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PARTICIPATION IN SPORT, KNOWLEDGE OF OLYMPIC FACTS AND ASSESSMENT OF OLYMPIC VALUES IN CZECH YOUNG PEOPLE

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SUMMARY

The aim of this study was to find out how 12–19 year-old Czech young people (1274 boys and 1090 girls selected according to the principles of the quota sample), differently involved in sports, know the facts of the Olympic movement and assess its ideals. In conformity with this aim the article came to the conclusion that:

- Participation of young people in sports positively affects their knowledge about the facts of the Olympic Movement.
- Young people's knowledge of the facts of the Olympic movement surveyed in 2008 is not different from that of their counterparts' reported in 1998.
- The order in which young people evaluate Olympic values (their desirability and reality) did not change over the period of 1998–2008.

The "Olympic questionnaire" has been used for the assessment of the knowledge of Olympic facts and Olympic ideals. The frequency of the respondents' participation in sport and physical activity was measured by means of the COMPASS methodology.

The results confirmed the hypothesis about the positive impact of participation in sport on the knowledge of the Olympic facts of the respondents. The comparison of the selected young people's knowledge of Olympic facts in the years 1998 and 2008 in persons of the same age and gender confirmed that there was rather a consensus than differences between them. Conformity in the assessment of the most desirable and real Olympic ideals was found in values which are associated with sport performance: competition, physical fitness, sportsmanship, etc. On the other hand the real impact of some ethical Olympic values like honor, cultural understanding, broadmindedness, nobility, modesty etc., was assessed as less significant.

Key words: olympic games, olympism, olympic education, attitudes, youth

INTRODUCTION

Sport and Olympism – their socio-cultural and educational functions

Among the current studies aimed at the relations between the frequency, intensity and duration of physical activities and their benefits, the biologically oriented ones predominate. Unfortunately on the other hand, a lesser attention is given to social studies in sport, regardless of the fact that the social benefits (both immediate and postponed) of participation in sports can usually be identified in terms of education about attitudes, values, psychical wellness, social inclusion as well as in terms of the contribution of sport toward “social capital”. These concern the way how the Olympic principles and their appreciation can also become a part of their value system.

These education processes can occur as a result of the practice of sport which however does not always automatically enhance their progress. The educational benefits of sport and the participation of youth in sports influence the way young people reflect the benefits of sport and how they know, understand and internalized Olympic ideals.

Nowadays we may observe a research or meta-analysis which has the purpose of recommending how to effectively harmonize the influence of globalization with the aims of education, social inclusion and integration. In sport the environment, especially the socio-cultural and educational ones, is important because it contributes to the identification of its participants with positive values, social norms and images. The educational potential of sport is very high; it belongs to the most popular leisure activities in youngsters. In this regard sport, especially its organized forms, has assumed an educational function that can contribute to improve the social development of society as well as sport itself. The relations between education through sport and Olympic education are narrow and significant (Rychtecký, 2010). Olympic education cannot be realized without sport education and sport education without the values which are an integral part of Olympism – the philosophy of the Olympic movement. Olympism goes beyond the boundaries of sport because it incorporates cultural and worldview aspects. Sometimes Olympism has to defend and justify sport, especially its professional forms, in which commercialism, abuse of doping unfair behavior, etc. must be thought against.

Crisis in Educational Systems and Sports – Challenge to Olympic Education

Among the symptoms of the crisis in current sport is that insufficient attention is given to sport in educational and training policies. The process of harmonizing educational programs for professionals (coaches, sport managers, health/fitness instructors, and physical education teachers) is increasing. The requirement of an optimal qualification in these professions is one of the main preconditions for the improvement of the educational potential of sport. If the aforementioned trends, particularly in professional sport, are not properly addressed in factual and legal terms, they may lead to socially undesirable consequences (e.g. increased violence in the sports arenas and among spectators, abuse of doping, illegal lotteries, etc.) and prompt state interventions (legislative, organisational, economic, etc.) in the sport sector.

The growing interest in the concepts of Olympic education may be found in the crisis of the concepts of general education which seem to students to be too theoretical and

conversational. Other reasons may be identified in the loss of long-time traditional values in society and in the increase of tendencies towards violence, a lack of tolerance towards other ethnical groups, a more selfish way of life and also a loss of belief in general traditional values (Andrecz, 2007, Krüger, 2007), as well as in the values of sport. Therefore Olympic Education is at present a frequent concept, not only inside the Olympic Movement, but it has gradually become an integral part of the curricula in P. E. teachers' and coaches' preparation and it penetrates step by step into the educational system at primary and secondary schools (Binder, 2006; Morgas, 2006; Rychtecký, 2010).

