PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES OR VIRTUAL WORLD?

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Abstract
Without drawing sweeping conclusions because of the informative aspect of data collected, it is obvious that the Internet, computer games and social networking sites are taking more and more powerful positions among the youth. This tendency may have a positive as well as a negative effect on the growth of a healthy and productive generation. A crucial problem of our age is to bring up a physically and mentally healthy generation since a country with health-deficit will take a disadvantageous economic position.

Key-words*: physical activities, virtual world, 'Z' generation*

Introduction

Many have carried out research on the position of useful leisure activities in the multifactorial system of well-being. The possible branches of physical activities and its positive effects on one's general state of health are also supported by a great deal of background literature (Ábrahám, Tábori, 2012).The prior goal of a country is to improve competitiveness and quality of life (Ács, 2012).What are the most crucial factors supposed to contribute to upgrade public health and parallel to this, to an increase in economic competitiveness? The target-subjects of this study are elementary school students of today's modern technocracy. Those 'Z' generation children that came to a world of technology, growing up while playing with rattles and keyboards or a mouse at the same time. Thus, the concepts of Facebook, YouTube, Skype, Blog, Twitter are totally embedded in their everyday life. The question of dominant values arises in such an accelerated, technologically top-positioned and continuously developing world. Let us compare the former state of total protection of one's private life to the effects of different communication channels and social networking sites that enable us to share happenings of one's private life with more and more people within the shortest term. In the last few decades mankind has been making a huge improvement in technology, which has been unique several thousand years after the presence of human race in the Planet. This incredible and explosive change influenced social- as well as economic processes in human society. During the process of children education it is very crucial to pay attention to the previously mentioned phenomenon. That is why teachers are to be open to continuous changes in order to convey values to forthcoming generations effectively. Will the phrase – continuously repeated by older generations – be proved that the generation growing up is lack of skills that enable them to create and preserve a socially and economically strong, valuable society without violence? This study tends to explore the possible factors that may lead to the answers to this question. Let us start with making some observations stemming from age differences concerning children's attitude and value system. A modern distinctive approach (Tari, 2011) divides generations into three groups between childhood and adulthood. People born in the 60's and 70's form the so-called 'X' generation. The ones who are close to the world of Internet while trying to keep up with its improvement, even though it is not in their blood as naturally as the generation following them (kamaszpanasz.hu 2013). The members of generation 'Y' are people in their 20's and 30's. They can be perfectly related to the technocrat society. Their life went on parallel to the improvements of computer technology and such possibilities derived from the virtual world as lifestyle and work ethic characteristics (e.g. less importance of family background, special options when choosing a partner, being a single etc.) play an important role in their everyday life. The children of the 90's are identified as Z generation. The ones born in the world of technology and adjusting to its achievements perfectly. Children who start their life with computer games instead of toys made of wood, and watch cartoons on television or the Internet instead of listening to 'Good-night tales' read or told by their parents. 'Z' generation members are also subjected to a value-crisis of present society in Hungary caused by the political and economic transformation in the 90's, since the changes happened in a dominant period of their life.

Data Collection and Methods

The researchers queried elementary school students about their main leisure activity habits in the small town of Paks with a population of 20.000 people. Sample characteristics: 90 % of the students (N: 269) aged 9-14 (grade 3-grade 8) participated in the survey. The participants filled in a 20-item-questionnnaire containing collective terms about lower and higher grade generations' main leisure activity habits. All the questions focused on a given activity where the pupils were to react on a Likert-scale on the basis of likes and dislikes. The questionnaire composed by the author was balanced since items inquiring about physical activities equalled with the ones about

