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Názory učiteľov východoslovenského regiónu primárneho stupňa vzdelávania na tematické celky z predmetu telesná a športová výchova

Opinions of Primary Education Teachers from Eastern Slovakia on Thematic Units in Subject Physical Education

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Abstract

Physical education can be a subject of great importance when thinking about healthy future of our kids. Physical development and basics of physical movements taught in physical education classes are transferred from childhood to adulthood. The aim of our study was to find out and compare opinions of primary education teachers from rural and urban schools on teaching various thematic units in their physical education classes. The survey was conducted in the form of a questionnaire in 2019 and 2020. We quantified the results using the percentage of the aspect of teachers in urban and rural schools, supplemented by statistical analysis using the χ^2 test at $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$. We also evaluated mutual correlations when dealing with the popularity or unpopularity and complexity of thematic units. The analysis of the answers of 341 teachers showed that the most popular thematic unit for both rural and urban teachers is the unit called manipulation, preparation, and sports games. Teachers from rural schools consider psychomotor and health-oriented exercises to be the least popular unit of teaching, but teachers from urban schools had a different opinion, for them the least popular thematic unit is musical movement and dance activities. In one of our questions, we asked teachers to choose which thematic unit they consider to be most or least demanding. Both rural (48.94%) and urban (44%) school teachers consider thematic unit psychomotor and health-oriented exercises to be the most demanding in terms of teaching. As for the least demanding thematic unit, both rural and urban consider it to be basic movement skills.

Keywords: Thematic units. Primary education teachers. Teaching.

Introduction

According to Vilimová (2009), physical education is a purposeful educational activity that affects not only a person's physical development, but it also strengthens one's health, increases physical fitness and performance and creates a person's lasting relationship to physical activity. Fialová (2010) considers physical education in schools to be the most widespread form of physical activity, which is organized in the young population. Physical education in schools is an educational subject whose main goal is a specific pedagogical activity.

The target of physical education in primary education is predominantly focused on physical, functional, and motion improvement. Physical education at this level of education should provide basic theoretical and practical education in the field of physical and sports activities, significantly contribute to the psychological, social, and moral development of students and to form a positive relationship to physical activity. Last but not least, it should also play an important compensatory role in the education process (<https://www.statpedu.sk>).

More recent problems in terms of teaching physical education at the turn of the millennium were described by Antala (2014) in the following points: declining number of lessons of compulsory physical education - many lessons are not taught or dropped, declining quality of teaching in many cases - teachers lose enthusiasm and professional enthusiasm for work, weak social and financial appreciation, lack of control of physical education teaching (inspectors, principals), increasingly more and more demanding work with students, stagnant or declining physical fitness and physical performance of youth, insufficient state of gym equipment and others. Kalhous and Obst (2002) state that the content of physical education consists of 3 subjects that are dominant - pupil, teacher, and curriculum.

From the pupils' point of view - there is a significant increase in number of children for whom physical education classes are the only place to move. According to the research from Antal et al. (2014), it is about 25% of boys and girls, while in the past it was on average only 8.5% of boys and 11.3% of girls. The results of research works by Peráčková (2006) or Antala et al. (2012) point to similar facts. Benca-Czaková (2017) state that the current school physical education classes no longer adequately meet the requirements for the scope and content of pupils' physical activities during the week. From the teachers' point of view - a decade ago, Melicher (2006) pointed out in his study the fact that many physical education teachers consider their profession to be financially and socially underappreciated, and many run their classes without a creative approach. We also consider important the fact stated by Průcha-Walterová-Mareš (2013) that the majority of primary and secondary school teachers are mainly women - about 84% and thus primary school students have a lack of male role models. The teacher plays a particularly important role in the first two

years of primary school - the first teacher is the authority students look up to and often think of them higher than the parent, with the students considering the teacher's word law. It is often one of the students' desires to resemble the teacher, and so it happens that the students automatically take over the values that the teacher himself professes. According to Ríčan (2014), for first and second grade students, identification with the teacher should be one of the basic educational strategies used.

From the point of view of the curriculum itself, schools can adjust the content of teaching to the conditions of the school and the interests of students. The role of every physical education teacher is to develop physical and sports education programs for individual groups of students based on the primary goals, taking into account the development of students' physical competencies, their interests and conditions of the given school. When creating teaching programs, the teacher should adhere to the restrictions that are a component of the current state given curriculum levels of education (Kršjaková, 2014).

Straka (2008) states that in several countries, where they have looked at the prospects of small rural schools, they have come to the conclusion that smaller schools are more efficient than the larger ones. They achieve better results in terms of graduation rates. Student's discipline seems to be better, and parents of the students are more involved in their children education process. They are particularly more effective in the success of students from socially disadvantaged families. Rural schools also strengthen the solidarity or consistency of municipalities, uniting residents (regardless of age and status) in participating in diverse and community-friendly activities. Rural schools often replace non-existent municipal and cultural centres, they are places where people can watch cultural and sporting events even with their own initiative or involvement in them. They are often also a meeting place for public organizations and associations or a space for political dialogues. They also represent places where various services are located, e.g., libraries, health care places, sports grounds etc.

