

## Attitude of law college students towards physical culture and sports

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### Abstract.

**Introduction.** Encouraging young people to exercise is one of the most important issues today, because low levels of physical activity, along with an unbalanced diet, lead to various diseases that will affect the quality of life and work in the future. **The purpose** of this study is to determine the current state of motivation for classes in physical culture and sports to improve the educational process of training future lawyers. **Materials and Methods.** The survey was completed by 132 first-year students of the Lviv College of Economics and Law, Kherson Cooperative College of Economics and Law and Mukachevo Cooperative College of Trade and Economics; 67 boys and 65 girls agreed to participate in the survey. **Results.** It was found that regular physical culture and sports are not considered important by students – future lawyers for successful work in the specialty (64.8%). However, they consider (51.2%) insufficient the amount of physical activity they receive in physical culture, and realize the need to engage in various forms of exercise at least 3 times a week. The uniformity of physical exercises used during classes does not satisfy approximately a third of students (29.4%). Sports sections are attended by only 11.8% of surveyed law students. It was found that lack of free time is the main reason that prevents students from engaging in sports (52.9%). However, 66.7% of students spend their free time passively. Priority sports have been identified, most of which are related to sports games: soccer – 33.3%, swimming – 29.4%, volleyball – 27.5%, table tennis – 23.5%, basketball – 13.7%, tennis – 11.8%, and badminton – 5.9%. To be engaged to in physical culture and sports, most students are motivated by maintaining and strengthening health (first rating place), the desire for physical improvement (second rating place), and improving overall performance (third rating place); a small number of respondents stated a lack of motivation for such classes. **Conclusions.** Students – future lawyers – consider insufficient the amount of physical activity in the classroom and suggest an increase in the number of classes. Classes on physical culture motivate the students to improve health and increase the level of physical fitness. The organization and regular holding of competitions, entertainments, entertainments with the use of sports and active games (76.5%) can improve the educational process, increase motor activity, and increase motivation.

**Keywords:** students, lawyers, motivation, physical activity, health.

### Introduction

Encouraging young people to exercise is one of the most important issues today, because low levels of physical activity and unbalanced diet lead to various diseases that will affect the quality of life and work in the future (Petryna, Stadnyk & Okopnyj, 2013) The results of previous studies indicate a significant decrease in physical activity (Tudor-Locke et al., 2011; Zanevskyy, & Bodnarchuk, 2020), deterioration of physical fitness (Bodnarchuk, Stefanyshyn, & Malanchuk, 2017) and health during school time (Bodnar et al., 2016; Bodnarchuk, Rymar, Solovey, & Malanchuk, 2018; Guthold, Stevens, Riley, & Bull, 2018; Prystupa, Handziarskiy, Bodnar, Vynohradskyi, & Slymakovskyi, 2019; Trigueros et al., 2019). Accordingly, a significant percentage of children who are insufficiently fit, healthy, and motivated enter higher education (Petrenko, 2014). According to Harkusha & Aryshchenko (2014), only 54.0% of students belong to the basic medical group, and 60.0% state that their physical activity is insufficient.

It is well known that regular exercise benefits physical and mental health and improves student learning (Rebecca et al., 2006; Khudolii, 2007; Barani, 2015; Turchyk, Romanchuk, Sorokolit, Kemin, & Lukjanchenko, 2021). However, more than a third part of the population over the age of 15 years is characterized by a low level of physical activity, and the vast majority do not attend sports at all (Hallal et al., 2012; Guthold, Stevens, Riley, & Bull, 2018; Dukh, Bodnar, Dunets-Lesko, 2018). There is a considerable increase in such inactivity and a decrease in student's interest in physical culture and sports with each subsequent year of study (Pavlova et al., 2020), where girls are less physically active than boys (Oksom, 2008; Hallal et al., 2012; Zemska, 2012). According to a study by Paffenbarger, Hyde, Wing, & Hsieh (1986), the mortality rate among physically active college graduates was significantly lower.

