

PLACE THE HANDBALL IN THE CONTEXT OF SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOL POPULATION

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Abstract

The aim of this research is an attempt of establishing the ways of organizing and estimating the popularity of handball among junior-high school boys and girls in comparison to other free-time sport interests. As a result of a draw, 10% of all junior-high schools were chosen from the Krakow region and two randomly chosen first-grade groups (295 girls and 330 boys). The diagnostic survey method was used in gathering material. 8% of teenagers participate in after-school activities. Junior-high schools do not organize a handball section as an after-school activity. Teenagers prefer sport activities that they themselves arrange and the popularity of handball is low- it is not higher than 1% among the examined teenagers of both sexes. Although 32.2% of female junior-high students and 41.1% of male junior-high students' exercise in sport clubs, the popularity of handball is on the seventh place among girls (1.4%) and on the third place among boys (3%).

Key words: handball, children's and teenagers' sport, free-time activities

1 Introduction

Development of sport activeness is a very important element in every person's life. The responsibility of teaching the importance of sport activeness belongs mostly to family and school. Parents' attitude shapes certain children's behavior patterns that may become lifetime habits. It is important to motivate young people to participate in sport activities. If it is the case, "the plasticity of character makes a person the most susceptible to upbringing" [1]. Health education is responsibility of school and physical education realized there, as well. The aim of this process is preparation to life in society and participation in sport culture even after the end of educational process. Among the conditions that decide about the level of quality of the physical education in schools, the greatest role plays a teacher of this subject. His or her role is to change initiating interests of a child into a permanent interest.

The influence of parents and teachers in shaping pro-health habits of their charges is declining as they get older. For the adolescents, the most important way of spending free time is set by an informal peer group, that is: mates or close friends. Social gatherings in peer group can have positive or negative influence in shaping motivation to sport activeness [2]. This influence depends from the level of popularity of sport activeness in the sport group.

2 Ways of undertaking a sport activity.

Examining free-time activities of Polish society, it was aimed to establish what are favorite places and ways to undertake a sport activity. It was observed that already in school age the percentage of boys practicing a sport is higher than girls' (57% of boys, 40% of girls [3], 32.5% and 19.1% [4]. Although girls more often attend after-school sport classes, their membership in sport clubs is by half lower [3, 4]. Definite majority of teenagers: 75.2%; 64% [3]; 54% [5]; 78%, 84% [4] prefer to take up a sport activity individually, without teacher's, coach's or recreation instructor's supervision. This problem was already noticed by physical education teachers in the 80 s. However, since than a growth in sport clubs' popularity has been noticed – 13.6%, 14.5%, 26.7%, 39% and in after-school sport classes – 6%; 16.7%; 12.8%. The tendency of falling percentage in relation to age of people being members of sport clubs and other sport

organizations is noticeable as well. Among 25-year-olds, only 16.5% participate in any kind of organized sport activities and among 35-year-olds the percentage falls by half [3].

The reasons for sport passivity. Because of low sport activeness of the Polish society, it was attempted to establish the reasons of passivity in free time. The reason given most often is lack of time. In case of children, they often explain their little sport activeness by living a long distance from their school and by the necessity of helping their parents in household chores [3]. Teenagers, apart from lack of free time, complain about lack of places and conditions for systematic sport activeness [3, 5, 6]. Lack of will for active rest is characteristic for 15% high-school students and 26.3% of university students. Adults, in order not to admit their laziness, explain their passivity by terms of high physical activeness in their work [3]. Apart from the reasons for lack or scarceness of motor activity, the subjects indicated their sources of inspiration of sport activity. Teenagers from Warsaw decided that the highest influence on shaping their sport interests have physical education classes 52%, 49.2% said that it was watching sport events and sport- recreational activities with their peers. Physical education teacher was most often indicated factor (70%) in encouraging teenagers to participation in sport culture since the 80 s. The order is reverse among Krakow teenagers. The greatest influence have peers, sport events are on the second position and then physical education teacher or a coach. In spite of civilization progress, the influence of mass media on the level of inspiration by sport culture remains slight – 1.7% [5].

