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DETERMINING THE DIFFERENCES IN INVOLVEMENT IN ORGANIZED SPORTS/PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS UP TO THE AGE OF 7

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Abstract

Currently in Croatia there is a lack of information that would enable understanding and insight into certain differences in the involvement of boys and girls of preschool age in certain organized sports /physical activities, in martial arts and non-martial arts as well as in individual and team sports activities. The research sought to determine in witch organized sports / physical activities are involved children up to the age of 7. A sample of the respondents consisted of children up to the age of 7 (N = 1291, 675 M and 616 F) who were involved in the work of a sports association or a sports club operating in Virovitica and Osijek.

The results show that by the age of 7, boys were statistically significantly more involved in football (96.9% vs 3.1%), athletics (62.9% vs 37.1%) and judo (74.3% vs 25.7%) then girls, while girls were statistically significantly more involved in gymnastics (62.5% vs 37.5%) and dance (75% vs 25%) then boys. At age 7, girls were statistically significantly more involved in individual organized sports/physical activities then boys (58.6% vs 41.4%), while boys were significantly more involved in the team's sports / physical activity then girls (66.7% vs 33.3%). Children up to the age of 7 show a significantly higher inclination, meaning they are significantly more involved in non-combat and individual sports/physical activities. In addition, up to the age of 7 boys statistically significantly participate in non-combat sports activities, while girls statistically significantly participate in non-combat and individual sporting activities.

Boys and girls ages 7 participate equally in organized sports / physical activities, and significant differences between boys and girls appear in the selection and affinity of individual sports activities. There is a connection between choosing a sports and the sex of a pre-school child, but the reasons for these gender differences are not so clear.

Key words: *combat sports; preschool children; individual sporting activities; non-combat sports; gender differences; team sports activities*

INTRODUCTION

Many authors state that children's participation in organized sports/physical activities has a positive effect on their health, but also on their motor, cognitive and psycho-socio-emotional development (Mikas, 2009; Prskalo, 2007; Sindik, 2009; Trajkovski et al., 2014). The vast majority of parents will probably agree with this, but the literature shows that usually only one quarter of preschool children are involved in organized sports/physical activities in their free time (Krivokapić & Bjelica, 2014; Tomašić Humer et al., 2016; Vidić et al., 2018). Previous research has shown that there is a certain discrepancy in the involvement of boys and girls of early and preschool age in organized sports/physical activities. Temple et al. (2014) found that there is no significant difference in involvement in organized sports between boys and girls of preschool age, while Hinkley (2011) and Tomašić Humer et al. (2016) found that early and preschool girls are significantly more involved in organized sports/physical activities than boys. It is evident from the above that in the early and pre-school period, boys and girls equally participate in organized sports activities, and if there is a difference, in that case girls engage in organized sports activities significantly more than boys (Iveković, 2020). As for specific activities, dancing is the predominant form of physical activity among girls of early and preschool age (Chalcarz & Merkiel 2014; Hinkley, 2011; Temple et al., 2014). Apart from dancing, girls are more involved in gymnastics and athletics than boys, while boys in the preschool period participate more in martial arts activities and in team sports than girls (Temple et al., 2014).

By reviewing the literature from the Republic of Croatia, Iveković (2020) determined in his research that it was not possible to gain insight into certain differences in the involvement of boys and girls of preschool age in individual, team, martial and non-martial organized sports/physical activities. The same author concludes that there is a lack of information in Croatia that would enable an understanding of the participation and preferences of boys and girls of early and preschool age towards certain organized sports/physical activities. The aim of the research was to determine in which organized sports/physical activities boys and girls up to the age of 7 are involved. The following research questions were asked: (1) Does the total number of children involved in organized activities differ by gender? (2) Does the number of boys and girls involved in a particular sport/physical activity differ? (3) Are children, boys and girls more involved in martial or non-martial activities? (4) Are children, boys and girls more involved in individual or team activities?

METHODOLOGY

A Sample of Respondents

The sample of respondents consisted of children up to the age of 7 (N = 1291; boys = 675, 52,3%; girls = 616, 47.7%) who were involved in the work of an association or sports club operating in Virovitica (N = 610, 47.3%) and Osijek (N = 681, 52.7%).

