

Financing physical culture by local government units

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Abstract:

Sport, more widely physical culture, has a positive impact on human health. Therefore, support of physical activity remains within the well-understood interest of the state and local government units. In Poland it is a statutory duty of particular units. The aim of the paper is to evaluate the level of engagement of particular types of local government in Poland in performance of tasks regarding physical culture and tourism on the basis of budget expenditures incurred by local governments for this aim. The paper verifies the following hypothesis:

H1: Among all local government units, municipalities are the most engaged in financing physical culture. The results of the study indicate that physical culture is supported by different local government units on a different level. This burden lies mainly with municipalities, i.e. the smallest units which in theory know best the needs of their inhabitants. Such solution is reasonable as local authorities know the age structure of their communities as well as their immediate needs. The results of the study show that urban municipalities invest evidently more in physical culture than small rural municipalities. The disproportions are significant and particularly visible in numbers representing the mean value of expenditures on physical culture per one inhabitant of local government unit. The presented differences did not change in the period of time analysed in this paper (2015-2019). Undoubtedly, increased investments in physical culture result in better health of the inhabitants who are taxpayers, which in the future will result in greater income and lower expenditures of particular units. Investment in physical culture may be also understood as investment in self-development of local government units, and money saved in this way cannot be regarded as savings, but as waste.

Key Words: financing, physical culture, sport, budget, local government units, municipality

Introduction

The notion of *physical culture* may be defined as "philosophy, regimen, or lifestyle seeking maximum physical development through such means as weight (resistance) training, diet, aerobic activity, athletic competition, and mental discipline" (Encyclopædia Britannica). Physical culture, in particular its components such as sport, physical education and motor rehabilitation (and partially 2 remaining elements of physical culture, i.e. physical recreation and tourism; Kobierecki, 2016) (Act of 25 June 2010 on Sport, Art. 2, section 2) nowadays constitute an inseparable element of human life. Regular physical activity is highly beneficial to human health.

It improves cardiovascular and respiratory system capacity (Watts, Beye, Siafarikas, O'Driscoll, Jones, Davis, Green, 2004), protects against non-communicable chronic diseases (Raza, Krachler, Forsberg, Sommar, 2020), prevents and corrects faulty posture (Chakravarthy, Joyner, Booth, 2002), supports intellectual capacity (Abu-Omar, Rütten, Lehtinen, 2004) and improves the quality of sleep (Guszkowska, 2009). Physical activity also positively impacts on the body functioning in elderly age and the phenomenon of the so-called successful ageing (Biernat, 2014; Yen, Lin, 2018). Moreover, physical activity influences psychological balance, i.e. improves stress and tiredness endurance as well as decreases fear and the risk of depression (Duda, Rżany, Dudło, Dogońska, Suszyński, Górka, 2015). Additionally, it has a positive impact on the functioning of people with depressive disorders (Monteiro, Schuch, Deslandes, Vancampfort, Mosqueiro, Messinger, Caldieraro, Fleck, 2020).

Higher level of physical activity also alleviates negative psychological symptoms among the elderly during COVID-19 pandemic when social distancing is necessary (Callow, Arnold-Nedimala, Jordan, Pena, Won, Woodard, Smith, 2020). What is more, different studies indicate that people who exercise have a high level of self-esteem and positive body image (Ziemiańek, Jendrysik, Horodecki, Knapik, 2015). Engaging children in various types of physical activity helps them to understand the rules of fair play, gain respect, awareness of their body as well as tactical and social awareness (European Commission, 2013).

Pursuant to Art. 27, section 1 of the Act of 25 June 2010 on Sport, creation of conditions which enhance sport development is the role of local government units (Act of 25 June 2010 on Sport, Art. 27, section 1). This provision broadens the catalogue of tasks specified in legal acts on local government. In acts regarding all types

of local government, i.e. municipality (Act of 8 March 1990 on Municipal Local Governments, Art. 7, section 1, item 10), district (powiat) (Act of 5 June 1998 on District Local Governments, Art. 4, section 1, item 8) and voivodeship (Act of 5 June 1998 on Voivodeship Local Government, Art. 14, section 1, item 11) there is a provision that particular governments perform tasks a.o. in the scope of physical culture and tourism. One of possible forms of performing this task, not only in Poland, is its financing (Cole, Burke, Aspinall, Hunter, Bichel, 2010; Kozma, Radics, Teperics, 2012; Siemińska, 2020).