The aim of the research demonstrated in this work is an attempt to establish the way of organizing and popularity of handball among girls and boys from junior- high schools from the Krakow region in relation to other sport and recreational interests.

3 Material and methods

The subject of the research is sport activeness undertaken consciously and willingly in the time free from school and household chores. Various aspects of this activeness have been counted as an operand and established on the basis of examined teenagers' opinions. On the other hand, way of its organization and its various types is a dependant variable. An indication of way of organization of sport activities were after-school classes (so called SKS), activities independent from school (clubs, institutions) and individual activities (individually organized). Indication of sport activities were various kinds of sport and recreational disciplines.

On the basis of the list obtained from Education Office, a list of all junior-high schools operating in the Krakow region was made. As a result of a draw, 10% of all junior- high schools were chosen from the Krakow region and two randomly chosen first-grade groups. In the research participated altogether 625 pupils (295 girls and 330 boys). The reason to choose teenagers from the Krakow region was the assumption that they represent a typical city environment. Occurrences and social processes typical for Polish cities take place in Krakow. Generalizations and research's conclusions can be therefore used to describe other Polish urban societies.

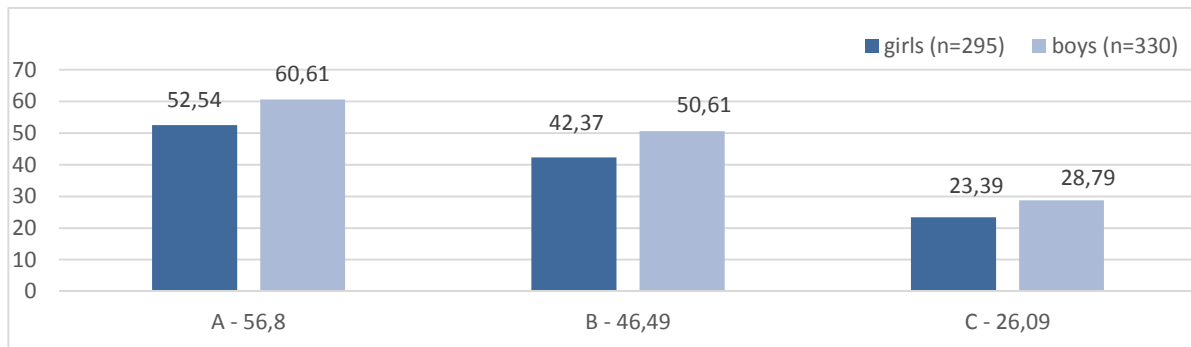
The diagnostic survey method was used in gathering material. The survey is one of the most popular methods in pedagogical and social research. It is called by some a diagnostic survey, by others a representational group survey. According to Pilch, Bauman [7], "a diagnostic survey is a way of gathering information about structural and functional attributes and the dynamics of social processes, societies' opinions and views, escalation and directions of development of certain occurrences and every other phenomena not localized institutionally- having a significance in upbringing- on the basis of specially chosen group representing the general population in which the examined phenomenon takes place". Using the survey method, empirical data and data that may indicate to the reasons for examined phenomena was gathered.

From all the survey research techniques, a survey form was chosen to be used. This technique fulfilled the expectations. The advantages of the survey form are: standardization of conditions

of research’s performance and the anonymity of the subjects. The fact that the surveyor tried to prejudice the subjects in favour of the research right before it, had a crucial effect on the results. In the survey, the measurement of the variables is done in accordance to nominal and ordinal scales.

