



# Dynamics of students' representations about physical culture as an academic discipline and lifestyle

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## Abstract

**Objective of the study** was to evaluate changes in the students' perception of physical culture in the context of value orientations.

**Methods and structure of the study.** The results of two waves of a mass questionnaire survey of students in 2015 and 2022 were compared. The number of respondents included students involved in physical education both as part of an academic discipline and independently.

**Results and conclusions.** A decrease in the gap between the verbal statements of attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle and the real valueological behavior of students against the background of changes in value attitudes was found. The conclusion is made about the shift of physical culture from terminal to instrumental value, the possibility of involving non-traditional healthy lifestyle methods and youth subcultural sports in the educational process as an additional driver of sports.

**Keywords:** *physical culture, sports, healthy lifestyle, students, motivation, values, physical education as an academic discipline.*

**Introduction.** Positive changes in the attitude of Russian society, and especially its youth, towards physical culture and sports (PCS) have been recorded by researchers since the 2010s. This was facilitated by the implementation of comprehensive strategies [8] and programs [9] for the development of the PCS at the state, regional and departmental levels. One of the main results is a change in public ideas about health - from understanding it as an abstract good to a special resource that needs to be preserved and developed at the level of the individual, large social groups and society as a whole. In youth policy, the culture of a healthy lifestyle (HLS) and self-preserving behavior as a social value remains an important direction [1, p. 122].

Students as the intellectual vanguard of the youth community act as a "trendsetter" for healthy lifestyles and involvement in PCS classes for other youth groups. However, the authors note the persistence in this audience of a two-stage spasmodic trend towards

a decrease in PCS classes, first after the end of the academic discipline, then after graduation [5, p. 11, 6, p. 78]. This trend persists for a long time (more than 10 years), despite the fact that the practice and implementation of this discipline in universities, and its scientific research is very solid [2, 4, 7].

Thus, the question remains how students develop a stable need for PCS classes. In this regard, it seemed important to fix the dynamics of students' attitudes towards physical culture as an academic discipline and way of life as a result of changes in value attitudes.

**Objective of the study** was to evaluate changes in the students' perception of physical culture in the context of value orientations.

**Methods and structure of the study.** The main method is to compare the results of two waves of a mass questionnaire survey of students on a quota target sample with a high degree of representativeness: 2015 - students of the Ural Federal University (N=600,



**Table 1.** Students' perceptions of the most significant values by year (polyvariant question, up to three answers), % of respondents

Answer options	2015	2022
Opportunity to realize your abilities	44	45
Health	34	33
<b>Autonomy, independence, freedom</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>29</b>
Family, my parents	42	27
Interesting and creative work	22	23
Chat with friends	18	21
<b>Get as much pleasure out of life as possible</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>21</b>
Money, wealth	12	16
Education, professionalism	11	16
<b>Have your own business, do business, commerce</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Personal safety</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>
Family, my children	31	10
Beauty and physical perfection	12	10
Communication with nature	5	5
Power	6	4
Recognition of others, prestige	6	3
Satisfaction in intimate life	5	3
Average number of responses	2,89	2,93

printed distribution questionnaire, the general population - more than 24 thousand full-time students, including including 14.3 thousand mastering the disciplines "Physical culture", "Applied physical culture". The results of the primary analysis are published here: [7]); 2022 - students of universities in Yekaterinburg (N = 925, including UrFU - 615, Ural State University of Economics - 262, Humanitarian University (private university) - 25, other state and municipal universities - 19. General population - 33.8 thousand students of full-time education, including 17.8 thousand, mastering the disciplines "Physical culture", "Applied physical culture", electronic questioning using the google form). The number of respondents included students involved in physical education both as part of the academic discipline and independently.

**Results of the study and their discussion.** The two leading positions in the structure of value orientations have not changed, and health still ranks second after the possibility of self-realization. Changes in the structure of value orientations of students (Table 1) reveal a growing trend towards independent and free arrangement of living space, the manifestation of hedonistic moods, reinforced by the growing importance of one's own business.

The increased demand for personal security is quite understandable. A serious and negative trend is a decrease in the value degree of significance of both the parental family and the future family of the

students themselves (reduction of the group by three times), which also manifests itself in relation to healthy lifestyles as a terminal value (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Distribution of respondents' answers about their attitude to physical culture as a way of life, by years, % of the group (alternative question)

Answer options	2015	2022	2015	2022
	Male		Female	
<b>Physical preparation for a specific work activity</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Being healthy, with a good figure is now fashionable</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>44</b>
Healthy lifestyle for future children	39	24	49	32
To avoid ridicule from peers	-	2	-	2
To please the opposite sex	-	8	-	3
Your variant	11	-	11	-

Beauty and physical perfection - the most important indicator of physical culture - has shifted in the rankings from tenth to twelfth place. Already at this level, there is a gap between verbal statements and real valueological behavior. An even greater discrepancy is found when analyzing the answers about whether students consider themselves healthy (there is an increase in those who consider themselves healthy from 23 to 30%) and what physical culture means for them as a way of life (Table 2). Two trends are clearly visible in the students' answers: on the one hand, a significant increase in the fashion for a healthy lifestyle among the female audience and the importance of physical training in the future professional activity of the male part of the respondents. On the other hand, there is a sharp loss of understanding of a healthy lifestyle as a terminal value for the sake of future children (reduction in groups by sex by 15-17%).