Researchers indicate a decrease in motivation of the young generation towards traditional physical education and sports (Azhyppo & Kryvoruchko, 2016; Harkusha & Aryshchenko, 2014). Rebecca et al. (2006), Harkusha & Aryshchenko, (2014), Zemska, (2012) conducted questionnaires of students to identify their attitudes towards physical culture and sports. The motivational basis of students' learning was investigated by Cid et al. (2019), Hernandez et al. (2019), Kosynskiy, Khodinov, Khrypliuk, & Krot, (2013). To reinforce motivation, researchers suggest including other sports in addition to those offered in physical education curricula (Azhyppo & Kryvoruchko, 2016; Rebecca et al., 2006).

Modern society places demands on the general culture, education of the future specialists, and their psychophysical qualities, which are important indices of readiness for professional and social activities (Solomonko, Bodnarchuk, Andres, 2021). Moreover, the activities of a lawyer are accompanied by constant stress and depression, which often leads to alcohol and tobacco abuse as well sleep disorders (Barani, 2015). The analysis of previous studies showed that the problem of forming a healthy lifestyle of future lawyers, starting from the first year, is quite relevant. College time creates an enabling environment for a more active lifestyle, and exercise can significantly reduce the risk of many of the health problems that accompany lawyers (i.e., obesity, diabetes, and stress issues). These reasons led to the choice of the topic of this study. The purpose of this study was to determine the current state of motivation of future lawyers to engage in physical culture and sports to improve their educational process of training.

### Materials and methods

A total of 72 colleges in Ukraine prepare bachelors of law (Law Colleges. <http://www.parta.com.ua/ukr/college/jurisprudence/>). This study was conducted on the basis of three of them, located in large, medium and small cities in different parts of the country, namely, i.e., Lviv Cooperative College of Economics and Law, Kherson Cooperative College of Economics and Law, and Mukachevo Cooperative College of Trade and Economics. The study involved 132 first-year full-time students (aged  $15.6 \pm 1.2$  years), 68 boys and 64 girls. Most students (64.7%) live in urban areas, and 35.3% live in rural areas. During their studies, 73.5% of students live at home, 14.7% live in a hostel, and 11.8% rent an apartment.

Prior to the study, all students gave written consent to participate in it, and the study program was approved by the Commission on Publication Ethics of Lviv State University of Physical Culture named after Ivan Boberskij. According to the results of a medical examination conducted at the beginning of the academic year, it was determined that in terms of health (relative to the allowed level of physical activity), 79.5% of students can be assigned to the basic medical group, 14.7% – to the preparatory group, and 5.8% – to a special medical group; students, exempted from physical culture lessons were not identified.

The research methods used included theoretical analysis and generalization of scientific and methodological sources, questionnaires, and mathematical data processing.

The questionnaire consisted of two blocks of questions, i.e., the attitude towards physical education and sports and the respondents' awareness of physical culture. Most of the questions involved several possible answers. The questionnaire was anonymous and consisted of 22 questions. The answers to some questions were built on a five-point scale (i.e., 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 points). The rating was determined by the sum of the products of the number of points and the percentage of grades obtained. The answers were processed using the Microsoft Excel office program.

### Results

Assessment of the importance of regular physical culture and sports for successful work in the profession of future lawyer was conducted on a 5-point scale (from 1 point – "not important" to 5 points – "very important"). Thus, 17.6% of students consider such classes to be "important" (5 points), and the same percentage of 17.6% consider them to be "more important than not important" (4 points). A total of 33.3% indicated such classes to have "average importance" (3 points); 23.5% of students consider such classes to be "more important than important" (2 points), and 8.0% believe that physical culture and sports are "not important" (1 point) for the successful work of a lawyer. Thus, two thirds of the surveyed students assess the importance of physical culture and sports in their professional activities as not "important" and at best as "moderately important"; 88.2% of students regularly attend all compulsory physical culture lessons during the semester; 5.9% of students attend approximately 15 lessons per semester; 2.0% of students attend 10 and 5 classes, and 2.0% of students do not attend physical culture lessons.

Some students (several answer options were allowed) prefer physical culture lessons – 47.1%, some prefer training in sports sections – 39.2%, a third prefer sports entertainment with friends – 31.4% and interest group activities – 27.5%. Other exercise forms that were named included classes in the gym, walking, fitness, yoga, and cross fit – 2.0%.