The undeniable advantage of these schools for rural students is the fact that students do not have to travel long distances to attend the school, they can often walk, which activates their movement regime. In addition, the time spent traveling deprives students of their time for rest, study, or leisure activities, entertainment, and games. However, according to Partila (2021), a common problem for rural schools is, that when municipalities in the immediate vicinity have two schools, they fail to fund them, or are often not adequately equipped, they do not have a gym, canteen or library and teachers are not paid as if they should be. From the point of view of small schools, these are often schools that are in areas where there is no other option for education. In our paper we did not directly address the issues related to the curriculum of subject physical education included in ISCED 1 and its implementation in small rural schools. Due to the relevance of the data, we compared teaching process in rural (up to

5,000 inhabitants) and urban schools from the point of view of teachers, who provide teaching of the compulsory subject physical education at these schools.

Aim of the study

The main goal of the work was to find out and compare opinions of teachers of primary education working in urban and rural schools on the teaching of different thematic units contained in ISCED 1 in the subject of physical education.

Methods

The survey group of teachers consisted of 341 teachers in primary education from Prešov and Košice regions. Out of this number, there were 44 men and 156 women working in urban schools and 19 men and 122 women working in rural schools, which means that in our sample there were 18.47% men, which correlates with the findings of Průcha-Walterová-Mareš (2013) who found that only 16% of men work in primary schools. Similar results are presented by Vašutová (2004). From the point of view of the age of our respondents, the survey group was dominated by teachers in the age category from 31 to 40 years ($n = 104$) and in the age group from 41 to 50 years ($n = 106$). However, we also recorded a relatively high number of teachers over the age of 50 ($n = 74$). In terms of the length of teaching experience, teachers with more than 11 years of experience dominated ($n = 181$), 71 teachers had less than 5 years of experience, 71 teachers had 6 to 10 years of experience and 18 teachers had up to 1 year of experience. 127 teachers act as independent teachers, after the first attestation there were 96 teachers, after the second there were 81 teachers and there were 37 beginning teachers. In terms of education, up to 207 teachers had master's degree in preschool and elementary pedagogy, 97 teachers had master's degree in related teaching studies, 22 teachers had bachelor's degree in preschool and elementary pedagogy and 17 teachers had a "different" level of college/university education.

The survey was conducted in the form of a questionnaire in 2019 and 2020. We quantified the results using the percentage of the aspect of teachers in urban and rural schools, supplemented by statistical analysis using the χ^2 test at $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$. We also evaluated mutual correlations when dealing with the popularity or unpopularity and complexity of thematic units. We decided to evaluate the results from the aspect of urban and rural schools for several reasons, which are stated in works of Straka (2008) and Volterrani (2019) - rural (and small) schools are generally located in a natural environment that provides several educational opportunities, for example teaching outdoor activities and seasonal physical activities. The number of pupils is usually smaller and for this reason the teachers have closer and more constructive relationships with their families, it is possible to implement a more individual approach - this fact does not only apply to students with special educational needs, such as dyslexia, ADHD, but also above-average gifted students, at the

same time it is possible to build support networks with communities quicker. Finally, the "home" community considers the school to be good, it values it, it is obligatory for the future of its inhabitants and its founders are mostly municipalities who care about these schools, as even for the smallest rural communities the presence of small classes is associated with many social and economic benefits (<https://obecpustesady.sk/zakladna-skola>; <http://www.obecbozkov.cz/images/Skola>).

Results

Marques (2021) states that the crucial importance of physical education can be highlighted in the context of the current Covid pandemic, when many children were forced into social isolation and were unable to engage in physical activity in sports clubs. As a result, online physical education classes were the only place for students to engage in physical activity. According to Alderman et al. (2012) and Long (2013), the level of daily and weekly physical activity in young people is significantly influenced by school physical education. Dvořáková and Engelthalerová (2017) state that the "scope" of primary school teachers is so wide that it becomes problematic for some teachers to teach physical education. Since, according to several authors, the subject of physical education and sports is specific mainly in its content, in the introductory question of our survey we were interested in the position of this subject among teachers in terms of the popularity of its teaching.

