



*Original Contribution*

**RESEARCH ON THE INTEREST AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS  
THE LEARNING PROCESS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ITS  
OPTIMIZATION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT STUDENTS AT  
SOFIA UNIVERSITY „ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI”**

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**ABSTRACT**

The problem of increasing the effectiveness of the educational process in the Physical Education and Sport specialty at the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts, part of the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” is particularly timely, considering that the specialty is very recent – it was launched at Sofia University during the academic year of 2009/2010. On the other hand, there is a relentless competition in this field among the other universities in the country. In order to optimise the educational process in the specialty, the opinion of the students is extremely important, as a way for the lecturers to get relevant feedback. The goal of the study is to research the work done with the students and on this basis to make an attempt to optimise the educational process of the specialty. The study used a survey conducted on February 08, 2023 with a card containing a total of 32 questions. The results were analysed and presented based on analysis of the frequency (f) and percentages (%). The data gathered by the survey was processed in MS Excel

**Key words:** educational process, Physical Education and Sport, school subjects, students, lecturers, difficulties, recommendations

**INTRODUCTION**

Each country prepares its personnel for every professional and vocational field in modern society. Through its institutions, it invests a certain vision for future development, exerting effort to develop long-term strategies for the improvement and qualification of its specialists. Modern consortia, companies, organizations and management place hopes in the preparation of their staff in a two-way process. On the one hand, society prepares the future specialists, and on the other, they themselves are its primary forces that move it forward to achieve progress. This is exactly how we should look at students. Their opinion about the ongoing processes in their education is the feedback for us teachers (1).

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According to E. Nikolova et al., education is increasingly becoming an economic determinant widely significant as a social phenomenon. Besides being a prerequisite for sustainable social development, the high general education level of any nation is associated with an increase in well-being and becomes a driver of the economic potential of a given country (2).

D. Zheleva-Terzieva points out that quality education is a serious and irreplaceable investment and a necessity for successful employment. Only with highly qualified pedagogical staff it is possible to implement changes that meet the real needs of society (3).

E. Mileva believes that the intensifying competition and the dynamics of social development give rise to the need for continuous diversification of the product of the offered educational services (4). The same author thinks that the main current trend is

related to the expansion of specialties within higher education institutions (5).

The problem of increasing the effectiveness of the educational process at Sofia University is extremely relevant, taking into account the conditions in which it is carried out. For the specialty of Physical Education and Sports within the Faculty of Education Sciences and Arts this is particularly important due to the specifics of its academic disciplines and activities. In the academic year 2022/2023, it will be fourteen years since the opening of the specialty, which was created in the academic year 2009/2010.

The opinion of the students about the ongoing processes in their studies, on the one hand, is feedback for us, teachers. On the other hand, the evaluation of the level of academic motivation would help the professional growth of the teaching staff. The study of the two-way transfer between teachers and students cannot give a complete picture of what is happening in the specialty. However, it can provide clarity on many essential issues related to the organization and training of students, meet the set goals and, last but not least, reveal the students' attitude towards the teachers of the Physical Education and Sports specialty (6).

The problem of students' internal readiness and active attitude to the learning process has been studied by a number of authors. According to I. Petkova, „The specialty of Physical Education and Sports is a desirable specialty. It attracts and retains its students with a good balance between theory and practice, good relationships between teachers and students, and the satisfaction of the preparation it offers.“ (7)

Focusing his research interest on the teaching of physical education and sports, I. Simeonov found that the students training to be teachers of physical education and sports at Sofia University have a negative attitude towards teaching the subject remotely (8). The opinion of the future physical education teachers is also supported by current sports instructors. In a study by K. Naydenova, conducted among 174 physical education teachers, of whom 152 or 87.4% defined it as more effective and, accordingly, preferred traditional education over distance learning (9).

According to Sijka Chavdarova-Kostova, „The challenges facing the modern university training of teachers are a direct consequence of

the existing problems. They concern not as much the training content, but arise from those higher in rank and hierarchy in their capacity as determinants of relationships between state policy in the field of education (including the training of teaching staff) and the commitment of universities as institutions implementing this training, and having sufficient autonomy in its functioning, both methodologically and substantively“ (10).

After a survey conducted among prospective students from the specialty of Pedagogy of Physical Education at the University of Veliko Tarnovo, it was established that the respondents expect to receive both in-depth scientific and theoretical knowledge of the major and broad-based practical training (11).

In the modern educational system in Bulgaria, and especially in the field of physical education and sports, in recent years there is a tendency to lower the level of competence of teachers. The reasons are many and varied. One of them is lowering the criteria for the selection of future specialists in physical education and sports (12). When conducting practical trainings, a large number of teachers rely primarily on their past experience, as well as their ability to improvise, which is by no means a sign of a professional attitude to work (13).