4 Research

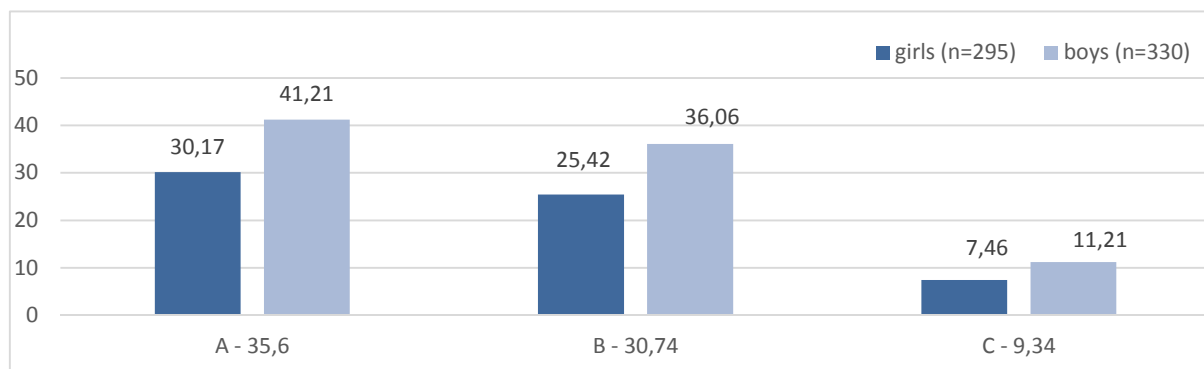
The results of the research are presented in relation to percent value with accuracy of two numbers after the coma. The second measure is an independence test of two variables chi-square for multidivisional tables. Only the correlations whose value is $p \leq 0.05$ or less are taken into account. Thanks to the used test, it is possible to examine measurable and immeasurable (quality) features.



Legend: A) undertakes motor activities (yes – $p \leq 0.05$), B) undertakes it at least once a week (1/w and more often – $p \leq 0.05$), C) undertakes it at least 4 times a week (4/w and more often – $p = n. i.$).

Fig. 1 Sport- recreational (motor) activeness in free time of junior- high pupils: organized individually, in schools, in clubs and other institutions

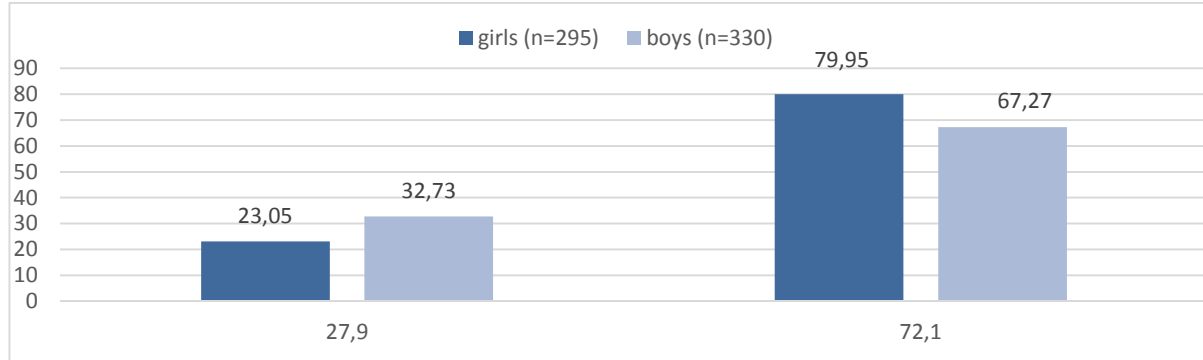
Sport and recreational activeness (except tourism) is undertaken in schools, in clubs and other institutions or individually by 57% of the subjects (61% of boys and 53% of girls- a significant difference of a value $p \leq 0.05$). Almost half of the boys and slightly fewer girls (42.37%) engage in that sort of motor activities at least once a week. Together it gives 47% value. Unfortunately, every fourth person exercises properly often, that is at least four times a week. Girls’ activeness (23.4%) and boys’ (28.8%) is comparable. Although the difference is not important statistically, it is visible that boys are more active (fig.1).



Legend: A) undertakes motor activities (yes – $p \leq 0.01$), B) undertakes it at least once a week (1/w and more often – $p \leq 0.01$), C) undertakes it at least 4 times a week (4/w and more often – $p = n. i.$).