25.53% of teachers working in rural schools and 23.50% in urban schools stated that their favourite subject to teach is physical education (Fig.1). Our findings then show that for more than 57% it is as popular a subject as any other subject. From the point of view of teaching physical education in primary education, we consider these findings to be positive in connection with the findings of several authors regarding the popularity and attitudes towards the subject of physical education from students. Bartík's (2007) study, which examined the attitudes of primary school pupils towards physical and sports education at six selected primary schools in Banská Bystrica states that up to 72.35% of pupils expressed either positive or very positive attitude towards physical education classes. In a sample of 1095 primary school pupils Adamčák-Nemec (2010) found that school subject physical education is amongst the most popular subjects in school. The popularity percentage for boys was more than 68% and for girls more than 32%. Similar results were reported by Antala et al. (2012), who point out that the subject of physical education is either a very popular subject (52.8%) or a popular subject (33.8%) for primary school boys. We agree with the opinion of Sekot (2015), who states that everyone who teaches physical education classes should take on their mission responsibly and realize that they have a large impact on whether students engage in physical activities in their free time or not. Dvořáková (2012) supports this statement and adds that the teacher's personality as a motivating factor is mainly related to the teacher's competencies. Teacher's

ability to encourage children to activities and learning by their own personality, their professional and social role models, enthusiasm for the subject and related activities, but also the quality of guiding students in their learning or educational activities, focusing the interest and overall social orientation of students, cooperation with students and the organization of this cooperation. By evaluating this question, we also found that for 14.18% of teachers working in rural schools and for 5.50% of teachers working in urban schools, the subject of physical education is the least popular subject. The subject is not taught by less than 3% of teachers. In the statistical evaluation of this question, we found significant differences on the level of $p < 0.05$ ($\chi^2(3) = 10.598$; $p = 0.01411$) from the point of view of rural and urban school teachers.

In a more detailed examination of our results, we found that the subject physical education is the most popular in the age group of teachers up to 30 years and in the age group from 31 to 40 years (more than 30% of answers), in the age group of teachers over 50 years only 14.46% of teachers chose physical education as their favourite subject. In terms of the length of teaching practice, it is most popular for teachers with more than 11 years of experience - 38.55%. Only 10.84% of the teachers with experience of up to 1 year considered physical education as their most popular subject to be taught. In terms of education, it is most popular in the group of teachers with a master's degree in preschool and elementary pedagogy - 50.6% of responses. The lowest percentage of responses was recorded in the group "other higher education" - 2.41% and bachelor's degree - 7.23%.

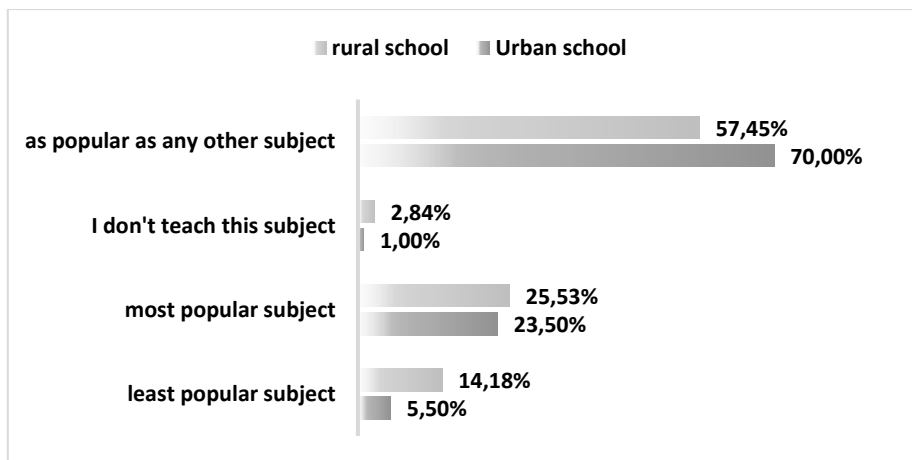


Figure 1 The popularity of teaching the subject of physical education by teachers

Other questions of our survey directly concerned the part of educational curriculum regarding the part of the educational standard of sports activity of the physical regime. From the point of view of the most popular thematic unit in both groups we monitored, we found that it is the part called manipulation, preparation, and sports games, which in their answer forms was marked by

more than 52% of respondents with a slight dominance of answers among teachers working in rural schools (Fig. 2). According to several authors, Slezák - Melicher (2008), Antala et al. (2012), Nemeč – Nemečová (2012) and Nemeč – Adamčák (2013), it is the sports games in physical education that are the most popular amongst pupils due to their action, diversity of bending activities, competitiveness, precisely defined rules, and motivation. In the survey from Adamčák-Kozaňáková-Kollár (2018) in selected regions of Slovakia among teachers of physical education at the second level of primary schools, sports games were also the most taught area - 65.4% of answers.

The second most popular thematic unit was a part called basic movement skills - from the point of view of teachers working in rural schools 17.73% of answers and 25% from the point of view of teachers working in urban schools. Our findings correlate to some extent with the results of Kremnický (2019a), who states that among teachers of physical education at the 2nd level of primary schools, 35% of female teachers stated that they like teaching of gymnastics, 30% of female teachers stated that they don't like teaching gymnastics and other 35% of female teachers do not differentiate between teaching gymnastics or other thematic unit. From the point of view of male teachers, he states that 55% of them like teaching gymnastics and 36% of them do not make differences in popularity between individual parts of the curriculum.