According to M. Nedkova, „Physical education, as a general phenomenon, must be developed in accordance with the modern changes in the educational process in higher schools, to take into account the new trends in the development of various types of sports and the interests of students“ (14).

According to G. Ignatov, the quality and effectiveness of education largely depend on the competence, motivation and resourcefulness of teachers (6), and according to M. Antonova, „The importance of physical education and the positive role it plays in the life of modern society obliges specialists – pedagogues to continuously improve their professional training“ (15). In his study, Zh. Georgiev points out that one of the main tasks of sports teachers is „to increase the motivation and activity of students in lessons, providing richer knowledge about sports as a means of physical fitness and social expression“ (16). B. Toshev also adds that „teaching methodology is a search for optimal ways to assimilate the scientific results in the learning process“ (17), and Elena

Nikolova et al. concludes that „the scientific and methodological preparation of sports pedagogues needs a serious rise to a higher qualitative scientific level“ (18).

### METHODS OF WORK

The above factors led us to conduct this multi-component study, which characterizes in detail students' attitude to the learning process, as well as the overall current state in the specialty of Physical Education and Sports at the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts of Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“.

The purpose of the present research is to study the interest and attitude towards the learning process of students majoring in Physical Education and Sports and to suggest ways to optimize it.

To realize our goal, we have set the following tasks:

1. To study the students' attitude towards the learning process.
2. To examine the overall current situation in the Physical Education and Sports specialty.
3. To draw conclusions and make recommendations for optimizing the work in the specialty.

The research was conducted on February 08, 2023 before the exam in the discipline „Methodology of teaching physical education of high school students of IX-XII grades“ with students in room 230 of the Faculty of Education Sciences and Arts. The obtained results were analyzed and presented based on the analysis of frequencies (f) and percentages (%). The data obtained from the survey were processed with the Excel program.

For the purposes and tasks of the present research, we analyzed students' opinions as a prerequisite for optimization and generation of management decisions to improve the organizational and teaching work in the specialty. We used the questionnaire method – a questionnaire was developed, including 32 questions, of which 7 were open-ended and 25 were multiple-choice, compiled according to the nature of the research. The survey card was personally handed over to 31 students in the 4th year of the Physical Education and Sports major from the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the analysis of the results, all questions from the survey were consistent with the direction of the set goal of the specific research, i.e. study of the interest

and attitude towards the learning process of students majoring in Physical Education and Sport at the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts at Sofia University.

The survey was completed by 31 students, of whom 61.3% were women and 38.7% were men. 45.2% of the respondents were 22 years old, 25.8% were 23 years old, 9.7% were 24 and 29 years old, and 3.2% were 25, 32 and 45 years old.

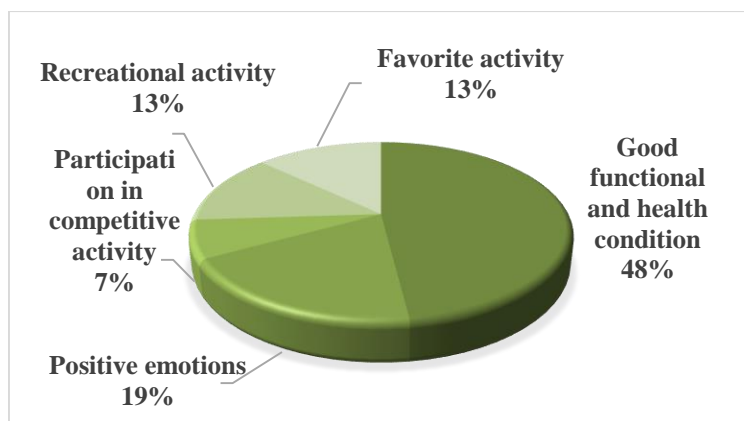
The high school performance of the surveyed students was as follows: 3.2% graduated with a satisfactory grade (from 3.00 to 3.50), 16.1% graduated with a good grade (from 3.50 to 4.50), 61.3% with a very good grade (from 4.50 to 5.50) and 19.4 % with an excellent grade (from 5.50 to 6.00).

To the question: At what level did you play sports before applying to the university?, 29% answered – sports for health, 54.9% – systematic training and competition activities, 16.1% – organized sports activities at school (extracurricular sports activities). There were no students who had not been involved in sports.

To the question: If you actively played sports, please indicate what sport?, 10 students noted that they were actively involved in football (32.3%), 5 students indicated that they practiced volleyball (16.1%), 3 students practiced martial arts – taekwondo, kickboxing and MMA (9.7%), two students per each sport - basketball, folk dancing and swimming (19.5% in total) and 1 actively engaged student per each sport - academic rowing, acrobatics, acrobatic rock roll, boxing, wrestling, athletics and sports dance (total 22.4%).