Local governments may positively impact on the change of health behaviours through their role in planning, providing and maintenance of infrastructure and sport facilities in local communities (Bichel, Aspinall, Burke, Cole, Osborne, Davies, 2010). As a result, budget resources of all types of local government may form the basis for development of all components forming physical culture. As indicated in previous studies, financing of physical culture from public resources improves its popularity (Huterska, Huterski, Zdunek, Łapińska, 2020).

The aim of the paper is to evaluate the level of engagement of particular types of local government in Poland in performance of tasks regarding physical culture and tourism. The level of engagement will be evaluated on the basis of budget expenditures incurred on this aim by local governments. The paper verifies the following hypothesis:

H1: Among all local government units, municipalities are the most engaged in financing physical culture.

Material & methods

In order to realize the research aim, budget expenditures of local government units incurred on physical culture were analysed taking into consideration the following:

- the level of expenditures,
- structure of expenditures with division into current and capital expenditures,
- share of expenditures in total expenditures,
- mean value of expenditures per one unit,
- mean value of expenditures per one inhabitant,

In the study the data regarding expenditures of local government units on physical culture collected in the Local Data Bank of the Central Statistical Office for 2015-2019 was used. According to the budget classification prevailing in Poland, expenditures on physical culture were classified in Division 926 – Physical Culture (Regulation of the Minister of Finance of 2 March 2010). In this division the following chapters are identified: 92601 – Sport facilities, 92604 – Physical culture institutions, 92605 – Tasks in the scope of physical culture, 92678 – Elimination of the effects of natural disasters, 92679 – Foreign support, 92680 – Research and development activity, 92695 – Other activity. Presented conclusions will not refer exclusively to sport promotion and activation of local inhabitants, but also to creating opportunities to participate in sport events by e.g. construction of sport facilities.

In the context of local government units, expenditures of municipalities, districts (poviats) and voivodeships were identified. Additionally, municipal expenditures were divided with respect to their type, i.e. rural, urban-rural and urban municipalities. The number of local government units in Poland in the analysed period, which were included in the estimations, is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The number of local government units in Poland in 2015-2019

Year	Type of local government unit				
	municipality			district (powiat)	voivodeship
	urban	urban-rural	rural		
2015	304	611	1563	314	16
2016	303	616	1559	314	16
2017	302	621	1555	314	16
2018	302	629	1547	314	16
2019	302	638	1537	314	16

Source: own study based on <http://eteryt.stat.gov.pl/eteryt/raporty/WebRaportZestawienie.aspx>.

Results

In the analysed period one may observe a systematic growth of financial resources which were in total spent by local governments on tasks associated with physical culture (Fig. 1). In 2015-2019 these expenditures increased from PLN 4.34 bn to PLN 5.99 bn, i.e. by 38%.

The greatest increase was noted in 2018 when it reached 19%, i.e. from PLN 5.08 bn to PLN 6.05 bn. In 2016 and 2017 an increase in expenditures was also noted, respectively 2.5% and 14.2% as compared to preceding year, whereas in 2019 an insignificant decrease by nearly 1% was observed.