Students' answers to the question whether they consider the amount of physical activity they receive in physical culture lessons (i.e., once a week) to be adequate, the answers are divided almost equally, i.e., 49.8% consider it to be sufficient, and 51.2% state that the load is insufficient.

Therefore, to consider themselves engaged in various forms of physical exercises (physical culture lessons, section, independent), 45.1% of students believe that they need to participate in physical activities at least three times a week; 25.5% of students – 4 classes per week, and 10.2% require 5–6 classes per week. For 15.7% of students, 2 classes are enough, and for 3.5% of students, one lesson is enough.

A possible way to increase the motor activity of students may be the organization of sports events in their free time. A significant part of the respondents (45.2%) spend their rest actively after lectures (several answer options were allowed), i.e., they engage in sports, travel, or dance. However, usually (66.7%) students surveyed by use in their free time rest passively or sleep. One of three respondents watches TV and has fun on a computer (35.3%), reads books, and does homework – 17.6%.

Most respondents (41.2%) spend up to 6 hours a week preparing homework; 33.3% of respondents do their homework from 7 to 10 o'clock. A small number of law students spend more than 10 hours studying at home: 11–15 hours – 9.8%, 16–20 hours – 11.8%, 21–25 hours – 2.0%, 26 hours and more – 1.9%.

A total of 11.8% of surveyed law students are involved in sports sections. A total of 52.9% of students consider the lack of free time to be the main reason preventing participation in such classes; 17.6% complain about the lack of a sports section they would like to attend; 5.9% indicate high cost, and 3.9% blame inconvenient schedule of sections. None of the students cited poor health as the reason, but 5.9% did not answer at all, and 2.0% indicated laziness.

A significant part of the survey participants (several answer options were allowed) would like to play sports: soccer – 33.3%, volleyball – 27.5%, table tennis – 23.5%, basketball – 13.7%, tennis – 11.8%, badminton – 5.9%, and active and sports games – 5.9% (Fig. 1).

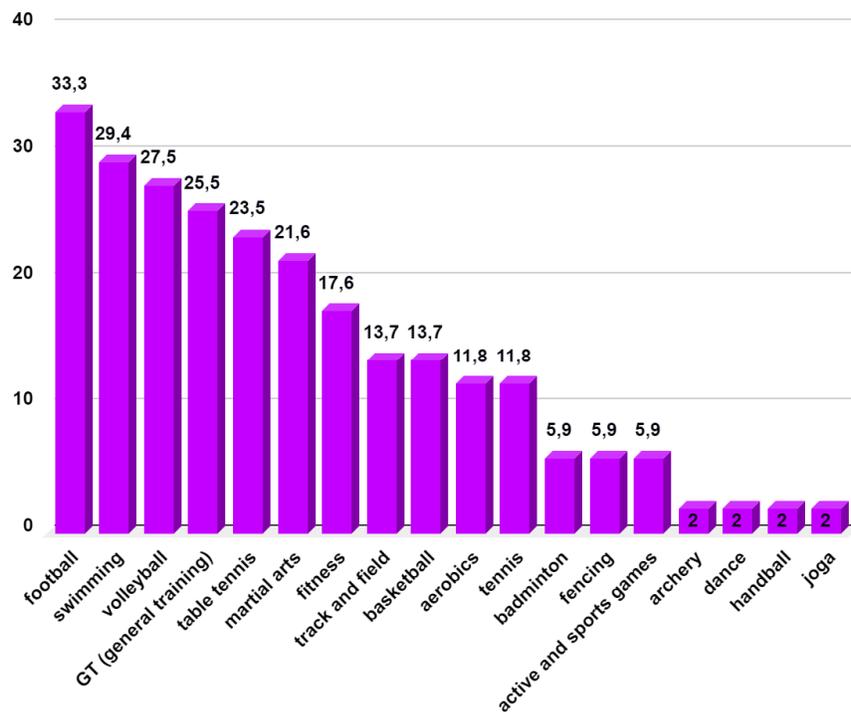


Figure 1. Sports that students would like to do, %

A total of 76.5% of students gave a positive answer to the question about the expediency of organizing competitions and entertainment with the use of active and sports games in their free time. A total of 21.6% of students would gladly participate in such events once a week; once or twice a month and once a semester – 19.6%; only 17.6% do not want participate in such events.