As a logical consequence of the previous question, the results regarding the question: If you are actively playing sports at the moment, please indicate what sport?, 19 students (61.3%) answered that they did not actively play sports at the moment, and 12 students (38.7%) answered that they were actively playing sports at the moment. Of them, five practiced football (41.7%), two per folk dancing and fitness (33.4%) and one per volleyball, sports dance and MMA (24.9%).

To the question: What motivates you to do sports?, 48.4% answered „I am convinced that with sports I will maintain a good functional and healthy state“, 19.3% – „Sports create positive emotional experiences for me“, 6.5% – „It is an opportunity to participate in an organized competitive activity“ and 12.9% answered „I am guaranteed a recreational activity (relieves me from the daily duties I perform)“ and „Sports is my favourite activity“ (**Figure 1**).

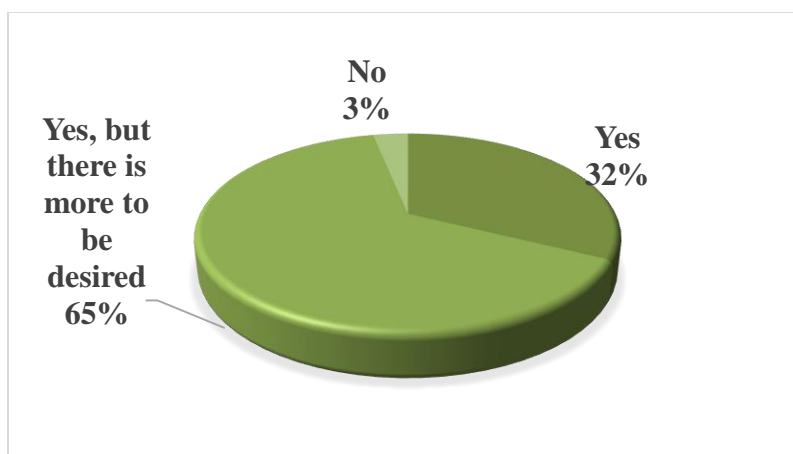


**Figure 1.** Question: What motivates you to play sports?

The questions that follow further cover more specific data on the education of students in the Physical Education and Sports specialty.

To the most general question in the questionnaire: Are you generally satisfied with your studies in

the specialty of Physical Education and Sports during the past 7 (seven) semesters?, 32.3% answered that they were satisfied, 64.5% were satisfied, but there was still much to be desired, and 3.2% were not satisfied (**Figure 2**).

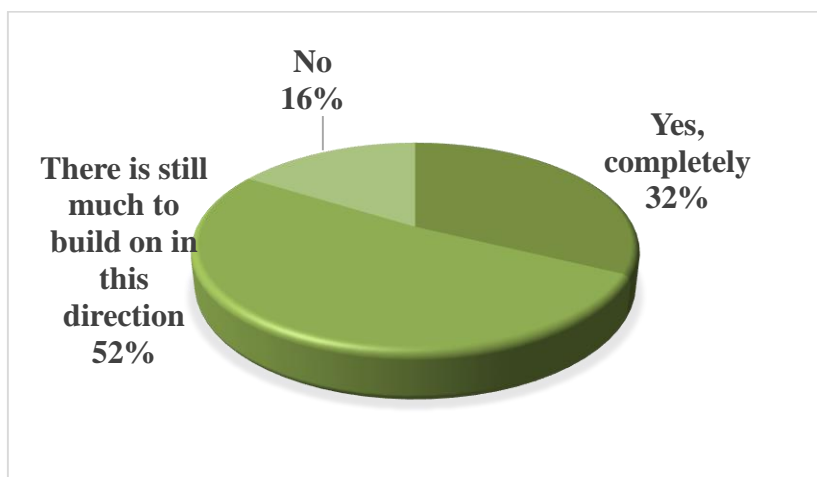


**Figure 2.** Question: Are you satisfied with your studies in the major over the past seven semesters?

To the question in the survey card: What did you like most in the four-year period of study in the specialty of Physical Education and Sports?, students answered as follows: „I gained knowledge in all areas of sports“, „I learned a lot of new things about physical education and sports“, „I added new knowledge“, „I learned to ski“, „Sports activities“, „Attendance of activities in different types of sports“, „Sports games“, „Mastering sports skills in the studied sports“, „Practicing sports“, „Sports studied“, „The different sports we studied and practised“, „The many types of sports included in the programme“, „Getting to know and practicing sports I haven't played“, „Improving in sports activity“, „Practical activities“, „Sports and communications“, „New contacts and acquaintances made“, „New environment“, „Socializing with colleagues“, „Colleagues I was with“, „Online learning during

the pandemic“, „The learned material for preparing a teaching career“, „The acquired knowledge that I will pass on to the students“, „Practice in the schools“, „The visit to the schools“, „Teaching methodology classes“, „The organization in the specialty“, „The attitude of the teachers“, „The intelligence of the teachers“, „The competence of the sports teachers“, „Everyone is given a chance“, „My personal development“, „I have built self-discipline“, „I realized that the University is an institution“.