Work Methods

Previous research that dealt with children's involvement in organized kinesiology (physical/sports) activities obtained data through questionnaires or interviews. For a sample of preschool children, the questionnaires were filled out by parents (Australian Sport Commission, 2018; Blažević et al., 2012; Bokulić, 2017; Chalcarz & Merkiel, 2014; Hinkley, 2011; Krivokapić & Bjelica, 2014; Temple et al., 2014; Tomašić Humer et al., 2016; Vidić et al., 2018), and with a sample of children of primary and secondary school age, the questionnaires children independently were filled out (Brown et al., 2011; Cimerman & Cetinić, 2008; Field & Temple, 2017; Ilišin, 2006; Jenko Miholić et al., 2015; Vilhjalmsson & Kristjansdottir, 2003) or through parent interviews (Barnett, 2008; Valentine & McKendrick, 1997). This is one of the few studies conducted among preschool children in which data was collected by contacting the clubs directly, and not through a questionnaire filled out by parents or children.

Data were collected from clubs and associations in most cases by telephone, and in four cases only by sending electronic mail. The purpose and goals of the research were briefly explained over the phone, after which the presidents, secretaries or coaches of the clubs/associations provided the necessary data with their own consent (the total number of included children up to the age of 7, not only registered competitors in the case for the club to compete). After the telephone conversation, some clubs requested that brief information about the research be sent to them by e-mail, which was done. Along with the information about the research, a table was sent by e-mail in which the following information had to be entered: the name of the club/association, the name of the sport/physical activity that the club or association carries out (e.g. swimming, sports gym, judo, etc.) and the total number of boys and girls early and preschool age that are involved in the activity. The Sports Association of the City of Virovitica and clubs in Virovitica were contacted in April 2018 and February 2019, while clubs and associations from the City of Osijek were contacted in the period from October 2018 to February 2019. In Osijek, a total of 71 clubs, associations and city sports associations (that were members of the Community of Sports Associations of the City of Osijek) were contacted. Only one association and one club, which were contacted by phone and then via e-mail, did not provide information on the number of children of early and preschool age involved in their activities, which shows that ultimately the response of the clubs and associations was very

good. It is very likely that there are clubs and associations in the area of the City of Osijek that conduct organized sports/physical activities with children of early and preschool age, were not contacted because they were not members of the Community of Sports Associations of the City of Osijek, and therefore their contact information could not be obtained.

Descriptive statistics were performed. A chi-square test ($\chi 2$) of matching was used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the frequencies of the entire sample and subsamples of respondents within individual categories. The chi-square test of independence was used to determine whether there is a statistically significant relationship between subsamples of respondents within individual categories. A 2x2 table with Yates' correction was used for the test of independence. The significance level for both tests was set at $p \leq 0.05$.

THE RESULTS

Table 1 shows the organized sports/physical activities in which children, boys and girls up to the 7 years of age are included. It can be seen that children up to the age of 7 are most involved in soccer (22.2%), universal sports school (16.3%), swimming (9.6%), rhythmic gymnastics (9.5%), gymnastics (9.3%), etc., and the least in table tennis (0.6%) and volleyball (0.2%). In addition, it was established that only girls are involved in rhythmic gymnastics, handball, basketball and volleyball under the age of 7, while only boys are involved in table tennis. It should be pointed out that only children of preschool age with certain developmental difficulties were involved in the riding activity, and this activity was carried out as a form of therapy. Table 1 shows the results of the chi-square matching test with regard to the gender of the child, and it was determined that there is a statistically significant difference in the number of boys and girls involved in football, sports gymnastics, athletics, dancing associations and clubs, and judo. Thus, the results show that up to the age of 7, boys are statistically significantly more involved than girls in football (96.9% vs 3.1%), athletics (62.9% vs 37.1%) and judo (74.3% vs 25.7%), while girls statistically significantly more involved in gymnastics (62.5% vs 37.5%) and dance (75% vs 25%) than boys.

