

# Student lifestyle: physical activity and health

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## Abstract

**Objective of the study** was to determine the dynamics of interests and attitudes of student youth towards physical education, sports style and a healthy lifestyle over the past decade.

**Methods and structure of the study.** The presented work presents data from sociological surveys conducted among students of the TSU Research Institute between 2013 and 2023. The aim of these surveys was to study their attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle, physical culture, and sports.

**Results and conclusions.** The examination allowed us to discern alterations in the preferences and requirements of students regarding participation in various sports and physical activities, and also to evaluate the significance of physical exercise in enhancing the health and physical condition of students in the two contrasting timeframes.

**Keywords:** *dynamics of interests and relationships, physical culture and sports lifestyle, importance of physical exercises.*

**Introduction.** In the last decade, quite a lot of scientific research has been devoted to physical education and sports, in the context of the formation of the PESL and a healthy lifestyle of student youth, which are considered as the main means of solving the urgent problem of increasing the physical activity of students to the level of the physiological standard necessary to ensure all processes of their life [1, 2].

**Objective of the study** was to determine the dynamics of interests and attitudes of student youth towards physical education, sports style and a healthy lifestyle over the past decade.

**Methods and structure of the study.** At the preliminary stages of the study, the structure and content of two areas of physical activity were studied, and then sociological surveys were conducted to study the attitude of TSU students to their own health, healthy lifestyle and social life, as well as the need and importance of physical exercise in their daily lives and future professional activities and their changes over 10 years. The 2023 study involved 150 1st-4th-year students from five TSU institutes

and faculties. The age range of respondents was as follows: 17-20 years (80,7% of respondents), 21-22 years (12,3%), 23-25 years (7%), including 54,4% women and 45,6% men. After receiving and processing the research materials, a comparative analysis of the results of a similar survey in 2013 was carried out, the statistical data of which had unreliable deviations, both with a plus and minus sign. Similar monitoring has been conducted at TSU annually for over 20 years [3].

**Results of the study and discussion.** Studying students' attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle and PESL and factors of multidirectional influence on their formation is one of the important problems of modern pedagogical science [3, 4].

The level of self-assessment of the health status of TSU students, according to the results of surveys of two time periods in both cases, is characterized by the assessment of «good» (70,6 in 2013 and 73,7% in 2023), which corresponds to objective indicators on average for the region, which are determined annually through mandatory medical testing of students. The survey results showed that over



the past decade, young people have become more aware of the need to strengthen and maintain health and its importance in future professional activities – this is confirmed by the results of the 2023 studies – 78,9% and 58,7% in 2013. Moreover, if in 2013, in the ranking of especially significant activities necessary to ensure the life processes of students, health maintenance occupied 3-4 positions, then according to the results of the 2023 survey, it moved to the first two positions. In our opinion, the increase in the importance of strengthening and maintaining health is caused by objective reasons, since in the indicators of the health of student youth in the last decade, a fairly stable negative trend has been maintained.

In most responses to the question about who plays the leading role in forming a caring attitude towards one's health as a person grows older, the opinion of respondents has remained virtually unchanged over the past decade (51,6% and 50,9% in 2013 and 2023, respectively). Just like ten years ago, students are confident that a positive attitude towards one's health should be formed by social institutions, namely the family, preschool organizations, comprehensive schools, the higher education system, etc. Unfortunately, a fairly large percentage of respondents indicated the main reason for the need to take care of their health only when they had clear signs of its deterioration (15,6% and 19,3% of respondents in 2013 and 2023, respectively).

In this list of the main reasons, unfortunately, the use of physical exercise as a means of strengthening health and physical development occupied only the 8th position in 2013, moving to the 6th in 2023, which still indicates the lack of relevant competencies, and most importantly, the motivation of students to regularly engage in various areas of physical education and sports activities.

The majority of students indicated that no actions to maintain health guarantee its good condition, since to a large extent its level depends on hereditary factors and the impact of bad habits (smoking, drinking alcohol, drugs, etc.) – about 42,3 and 40,4% of responses in 2013 and 2023, respectively.