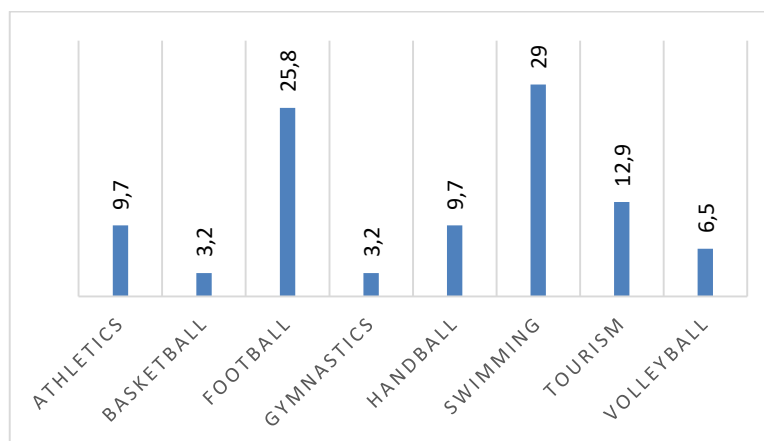
To the indicative question: In your opinion, are the sports facilities used by the Physical education and sports major students suitable and do they meet your needs?, 32.3% answered that they completely approved of the conditions, 51.6% answered that there is more to be desired, and 16.1% disapproved of the facilities (**Figure 3**).



**Figure 3.** Question: In your opinion, is the sports facility used by the

To the next question: During classes in which of the compulsory sports (basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, athletics, swimming, hiking, football, handball) in the curriculum of the Physical Education and Sports major, do you feel you got the most practical and theoretical skills?, 29% answered „Swimming“, 25.8% – „Football“, 12.9% – „Tourism“, 9.7% each –

„Athletics“ and „Handball“, 6.5%π – „Volleyball“ and 3.2% each – „Basketball“ and „Gymnastics“. It is important to note here that as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the training that year was online in the second, third and fourth semesters, when all the listed subjects except swimming and athletics were covered (**Figure 4**).



**Figure 4.** Question: In which sport do you feel you have gained the most practical and theoretical skills?

To the question: „After studying the compulsory sports in the specialty, I mastered best:...”, the students determined as follows: with the most collected points (48) was the teaching methodology, with 28 points – obtaining judgment skills the students' talents and aptitudes, with 26 points followed by the theory of teaching and the technical elements of sport, with 18 points – the specific sports terminology, with 16 points each, the knowledge of the rules and the history of the sport, and last, with 8 points, students noted the tactical elements of the sport.

To the question: „If you could add one sport to the curriculum studied in the Physical Education and Sports major, it would be...:“, students suggested the following sports: badminton, baseball, martial arts, boxing, wrestling, rowing, folk ball (dodgeball), folk dancing, rugby, tennis and chess. Depending on the available material base of the university and the availability of qualified teachers, some of the proposed sports could be included in the curriculum as optional subjects.

To the question: Is it important for you to be able to attend additional sports improvement classes/training for the sports you study?,

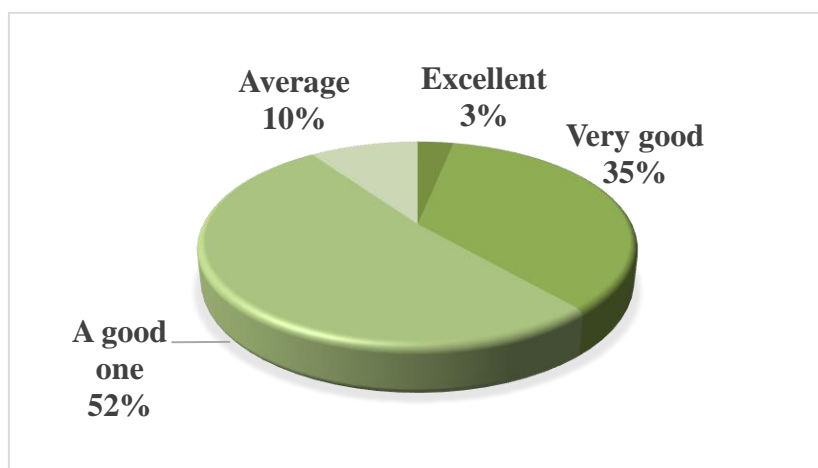
74.2% of respondents were positive, 16.1% answered „extremely important“, 6.5% were negative, and 3.2% answered that they could not judge.