The development of sport as well as the importance and social impact of the Olympic Games later prompted interest among individual researchers and teams of scholars at universities (cf. Morgas, 2006). The important presumption of effective Olympic education concepts are the information which young people have today about the Olympic Movement (cognitive aspect), which Olympic values they prefer (emotional aspect) and how they include them in own sports activities, especially in sport competitions (conative aspect). Another question we are concerned about is the verification of the question of how the level of participation in sports influences the assessment of Olympic values (Jegorov, 2001; Roditchenko, 1996; Binder, 2006; Naul, 2008). The final question which interests us in this paper is how the assessment of Olympic values and Olympic knowledge in young people has changed during the last ten years.

Any education, if it is to be successful, requires a continuous and resultant feedback. It may include both interview of respondents in surveys which verify the partial as well as the final results in knowledge and attitudes. It is concerned with the current knowledge and attitudes young people had or have towards the current state of the Olympic movement, or that of the past and the values which young people had earlier. Therefore this does not concern the learning of Olympic facts only but also the shaping of the attitudes in the past and their finalization in current sporting activities.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to find out how 12–19 year-old Czech young people (1274 boys and 1090 girls, selected according to the principles of the quota sample), differently involved in sports, assess the role of Olympic ideals in the Olympic Games and their knowledge about the Olympic movement. In conformity with this aim the article came to the conclusion that:

- Participation of young people in sports positively affects their knowledge of the facts of the Olympic movement.
- Young people's knowledge of the facts of the Olympic movement surveyed in 2008 is not different from that of their counterparts reported in 1998.
- The order in which young people evaluate reality and what they desire from Olympic values did not change over the period of 1998–2008.

METHODOLOGY

The “Olympic Questionnaire”, created and standardized in the project “Sportive Lifestyle, Motor Performance of Youth in Europe” was used for this task (cf. Telama, Naul, Nupponen, Rychtecký, & Vuolle, 2002). The frequency of participation of the respondents in sports and physical activities was classified by the COMPASS methodology (Rossi, Mori, 1998). The respondents were 12–19 year old young people (1274 boys and 1090 girls) selected according to the principles of the quota sample in the Czech Republic.

RESULTS

1. Relations Between the Levels of Participation in Sport and Active Knowledge of the Facts of the Historical and Actual Development of Olympic Movement are Significant

The aim of this comparison was to assess how the general knowledge and understanding of Olympism and of the facts of the Olympic movement of respondents is influenced by the level of participation in sports. Active and correct answers of the respondents were included in the following areas of the comparison:

Table 1. Knowledge of selected Olympic historical and actual facts clustered according to participation in sports and physical activities (COMPASS categories) in males (a) and females (b), surveyed in 2008.

1a males

COMPASS categories	Olympic Knowledge correct answers									
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	Σ
1	43.1	34.5	78.9	46.8	93.6	97.4	84.4	41.5	20.5	540.7
2	39.7	33.3	80.5	39.7	83.3	91	75	19.2	9	470.7
3	33.8	31.2	69.2	53.8	80.8	85.9	73.1	33.3	26.9	488
4	29.9	31.3	76.3	41.5	85.9	88.1	75	26.5	14.1	468.6
5	33.3	26.2	70.2	47.6	88.1	88.1	78.6	33.3	13.1	478.5
6	33.7	29.6	70.8	36.4	84.7	90.9	69.1	24.5	10.5	450.2
7	27.8	23.5	61.1	38.9	77.8	77.8	55.6	44.4	33.3	440.2
8	23.9	16.2	55.8	28.2	75.1	79	55.3	16.8	7.2	357.5
M	34.8	29.2	71.9	41.2	85.8	89.9	73.4	29.9	15	471.1

1b females

COMPASS categories	Olympic knowledge correct answers									
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	Σ
1	38.3	33.5	81.1	32.5	87.0	87.0	79.3	42.4	20.1	481.1
2	26.3	18.2	77.9	27.3	81.8	79.2	77.6	23.4	13.0	411.7