Fig. 2 Sport-recreational (motor) activeness of junior-high pupils: organized in schools, in clubs and other institutions

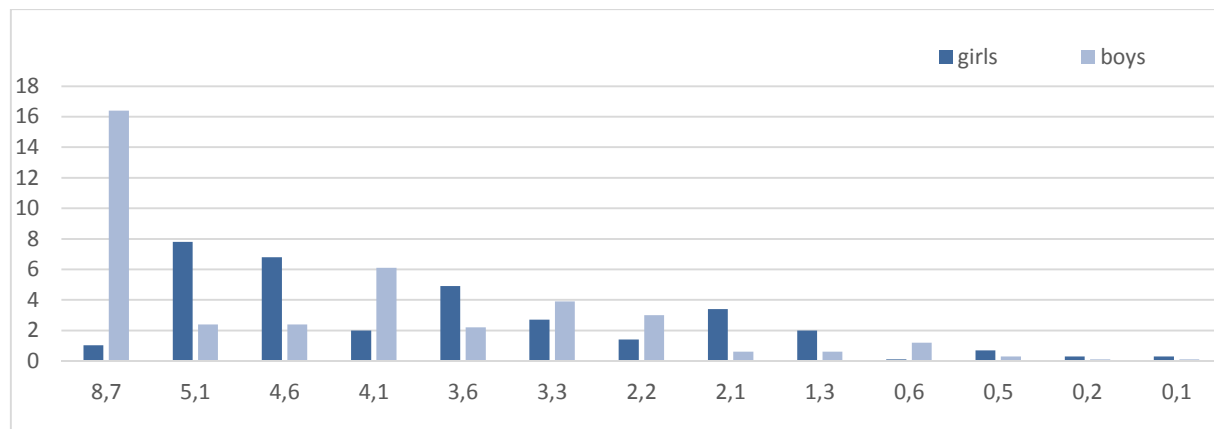
36% of examined teenagers (41% - boys, 30% - girls) participate in motor activities organized by schools, clubs and other educational institutions serving this purpose. There is a relation between this type of activeness and sex – $p \leq 0.01$. The frequency of participation in this type of activeness at least once a week is 31% of the subjects (girls 25.4% and 36.1% boys), but four times a week is only 9.4% of the teenagers (11.2% - boys, 7.5% - girls) (fig.2).



Legend: 27.9% – undertakes motor activities; 72.1% – does not undertake motor activities

Fig. 3 Sport-recreational (motor) activeness of junior-high pupils: organized in clubs and other institutions

As a result of an attempt to differentiate between activities organized by clubs and institutions from after-class activities organized by schools, it has been established that 28% participate in the former. These activities are of more interest for boys – 32.73% than for girls 23.05% ($p \leq 0.01$) (fig. 3).

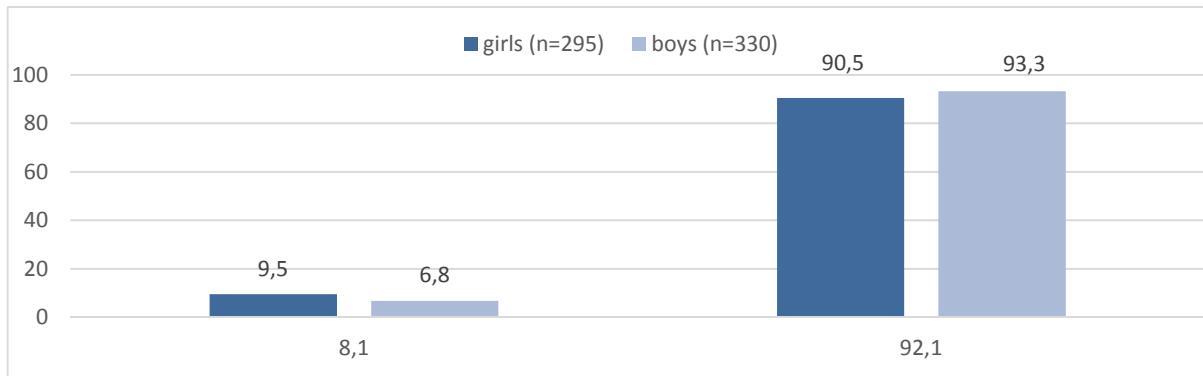


Legend: 8,7%– football; 5,1% – volleyball; 4,6% – swimming; 4,1% – martial arts; 3,6% – basketball; 3,3% – racket games; 2,2% – handball; 2,1% – exercises with music; 1,3% – gymnasium exercises; 0,6% – riding a bicycle; 0,5% – winter sports; 0,2% – jogging; 0,1% – extreme sports

