disrupt the flow of the lesson ($U=2444$, $p=0.046$), and also with the statement that the inclusion of a pupil in a wheelchair in PSE lessons together with intact pupils is important for his/her successful integration into society ($U=2288$, $p=0.007$). Evaluating the mean scores, the results indicate positive evaluations of inclusion in six of the seven statements by both sets of pupils in terms of year groups, and neutral attitudes towards inclusion by both younger and older pupils in terms of disrupting the flow of inclusive PE lessons. By summing the scores of all the statements analysed (mean), younger pupils demonstrated more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of a pupil in a wheelchair in PE compared to pupils in older year groups, but these differences were not statistically significant (Figure 4).

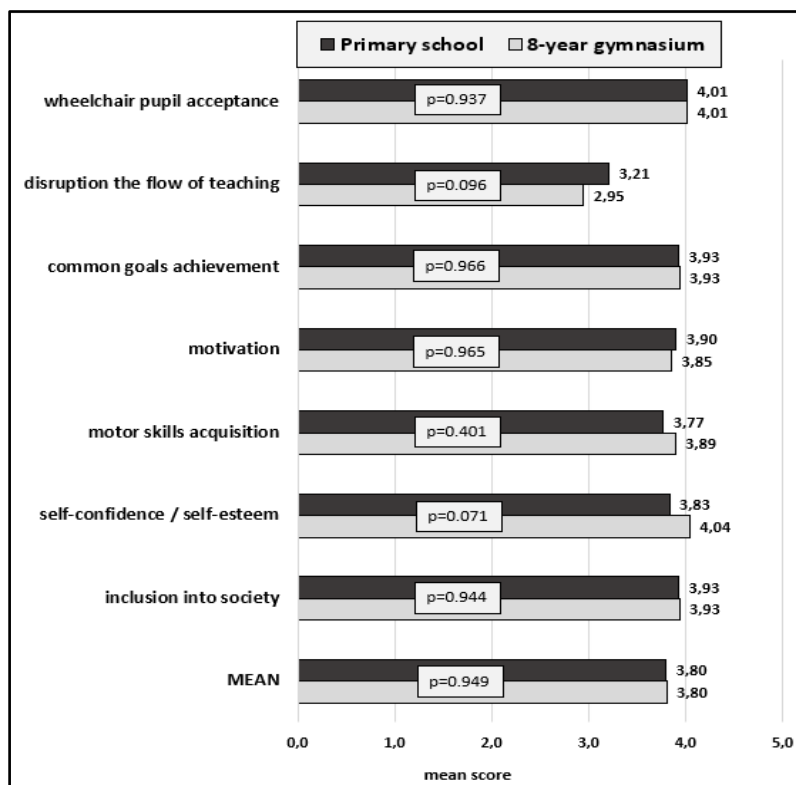


Figure 5: Comparison of attitudes towards inclusive PSE in terms of type of school

The analysis of the church school students' attitudes towards inclusive PSE in terms of school type showed consistent results in almost all statements (Figure 5). The lowest level of agreement, more precisely neutral attitude, was taken by the pupils of both schools towards the second statement, which states that "in no case can the participation of a pupil in a wheelchair interfere with the flow of the PE teaching". This shows that the pupils rather do not think that the participation of a pupil in a wheelchair in inclusive PSE, would not disrupt the flow of the lesson. By other statements, both groups of pupils from the primary school and the 8-year gymnasium had positive attitudes towards inclusive PSE when including a pupil in a wheelchair. We did not find significant differences in attitudes towards inclusive PSE between the primary school pupils and the 8-year gymnasium pupils, thus concluding a congruence of attitudes towards the inclusion of a pupil in a wheelchair in the PSE lessons in terms of the type of church school (Figure 5).

Discussion

The aim of the study was to analyse the attitudes of pupils of a church school towards the inclusion of a pupil with a physical disability in PSE and to compare in terms of gender, grade-level, in-school and out-of-school experiences, and type of school. We found that although there were no significant gender differences in overall attitudes towards the inclusion of a wheelchair pupil in PSE lessons, girls were significantly more likely to consider it important to integrate wheelchair pupil into PSE lessons for their successful integration into society. Similar findings were reached by Nemček, Bumbera (2021a), who also found no significant differences between male and female second primary school pupils in the overall opinion of inclusive PSE lessons, but the girls in their research agreed at a significantly higher rate than boys that including pupils with hearing and visual impairments in integrated PSE lessons would mean more work for the teacher. The opposite findings are reported by foreign authors. Reina et al. (2019) surveyed attitudes towards inclusion in PSE among primary school pupils and Verderber, Rizzo, and Sherrill (2003) among high school students. In both studies by the abovementioned authors, girls showed significantly more positive attitudes towards inclusive PSE compared to boys.

Further, our research found that although there were no significant differences in overall attitudes towards inclusion of a pupil with a physical disability in PSE between pupils with and without experience of a disabled pupil in their school, pupils with experience showed significantly higher levels of positive attitudes in acquiring motor skills faster in inclusive PSE. Our research yielded different findings when comparing attitudes towards inclusive PSE between pupils with and without experience with a disabled pupil outside their school, when pupils with experience declaring significantly more positive overall attitudes towards inclusion, supported in particular by significantly

more positive attitudes towards acceptance of the pupil by their classmates in inclusive PSE, achievement of shared goals in inclusive PSE, and integration into society through inclusive PSE. Similar findings were reached in the work of Dreveňák (2022), who found that pupils with experience of a person with a physical disability showed significantly more positive attitudes towards inclusion in PSE compared to pupils without experience, when they agreed with the statements to a significantly higher extent, that even if a pupil in a wheelchair is not a good athlete, it would not slow down everyone's game; if a pupil with a physical disability was in PSE lessons, the lesson would be fun with them; and they would also allow a wheelchair pupil to stay under the basket longer than the rules allow. However, different findings are provided by the research of Olekšák, Nemček and Ruman (2022a), who investigated the attitudes of able-bodied pupils towards the inclusion of a visually impaired pupil in PSE from the perspective of the experience of a person with a visual impairment. Remarkably, their research showed that it was pupils who had no previous experience with a person with a visual impairment who perceived the inclusion of a blind pupil in PSE significantly more positively than those who have had experience with a person with a visual impairment in the past.