The presence of problems in teaching physical culture as an academic discipline is evidenced by a decrease in 2022 in the number of those who rated it as necessary for all students, including those with disabilities, from 55 to 43% (and in this group there is also a decrease in the proportion of those who intend to continue PCS classes after university) and, conversely, the growth of those who noted the option "a useful additional discipline that should be studied by those who are interested in it" from 35 to 44%, and as unnecessary - from 10 to 13%. Students try to compensate for such shortcomings by extracurricular physical activity (Table 3).



**Table 3.** Distribution of answers about the regularity of independent physical education, sports, depending on the group of specialties, 2022, an alternative question, % of the group

Answer options	Specialty groups *				2022	2015
	1	2	3	4	Array as a whole	
Of course, I regularly visit the sports section, sports club, fitness room	19	25	23	17	22	17
I do from time to time when I feel the need	40	40	36	47	39	45
I used to work, but now I quit	24	20	27	26	24	18
I devote a minimum of time to my physical training	9	10	8	7	9	10
I didn't do it before and I don't do it now.	8	5	6	3	6	10

Note: \* 2022. 1. Humanitarian. 2. Socio-economic, pedagogical, law, service. 3. Engineering and mathematical. 4. Natural science and medical.

In the process of studying, they more often began to choose the regularity of independent physical culture and sports (this is especially noticeable for students of socio-economic specialties) due to their understanding of the importance of maintaining health (an important factor for 81% of respondents in 2022), a way to strengthen the will (65%), an effective means of relieving stress (55%) and stimulating mental work (41%). It is noteworthy that students of the natural sciences and medical specialties are more often than others engaged in PCS periodically and "on demand". However, a negative trend can be considered an increase in the group of those who quit PCS self-study, which is somewhat offset by a reduction in the group of those who never practiced.

With regard to plans to engage in physical culture and sports after graduation, respondents in 2022 expressed more definite positions: definitely ready - 53% (group growth by 13%), rather ready - 28% (decrease by 8%), rather not ready - 5% (minus 2%), not ready - 1% (minus 2%), undecided group - 13% (minus 1%). At the same time, bachelors and specialists (54% in 2022) more often than masters (22%) recorded a strong desire to study after receiving a diploma.

Comparison of respondents' answers about the nature of their behavior in relation to health, depending on plans to engage in physical education and sports after graduation, showed the following. Despite the fact that in the arrays as a whole the ratio of as-

sessments remained practically unchanged (self-preserving - 46% in 2015 and 44% in 2022, neutral - 48%, self-destructive - 6% and 8%), there was a significant reduction in those who exactly will continue PCS classes, in the group rated as "self-preserving" - from 63 to 56%, and those who definitely do not gather in the "neutral" group - from 83 to 31% (which is positive). In the group with self-destructive behavior, there was a significant increase in those who are more likely not going to engage of PCS - from 15 to 23% and who are completely confident in this - from 8 to 39% (indicator of a negative trend).

In the group of factors motivating to engage PCS, the average number of answers to a multivariate question increased significantly - from 1.1 to 2.19, which gave a statistically significant increase for each of the proposed options, except for "the desire to be like others." The largest gap compared to the first wave was noted for the following positions: "gaining additional self-confidence" - from 15 to 61%, "desire to maintain health throughout life" - from 52 to 74%, "expanding contacts" - from 2 to 19%, "the desire to have a full-fledged family and healthy children" - from 17 to 31%.

In the group of demotivating factors, the average number of responses, on the contrary, decreased slightly - from 2.44 to 2.33%, and the dynamics of the main factors turned out to be multidirectional: the significance of the factors "little free time" decreased - from 61 to 52%, "laziness, inability to plan time" - from 29 to 23%, "lack of prospects for a sports career" - from 8 to 4%. The significance of the factor "no habit of constant sports, physical education" has increased - from 26 to 41%, economic factors (such as "lack of funds for sports - 18%), infrastructural (remoteness from the place of residence - an increase from 8 to 11%, lack of sports facilities - reduction from 4 to 3%) and methodological (insufficient experience of a teacher, trainer - 2%) did not change or changed little. Remained at the same level and the main factor - the lack of free time (53%).

More than half of the respondents (54% in 2015 and 52% in 2022) still named the organization of physical education classes using non-traditional developmental methods (yoga, wu-shu and etc.), the use of new, youth sports (mountain biking, roller sports, skating, etc. - a new version of 2022) - 36%. There is a pronounced demand for more competitions - an increase from 1 to 15%.

**Conclusion.** The general structure of young people's value orientations is preserved, but an increase in the need for independence, personal security, a de-



crease in the value degree of the significance of the family as such lead to the transformation of physical culture and sports from a terminal to an instrumental value. The narrowing of the gap between the verbal statement of the value of a healthy lifestyle and the actual valueological behavior of students indicates the success of the existing methods and programs for inclusion in the systematic classes of the PCS. The introduction of the discipline "Physical culture" into the master's curriculum can be one of the main tools in this direction. Non-traditional health practices and the use of youth sports subcultures can act as additional drivers for the formation of a culture of systematic PCS training after graduation.

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