The fact that outdoor activities and seasonal physical activities in the response forms of the teachers we monitored did not exceed 8% is quite surprising- especially in terms of the responses of teachers working in rural schools. From the point of view of teachers from urban schools, only 2% of them likes to teach outdoor activities and seasonal physical activities. The differences recorded by us in terms of responses of teachers in urban and rural schools were significant at the level of $p < 0.05$ ($\chi^2(4) = 12.276$; $p = 0.0154$). The fact that handling, preparatory and sports games are the most popular thematic unit taught by teachers in the age group up to 30 years (64.91% of responses), outdoor activities and seasonal activities in the age group over 50 (10.81% of responses) is quite interesting. In terms of the length of teaching practice, manipulation, preparatory and sports games are the most popular thematic unit taught by the teachers with teaching practice up to 1 year or 2 to 5 years, where the response rate was more than 60%. Outdoor activities and seasonal activities are preferred especially by teachers with pedagogical experience from 6 to 10 years. From the aspect of achieved education, manipulation, preparation, and sports games are the most popular thematic unit taught by teachers with master's degree in a related teaching profession, or by the teachers with a different level of education. The response rate in these groups was greater than 58%. We also consider interesting the fact that basic movement skills are the least popular in terms of teaching among teachers with other levels of education - the answers reached a value of only 5.88%, which was different by more than 15% compared to the teachers with different education.

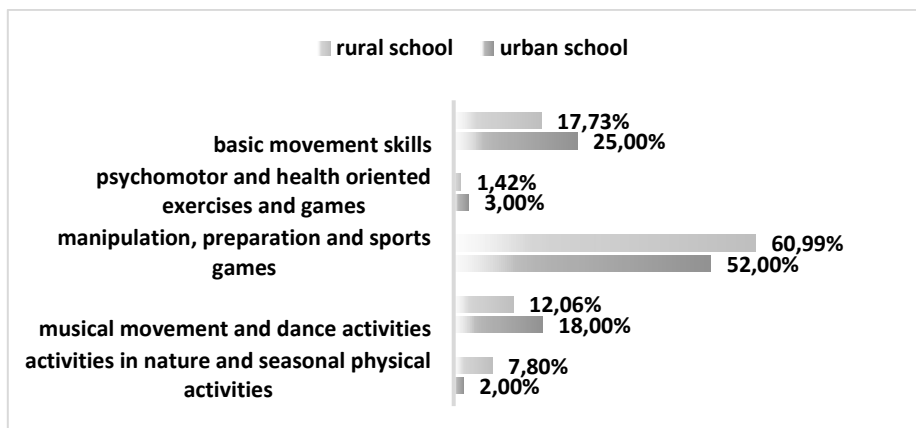


Figure 2 The most popular thematic unit from the part Sports activities of the movement mode by teachers

In terms of evaluating the least popular thematic unit, our survey found that teachers in rural schools predominantly chose the answer psychomotor and health-oriented exercises and games (42.55% of responses), the second in least favourite thematic unit was musical movement and dance activities - 31.91 %. In the group of teachers working in urban schools, the least popular was musical movement and dance activities - 34.50% and psychomotor and health-oriented exercises and games (33.50% of answers). Dvořáková (2002) states that psychomotor games have a variety of uses from the perspective of education. She recommends using them especially in those cases where the purpose is to develop the child's personality - in and out of school and especially games (including psychomotor) bring much needed variety into pedagogical process. Hálková (2009) states that the role of psychomotor skills in general is for practitioners to obtain as much information as possible from three main areas - area of their own body (perception, cognition, emotions), material area (things and objects used in games and exercises) and third social or relational area (empathy, communication, and cooperation). The results of Novotná-Hubinák-Kollár (2015), who dealt with teaching units dedicated to psychomotorics, suggest that such lessons lack dynamics and playfulness in practice, and thus students lose interest in these activities relatively quickly. Blahutková et al. (2008) speak of psychomotorics as a system in physical education, which should be fun and playful. We agree with Chebeň (2006) that adequately chosen motivation remains a central factor in building a lasting positive attitude towards physical education and sports as well as creating a positive attitude for students to regular physical activities. Standage, Duda & Ntoumanis, (2003) consider the level of internal motivation to be crucial.