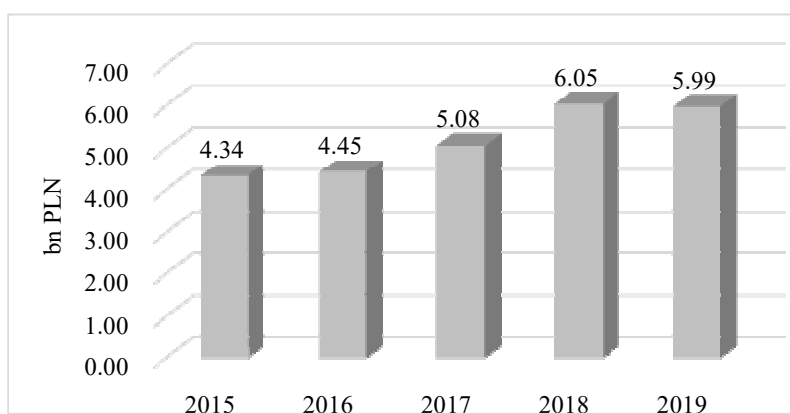


Fig. 1. Total expenditures of local government units in Poland on physical culture in 2015-2019 (in bn PLN)
Source: own calculations based on the Local Data Bank.

In 2019, rural municipalities spent in total on physical culture PLN 832.22 mln, whereas in this year the mean value of expenditures per unit amounted to PLN 0.54 mln and in the analysed period increased from PLN 0.36 mln, i.e. by as much as 50% (Table 2). Despite an upward tendency of the mean value of expenditures per one unit, when compared to preceding year in 2019 there was a decrease by 10% (from PLN 0.60 mln to PLN 0.54 mln). The share of rural municipalities' expenditures on physical culture in the total budget expenditures in 2019 reached 1.42% and when compared to 2015 it decreased from the level of 1.50%. In the first three years of the analysed period, the structure of expenditures specified in Division 926 – Physical culture was dominated by current expenditures and in two further years by capital expenditures. In 2018, the share of capital expenditures amounted to 60.17%. The mean value of expenditures on physical culture per one inhabitant in 2019 reached PLN 76.42 and when compared to 2015 it increased by PLN 25.17. The highest level of expenditures per one inhabitant was observed in 2018 when it amounted to PLN 84.57.

Table 2. Characteristics of expenditures incurred by rural municipalities on physical culture in Poland in 2015-2019

Specification		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
expenditures on physical culture, including (in mln PLN)		562.35	556.88	650.02	924.55	832.22
current expenditures	value (in mln PLN)	300.50	316.83	334.18	368.25	395.96
	share (in %)	53.44	56.89	51.41	39.83	47.58
capital expenditures	value (in mln PLN)	261.85	240.05	315.84	556.30	436.26
	share (in %)	46.56	43.11	48.59	60.17	52.42
share in total expenditures (in %)		1.50	1.30	1.33	1.66	1.42
mean value of expenditures per one unit (in mln PLN)		0.36	0.36	0.42	0.60	0.54
mean value of expenditures per one inhabitant (in PLN)		51.25	50.76	59.35	84.57	76.42

Source: own calculations based on the Local Data Bank.

Expenditures of urban-rural municipalities in Division 926 – Physical culture in budget classification in 2019 reached PLN 1133.12 mln, which constitutes 2.43% of total expenditures (Table 3). On average, in this year every urban-rural municipality spent PLN 1.78 mln on physical culture. As compared to 2015, the mean value of expenditures per one unit for this task increased by nearly 35%, i.e. from PLN 1.32 mln to PLN 1.78 mln. The structure of urban-rural municipalities' expenditures on physical culture in the whole analysed period of five years was dominated by current expenditures, and their biggest share was noted in 2016 where it amounted to 67.65%. Moreover, in 2019 the mean value of expenditures of urban-rural municipalities per one inhabitant was PLN 125.55 and it was higher by PLN 34.43 as compared to 2015.

Table 3. Characteristics of expenditures incurred by urban-rural municipalities on physical culture in Poland in 2015-2019

Specification		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
expenditures on physical culture, including (in mln PLN)		807.54	813.64	941.43	1142.31	1133.12
current expenditures	value (in mln PLN)	523.28	550.40	597.73	654.39	711.50
	share (in %)	64.80	67.65	63.49	57.29	62.79
capital expenditures	value (in mln PLN)	284.26	263.24	343.70	487.92	421.62
	share (in %)	35.20	32.35	36.51	42.71	37.21
share in total expenditures (in %)		2.77	2.43	2.46	2.62	2.43
mean value of expenditures per one unit (in mln PLN)		1.32	1.32	1.52	1.82	1.78
mean value of expenditures per one inhabitant (in PLN)		91.12	91.42	105.28	127.19	125.55

Source: own calculations based on the Local Data Bank.