Among the reasons that cause dissatisfaction with physical culture lessons (several options were allowed), the majority of students (54.9%) mentioned the need to bring a sports uniform and change clothes. Excessive fatigue after physical culture lessons was indicated by 33.3%, which, according to students, complicates the learning process in other subjects. The use of monotonous exercises during classes does not satisfy 29.4% of students; 19.6% complain about coercion, the need to show willpower, and do what they do not want to do; 15.7% complain about low emotional background during classes; 7.9% / 3.9% indicated over / under load; 9.8% did not like the organization of the learning process.

The next question allowed us to determine what students like about physical culture lessons (several possible answers). The majority of students (72.5%) see such activities as an opportunity to improve their health; 62.7% – to become strong, agile, enduring; 60.8% – to switch from mental work; 52.9% – to communicate with friends; 45.1% – perform various physical exercises; 51.0% – to compete; 33.3% – to reduce (or "remove") psycho-emotional stress; 31.4% – to show (train) strong-willed efforts; 29.4% – to improve the emotional state. The positive features of physical culture lessons are confirmed by incentives to increase motor activity of students. According to our data (Table 1), among the main reasons that motivate students to participate in such lessons are the preservation and strengthening of health (I rating place) – 380.6 points, the desire for physical improvement (II rating place) – 360.4 points, increase of the general working capacity – (III rating place) – 356.1 points. Of note, the lack of motivation of students towards physical education classes took the last ranking place with a total score of 223.1.

**Table 1.** The main motives for participating in physical culture lessons by future lawyers (n = 132)

Motive level	High, % (5 points)	Above average, % (4 points)	Average, % (3 points)	Below average, % (2 points)	Low,% (1 point)	Total points	Rate
Maintaining and strengthening health	31.9 (159.5)	38.7 (154.8)	13.7 (41.1)	9.5 (19.0)	6.2 (6.2)	380.6	I
Physical improvement	29.1 (145.5)	33.6 (134.4)	15.2 (45.6)	12.8 (25.6)	9.3 (9.3)	360.4	II
General working capacity	33.5 (167.5)	27.3 (109.2)	14.5 (43.5)	11.2 (22.4)	13.5 (13.5)	356.1	III
Mark on physical culture lessons	23.2 (116.0)	25.8 (103.2)	28.5 (85.5)	13.4 (26.8)	9.1 (9.1)	340.6	IV
Active leisure	16.3 (81.5)	22.9 (91.6)	34.2 (102.6)	19.5 (39.0)	7.1 (7.1)	321.8	V
Emotional satisfaction	20.1 (100.5)	15.2 (60.8)	30.8 (92.4)	18.6 (37.2)	15.3 (15.3)	306.2	VI
Deficiency of motor activity	14.6 (73.0)	18.7 (74.8)	34.2 (102.6)	20.4 (40.8)	12.1 (12.1)	303.3	VII
Prevention of stress	8.9 (44.5)	14.6 (58.4)	26.8 (80.4)	32.4 (64.8)	17.3 (17.3)	265.4	VIII
Harmonious development	6.8 (34.0)	14.8 (59.2)	32.6 (97.8)	24.5 (49.0)	21.3 (21.3)	261.3	IX
A tribute to fashion	1.3 (6.5)	2.6 (10.4)	38.5 (115.5)	40.3 (80.6)	17.3 (17.3)	230.3	X
Lack of motivation	0.8 (4.0)	3.1 (12.4)	38.2 (114.6)	34.2 (68.4)	23.7 (23.7)	223.1	XI

More than three quarters of students (78.4%) receive information about physical culture and sports from the Internet, and 13.7% receive it by watching television, listening to the radio, and reading newspapers. The least number of students (7.9%) receive information by reading popular magazines, books, methodological and scientific literature. A total of 54.9% of students are particularly interested in issues related to maintaining and promoting health; 21.6% of students are interested in participating in competitions and the results obtained in the process of training in a particular sport; 19.6% are interested in active recreation, and 3.9% of students are interested in other issues related to physical culture and sports.