spare time activities connected to internet and computer usage (50-50 %). Data classification and analysis were carried out by SPSS program. The participants of the research represent an elementary school in Paks (Hungary) named Bezerédj. My aim was to carry out a broad-spectrum research in order to observe the possible age period when leisure activities connected to physical activities are substituted by activities related to computer usage. It is well-known that children at an early age are strongly attracted by physical activities and they gradually give up on sports getting closer to secondary school. Every age has its special significance in the enablement of improving given skills and abilities in a relatively easier way. Skills possible to be improved at a given age are summarised by Harsányi's chart. Before data-collection phase I compiled a twenty-item questionnaire focusing on mixed form of spare time activities. The questions were balanced concerning physical activities and activities which do not really inquire moves. Thus I intended to avoid shallow answers and inspire students to deep thinking and undergoing an emotional process as well. I did not ask pupils directly about the hours spent with a given activity even though I could also have gained data in this way. Since I interviewed children between the age of 10 and 15, I planned a short, simple and easy-to-understand questionnaire. Consequently, questioning and responding was composed on the basis of a five-level Likert-scale indicating the extent of students' agreement or disagreement, with such simple instructions as: 'Could you mark the following activity from 1 to 5 on the basis of likes and dislikes?' or 'How close is the following activity to you?' If pupils came to an activity they had not tried before, they did not evaluate the experience but they were to describe their attitude towards trying the given activity. Recording data was carried out by an interviewer. The points and their equivalents were the following: a) 1 point: I hate it, b) 2 points: I dislike it, c) 3 points: I like it to a certain extent, d) 4 points: I like it, e) 5 points: I like it the most / I love it.

Table 1 The questions

Activity / Points	1	2	3	4	5
Swimming					
Running					
Cycling					
Facebook					
Skype, Msn					
Watching movies online					
Kinect, Wee					
Ball games					
Walking, touring					
Dancing					
Board games					
Conversations					
Strategy or logic games on PC					
Driving a car or motorbike					
Driving a car or motorbike simulator					
Surfing the Internet					
Online Homework					
Combat sports					
YouTube					
War or combat games on PC					

Before starting the research I assumed:

1. Firstly, I expected to observe a continuous decrease in the level of popularity concerning physical activities compared to computer-related, virtual world activities (not really requiring moves) as I proceed in further stages of age among the interviewed students.
2. At the beginning of the research I presumed a lower tendency of decrease in case of those students who take part in trainings at least 3 times a week, and as time goes by one could not experience a change in their attitude towards physical activities either.
3. My third assumption tended to reflect differences between the sexes. I expected girls to avoid physical activities at an earlier stage of life than boys. However, females would not obviously turn towards virtual world but rather communication based personal relationships.

Results

Since research on economic growth in the past century proved that the improvement of health of a given population is responsible for 30-40 % of economic growth (Ács, 2012), children's attitude towards physical (health improving) activities might be a key factor. At the beginning of this research the author expected data showing a change in attitude in favour of computer-based leisure activities compared to physical activities. Another assumption of the author's reflected sex-differences. Presumably, in case of girls – socially more sensitive but less intensively attracted by physical activities – real personal communication will not be totally substituted by virtual world. The final results predict further relations among research components. *Results of all the elementary school students:* YouTube seems the most popular leisure activity among students with 86 % 5-point-anwers (5 points=most liked) given. Attitude towards driving cars and motorbikes came in second with 78 %. However talking (conversation) and cycling were evaluated with an impressive percentage (above 70% both). The superiority of relaxing in a virtual way is proved by the high scores of kinect (74%) and online movies (70 %). The rate of 1-point and 5-point-responses at the school level. A result to be considered positive is the fact that the least popular activities are indicated as different types of virtual combat games with 19% 1-point answers among the inquired elementary school students. Another remarkable tendency among 5-point responses is that it hardly ever occurs that pupils do not enjoy cycling (72%), ball-games (64%), walking (61%) or conversations (74%). However, one can observe the disadvantageous position of running (13% 1-point answers whereas only 25 % 5-point responses) referring to the fact that students do not really prefer this activity. *Comparing school athletes' results to non-athletes:* Athletes evaluated YouTube as a possible leisure time activity with the highest score (87%), similarly to school average (see Figure 1). Besides the world of computer, school sportsmen are also interested