Fig. 4 Sport - recreational disciplines practiced by junior- high schools in clubs and other institutions

Teenagers participating actively in club activities prefer football trainings (8.69%) and volleyball trainings (5.11%). Swimming, martial arts and basketball are very popular, too. Less than 4% participate in exercises with music, racket games (badminton, tennis and table tennis) and handball trainings. The fact that handball occupies the seventh position is curious. What is more, arranging handball trainings in clubs and sport organizations should not be a problem when we consider possibilities of hiring professional trainers and the facilities. Sport preferences of junior-high girls are significantly different from boys'. Among boys, the most popular form of motor activity is football. Practicing it is admitted by 16.36% of boys and only

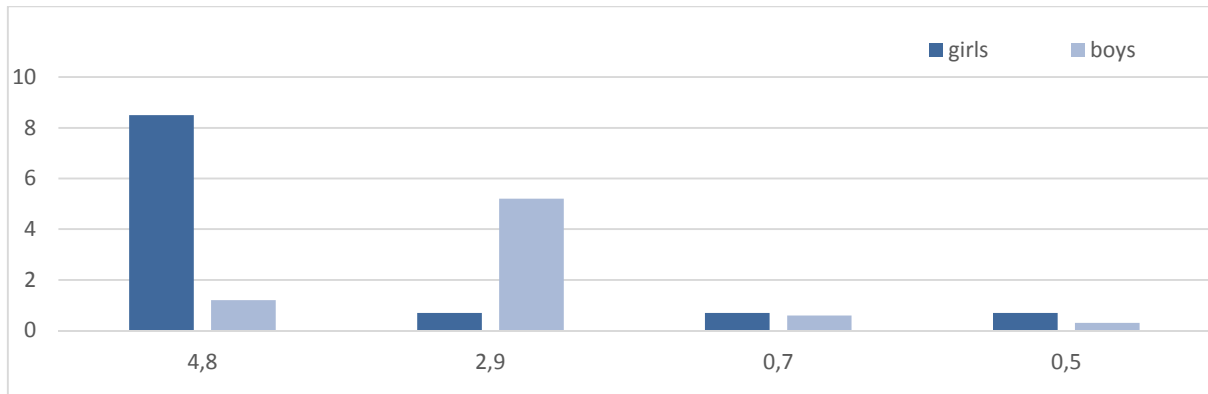
1.02% of girls, who find volleyball definitely more attractive (7.8% - girls, 2.42% - boys). Exercises with music and swimming are popular among girls, too. Boys as often attend martial art trainings and racket games (fig. 4).



Legend: 8,1% – Undertakes motor activities; 92,1% – Does not undertake motor activities

Fig. 5 After-class motor activities of teenagers from junior-high

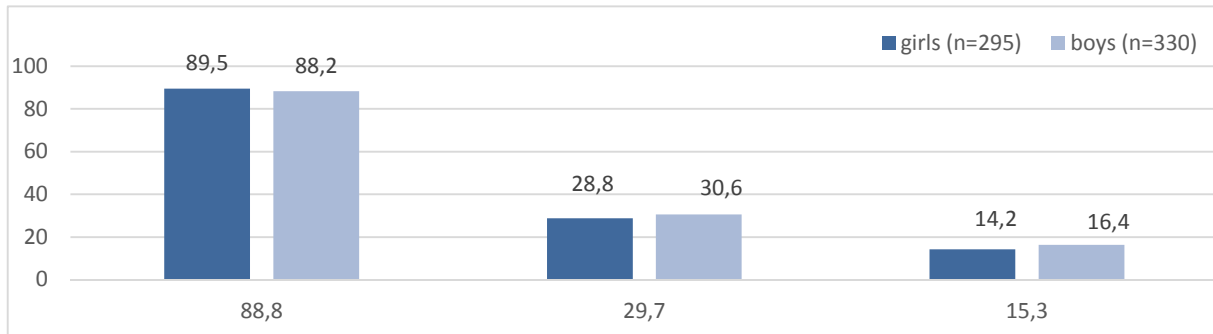
After-class activities in junior- high are not very popular. Only 9.5% of girls and 6.7% of boys identify themselves with such form of activeness. Together 8% of junior-high students. The result has been unchanged for years (fig. 2).