The following are several questions related to the overall theoretical and practical training of the students and their attitude towards teaching. Regarding the question: Do you feel theoretically prepared to teach each of the compulsory sports included in the curriculum of the Physical Education and Sports specialty?, 3.2% answered that they were prepared. The majority of students – 74.2% indicated that they were prepared, but there was still much to be desired, and 22.6% considered that they were unprepared.

To the similar question: Do you feel practically prepared to teach each of the compulsory sports

included in the curriculum of the Physical Education and Sport specialty?, 12.9% answered that they were prepared. More than half of the students – 58% indicated that they were prepared, but there was still much to be desired, 22.6% considered that they were not prepared, and 6.5% answered that they could not judge.

To the summarizing question: Rate your level of sports preparedness and training at the moment at a six-point scale?, the students answered as follows: excellent 3.2%, very good 35.5%, good 51.6% and average 9.7% (**Figure 5**). What is striking here is the modest self-assessment on the part of the students, which is even below the level of their real capabilities, based on our expert assessment as teachers.



**Figure 5.** Self-assessment of the capabilities of the surveyed students

The following are several questions related to the overall theoretical and practical training of the students and their attitude towards teaching.

To the question: „When I teach, I feel most confident in myself with...“, 12.9% answered – preschool/kindergarten groups, 19.3% – with I-IV grade students, 45.2% – with V-VIII grade students and 22.6% – with IX-XII grade students.

Analogous to the above question is the question about when they teach, with which age group they feel the most insecure: 32.3% answered with preschool/kindergarten groups, 9.7% – with I-IV graders, 16.1% – with V-VIII grade students and 41.9% – with IX-XII grade students.

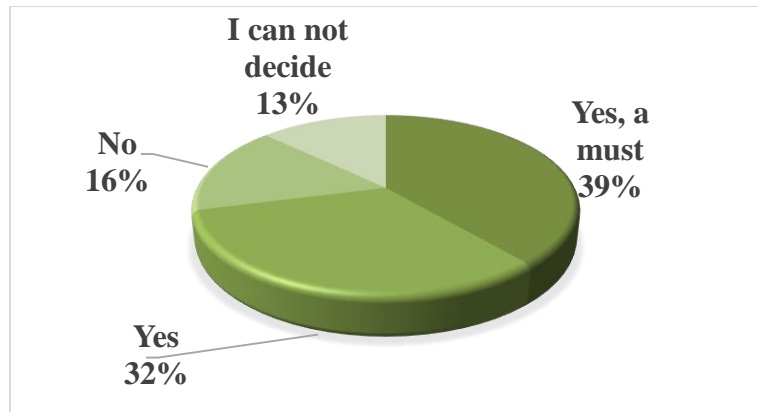
Related to the satisfaction with the mandatory disciplines in the major are also the answers to the question: „During classes, in which of the mandatory disciplines studied in the curriculum of the Physical Education and Sports course do you

feel you gained the most knowledge?“. With the largest number of collected points – 41, the students determined that they obtained the most theoretical knowledge in the subject „Methodology of teaching physical education for students of IX-XII grades“, with 29 points followed by „Methodology of teaching physical education of students from V-VIII grades“, in third place with 19 items is „Methodology of teaching mobile games“, with 17 items each followed by „Theory of education“ and „Methodology of teaching physical education of students from I-IV class“, with 11 points each, are ranked „Anatomy“ and „Didactics“, with 8 points „Theory and methodology of sports training“, with 7 points „Fundamentals of Kinesitherapy“, with 6 points „Sports Psychology“, etc.

The following are several questions asking for the students' opinion on the method of admission to the major.

Regarding the question: “Do you think there should be an exam in the form of language aptitude test (to establish the applicant's Bulgarian grammar knowledge) for admission to the Physical Education and Sports major?,”

38.7% answered „yes, necessarily“, 32.3% answered „yes“, 16.1% considered that they should not, and 12.9% could not decide (**Figure 6**).