In 2019 urban municipalities spent on physical culture as much as PLN 3740.11 mln, which is equivalent to PLN 12.38 mln per one municipality (Table 4). In 2015-2019 a significant upward trend of these expenditures could be observed. The mean value of expenditures per unit in the whole analysed period increased by over 36%, i.e. from PLN 9.08 mln to PLN 12.38 mln; also, the mean value of expenditures per one inhabitant increased by over 36%, i.e. from PLN 148.46 to PLN 202.54. The highest increase in mean value per one unit was observed in 2017 as compared to preceding year and it exceeded 14% (from PLN 9.50 mln to PLN 10.85 mln). Also, the highest increase in expenditure value per one inhabitant reaching nearly 14% (from PLN 155.11 to PLN 176.81) was observed in 2017. The share of expenditures on physical culture in total expenditures in 2019 amounted to 2.95% and decreased slightly as compared to preceding year. As in the case of urban-rural municipalities, the structure of urban municipalities' expenditures in Division 926 – Physical culture in budget classification was dominated by current expenditures, with the share of 58% in 2019.

Table 4. Characteristics of expenditures incurred by urban municipalities on physical culture in Poland in 2015-2019

Specification		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
expenditures on physical culture, including (in mln PLN)		2761.67	2879.15	3277.85	3678.94	3740.11
current expenditures	value (in mln PLN)	1583.79	1699.28	1833.08	2006.94	2169.23
	share (in %)	57.35	59.02	55.92	54.55	58.00
capital expenditures	value (in mln PLN)	1177.88	1179.87	1444.77	1672.00	1570.88
	share (in %)	42.65	40.98	44.08	45.45	42.00
share in total expenditures (in %)		3.10	3.07	3.18	3.20	2.95
mean value of expenditures per one unit (in mln PLN)		9.08	9.50	10.85	12.18	12.38
mean value of expenditures per one inhabitant (in PLN)		148.46	155.11	176.81	198.89	202.54

Source: own calculations based on the Local Data Bank.

In 2019, districts (poviats) spent on physical culture the total of PLN 100.59 mln, reaching mean value of PLN 0.32 mln per unit (Table 5). In the analysed period, the mean value of expenditures per unit increased from PLN 0.25 mln to PLN 0.32 mln, yet in 2016 and 2019 this value decreased by 8% and 22% respectively as compared to preceding year. Nonetheless, in 2018 a significant increase by nearly 52% was observed. The share of expenditures on physical culture in total expenditures was minimal and in 2015-2019 it amounted to less than 0.5%. Also, the mean value of expenditures per one inhabitant reached a relatively value in the period under analysis. In 2019 the mean value of expenditures per one inhabitant was only PLN 3.90. The structure of district (poviat) expenditures on physical culture in majority was dominated by current expenditures. Their share in 2019 reached 61.44%.

Table 5. Characteristics of expenditures incurred by districts (poviats) on physical culture in Poland in 2015-2019

Specification		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
expenditures on physical culture, including (in mln PLN)		78.44	72.85	83.52	129.72	100.59
current expenditures	value (in mln PLN)	43.55	46.01	50.93	57.39	61.44
	share (in %)	55.53	63.15	60.98	44.24	61.08
capital expenditures	value (in mln PLN)	34.89	26.84	32.59	72.33	39.15
	share (in %)	44.47	36.85	39.02	55.76	38.92
share in total expenditures (in %)		0.33	0.31	0.33	0.45	0.34
mean value of expenditures per one unit (in mln PLN)		0.25	0.23	0.27	0.41	0.32
mean value of expenditures per one inhabitant (in PLN)		3.04	2.82	3.23	5.02	3.90

Source: own calculations based on the Local Data Bank.