Legend: 4,8% – volleyball; 2,9 – football; 0,7% – basketball; 0,5% – swimming

Fig. 6 Kinds of sport-recreational disciplines organized by junior-high schools as after-class activities

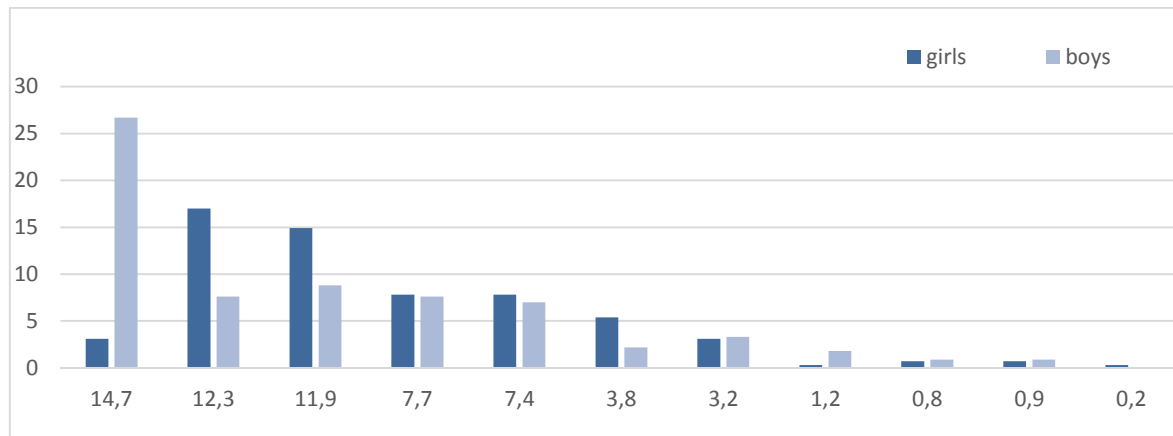
Group of teenagers taking part in after-class sport activities values group games such as volleyball (4.84%) and football (2.91%) the most. Less than 1% attend basketball and swimming classes. Sex of examined teenagers influences the choice of a discipline practiced at after-school activities. Girls value volleyball classes the most (9%), which are chosen by only 1% of the boys. Junior-high boys definitely prefer football, which is little popular among girls of their age. It is difficult to understand why schools do not arrange handball classes, as most of them have appropriate facilities and trainers (fig. 6).



Legend: 88,8% – undertakes motor activities (yes), 29,7% – undertakes it at least once a week (1/w and more often), 15,3% – undertakes it at least 4 times a week (4/w and more often)

Fig. 7 Independent from school sport-recreational (motor) activeness organized by teenagers individually, during all year or seasonally

Forms of motor activeness organized by teenagers themselves are of great interest for them. With such form of undertaking motor activeness identify themselves 89% of subjects. Nevertheless, while analysing the results of the experiment we can see that regularly – that is once a week or more often – do that only 29.8% of the subjects (28.8% girls and 30.6% boys). Even fewer of the subjects: 15.4% undertake sport activities four times a week and more often, which includes 14.2% of girls and 16.2% of boys (fig. 7).