**Figure 6.** Question: Should there be an exam in the form of a language aptitude test

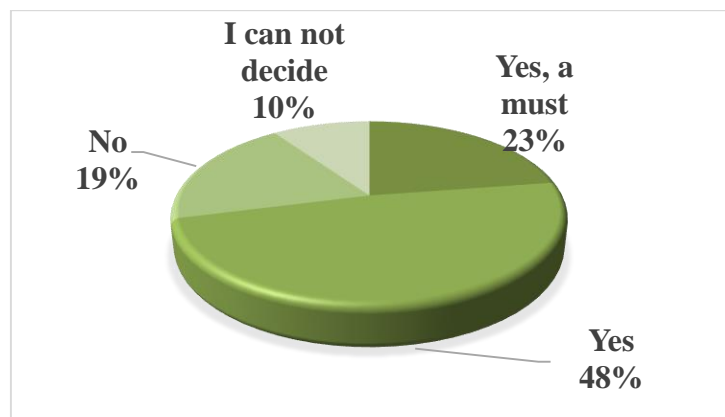
Analogous to the above question is the question of how far students believe that a physical fitness test should be conducted for admission to the Physical Education and Sports specialty, 19.4% were of the opinion that such an exam should be conducted „compulsorily“, 58% answered affirmatively with „yes“, 9.7% believed that there should not be such an exam, and 12.9% could not judge.

The next question is a continuation of the previous one, namely: “If your answer is „yes“, in what form should the physical fitness test be conducted?” Students ranked the three options offered, as follows: 12.5% believed that the exam should include testing a wide range of the candidate's sports training (athletics, sports games, gymnastics), 70.8% were of the opinion that the exam should be aimed primarily at general physical training (standards for physical fitness - standing long jump, push-ups, sit-ups, throwing a solid ball) and track and field running at short and

medium distances, and 16.7% believed that there should be an exam with standards close to those in secondary schools (same as above, but with lower workload and intensity. No students who benefited indicated another way in their allotted place in the survey.

To the question: “Do you think that the grade in Physical Education from the secondary education diploma should be used as a score when applying for the specialty of Physical Education and Sports?”, 38.7% answered with „yes, absolutely“, 45.2% with „yes“, 3.2% with „no“, and 12.9% with „I cannot judge“.

To the next question: “Do you think that high sports achievements in a certain type of sport should be given priority when applying to the Physical Education and Sports specialty?”, 22.6% of respondents answered with „yes, absolutely“, 48.4% with „yes“, 19.3% with „no“ and 9.7% with „I cannot judge“ (**Figure 7**).



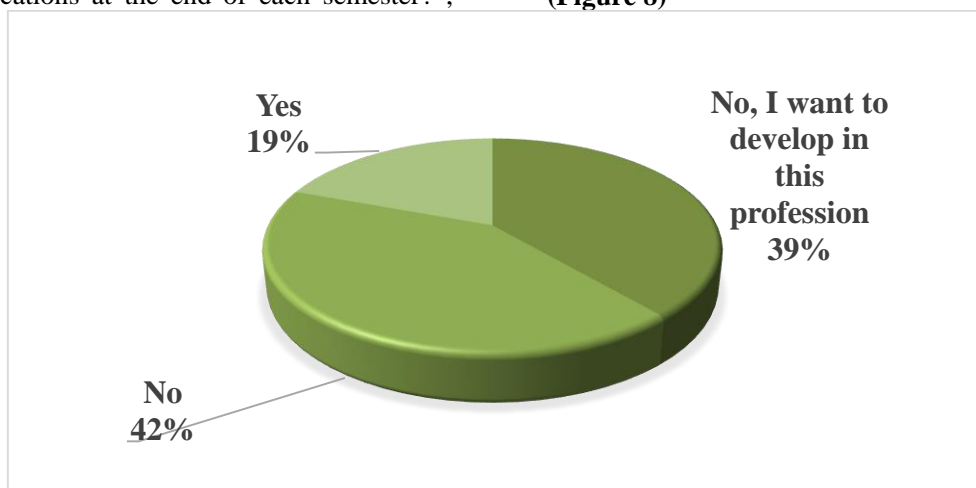
**Figure 7.** Question: Should high sports achievements in a certain type of sport give an advantage when applying to the specialty?

Also of interest are the answers to the question: “Should a part-time form of education be introduced for the specialty of Physical Education and Sports?”, 19.4% answered „yes, absolutely”, 29% gave a positive answer – „yes”, 41.9% answered negatively with „no”, and 9.7% answered „I cannot judge”.

To the next question: “Do you think there should be certifications at the end of each semester?”,

32.3% of students answered that they completely agreed, 25.8% stated that they completely disagreed, and 41.9% could not judge.