Total expenditures of voivodeships in Division 926 – Physical culture in 2019 equalled PLN 185.85 mln, which is equivalent to the mean value of PLN 11.62 mln per unit (Table 6). As compared to 2015, the expenditures of voivodeships on physical culture increased by PLN 58.34 mln. In the first three years of the analysed period the share of these expenditures in total expenditures was below 1%, and in the next two years it reached 1.05% in 2018 and 1.01% in 2019 respectively. Expenditures on physical culture in 2019 per one inhabitant amounted to PLN 4.84 and it was the highest value noted in the analysed period 2015-2019. Again, the structure of the analysed expenditures was dominated by current expenditures; in 2019 their share reached 70.27%.

Table 6. Characteristics of expenditures incurred by voivodeships on physical culture in Poland in 2015-2019

Specification		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
expenditures on physical culture, including (in mln PLN)		127.51	122.60	125.53	174.24	185.85
current expenditures	value (in mln PLN)	80.95	84.97	98.37	120.87	130.60
	share (in %)	63.48	69.31	78.37	69.37	70.27
capital expenditures	value (in mln PLN)	46.56	37.63	27.16	53.37	55.25
	share (in %)	36.52	30.69	21.63	30.63	29.73
share in total expenditures (in %)		0.74	0.97	0.88	1.05	1.01
mean value of expenditures per one unit (in mln PLN)		7.97	7.66	7.85	10.89	11.62
mean value of expenditures per one inhabitant (in PLN)		3.32	3.19	3.27	4.54	4.84

Source: own calculations based on the Local Data Bank.

Discussion

For the needs of the present paper Table 7 contains a summary of the conducted study. The most optimistic conclusion which can be drawn from the study is a dynamic increase of expenditures on physical culture. This increase is evidently higher than annual inflation in Poland (2015 – -0.9%; 2016 – -0.6%; 2017 – 2.0%; 2018 – 1.6%; 2019 – 2.3%).

The results also confirm the research hypothesis assumed in the paper, i.e. among all local government units, municipalities - the smallest units which in theory know best the needs of their inhabitants - are the most engaged in financing physical culture. Such solution is reasonable as local authorities know the age structure of their communities as well as their immediate needs.

It needs to be added that expenditures presented in the paper are classified within the budget Division of Physical culture. In Poland, primary schools, where sport classes as well as preventive and general physical development classes are organised, are also financed by municipalities, which additionally signals their great responsibility for financing physical culture. The observed increase of expenditures on physical culture constitutes a positive conclusion; on the other hand, one needs to point to noticeable disproportions between different types of municipalities. The disproportions are significant and particularly visible in the values representing the mean value of expenditures on physical culture per one inhabitant of local government unit. It seems that urban municipalities invest evidently more in physical culture than small and poorer rural municipalities. Undoubtedly, increased investments in physical culture result in better health of the inhabitants who are taxpayers, which in the future will result in greater income and lower expenditures of particular units. Investment in physical culture may be also understood as investment in self-development of local government units, and money saved in this way cannot be regarded as savings, but as waste.

Table 7. The mean value of expenditures on physical culture per one inhabitant in local government units in Poland, in PLN

Year	Type of local government unit				
	municipality			district (powiat)	voivodeship
	urban	urban-rural	rural		
2015	148.46	91.12	51.25	3.04	3.32
2016	155.11	91.42	50.76	2.82	3.19
2017	176.81	105.28	59.35	3.23	3.27
2018	198.89	127.19	84.57	5.02	4.54
2019	202.54	125.55	76.42	3.90	4.84

Source: own study.

Conclusions

Sport, and more broadly physical culture, has a positive impact on human health. Therefore, support of physical activity remains within the well-understood interest of the state and local government units. In Poland it is a statutory duty of particular units.

Evidently, numbers presented in the paper are indisputable. Nonetheless, their justification requires further in-depth qualitative studies. Lack of investment in physical culture in rural municipalities may be determined by various factors, such as wealth, the awareness of local authorities, the needs of local community, social pressure or allocation of resources to short-term and politically noticeable projects.

The authors wish to express hope that the values of resources allocated to physical culture and sport will not only increase but will reach a similar level in all types of municipalities. Only such expenditures will assure a uniform and balanced development of all inhabitants from various age groups.

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