COMPASS categories	Olympic knowledge correct answers									
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	Σ
3	32.8	31.3	71.9	39.1	73.4	82.8	73.4	30.2	20.3	434.8
4	25.7	26.5	72.5	35.3	85.3	85.3	83.3	31.4	16.7	445.4
5	20.7	24.8	67.3	28.3	77.9	87.6	79.3	23.2	8.8	409.1
6	21.0	19.7	76.6	34.7	79.6	86.1	70.2	23.9	12.0	411.9
7	10.7	14.8	64.3	32.1	78.6	82.1	88.9	14.3	3.6	385.8
8	12.4	17.8	71.5	33.2	64.8	71.5	68.9	15.6	9.3	355.7
M	23.5	23.4	74.4	33.0	78.1	82.7	75.1	26.1	13.3	

Legend to the Olympic knowledge: a. general consciousness about the Olympic ideals? b. active knowledge of the Olympic Ideals. c. city in which the first modern Olympic Games were held? d. year, in which the first modern OG were held? e. city of the last winter Olympic Games? f. city of the next Summer OG? g. what do the 5 Olympic rings symbolize? h. who is the current President of the IOC? Who was Pierre de Coubertin?

Legend to the COMPASS categories: 1. Competitive, organized, intensive – annual frequency more than 120, competition in one sport at least, membership in a sport club; 2. Intensive – competitive and/or organized, annual frequency more than 120, competition at least in one sport or he/she is a member of a sports club; 3. Intensive – annual frequency more than 120, no competition in sports, no membership in a sports club; 4. Regular, competitive and/or organized – annual frequency 60–120, competition in one sport at least, member of sports club; 5. Regular, recreational – annual frequency 60–120, no competition in sports, no membership in a sport club; 6. Irregular – annual frequency 12–60, 7. Occasional – annual frequency 1–12; 8. No sport and physical activity.

The results in the tables show significant compliances between the participation in sport and physical activities and Olympic knowledge. In this case the hypothesis about the positive influence of participation in sport on Olympic knowledge was confirmed. The respondents, both the boys and the girls, who are more involved in sport activities, have a better knowledge about the Olympic Games and the Olympic movement. In boys samples the sum of the Olympic knowledge is higher than in girls which reflects the lower participation of girls in sports in general. During a long period of time these tendencies were documented in surveys, especially in terms of participation in organized and competitive sports (not only in the Czech Republic).

2. The Knowledge and Understanding of the Facts of The Olympic Movement in Youngsters (2008) are Not Significantly Different from Their Counterparts Surveyed Ten Years Ago (1998)

When we ask how the knowledge about Olympic movement facts of the Czech youth changed during the last ten years it may be said that the results of these comparisons document compliances, as well as differences between the results of surveys carried out in the years 1998 and 2008. They are clearly documented in the following figure. The same areas of knowledge of the respondents, as those described above, were selected for comparison.

A high level of compliance is documented in the fields: b, c, e, g (b. active knowledge of the Olympic Ideals. c. city in which the first modern Olympic Games were held?

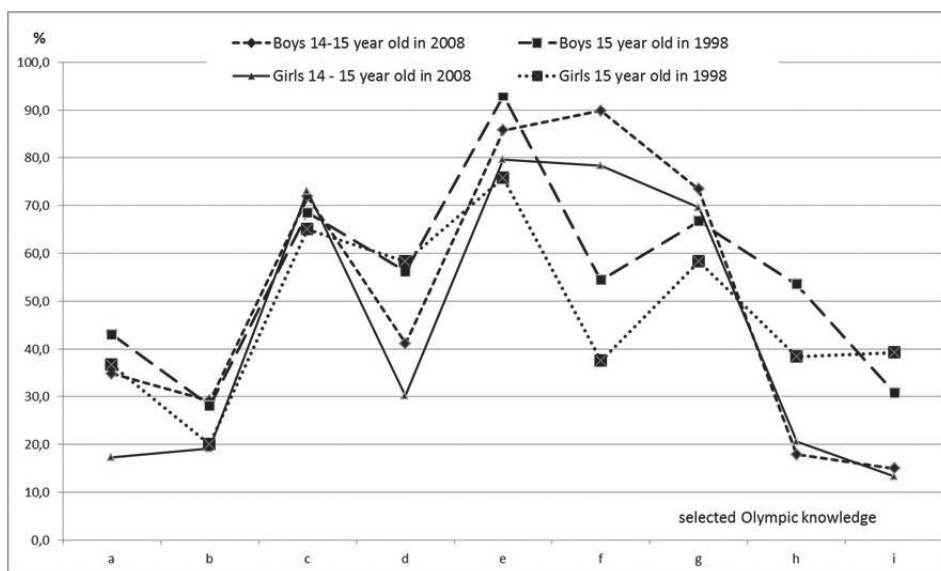


Figure 1. Comparison of the selected Olympic knowledge between the surveys carried out in the years 1998 in 15 year old boys and girls and in the year 2008 in 14–15 year old respondents (Source: Rychtecký, Dovalil & Tilinger, 2009)