Table 1 *Chi-square test - differences in participation in organized sports/physical activities between boys and girls up to the age of 7*

ORGANIZED ACTIVITIES	Total	Boys	Girls	χ^2 *(df)*	*p*
	N	N	N		
Soccer	**287**	**278**	**9**	**252,129 (1)**	**,000***
Universal sports school	211	117	94	2,507 (1)	,113
Swimming	124	68	56	1,161 (1)	,281
Rhythmic gymnastics	122	0	122	/	/
Gymnastics	**120**	**45**	**75**	**7,500 (1)**	**,006***
Karate	109	50	59	,743 (1)	,389
Handball	71	0	71	/	/
Athletics	**70**	**44**	**26**	**4,629 (1)**	**,031***
Dance	**56**	**14**	**42**	**14,000 (1)**	**,000***
Judo	**35**	**26**	**9**	**8,257 (1)**	**,004***
Tennis	25	8	17	3,240 (1)	,072
Basketball	22	0	22	/	/
Taekwondo	20	11	9	,200 (1)	,625
Horseback riding (therapeutic for children with disabilities)	9	6	3	1,000 (1)	,317
Table tennis	8	8	0	/	/
Volleyball	2	0	2	/	/
TOTAL	**1291**	**675**	**616**	**2,696 (1)**	**,101**

* $p \leq 0,05$

Figure 1 shows the differences in participation between boys and girls up to the age of 7 in organized sports/physical activities in general, in martial and non-martial sports activities, and individual and team sports activities. The results of the conducted chi-square test show that there is no statistically significant difference in the number of boys and girls up to the age of 7 participating in organized sports/physical activities, martial arts and non-martial arts. It was determined that there is a statistically significant difference in the number of boys and girls involved in individual and team organized sports/physical activities. Girls are statistically significantly more involved in individual organized sports/physical activities than boys, while boys are statistically significantly more involved in team activities than girls by the age of 7 years.

Figure 1 *Chi square test - differences between boys and girls up to the age of 7 with regard to involvement in organized sports/physical activities in general and with regard to involvement in martial, non-martial, individual and team sports/physical activities*

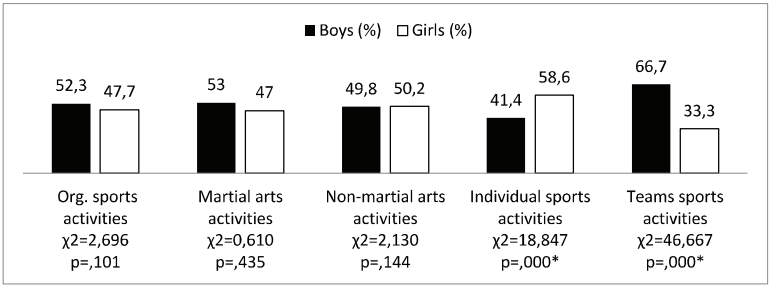


Figure 2 shows the results of the differences between boys and girls up to the age of 7 involved in martial and non-martial organized sports activities. The obtained results of the chi-square test show that there is a statistically significant difference in the entire sample of respondents and in boys and girls in favor of non-martial sports activities. This means that children up to the age of 7 are statistically significantly more involved in non-martial than in martial sports activities. In addition, statistically significantly more boys and girls under the age of 7 are involved in non-martial sports activities. The chi-square test of independence (correction according to Yates') showed that there is no statistically significant relationship ($\chi 2$ [1, n = 1291] = ,016; *p* =,900; *fi* = ,006) between the child's gender and involvement in martial and non-martial activities. The gender of a child up to the age of 7 does not statistically significantly affect involvement in martial and non-martial organized sports/physical activities. Boys and girls up to the age of 7 are equally involved in martial and non-martial activities.

Figure 2 *Chi-square test - differences in involvement in martial and non-martial organized sports/physical activities among children in general and boys and girls up to the age of 7*

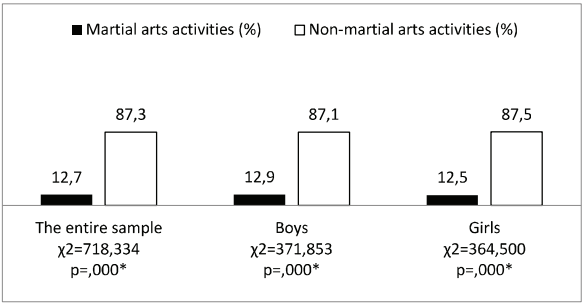
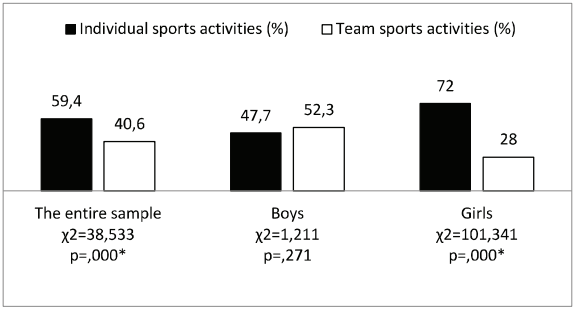