in kinect (77%) serving as a kind of bridge between virtual world and physical activity. Furthermore, athletes are keen on cycling (73 %), conversation (74%), as well as driving (78 %). Non-athlete students or students who are not involved in sports regularly indicated YouTube the most favoured spare time activity (83 %). This popularity index is approaching sportsmen's result (87%). *Comparing athletes' and non-athletes' 5-point-responses:* Comparing athletes' and non-athletes' 5-point-responses one can observe that the rate of 5-point answers are higher in case of sportsmen but not to a significant extent (p=0,31). As for running, dancing and surfing the internet the scores given are very close to each other. *Leisure activities evaluated by 1 point:* This topics draws one's attention to the low level rate of students refusing board-games (non-athletes: 0%, athletes: 1.5 %) and conversations (non-athletes: 0%, athletes: 1.5 %). The possible obvious explanation for athletes rather avoiding running, swimming and physical-activity-connected kinect game as leisure activities might be the fact that they keep practising these kinds of physical activities during trainings and they would not appreciate them when relaxing. *Girls'results:* In case of girls YouTube (82%) is followed by personal-relationship-based conversation (80%), kinect (72%) and online movies (70%). Less favoured activities are virtual combat games (20%). *Boys' results:* In the group of boys YouTube (89%) is preceded by driving cars or motorbikes (92%). In their case physical activities play a considerable role as well as ball-games (75%), dissimilarly to girls. One can notice a positive tendency in case of girls, since they appreciate conversation (68-86%), walking (89-63%), as well as cycling (40-78%) besides kinect (45-58%) and online movies (73-68%). Focusing on boys' results, one is to witness the high position of driving cars and motorbikes (96-90%) as well as YouTube (85-100%) which are followed by more and more popular kinect (35-95%). *Comparing boys' and girls' results:* The most outstanding difference was revealed between the two sexes concerning virtual combat games (girls: 20%, boys: 72%) driving a car or a motorbike (girls: 63%, boys: 92%), as well as ball-games (girls: 52%, boys: 75%). Girls prefer Facebook (girls: 63%, boys: 49%), conversations (girls: 81%, boys: 67%) and dancing (girls: 53%, boys: 22%) to a significant extent. Among boys the least favoured activities are presented by dancing (24%) whereas girls dislike virtual combat games (35%) the most. In case of school-boys one can never find examples for not liking ball-games (0%), driving cars or motorbikes (0%). Similar tendency among girls can be observed in walking (0%) or conversations (0%).

Conclusions

The first hypothesis regarding elementary school students turning towards computer-related, virtual world has been proved on the basis of data collected. Although the process is obvious, it could not be described as linear. The second hypothesis focusing on sportsmen being less attracted by virtual world has not been proved in this research since significant difference could not be shown between athletes and non-athletes. Athletes responded positively as far as swimming and combat sports, though it is interesting that non-athlete students prefer running to a bigger extent than athlete-students because of the possible reasons mentioned earlier.

The third hypothesis concerning girls being less interested in virtual world has been proved to a certain extent, because it was true in case of virtual combat games but not Facebook, Skype and YouTube. However, personal – relationship - based conversations and walking play a more crucial role in their life than in boys'. Even though it could be observed that the position of virtual world in our students' life is gradually becoming more and more dominant regardless of sexes or being an athlete or non-athlete, physical activities still have not disappear from pupils' life. The parallel phenomenon lets us conclude that the two worlds (virtual and real) can make young people's life complete together, since even the always winning YouTube could convey values as well if it is used for positive purposes.

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TJELESNE AKTIVNOSTI ILI VIRTUALNI SVIJET?

Sažetak

Bez pripreme jasnih zaključaka, a zbog informativnog aspekta prikupljenih podataka, očito je da internet, računarske igre i društvene računarske mreže uzimaju sve više i više snažnih pozicija među mladima. Ova tendencija može imati pozitivan kao i negativan učinak na rast zdrave i produktivne populacije. Krucijalni problem našeg vremena je da pokrenemo tjelesno i mentalno zdravu populaciju budući će država sa zdravstvenim deficitom zauzeti zaostajući ekonomski položaj.

***Ključne riječi**: tjelesna aktivnos, virtualni svijet, 'Z' generacija*

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