From the point of view of the low interest in thematic unit called musical movement and dance activities, we agree with the opinion of Palovičová (2006), who states that teachers are not sufficiently prepared for

teaching during their university studies. Surprisingly, we did not record the lowest average scores in thematic unit manipulation, preparation, and sports games, but in activities in nature and seasonal physical activities - 4.96% of responses for teachers working in rural areas and 9.50% for teachers working in urban schools. In evaluating this question, we did not observe significant differences from the aspect of teachers' residence (chi statistically insignificant; $\chi^2(4) = 6.224$; $p = 0.183$). Subsequent in-depth analysis of the results showed that psychomotor and health-oriented exercises and games are the least popular part of curriculum in the age group of teachers from 41 to 50 years (44.34% of responses) and in the age group over 50 years (40.54%). On the other hand, for the age group of teachers up to 30 years it is musical movement and dance activities that are the least popular (42.11% of responses). We recorded similar results from the aspect of pedagogical experience of teachers, psychomotor and health-oriented exercises and games are the least popular among teachers with 6-10 years of experience (38.03%) and among teachers with more than 11 years of experience (40.33% of answers). Musical movement and dance activities are the most popular among teachers with pedagogical experience up to 1 year (38.89%) and pedagogical experience from 2 to 5 years (36.62%). From the point of view of the achieved education, it is psychomotor and health-oriented exercises and games (40.91% of answers) and musical movement and dance activities that are the most popular among teachers with bachelor's degree in elementary preschool pedagogy.

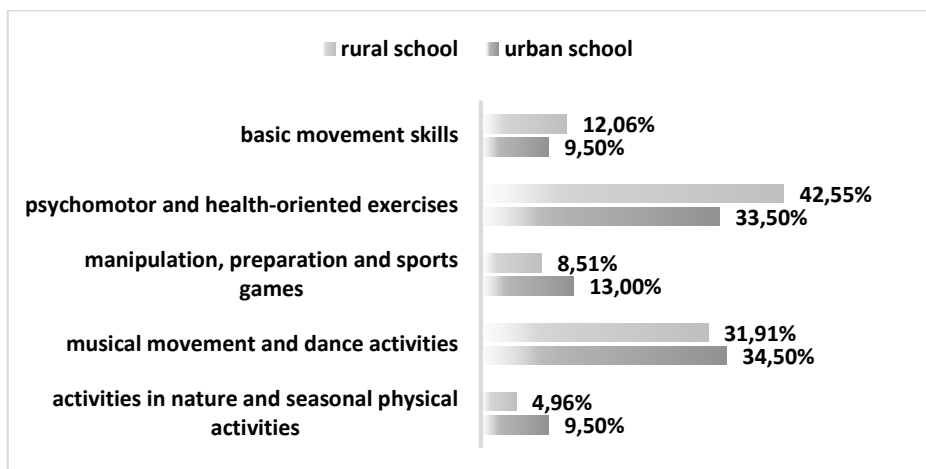


Figure 3 The least popular thematic unit from the part Sports activities of the movement mode by teachers

From the point of view of teaching thematic units, we also wanted to find out which units teachers consider to be the least demanding in terms of teaching. We present our results in Figure 4, which shows that teachers of both dominant groups (rural teachers - 41.84% and urban schools 43.50%) consider part basic movement skills to be the least demanding. Kremnický (2019a) found

that from the point of view of women teachers only 36% do not think that gymnastics is more difficult to teach than other thematic units, although 64% of women teachers think that the gymnastics is one of the most demanding thematic unit. From the point of view of male teachers, he found that 64% are of the opinion that gymnastics is more demanding than other sections of the physical education curriculum, and according to 27% of teachers, general gymnastics is one of the most demanding thematic unit. According to him, the most common reasons were the danger of a possible accident, the difficulty in performing the demonstration, the correction of errors, lack of interest and insufficient general readiness of students.

From the point of view of teachers of both urban (22.0%) and rural (21.99%) schools, the second least demanding thematic unit are outdoor activities and seasonal physical activities. We recorded the lowest % score in thematic unit psychomotor and health-oriented exercises and games, which were marked by less than 5% of teachers in their answer forms. In evaluating this question, we did not observe significant differences in the answers of teachers working in rural and urban schools (chi statistically insignificant; ($\chi^2(4) = 5.788$; $p = 0.215$).

However, a more detailed analysis of the answers pointed to the following facts: thematic unit basic movement skills is considered to be the least demanding by teachers with experience of 2 to 5 years and dominantly teachers with only bachelor's degree in the field elementary preschool pedagogy (up to 59.09%). From the point of view of thematic unit outdoor activities and seasonal physical activities, it is considered the easiest in terms of teaching dominantly by teachers aged 41 to 50 (33.96% of responses), as well as a group of teachers with more than 11 years of experience (29.28% of responses) and teachers with master's degree in the field of elementary preschool pedagogy - 24.15% of answers.