Legend to the knowledge of Olympic facts: a. general consciousness about the Olympic ideas? b. active knowledge of the Olympic Ideals. c. city in which the first modern Olympic Games were held? d. year, in which the first modern OG were held? e. city of the last winter Olympic Games? f. city of the next Summer OG? g. what do the 5 Olympic rings symbolize? h. who is the current President of the IOC? i. Who was Pierre de Coubertin?

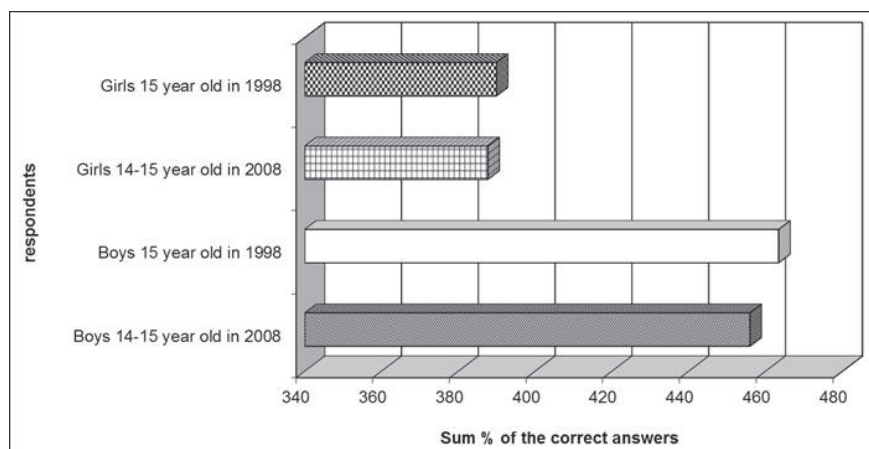


Figure 2. Comparison of the sum of the percentage of the selected Olympic knowledge between the surveys carried out in the years 1998 and 2008 in 14–15 year old boys and girls (Source: Rychtecký, Dovalil & Tilinger, 2009)

e. city of the last winter Olympic Games? g. what do the 5 Olympic rings symbolize?). In contrast clear differences were discovered, in particular in the areas a, f and h (a. general consciousness about the Olympic ideas? f. city of the next Summer OG? h. who is the current President of the IOC?). Unfortunately, the results are not always in favor of the current population (see Figure 2). The sum of the partial results document a slightly better knowledge about Olympism and the Olympic movement in the respondents surveyed in the year 1998 than in the subjects surveyed in the year 2008. The discovered differences are not statistically significant, but we keep them in mind in the concepts of Olympic education programs.

3. Which real and desired Olympic values did the boys and girls survey in the years 1998 and 2008 perceive?

These results shows the differences and the compliances in the assessment of the list of Olympic values and distinguishes them from the Olympic ideals which really exist in their opinion in current Olympic Games and in the Olympic movement from those which are considered as rather desirable and which are improbable in reality.

The respondents in both surveys carried out in the years 1998 and 2008 assessed 52 values. First they assessed them on the scale: (1) totally agree; (2) quite agree; (3) quite disagree or (4) absolutely disagree and, secondly evaluated how in their opinion, they really influenced, improved, lead and promoted the Olympic Games and in the Olympic movement.

These results clearly indicate that the active knowledge of Olympic ideals and principles in our country, both in boys and girls is fairly consistent and is more focused on the area of sports. In addition to these ideals and principles, however, young people reliably distinguish these principles and values that are most desirable and necessary from those which really influence the Olympic movement and Olympic competitions.