Figure 3 shows the results of differences in participation in individual and team organized sports/physical activities of children, boys and girls up to the age of 7. It can be observed that there is a statistically significant difference in the participation in individual and team organized sports/physical activities in the entire sample of respondents, with the fact that children up to the age of 7 are significantly more involved in individual than in team organized sports/physical activities. It was also found that girls up to the age of 7 are statistically significantly more involved in individual than in team organized sports/physical activities, while no statistically significant difference was found in boys. The chi-square test of independence (correction according to Yates') showed that there is a statistically significant relationship ($\chi 2$ [1, n = 1080] = 65.381; p = ,000; fi = -.248) between the child's gender and involvement in individual and team organized sports/physical activities. It can be stated that the gender of children up to the age of 7 significantly affects participation in individual and team organized sports/physical activities. Boys and girls under the age of 7 do not participate equally in individual and team organized sports/physical activities.

Figure 3 *Chi-square test - differences in involvement in individual and team organized sports/physical activities among children, boys and girls up to the age of 7*



Discussion

The research showed that only 15.6% of children under the age of 7 participate in some kind of organized sports/physical activity. A small percentage (from 23-32%) of the involvement of preschool children in organized sports activities is also reported by other authors (Krivokapić & Bjelica, 2014; Tomašić Humer et al., 2016; Vidić et al., 2018). Literature states that one of the main factors of children's low involvement in organized sports activities is their price (they are very expensive), and because of this, many parents do not decide to include their children in these activities (Hinkley, 2011; Iveković, 2020; Vilhjalmsson & Kristjansdottir, 2003). There are other barriers that affect children's involvement in organized sports activities. The Australian Sport Commission (2018) lists five main barriers that cause children aged 0 - 8 years do not

participate in organized sports activities. At the age of 0 - 4 year, the main reason is that parents (85%) believe that children are still too young to participate in organized sports, parents (4%) believe that children are physically active enough, lack of time/many other obligations (4%), involvement of children in organized sports is not a priority for parents (1%). At the age of 5 - 8 year, the main reason is still that parents (22%) believe that children are still too young to participate in organized sports, parents (13%) believe that children are physically active enough, children do not like physical activity (12%), involving children in organized sports is not a priority for parents (6%), lack of time/many other obligations (3%).

It was found that boys up to the age of 7 are more involved in organized sports/physical activities than girls (52.3% vs 47.3%), but the difference is not statistically significant. The results obtained in this way coincide with certain researches (Australian Sport Commission, 2018; Temple et al., 2014; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2006), but are in contrast to other researches (Hinkley, 2011; Tomašić Humer et al., 2016), with the fact that they found that girls are significantly more involved from a boys.

The results show that children up to the age of 7, who are involved in organized sports activities, mostly participate in soccer (22.2%), universal sports school (16.3%), swimming (9.6%), rhythmic gymnastics (9.5%), gymnastics (9.3%), karate (8.4%), handball (5.5%), etc., and the least in table tennis (0.6%) and volleyball (0.2%) (table 1). Observing the differences by gender, boys are significantly more involved in soccer, athletics and judo than girls under the age of 7, while girls are significantly more involved in gymnastics and dance than boys. The obtained data coincide with the results of previous research, which found that girls are more involved in gymnastics than boys in the early, preschool and elementary school periods and significantly more in dance (Australian Sport Commission, 2018; Cimerman & Cetinić, 2008; Chalcarz & Merkiel, 2014; Hinkley, 2011; Temple et al., 2014; Tomašić Humer et al., 2016), while boys are significantly more involved in soccer than girls in the preschool period (Australian Sport Commission, 2018; Chalcarz & Merkiel, 2014; Hinkley, 2011) and at the age of 0 - 4 year in athletics (Australian Sport Commission, 2018).