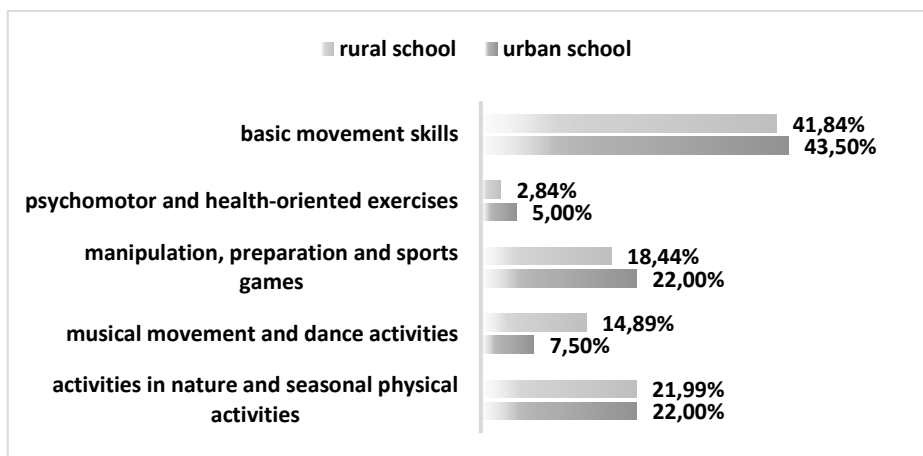


Figure 4 The least demanding thematic unit from the part Sports activities of the movement regime by teachers

Another question we asked our research group of teachers was which thematic unit teachers consider to be the most demanding in terms of teaching. Figure 5 explicitly shows that it is a thematic unit psychomotor and health-oriented exercises and games. The frequency of responses ranged above 44% for both groups we monitored - teachers working in both rural and urban schools. From the point of view of the authors Novotná-Hubinák-Kollár (2015), the biggest problem in teaching this thematic unit is that the teachers themselves are not interested in the content, they have little to none theoretical but also practical skills and especially experience in teaching this thematic unit and often do not know the fundamental difference between psychomotor and movement games. Another problem may be the fact that they differ from ordinary games in the use of non-traditional tools and a different position of the teacher who takes on a new role - the role of a manager (Blahutková et al., 2017). If it is not necessary, the teacher does not interfere in the game, only observes, and directs the reflection. When needed, leads the students to think with pre-prepared question to express their feelings, observations, and new experiences. However, the author adds that it is not appropriate to compile a lesson in physical education only from psychomotor activities without the use of other methods leading to the development of students. It is also questionable whether the university itself has thus prepared the teachers themselves for teaching this subject.

As we expected, the second most demanding thematic unit taught was musical movement and dance activities chosen both by teachers from rural (21.99%) and urban (26.0%) area. These findings correlate with the evaluation of previous issues. Palovičová (2006) thinks that one of the reasons for this situation may be the fact that there is absence of aids for teaching these activities (eg. radio, music recordings, methodical materials, etc.). The works of Trunečková (1993), Šimoneková (1997), Palovičová (1998) also drew attention to the unsatisfactory state of teaching dance and rhythmic gymnastics in physical and sports education at schools. However, it is necessary to realize, as stated by Orelová (2013), that musical and movement activities are typical and natural manifestation of children's music understanding already in kindergarten. Knopová (2010) emphasizes that musical and movement activities develop students' imagination and creativity and significantly enable the application of student's individuality and gives space for his creativity.

From the results presented in Figure 5, it can be concluded that we recorded the lowest average percentage score of responses in the thematic unit basic movement skills. In other parts of this question, the answers of teachers working in rural and urban schools were relatively close, which was reflected in the statistical evaluation, where we did not notice significant differences in answers - chi statistically insignificant ($\chi^2(4) = 3.412$; $p = 0.491$). As in the previous questions, we also analysed the answers more deeply when evaluating the most demanding thematic unit. We found that teachers aged 41 to 50 (50.94%), but also teachers in the age category 31 to 40 years consider thematic

unit psychomotor and health-oriented exercises and games to be the most demanding. In terms of the length of teaching experience, we found that the highest response scores were recorded for teachers with experience from 2 to 5 years (49.30%) and for teachers with experience from 6 to 10 years (46.48%). From the point of view of the achieved education, it is considered the most demanding by teachers with only a bachelor's degree in elementary preschool pedagogy, where the frequency of answers reached the value of up to 63.64%. Thematic unit musical movement and dance activities is considered to be the most demanding among teachers under the age of 30 (29.82%), teachers with pedagogical experience of up to 1 year (38.89%), but also among teachers with a master's degree but in a related teaching field (29.47%).

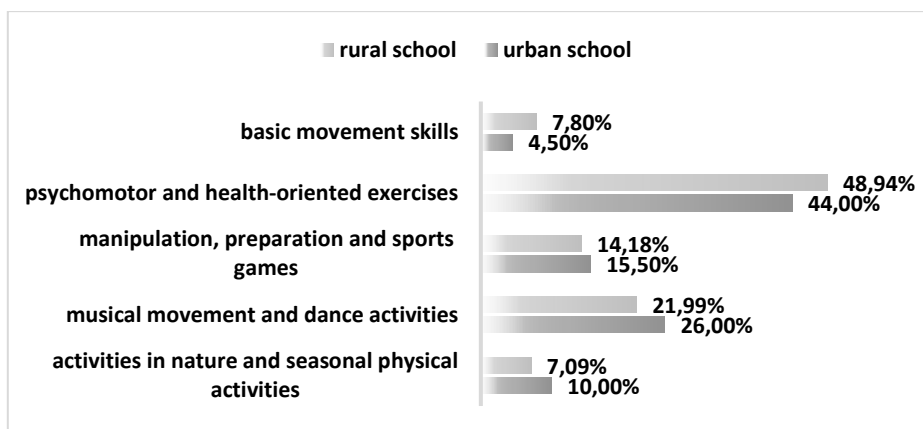


Figure 5 the most demanding thematic unit taught by teachers from the sports activities of the movement part of the curriculum