Table 2. The most real (a) and most desired (b) Olympic values, surveyed in the years 1998 and 2008 in Czech young people (Source: Rychtecký, Dovalil & Tilinger, 2009)

2a Olympic values which really acted in Olympic movement

The most real Olympic values in 2008	Rank	The most real Olympic values in 1998
competition	1	competition
physical fitness	2	sportsmanship
sportsmanship	3	willpower
willingness to exert a maximum effort	4	physical fitness
fair play	5	joy in effort
joy in effort	6	willingness to exert a maximum effort
cooperation	7	pursuit of excellence cooperation
willpower	8	popularity
respect of rules	9	harmony of body and mind
professionalism	10	cognition

2b desired Olympic values in the Olympic movement

The most desired Olympic values 2008	Rank	The most desired Olympic values 1998
physical fitness	1	physical fitness
sportsmanship	2	sportsmanship
competition	3	joy in effort
fair play	4	self-control
respect of rules	5	competition
willingness to exert a maximum effort	6	willpower
willpower	7	cooperation
joy in effort	8	willingness to exert a maximum effort
cooperation	9	pursuit of excellence
success	10	mutual respect

Data in Table 2 a,b show that a considerable consensus in how respondents assessed the most desirable and real Olympic ideals, values and principles was found in values connected with sport performance: competition, physical fitness, sportsmanship, willingness to exert a maximum effort and fair play. The relationship between the desired ideals and reality in the assessment of all 52 Olympic ideals is statistically significant ($r = 0.62$).

The differences between the issues “desired” and “reality”, as shown in the tables, indicate that the real impact of some other Olympic values like honor, cultural understanding, broadmindedness, nobility, modesty etc.), is lesser. Young people often cannot imagine what those principles exactly mean and how they manifest themselves in sports. In contrast, a list of ideals and principles with the smallest differences between desired ideals in Olympic principles may indicate the current status of Olympic values, as perceived in contemporary youth.

The philosophy of Olympism, the ideals of Olympism as a humanistic world view, cannot be implemented, i.e., converted only from the objectification of texts which describe rituals, customs, traditions and forms of human existence. The internalization of Olympic principles and values cannot be ordered to people.

4. Sources of Informational about the Olympic movement

Table 3. Sources of information about the OG and Olympism (%); survey in the year 2008, (Source: Rychtecký, Dovalil & Tilinger, 2009)

a) Males

Age/sources of information	school	parents	siblings	friends	radio	TV	newspapers journals	coaches	others	nobody
12–13	48.0	65.8	24.0	44.7	48.7	89.5	62.9	25.1	25.8	7.3
14–15	45.5	66.3	23.5	50.1	44.3	91.4	71.6	24.3	28.9	9.9
16–17	47.5	67.9	17.2	50.2	56.6	93.7	74.2	20.4	26.7	5.9
18–19	63.6	63.4	17.9	58.2	50.0	96.3	79.1	17.9	20.9	2.2

b) Females

Age/sources of information	school	parents	siblings	friends	radio	TV	newspapers journals	coaches	others	nobody
12–13	49.8	70.6	22.0	38.3	46.5	87.9	69.1	17.4	27.0	8.9
14–15	63.2	66.8	20.1	44.1	51.3	94.7	79.9	17.1	20.1	3.3
16–17	71.1	62.1	21.6	47.1	51.1	95.6	82.8	12.3	16.7	2.2
18–19	66.0	59.3	17.3	46.7	50.0	95.3	76.0	14.7	16.7	2.0

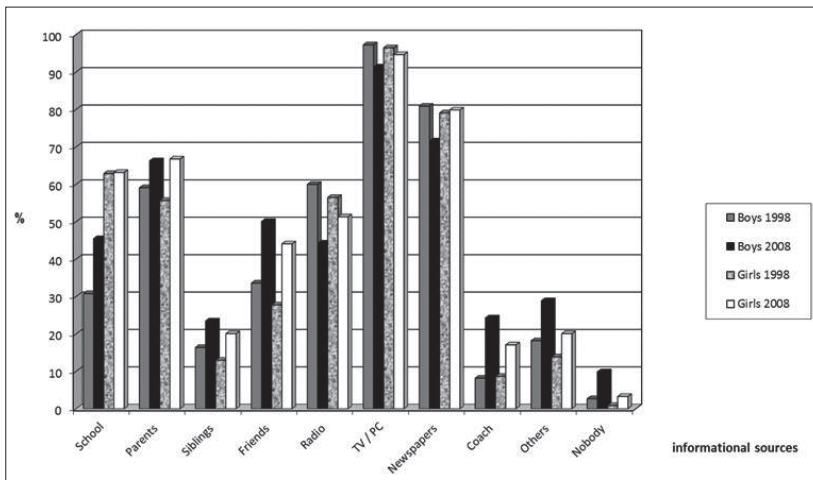


Figure 3. Sources of Information about the OG and the Olympic movement, surveyed in 1998 in 15 year old, and in 2008 in 14–15 year old respondents. (Source: Rychtecký, Dovalil, & Tilinger, 2009)

Knowledge, understanding and internalization of respondents, as they correspond to the theory of the formation of attitudes and values, create a presumption of an effective Olympic education. Today young people find knowledge about the Olympic ideals, values, principles, etc. in other, often more impressive resources (internet).