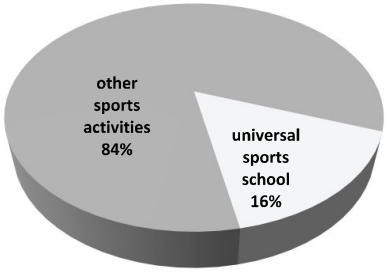
The results show that children up to the age of 7 are significantly more involved in non-martial sports than in martial sports activities. Although the research carried out so far did not directly compare the involvement of children in martial and non-martial sports activities, by reviewing their results, it can be stated that preschool children (Australian Sport Commission, 2018; Krivikapić & Bjelica, 2014; Temple et al., 2014) and of elementary school age (Cimerman & Cetinić, 2008; Field & Temple, 2017) and young people (Ilišin, 2006) in a much higher percentage involved in non-martial sports than in martial sports. Therefore, it can be observed that among children of preschool and primary school age and among young people there is a pattern according to which children and young people are much more involved in non-martial sports than in martial sports. Previous research conducted among children of preschool and primary school age found that boys participate in martial arts activities more than girls (Tem-

ple et al., 2014; Field & Temple, 2017), which coincides with the results of this research (boys 53% vs girls 47%). It should be emphasized that the difference obtained in this research is not statistically significant. As can be seen, there are differences, but they are not significant, so it can be stated that boys and girls up to the age of 7 will be equally involved in martial and non-martial sports activities. Therefore, the gender of children up to the age of 7 does not affect their involvement in martial or non-martial sports activities. When looking at the results separately for each gender, it can be said that boys and girls up to the age of 7 participate significantly more in non-martial than in martial sports activities, i.e. they are significantly more inclined to participate in non-martial than in martial sports. Research on the attitudes of adults towards martial arts shows that adults have a mostly positive and not a negative attitude towards martial arts (Bosnar et al., 2016). The reason why children in this research prefer non-martial sports activities could be their own view and attitude towards martial activities as perhaps rough-brutal (Rogowska & Kuśnierz, 2013), that they contribute less to health (see Rodić et al., 2013), less attractive or boring than non-martial sports activities. Such attitudes may be the result of a very low level of knowledge about martial arts. Rogowska and Kuśnierz (2013) state that a low level of knowledge about martial arts was found among children of primary and secondary school age. The same authors further state that it is necessary to carry out various educations about the usefulness of martial arts in order to popularize them in this way, because knowledge is the basis of the attitude towards martial arts, which can be a motivating factor that will encourage someone to get involved in martial arts.

It was found that children up to the age of 7 are significantly more involved in individual than in team organized sports activities. Krivokapić and Bjelica (2014) and Temple et al. (2014) found different results in their research. According to the aforementioned research, children of preschool age are more involved in team activities (basketball, soccer, volleyball) than in individual physical activities. Research conducted among school children showed that children more involved in individual than in team sports (42.5% vs 25%) (Cimerman & Cetinić, 2008). Research that dealt with parental support, but among school children, shows different results, i.e. one found that parents give significantly more support to children who play individual sports, and less to children who play team sports, while others showed that there is no difference in the support of parents to children involved in individual and team sports (see Bosnar & Turkalj, 2011). So, if there is a significant difference, in that case parents provide more support to children participating in individual than in team sports. Since this research covers children up to the age of 7, it cannot be speculated whether children participate significantly more in individual sports than in team sports due to the greater support that parents provide to children who participate in individual sports. Research on parental support among preschool children needs to be conducted to determine if this is a possible reason. With regard to gender, girls participate significantly more than boys in individual sports/physical activities up to the age of 7, while boys participate significantly more in team sports/physical activities than girls. Previous research conducted among school (Barnett, 2008; Cimerman & Cetinić, 2008;