To the interesting question in our opinion: “Would you enrol in a different programme if you could go 4 years back in time?”, 38.7% answered with „No, I want to develop in this profession”, 41.9% gave the answer „no”, and 19.4 % answered „yes”. **(Figure 8)**



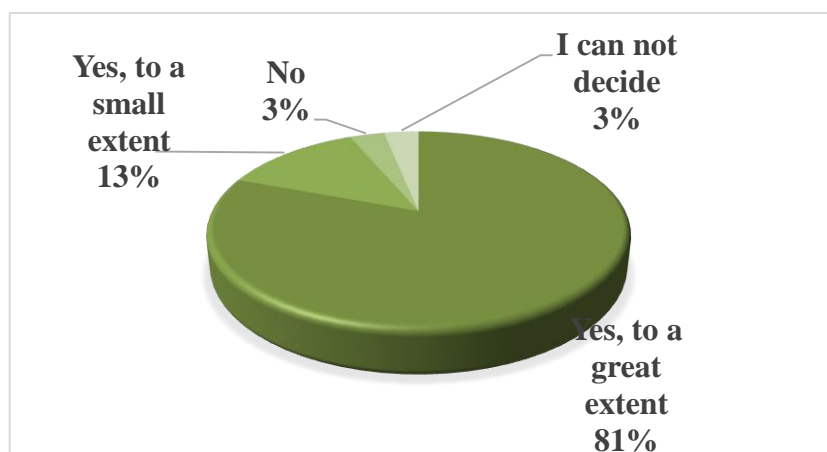
**Figure 8.** Question: Would you sign up to study something else if you could go back 4 years?

To the question: “What do you plan to do after completing your bachelor's degree?”, 35.5% answered „I want to practice my profession - I have a high personal motivation for that“, 45.2% replied „I would like to enrol in a master's degree at Sofia University, and continue my development as a specialist in the field of physical education and sports“, 9.7% responded „I want to enrol in a master's degree that has nothing to do with physical education and sports“, 3.2% – „I would like to enrol in a master's degree at the Vasil Levski National Sports Academy, continuing my development as a specialist in the field of physical

education and sports“, again with 3.2% answering – „I have a desire to go abroad after I graduate“ and „I have no desire to teach physical education and sports“.

The following two questions are related to the Covid-19 pandemic that are of interest to us.

To the question: “Do you think that the Covid-19 pandemic has prevented your full general training in the major?”, 80.7% of students answered „yes, to a great extent“, 12.9% answered „yes, to a small extent“, and 3.2% each answered with „no“ and „I can't decide“ **(Figure 9)**.



**Figure 9.** Question: Do you think that the Covid-19 pandemic has prevented your full general training in the specialty?



To the second question in this category: "Indicate in which area, the Covid-19 pandemic has hindered your studies the most?", 12.9% answered in „teaching theory“, 45.2% in „teaching methodology“, and 41.9% in „mastery of the technical elements of the sports studied“.

To the last question in the survey: „Please state your personal opinion or recommendation on an issue that has impressed you during the training so far, which is not included in the survey“, the students voiced the following opinion: „More emphasis on practical training of students“, „There should be more compulsory sports and more practice“, „Some professors should be more demanding of all students“, „The major in the faculty should be taken more seriously“, „Overall I am satisfied, only the facilities are not up to par“ and „The positive attitude of the teachers towards all of us“.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The research results show that 32.3% of the students are generally satisfied with their studies in the specialty, 64.5% answer that they are satisfied, but there is still something to be desired, and 3.2% answer that they are not satisfied. These grades are a very good attestation for the work of the teachers in the specialty. They oblige them not only to maintain the same course of action, but also to upgrade their own knowledge and skills in order to achieve even better results with students.
2. The opinions of the students are divided regarding the sports facilities available for the Physical Education and Sports specialty – 16.1% are not satisfied, 32.3% are satisfied, and 51.6% believe that there is still much to be desired. This gives us reason to once again raise the issue of the university's sports facilities with the Rector's leadership, as it is a shame that the oldest and most renowned university in Bulgaria does not have its own sports facility.
3. The results of the research show that students gained the most practical and theoretical skills in the lessons of compulsory sports: „Swimming“ (29%), „Football“ (25.8%), „Tourism“ (12.9%), „Athletics“ (6.5%) and „Handball“ (6.5%). The teachers of basketball, volleyball and gymnastics are each with 3.2%, which is not a good certification. It is important to mention that as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the training of this graduating class went online in the second, third and fourth semesters, when all the mentioned subjects,

except for swimming and athletics were represented.

4. After studying the compulsory sports in the major, students master best the teaching methodology, teaching theory and technical elements of sports, specific sports terminology, knowledge of rules and history of sports. Educators should pay more attention to the study of the tactical elements of sports.

5. According to a very large part of the students (74.2%), it is extremely important to attend additional classes/trainings on sports improvement in the studied sports, which tells us that in the curriculum of the specialty, ways should be sought to include more hours on sports improvement of the main sports studied.