The figure and tables show that the most impressive sources of information are electronic media. School as a source of information is recognized more by girls than boys. Media in sports, more than in the past glorify victory, in the analysis of the sporting results, directly or indirectly. The frequent presentation of violence between players, exaggerated offenses, scandals, gross leadership style athletes, the taunting of rivals and others, create the impression that sport is more an obstacle than a helper in the internalization of positive social and Olympic values.

Other aspects of Olympic education consist in increasing the participation of youth in sport, the creation of a positive motivation and interest in sport, the cultivation of the needs for physical activity and they focus on achieving better sports results in young people's. The motivational structure in a stimulation environment develops gradually, but qualitative changes can be observed in it. Sport models play a significant role in it and young people identify themselves with them.

CONCLUSIONS

The sporting youth know more facts about the Olympic movement than their non-sporting counterparts.

The Olympic knowledge of Czech youth did not change much during the last ten years. It may be said that the results of these comparisons document compliances, as well as the differences between the results of surveys carried out in the years 1998 and 2008. The discovered differences are not statistically significant, but we keep them in mind in the concepts of Olympic education programs.

The results of this study confirmed the fact that mass media are the most significant source of Olympic knowledge and attitudes about the Olympic Games and Olympism for the respondents. The internet and TV play the most important role in this aspect.

The philosophy of Olympism, the ideals of Olympism as a humanistic world view, cannot be implemented, i.e., converted only from objectification of texts which describe rituals, customs, traditions and forms of human existence. The internalization of Olympic principles and values cannot be ordered to people.

The results of this study and other ones will be used in plans of study programs, in the improvement of educational programs for elementary and high schools as well as in Olympic education in general.

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ÚČAST VE SPORTU, OLYMPIJSKÉ VĚDOMOSTI A HODNOCENÍ OLYMPIJSKÝCH HODNOT ČESKOU MLÁDEŽÍ

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SOUHRN

Cílem studie bylo zjistit jak česká mládež ve věku 12–19 let (1274 chlapců a 1090 dívek, vybraných dle principů kvótního výběru), s rozdílnou účastí ve sportu, zná fakta a realie z olympijského hnutí a hodnotí roli Olympijských ideálů v olympijském hnutí. V souladu s cílem studie bylo předpokládáno, že:

- účast mladých lidí ve sportu pozitivně ovlivňuje jejich znalost faktů z olympijského hnutí,
- znalosti faktů olympijského hnutí se u mladých lidí v roce 2008 neliší od znalostí jejich předchůdců před deseti lety (1998),
- pořadí, v jakém mladí lidé hodnotí realitu, a žádoucnost Olympijských hodnot se v období let 1998–2008 výrazně nezměnilo.

K hodnocení olympijských znalostí, faktů a ideálů byl použit „Olympijský dotazník“. Frekvence účasti respondentů ve sportu a v pohybových aktivitách byla zjišťována podle metodologie COMPASS.

Výsledky potvrdily hypotézu o pozitivním vlivu účasti ve sportu na olympijské vědomosti respondentů. Porovnání vybraných olympijských vědomostí z šetření provedených v letech 1998 a 2008, dokumentuje u osob stejného věku a pohlaví, spíše shodu než rozdíly mezi nimi.

Shoda v hodnocení nejvíce žádoucích a reálných olympijských ideálů byla zjištěna v hodnotách spojených se sportovními výkony: soutěživost, tělesná zdatnost, sportovní chování, atd. Na druhé straně reálný dopad některých etických olympijských hodnot jakými jsou čest, kulturní porozumění, snášenlivost, velkorysost, šlechtnost, skromnost aj., byl hodnocen jako méně významný.

Klíčová slova: olympijské hry, olympismus, olympijská výchova, postoje, mládež

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