Field & Temple, 2017; Šiljković et al., 2007; Tomašić Humer et al., 2016) and preschool children (Temple et al., 2014) also found that boys are more involved in team sports than girls, while girls are more involved in individual physical activities than boys of preschool age, but of an informal recreational type (Temple et al., 2014). Involvement in individual and team organized sports activities is significantly influenced by the gender of the child, which is confirmed by the results of this research. Therefore, boys and girls under the age of 7 will not be equally involved in individual and team organized sports/physical activities. Boys will prefer team sports activities, while girls will prefer individual ones. When observing the differences in children up to the age of 7 at the level of the same gender and involvement in individual and team sports/physical activities, it can be stated that there is no significant difference in boys, i.e. they equally participate in team and individual sports/physical activities (52.3% vs 47.7%), while in girls there is a significant difference, i.e. girls participate significantly more in individual than in team sports/physical activities (72% vs 28%). Barnett (2008) found that there are different predictors of involvement and time spent in team and individual sports activities of school-aged boys and girls. Predictors of boys' involvement and time spent in individual sports are: larger family (more brothers and sisters), high household income, shorter time involved in the full-day kindergarten program, longer time involved in the shortened kindergarten program, higher level of education of fathers, fathers who are not employed at high-status positions and fathers who have longer working hours. Predictors of boys' involvement and time spent in team sports are: smaller family (fewer brothers and sisters), mother's employment, mothers who work longer hours, fathers' higher education level, fathers who work longer hours, father's unemployment. Predictors of girls' involvement and time spent in individual sports are: larger family, fathers employed in high-status positions and longer time involved in the shortened kindergarten program. Predictors of girls' involvement and time spent in team sports are: larger family, high household income, lower level of education of fathers and fathers employed in high-status positions.

Figure 4 *Comparison of the participation of children up to the age of 7 in specific sports programs and a universal sports school*



On Figure 4, it can be seen that only 16% of children under the age of 7 are involved in a universal sports school, while the rest of the children (84%) are involved in some other type of specific organized sports activity. Research shows that children of preschool age who participate in specific sports activities have less developed motor skills and knowledge than children who are included in universal sports schools where they work on the development of general motor skills (Gudelj Šimunović et al., 2016; Šalaj et al., 2016). „For this reason, it is necessary to change the training programs intended for preschool children in specific sports programs" (Šalaj et al., 2016, p. 52) in such a way as to include as diverse exercises as possible that would encourage the development of the coordination of the whole body, not just its partial parts. In addition, the most educated and experienced specialists who understand the long-term development of the child not only as an athlete but also as a person should work with the youngest age categories in the activities of a specific sport. Perhaps the best practice would be for children up to the age of 10 to be primarily involved in universal sports programs, and after that in specialized ones. It is possible for children to be involved in several different sports, which may not be feasible in practice because it represents a very large financial expense for parents, so only a very small number of families can afford such a thing.

The lack of research is that it was not possible to obtain data from all associations/clubs that carry out some form of organized sports/physical activity with children of preschool age, so it is possible that there are deviations in the established differences between boys and girls.

CONCLUSION

Overall, boys and girls up to the age of 7 participate equally in organized sports/physical activities, and differences appear in the selection and affinities for certain sports activities. It can be stated that children up to the age of 7 show a greater preference for non-martial and individual sports/physical activities. The gender of children up to the age of 7 does not significantly affect the involvement in martial or non-martial sports activities, but it significantly affects the involvement in individual and team organized sports activities. Boys will participate significantly more in team and girls in individual sports activities. The strong influence of gender in certain activities (e.g. soccer, rhythmic gymnastics, etc.) may indicate "the persistence of gender-based socialization in terms of the development of different interests, which is equally manifested in the choice of different activities" (Ilišin, 2006, p. 327). It is evident that there is a connection between sports, physical activity and the gender of the child, however, the exact reasons for this connection have not yet been clarified. Field & Temple (2017) conclude that future research should focus on determining the reasons why preschool boys and girls choose specific organized sports/physical activities in which they want participate in or they already participate in order to better understand trends in involvement. Future research should be focused on determining the involvement of preschool children according to the age structure,

in order to determine exactly which sports activities and at what age children participate the most.

In this research, it was not possible to make a direct comparison of the involvement of preschool children in organized sports/physical activities in Croatia based on gender, because no literature was available to the authors.