6. More than half of the students indicate that they are theoretically (74.2%) and practically (58%) prepared to teach the compulsory sports included in the curriculum of the major, but there is still much to be desired. In support of this statement is the fact that students feel most confident in themselves when teaching students from V – VIII classes and most insecure when teaching upper year students with IX – XII classes. This shows that all sports teachers in the specialty need to be even more innovative in our teaching activities, as well as more demanding of students.

7. In the conducted research, the modest self-assessment on the part of the students is impressive, which is even below the level of their real capabilities, based on our expert assessment as teachers – 3.2% rated themselves as excellent, 35.5% as very good, 51.6 as good % and with an average of 9.7%. This gives us reason to recommend that teachers of the specialty stimulate students' confidence in their own capabilities.

8. Students are extremely satisfied with the teachers of the theoretical disciplines: „Methodology of teaching physical education of students of IX-XII grades“, „Methodology of teaching physical education of students of V-VIII grades“, „Methodology of teaching mobile games“, „Theory of education“, „Methodology of teaching physical education of I-IV grade students“, „Anatomy“, „Didactics“, „Theory and methodology of sports training“, „Fundamentals of kinesitherapy“ and „Sports psychology“. In other theoretical disciplines, teachers should improve their work methods and ways of communicating with students, which is also reflected in the recommendation given by the students themselves, namely:

„Some teachers should be more demanding of all students“.

9. Regarding the students' opinion about the method of admission to the specialty, it is indicative that a total of 71% of them are of the opinion that it is necessary to conduct an exam in the form of a language aptitude test to establish the Bulgarian grammar knowledge of the candidates. A total of 77.4% of the students believe that a physical fitness test should also be conducted for admission to the Physical Education and Sports specialty. This is also the great desire of the instructors from the Sports Department teaching this specialty. This opinion has been repeatedly expressed to the administrator of the specialty - the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts, which, unfortunately for everyone, has so far remained out of the sight of the Dean's Office, and is also the real obstacle to raising the level of education in the specialty.

10. The opinion of the students (83.9%) is also interesting regarding the Physical Education assessment of the secondary education diploma, which, according to them, should be graded. At the moment, this assessment is not included in the formation of the score when applying for the Physical Education and Sports specialty.

11. A very large percentage of respondents (71%) are of the opinion that high sports achievements in a given type of sport should be given priority when applying for the Physical Education and Sports specialty. This opinion overlaps with the practice in other higher education institutions in the country. In this way, the University will be able to train good athletes who will strengthen our representative teams in all types of sports. This will inevitably lead to an increase in the sports rating not only of the specialty, but also of the University in general.

12. The opinion of the students is two-way, regarding whether a part-time form of study should be introduced for the specialty – 48.4% are in favour of the introduction, and 41.9% are against, which largely supports the current situation, namely only with a full-time form of training.

13. An extremely high percentage (80.6%) of students are of the opinion that if they go four years back in time, they would still enrol in the same specialty, which speaks of a well-done job by the teachers of the specialty on the one hand, and of the preliminary correct choice of profession from the students on the other hand.

14. The answers of the students regarding their development after completing the bachelor's degree are also indicative, with 45.2% answering that they would like to enrol in a master's degree at Sofia University, and 35.5% answering that they wish to practice their profession immediately after graduation.

15. The students' opinion is categorical that the Covid-19 pandemic has prevented their full-fledged general education in the specialty – a total of 93.6% of students support this opinion, bearing in mind that three semesters of their education were spent in an online environment.

## CONCLUSION

The problem of increasing the effectiveness of the educational process in the specialty of Physical Education and Sport is particularly relevant, given that on the one hand, the specialty is quite young for Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“ – it was established in the academic year 2009/2010, and on the other hand – there is huge competition between the higher schools in the country, in which such a specialty exists: Vasil Levski National Sports Academy, Plovdiv University „Paisii Hilendarski“, Southwest University „Neofit Rilski“, „St. Cyril and St. Methodius“ University of Veliko Tarnovo, Shumen University „Konstantin Preslavski“, and from this academic year also in Trakia University – Stara Zagora. For these reasons, the opinion of the students, which is valuable feedback for us, teachers, is extremely important in order to optimize the learning process in the specialty.

Through the analysis of the learning process in the Physical Education and Sports specialty, we cannot give a complete picture of its current situation, but we provide clarity on many painful and long discussed issues related to the organization and training of students. It is clear to everyone that the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts and the Department of Sports, which are also the main service units in the specialty, must act more transparently and professionally and resolve all organizational, structural and personnel problems not only in the name of its prosperity, but also for the sake of the students – the future physical education and sports teachers of our children.

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