### Discussion

Unfortunately, almost a third of the students we surveyed (31.5%) are not fully aware of the importance of physical culture and sports in their professional activities. Of all forms of physical education, law students prefer physical culture lessons (47.1%). First-year students, in the majority (88.2%) still regularly attend academic classes, which is confirmed by the results of other studies (Azhypko & Kryvoruchko, 2016; Pilova, 2013; Zakharchenko, 2017). However, if in the first year there is an interest in physical culture lessons, then with each subsequent year of study the interest decreases (Zemska, 2012; Oksom, 2008).

For the majority of students (88.2%), physical culture lessons are the only way to increase the level of physical activity and interest in leading a healthy lifestyle. Half of the students we surveyed (52.9%) do not have enough free time for independent physical exercises. Although 74.5% of students spend only up to ten 10 hours a week on homework, i.e., they do not particularly overload themselves with studying at home. However, 66.7%

of students do not use their free time very effectively and spend it passively. The dominance of passive rest after lectures can become a bad habit and negatively affect one's health Grajek et al. (2021).

Insufficient amount of physical activity during physical culture lessons was stated by 51.2% of students. Therefore, the vast majority of students (80.8%) consider it necessary to engage in various forms of exercise at least three times a week. This is encouraging, and it is worth giving students an opportunity by organizing physical education for them in various organizational forms in addition to academic classes. According to Garkusha & Arishchenko (2014) and Pilova (2013), 43.7% and 30.2% of students, respectively, exercise independently more than 2–3 times a week.

Of note, popular sports among young people are soccer, swimming, volleyball, table tennis, and martial arts, which coincides with the opinions of other experts (Rebecca et al., 2006; Zemska, 2012; Pilova, 2013). However, most students state that they do not have enough time for active sports, as evidenced by the results of other studies (Hunko, 2009; Harkusha & Aryshchenko, 2014; Kolomiets, Zolochovskyi, & Rusanov, 2015). We believe that the lack of time is a consequence of the inability to rationally organize their free time, poor motivation, and laziness. Other researchers observed that students also cite reasons such as the lack of opportunity to attend a sports section to their liking, as well as high pay and inconvenient schedule of sections (Rebecca et al., 2006; Zemska, 2012), which also indicates a low level of motivation, interest and desire of students.

Students express a positive attitude (76.5%) towards active and sports games in their free time and participation in competitions. This fact coincides with the data of other researchers (Hunko, 2009; Kosynskyi, Khodinov, Khrypliuk, & Krot, 2013). The organization of active recreation during students' free time in the form of competitions in active and sports games will increase the volume and intensity of physical activity as well as, interest in leading a healthy lifestyle. In our opinion, this type of activity improves the emotional state, promotes attractiveness to physical activity, strengthens relationships, and enhances creative and mental activity and more. The abovementioned outcomes meet the expectations of students from participation in various forms of physical education.

In conducting physical culture lessons, most students (54.9%) do not like (not considerably, in our opinion) bringing uniforms to classes and changing clothes. We think that this occurs due to the need to wear a sports uniform during the school day. Especially for girls, such hygienic factor as the inability to take a shower after classes is an issue. However, it is important to prioritize and explain the need for physical activity for health reasons.

However, such reasons for reluctance to participate in physical culture lessons as the use of monotonous exercises (29.4%) and low emotional background (15.7%) of physical culture lessons, which have been observed in their previous studies by other authors (Pilova, 2013; Azhyppo & Kryvoruchko, 2016), should be considered. An alternative to "boring" physical culture lessons to increase physical activity of students can be the organization of active leisure in the form of active entertainment and competitions.

The students who participated in this study enjoy physical education classes because they help maintain and strengthen health (72.5%); perhaps this indicates their conscious attitude to such classes. The idea that "being healthy is fashionable, stylish, and beautiful" is simply popular among young people has been also suggested by other experts (Kolomiets, Zolochovskyi, & Rusanov, 2015).