As in previous research, this one also showed that a very small percentage of preschool children participate in organized sports/physical activities. In addition, there is much more evidence that suggests that children of preschool age are less and less physically active (they do not meet the set recommendations), and that they spend more time in sedentary activities (see Iveković, 2018). Considering that parents play a key role in the quality of preschool children's free time (Blažević et al., 2012), it is suggested that additional education of parents of preschool children about the role of organized physical exercise for the child's motor development (Chalcarz & Merkiel, 2014) and education about the importance of optimal physical activity for the growth and development of children could partially reduce the negative consequences resulting from their unsatisfactory level of physical activity (Krivokapić & Bjelica, 2014) and involvement in organized sports activities. It is certain that modern lifestyles and the expansion of digital technology have greatly contributed to the passive spending of free time in preschool children as well (Krivokapić & Bjelica, 2014). Therefore, it is necessary to encourage children and parents to spend their free time in a quality way and that play and various sports activities are a key segment in spending free time for preschool children (Blažević et al., 2012).

In order for preschool children to be able to participate as much as possible in organized sports activities, it is necessary to encourage the local community to co-finance these activities (Tomašić Humer et al., 2016), but clubs and associations should be encouraged to find a common model of facilitated financing for all those parents who not employed or for families with three or more children. In order to humanize the profession and society as a whole, but also for the benefit of children's health status, it is worth thinking about the possibility that in the future well-designed sports programs in kindergarten will be available to all children without additional financial costs for parents (Trajkovski et al., 2014).

Given that the data on the involvement of preschool children in organized sports/physical activities in previous researches were most often collected through questionnaires, the results of this research can help in the preparation of some future questionnaires that will include all those activities listed in this research. In this way, it will be possible to get a broader insight into which organized physical activities preschool children involved.

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UTVRĐIVANJE RAZLIKA UKLJUČENOSTI U ORGANIZIRANE SPORTSKE/TJELESNE AKTIVNOSTI DJEČAKA I DJEVOJČICA U DOBI DO 7 GODINA

Sažetak

U Hrvatskoj trenutačno postoji nedostatak informacija koje bi omogućile razumijevanje i uvid u postojanje određenih razlika u uključenosti dječaka i djevojčica predškolske dobi u pojedine organizirane sportske/tjelesne aktivnosti, zatim u borilačke i neborilačke te u individualne i timske sportske aktivnosti. Istraživanjem se željelo utvrditi u koje su sve organizirane sportske/tjelesne aktivnosti uključeni dječaci i djevojčice u dobi do 7 godina. Uzorak ispitanika činila su djeca u dobi do 7 godina (N=1291; 675 M i 616 Ž) koja su bila uključena u rad sportske udruge ili sportskog kluba koji je djelovao u Virovitici i Osijeku.

Rezultati pokazuju da su u dobi do 7 godina dječaci od djevojčica statistički značajno više uključeni u nogomet (96.9 % odnosno 3.1 %), atletiku (62.9 % odnosno 37.1 %) i judo (74.3 % odnosno 25.7 %) dok su djevojčice od dječaka statistički značajno više uključene u gimnastiku (62.5 % odnosno 37.5 %) i ples (75 % odnosno 25 %). U dobi do 7 godina djevojčice od dječaka statistički su značajno više uključene u individualne organizirane sportske/tjelesne aktivnosti (58.6 % odnosno 41.4 %) dok su u timske sportske/tjelesne aktivnosti statistički značajno više uključeni dječaci od djevojčica (66.7 % odnosno 33.3 %). Djeca u dobi do 7 godina pokazuju značajno veću sklonost, tj. značajno više sudjeluju u neborilačkim i individualnim sportskim/tjelesnim aktivnostima. Osim toga, u dobi do 7 godina dječaci statistički značajno više sudjeluju u neborilačkim sportskim aktivnostima, dok djevojčice statistički značajno više sudjeluju u neborilačkim i individualnim sportskim aktivnostima.

Dječaci i djevojčice u dobi do 7 godina podjednako participiraju u organiziranim sportskim/tjelesnim aktivnostima, a značajne razlike između dječaka i djevojčica pojavljuju se u odabiru i afinitetima prema pojedinim sportskim aktivnostima. Postoji veza između odabira sporta i spola djeteta predškolske dobi, ali razlozi tih spolnih razlika nisu do kraja jasne.

Ključne riječi: *borilačke sportske aktivnosti, djeca predškolske dobi, individualne sportske aktivnosti, neborilačke sportske aktivnosti, razlike između spola, timske sportske aktivnosti*