According to Spilková (2007), changes in the teaching profession and preparation for it have come to the forefront of pedagogical theory, research, and educational policy on a European and global scale. Especially since the late 1980s, teacher cultivation has been seen as a crucial tool for educational reform and school innovation. Kremnická (2022) also states that it is no longer true that by achieving an academic degree the education is completed, on the contrary, acquiring masters or bachelor's degree represents a new stage of life clearly connected with further education. For the above reasons, in the last question of our survey, we wanted to find out from teachers whether they would be interested in participating in further educational training dealing with the issue of teaching physical education for the primary school (Figure 6). We consider the fact that up to 58.16% of teachers working in rural areas and 48.50% of teachers working in urban schools were interested in such educational training as positive. According to Kremnický (2019b), 56% of teachers from the Ilava region showed a similar interest in educational training in gymnastics teaching, but he found 100% interest among teachers working in Banská Bystrica (Kremnický, 2019a).

Almost ¼ of teachers said that they have already received educational training of a similar nature. 7.8% of teachers working in rural areas and 3.5% of teachers working in urban schools considered this training to be ineffective. From the point of view of statistical evaluation of the answers of teachers working in urban and rural schools, we found significant differences in this question at the level of $p < 0.05$ ($\chi(3) = 11.128$; $p = 0.0110$). From the point of view of age, the highest interest in training was shown by teachers aged 31 to 40 (67.31%), while the lowest interest was in teachers aged over 50 (37.03%). In terms of the length of teaching experience, teachers with experience of up to 1 year (77.78%) and up to 5 years (69.01%) showed the highest interest and, as in the previous case, teachers with experience of more than 11 years showed the lowest interest. In terms of achieved education, the greatest interest in this type of training was shown by teachers with a bachelor's degree in elementary preschool pedagogy (63.64% of responses). Especially teachers over the age of 50 (8.11%), teachers with experience over the age of 11 (7.33%) and teachers with a master's degree in elementary pre-school pedagogy (6.28%) but also teachers with "other" levels of education (5.88%) consider this type of educational training to be ineffective.

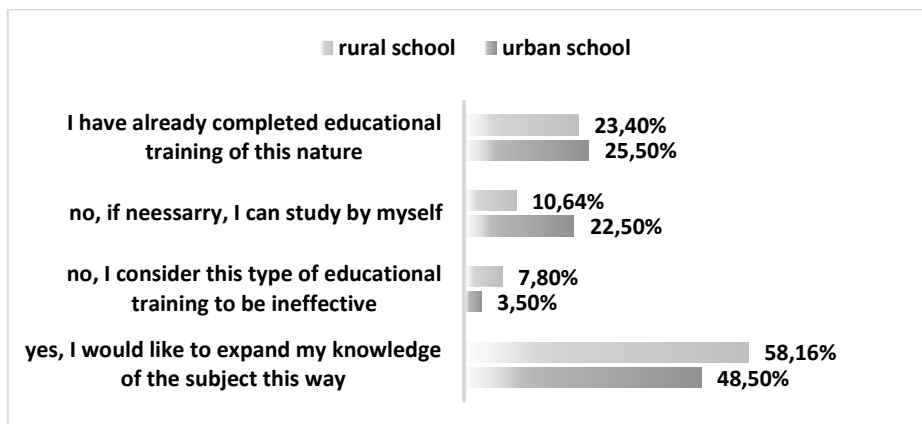


Figure 6 Teachers' interest in further educational training in physical education in primary education (chi statistically significant at $p < 0.05$; $\chi = 11.128$; $p = 0.0110$)

Subsequently, we focused on finding correlations (tables 1 and 2) - examining the dependence of the popularity or unpopularity of teaching thematic units in relation to the complexity of their teaching. We found that in the group of teachers working in rural schools (table 1) there is a very strong (direct) dependence between the most demanding thematic unit and its unpopularity and at the same time there is a very strong (indirect) dependence between the most demanding thematic unit and the least demanding thematic unit. There is a very strong indirect relationship between the least demanding thematic unit and the least popular thematic unit. Subsequently, we found that

there is an indirect moderate correlation between the least and most popular teaching of thematic units.