Our research findings further revealed that although differences in overall attitudes towards inclusion of a pupil with a physical disability in PSE were not found from a grade-level group perspective, nevertheless, pupils in the lower grade-level group held significantly more positive attitudes towards inclusion of a wheelchair pupil in PSE in the areas of non-disruption to the flow of inclusive PSE teaching and inclusion in society through inclusive PSE. Different results were shown by Nemček and Bumbera (2021b), who found in their research that pupils in lower and upper grade-levels of two primary schools in Trebišov expressed the same opinion about the inclusion of pupils with different disabilities in PSE, when differences in the opinions of pupils in lower and upper grade-levels were not found. However, this was not the case in the research by Dreveňák (2022), who investigated the opinions on the inclusion of a wheelchair pupil in PSE among pupils of lower and upper grades in two primary schools in central Slovakia (Tvrdošín and Trenčín). He found that sixth and seventh graders declared significantly more positive attitudes towards inclusion of a pupil with a physical disability in PSE classes compared to eighth and ninth graders by leaning more positively towards the statement that it would be nice if a pupil in a wheelchair could attend PSE classes with them; even if the pupil in a wheelchair is not a good athlete, he would not slow down everyone's game; it would be nice to have him on the team when playing sports; and if he went to PSE with them, they would have fun with him and be his friends.

The last comparison of attitudes towards inclusive PSE of intact pupils of a church school was made in terms of the type of school, namely between pupils of a primary school and pupils of an 8-year gymnasium. In this comparison, we found no significant differences in the attitudes of the intact

pupils towards inclusion in PSE. The research of Skovajsová, Nemček and Bumbera (2022), who compared the attitudes towards inclusion in PSE of pupils of a church and a state school, proved to be interesting. The authors found that state school pupils, compared to church school pupils, were significantly more likely to believe that the inclusion of a pupil with intellectual, sensory and other disabilities can disrupt the flow of PSE teaching, and that the inclusion of a pupil with an intellectual disability in inclusive PSE will mean more work for the teacher. On the other hand, however, it is state school pupils, compared to church school pupils, who are significantly more likely to agree that pupils with sensory disabilities (hearing and visual) will learn motor skills much faster if they are placed in inclusive PSE with their able-bodied peers. The authors' research further declared that there are no significant differences in the attitudes towards inclusion of a pupil with disabilities in PSE between pupils of state and church schools in the areas of: achieving common goals; empathy and joint involvement in physical activities; strengthening self-confidence; and inclusion in society (Skovajsová, Nemček, & Bumbera, 2022). It is also notable that small town pupils, compared to large town pupils, have been shown to have a significantly more positive attitude towards the inclusion of a visually impaired pupil in PSE lessons (Olekšák, Nemček, & Ruman, 2022b). The authors' collective found that able-bodied pupils of the Púchov primary school, compared to pupils of the Bratislava primary school, agree to a significantly higher degree with statements that PSE would be fun if a visually impaired pupil was there with them; that they would have fun with him in the PSE lesson and would be his friends; would help him to practice; and, when practicing the game activities of the individual sport game football, would cover their eyes with a shield to feel themselves in the position of a visually impaired pupil.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can state that the pupils of the church school in Prievidza in all statements expressed a positive attitude towards the inclusion of a wheelchair pupil in the PSE lessons. They least agreed that the inclusion of a wheelchair pupil cannot disrupt the flow of the PSE lessons, i.e., they are aware that the presence of such a pupil can also negatively affect the flow of the PSE lessons. The highest level of both agreement and positive attitude was shown by the pupils of the church school in Prievidza in the area of full acceptance of a wheelchair pupil in the PSE class. Further results of the research led us to the following significant findings:

- Although there are no significant differences in overall attitudes towards inclusive PSE in terms of gender, girls show a significantly more positive attitudes compared to boys in importance of inclusive PSE for his/her successful integration into society.

- Although there are no significant differences in overall attitudes towards inclusive PSE in terms of in-school experience, pupils with experience declare a significantly more positive attitude compared to pupils without experience in the success of motor skills acquisition in inclusive PSE.
- Although there are no significant differences in overall attitudes towards inclusive PSE in terms of grade-level, pupils in the lower grade-level (6th and 7th) compared to the higher grade-level (8th and 9th) are significantly more inclined to believe that the inclusion of a wheelchair pupil in PSE lessons can in no way disrupt the flow of the lesson, and that inclusive PSE is important for the pupil's successful integration into society.
- Pupils of a church school who have out-of-school experience with a person with physical disability are significantly more positive about the inclusive PSE than pupils without out-of-school experience, particularly in the areas of wheelchair pupil acceptance by classmates, common goals achievement, and higher success rates of inclusion in society.
- There are no differences in the attitudes towards inclusive PSE between pupils of primary school and pupils of 8-year gymnasium.

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