Legend: 14,7% – football; 12,3% - volleyball; 11,9% – swimming; 7,7 – basketball; 7,4% – martial arts; 3,8% – jogging; 3,2% – racket games; 1,2% – exercises with music; 0,8% – handball; 0,9% – gymnasium exercises; 0,2% – extreme sports

Fig. 8 Kinds of sport-recreational disciplines practiced by junior-high students individually during all year

Among the disciplines practiced individually and seasonally, the most popular are: riding a bicycle (36%), winter sports (21%), and football (29%). Very popular are also: volleyball (17%), swimming (16%), and basketball (14%). The choice of a discipline practiced individually during the season is dependent from the sex. The most popular discipline among girls is riding a bicycle (40%). 10% fewer boys participate in such kind of activity, they prefer playing football (46%). Junior-high girls choose more frequently winter sports (26% - girls, 17% - boys), volleyball (22% - girls, 12% - boys) and swimming (19% - girls, 13% - boys). Boys, on the other hand, more frequently play basketball (20%) that is not popular among girls (8%). Alike all-year activeness and seasonal activeness, the popularity of handball is around 1% (fig. 8).

5 Discussion

In organizing free-time sport activeness, school is on the lowest position. Comparing forms of activities at school and independent from school, it has been observed that the examined teenagers more often participate in activities organized by sport clubs than those organized by schools. ¼ declare being a member of a club, while only 8% of junior high-school students participate in after-school classes. Comparably low attendance has been observed during similar research [4]. It is possible that such low interest in after-class activities is due to narrow choice of sport disciplines offered to junior-high students by Krakow schools. The lack of recreational disciplines practiced often by teenagers in their free time is not a factor encouraging to participate in after-school classes. Moreover, sport activeness gives satisfaction if it meets the interests of the teenagers and if it does not require more than their capabilities.

The examined teenagers prefer activities organized individually. Activities without supervision of a physical education teacher, instructor or a trainer are very popular. Unfortunately, the level of these activities is too low for at least the half of the examined teenagers. This conclusion concerns boys and girls to the same degree. These results are in accordance with results of other experiments [3, 5, 4]. Individual way of organizing motor activities is popular. Unfortunately, more than 2/3 of the subjects undertake this kind of sport activeness less than once a week and only 1/5 of the subjects four times a week and more often. The majority of the subjects do not undertake enough exercise, which creates many risks for their health and motor capacities. Probably such a high interest in activities organized individually is caused by decreasing influence of parents and teachers on shaping pro-somatic attitude of the children. In this stage of life, the pattern of free-time activities is set mainly by peer group. It is the popularity of sport in peer environment that affects to a large extent the level of sport activeness of an individual and forms of organizing it [2].

Girls prefer volleyball, swimming, basketball and exercises with music. Boys, on the other hand, prefer football, martial arts, swimming. This data is confirmed by preferences of boys and girls from other experiments [3, 5, 8]. The popularity of handball among junior-high school students is very low. Is it only a current problem, or the lack of interest in this discipline has been observed for a longer time? The answer to this question might be found in the research material gathered as a result of interviews and analysis of documents in 75 randomly chosen clubs and other institutions. This data demonstrate that among 5657 members only a Student Sport Club (287 members) had handball activities. The members practicing handball were only 0.5% of all members. On the other hand, survey research in Krakow schools demonstrated that among 1582 of the subjects 6 people (1%) practice handball in elementary schools and the same amount of people in junior-high and high schools [9]. Results of these researches have been confirmed in later works based on representative test for Krakow, in which it can be observed that among 624 junior-high students, 6 practice handball. The results of the research do not give any reasons for this situation. Therefore, it might be necessary to perform another research, searching for the reasons.

6 Conclusions

Only 8% of teenagers participate in voluntary after-class activities. In order to increase student participation in additional physical education classes, it is necessary to include in educational programs these disciplines that the teenagers enjoy practicing. Too limited choice of disciplines offered by schools often does not meet the demand of the students. It is difficult to understand why schools do not offer handball after-class trainings, as they have proper teachers and facilities.

The teenagers prefer motor activeness organized individually (89%). On the other hand it has been observed that regularly- that is at least once a week- in this kind of motor activity

participate only 28.8% of girls and 30.6% boys. The popularity of handball is low and is not higher than 1% among the subjects of both sexes.

30.2% of junior-high school girls and 41.2% of junior-high school boys train in clubs under supervision of a trainer or an instructor. The popularity of handball is on seventh place (1.4%) among girls and on the third place among boys (3%).

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