Table 1 Correlation analysis of responses of teachers working in rural schools to the popularity and difficulty of teaching various thematic units

	<i>Most popular thematic unit</i>	<i>Least popular thematic unit</i>	<i>Least demanding thematic unit</i>	<i>Most demanding thematic unit</i>
<i>Most popular thematic unit</i>	1			
<i>Least popular thematic unit</i>	0.505200829	1		
<i>Least demanding thematic unit</i>	0.165095608	-0.682222913	1	
<i>Most demanding thematic unit</i>	0.371303931	0.915437581	-0.807192509	1

Note. + direct correlation dependence; -indirect correlation dependence; *** very strong dependence $r = 0.8$ to 1 (-0.8 to -1); ** moderate dependence $r = 0.4$ to 0.8 (-0.4 to -0.8); * weak dependence $r = 0$ to 0.4 (-0.4 to 0)

In the group of teachers working in urban schools (Table 2), we found a very strong, indirect dependence in the relationship between the most demanding thematic unit and the least popular thematic unit. We have also found indirect dependence between the most demanding thematic unit and the least demanding one. There was also indirect dependence between the least demanding thematic unit and the least popular thematic unit.

Table 2 Correlation analysis of responses of teachers working in urban schools to the popularity and difficulty of teaching various thematic units

	<i>Most popular thematic unit</i>	<i>Least popular thematic unit</i>	<i>Least demanding thematic unit</i>	<i>Most demanding thematic unit</i>
<i>Most popular thematic unit</i>	1			
<i>Least popular thematic unit</i>	0.329465243	1		
<i>Least demanding thematic unit</i>	0.339744085	-0.842963758	1	
<i>Most demanding thematic unit</i>	0.362567942	0.885191923	-0.865578534	1

Note. + direct correlation dependence; -indirect correlation dependence; *** very strong dependence $r = 0.8$ to 1 (-0.8 to -1); ** moderate dependence $r = 0.4$ to 0.8 (-0.4 to -0.8); * weak dependence $r = 0$ to 0.4 (-0.4 to 0)

Conclusion

It is inevitable to consider physical education in primary education as a key factor in supporting and expanding pupils' physical activity, which is an important subject of basic health prevention, as the entry of children into school significantly changes the scope but also the content of physical activities. From the results of the study by Mikláňková (2009) we conclude that there is a decrease in daily physical activity compared to children from kindergartens. This decrease is reflected not only on weekdays but also on weekends. Authors perceive this fact as a change in the daily routine of children, where walks and physical activities typical for preschool children are absent in the morning, which means that compulsory schooling ultimately reduces children's physical activities. Partial freedom to choose the content of education allows teachers to adapt the content of lessons from several perspectives, e.g., material, spatial, etc. and we fully agree with the opinion of Oborný-Štefaničáková (2013) that the content of physical education classes must be pleasant for primary school students, as only in this way will it be possible for them to develop an interest in movement and various physical education activities. This fact is significantly influenced by the role of a teacher, who conducts such lessons, and it is extremely important to consider the fact that this is the "golden age" of motor skills (Laczo, 2014; Ružbarská, 2018) or psychomotor skills, as every movement and physical activity is always a unification (integrity) of external bodily movement with controlling mental processes, which ultimately represents psychomotor activity (Novák, 2016). The main results of our work show that:

- for ¼ teachers working in rural and urban schools, the subject physical education is the most popular subject, in terms of the length of pedagogical experience it is the most popular for teachers with experience longer than 11 years;
- thematic unit handling, preparation and sports games is the most popular among more than 50% of the interviewed teachers, especially in the age category of teachers under 30 (more than 60% of responses), on the other hand it is the least popular in the age group of teachers over 50 (10 % of responses);
- teachers of urban as well as rural schools consider thematic unit basic movement skills to be the least demanding one - more than 40% of answers and mostly teachers with 2 to 5 years of experience - almost 60% of answers;
- both urban and rural school teachers consider thematic unit psychomotor and health-oriented exercises and games to be the most demanding one, in terms of age teachers in the age category from 41 to 50 years (50.94%) and in terms of education achieved only by a bachelor's degree - more than 60% of answers;

- large portion of teachers (48.50% working in urban schools and 58.16% working in rural schools) would like to expand their knowledge in teaching physical education in primary education. The greatest interested in additional educational training was shown by teachers aged 31 to 40 years (67.31%) and teachers with only a bachelor's degree - more than 63.64% of answers;
- from the point of view of mutual correlations, we found a very strong direct correlation dependence between the most demanding thematic unit and the least popular thematic unit in teachers from both urban and rural schools.

The results of our findings show that in the educational training of future teachers focused on primary education, it will be necessary to focus more deeply on those subjects that even teachers with longer pedagogical experience consider to be challenging in terms of teaching. Already stated complexity of teaching these subjects is subsequently related to the unpopularity of their teaching, which is certainly reflected in practice on the quality of the implementation of such lessons. We consider it extremely necessary to organize training courses for teachers dealing with physical education focused on primary education through methodological centres or other educational institutions, as more than 50% of teachers are interested in such educational activities. If we want to improve the quality of education at the primary level of education of the subject physical education to a qualitatively higher level, various educational courses should be implemented.

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