Nevertheless, among the important arguments that contribute to strengthening physical health, respondents rated the importance and necessity of physical exercise quite highly (33,6% in 2013 and 38,6% of responses in 2023) – this is the 2nd position in the ratings of positive factors in importance, after the «balanced diet» factor, and it has

not changed over the past decade. In the list of the most significant disciplines necessary for obtaining knowledge about a healthy lifestyle, as well as acquiring practical skills and abilities in physical education and sports activities, as ten years ago, the following were noted: human physiology, sports medicine, psychological foundations of health, etc., which students rated especially highly (48,8% of respondents in 2013). In the results of the answer to the previously posed question, 54,4% of students in 2023 added to the previously listed disciplines the need to obtain methodological and practical knowledge and skills for organizing independent physical exercise classes.

Despite their relatively young age, students are still concerned about the issues of rational nutrition, as well as its quality (30.1% of respondents in 2013), the requirements for which have increased significantly over the past decade (35.8% in 2023) - this suggests that students are still quite aware of the need for high-quality nutrition as a factor determining health, as well as optimal mental and physical performance.

Research materials confirm the positive dynamics of increasing interest in the need to acquire knowledge about physical education and sports (12,3% in 2013 and 28,6% in 2023), characterizing the increasing level of their importance and the need for their presence in the daily lives of respondents.

Despite the insufficient level of daily motor-muscular activity in everyday life, students, like ten years ago, highly appreciated the need to engage in physical education and sports lifestyle (48,6% of respondents in 2013 and 56,1% in 2023), as an effective means of strengthening health and increasing their physical fitness. Despite the fact that the majority of students still have a low demand for knowledge about a healthy lifestyle, physical education and sports after 10 years, in response to the question about the need to use physical exercises in everyday life, the overwhelming majority of them answered in the affirmative (80,5% and 91,2% in the 2013 and 2023 surveys, respectively).

In recent years, students' physical education and sports interests have changed significantly. The results of the responses to the questionnaire question, in which students of two time periods were asked to name the types of sports they would like to do in order to join the Healthy Lifestyle and the Social Lifestyle Fund at TSU, have undergone signifi-



cant changes. Thus, if the majority of respondents in 2013 preferred traditional types such as athletics, gymnastics, aerobics, dance exercises (61,4%), as well as health running (29,8%), sports games and strength exercises (28,1% each), then more than half of the students in 2023 would prefer to engage mainly in «new» types of sports and physical activity, such as eSports, aqua aerobics, Jumping fitness (training on trampolines), phigital, airsoft, breaking, flag football, lacrosse, squash, etc. Of the traditional types, over time, not only have they not lost their significance, but only strength exercises have become more in demand, both among male students (45,4%) and female students (34,6%). Unfortunately, in this regard, it must be noted that all wishes in the direction of changing the curriculum and filling it with new types of sports and physical activity are currently practically impossible due to limited resource provision and the lack of appropriate (previously listed types of physical education and sports activities) pedagogical technologies.

**Conclusions.** Analyzing the research materials of two time periods of the life of students of TSU, it can be argued that in recent years, despite the spread of various health systems in society, the physical education and sports style and healthy lifestyle of student youth are becoming increasingly popular.

The survey results showed that over the past decade, young people have become more aware of the need to strengthen and maintain health and

its importance in future professional activities. This is confirmed by the health importance rating in the 2023 study materials (1-2 positions).

Currently, among students, although weakly expressed, but still a positive trend in the need to acquire knowledge about a healthy lifestyle and FSSZH, physical education and sports is noted, although its level after 10 years remains low.

Of the responses received, in our opinion, more important are the results of monitoring the dynamics of students' physical education and sports interests over the past 10 years, which have changed significantly: there is a noticeable interest in modern sports and physical activity, and its traditional types are becoming less in demand. As before, strength exercises have not lost their importance for both sexes.

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