An important motive for physical culture lessons for most students is to maintain and strengthen health (first rating place) – 70.6%. The results obtained by us were confirmed in the studies of Pilova (2013) – 73.9%; Turchyk, Romanchuk, Sorokolit, Kemin, & Lukjanchenko (2021) – 60.0%; Kolomiets, Zolochovskyi, & Rusanov (2015) – 59.4%; Oksom (2008) – also the first rating place. Currently, the cult of health, comprehensive and harmonious development covers an increasing part of conscious youth.

A high percentage of students indicated the desire for physical improvement and increase of general working capacity (II and III rating places with 62.7% and 60.8%, respectively), which is typical for young people. They are very critical, and sometimes painfully, perceive their external characteristics, comparing themselves with certain standards of beauty; they, also like to compare their physical capabilities with the results of peers (Hunko, 2009; Pilova, 2013; Kolomiets, Zolochovskyi, & Rusanov, 2015).

The motive to get a positive assessment and successfully pass the test in physical culture is a good reason for classes (IV place) according to half of the students (49.0%), which is confirmed by data obtained by other researchers (Oksom, 2008; Zemska, 2012; Kolomiets, Zolochovskyi, & Rusanov, 2015). Lack of intrinsic motivation (3.9%) is an alarming signal that may indicate a kind of "serving".

Our study shows that 64.8% of future lawyers do not consider physical culture and sports a priority component of vocational education, which is consistent with other data (Barani, 2015). However, students realize that such classes significantly contribute to the development of physical qualities (68.6%), maintaining and strengthening health (54.9%), and meet the need for active rest (68.6%) after prolonged mental stress (Bodnarchuk, & Andres, 2021). More than a third of respondents (33.3%) like to participate in physical culture lessons because of the opportunity to reduce (or "remove") psycho-emotional stress. More than one third (39.2%) are of students are motivated to participate in physical education classes by owing to the possibility of active recreation, which coincides with the data of other researchers (Pilova, 2013). Another factor that

motivates students is the opportunity to get emotional satisfaction from classes and communication with peers (35.3%), and 52.9% consider the opportunity to communicate with friends a significant advantage of physical education classes. These data coincide with the data obtained by Pilova (2013) 32.3%; Kolomiets, Zolochevsky, & Rusanov (2015) 33.3%. One third of students (33.3%) are also motivated by the possibility of reducing the deficit of motor activity; similar data have been obtained by Kolomiyets, Zolochevsky, & Rusanov, (2015) – 31.3%. Some respondents lack motivation, which is confirmed by the data obtained by Zemskaya (2012). Lack of motivation for physical culture and sports and, underestimation of the importance of physical activity by students can significantly reduce opportunities for further professional activity. Currently, it is not difficult to obtain any necessary knowledge, skills and abilities from the media, and most of students in this study (78.4%) clearly use these opportunities. This statement is also observed in other studies (Oksom, 2008; Pilova, 2013). The important role of the teacher of physical culture lessons in the physical education of students to explain the importance of physical activity for maintaining and promoting health should also be noted, especially because 54.9% of students are interested in such issues.

### Conclusions

Regular physical education and sports classes are not considered important by students –future lawyers for successful work in their specialty (64.8%). However, they assume that the amount of physical activity they receive in physical culture lessons (i.e., once a week) is insufficient (51.2%) and consider it necessary to engage in various forms of exercise at least three times a week. Although students complain about the lack of free time for additional classes (52.9%), we believe that there is a significant reserve in the amount of free time of students for the organization of additional forms of physical education because 66.7% of respondents spend leisure time passively, and spend no more than 10 hours a week on homework (74.5%). Students' needs for better health (72.5% and 70.6%), increased level of physical fitness and efficiency (62.7% and 60.8%), psycho-emotional and mental relief (60.8% and 33.3 %), and communication with peers (52.9%) serve as incentives to increase their motor activity. One of the effective ways to improve the educational process of training future lawyers (76.5%) can be the organization and regular holding of competitions, entertainment, and fun with the use of active and sports games during leisure. The results of this survey can be used to identify areas for optimizing the process of physical education in the school and for developing a program of physical education classes for students based on their motives, needs and interests, providing the necessary knowledge to organize independent exercise and lead a healthy lifestyle.

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