

THE RELATION BETWEEN YOUTH SPORT AND THE REDUCTION OF PEER VIOLENCE

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Abstract. *This research was a part of a field study, within the SAVE project funded under the Erasmus+ European programme. The study aimed at providing answers about the benefits of practicing sports in the prevention and reduction of peer violence. Generally, the frequency of aggressive behaviour was low, and equal in both tested groups. The results revealed a significant relationship between physical activity and prosocial behaviour, group cohesion and satisfaction of participants with the group. Furthermore, the athletes had a lower level of aggression compared to the students. Although this difference is small, it is in line with some previous studies and it is an indicator of sport benefits in the suppression of peer aggression. This finding is very important for policy makers, because some research showed that regardless of SES, sport is seen as a favourite extracurricular activity among parents. The results of this research should contribute to the overall aim of the SAVE project, i.e. the prevention of violent behaviour among peers. Thus, it should be observed and targeted in such a way as to systematically reduce the exposure of children and youth to violence.*

Key words: *Sport, Education, Peer Violence, Prosocial Behaviour*

INTRODUCTION

The investigation of aggression and violence, especially in the school setting is one of the most important topics for society in general and it is motivated by increased frequency of violence in the everyday life of modern societies (Popadić, Plut, & Pavković, 2014). Therefore, a school, as a location where children spend almost a third of their time, represents a convenient place for investigation of peer interaction. In other words, it represents the most natural setting to explore how prosocial and on the other hand, aggressive behaviours are developed among peers. Public opinion is that the pedagogical

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role of the school has been neglected in the past two decades (Popadić et al., 2014). Consequently, sociologists and other social scientists have been keen to explore the benefits of practicing sport in childhood, since sport is the most common extracurricular activity, where children experience group interaction and where they can develop group behaviours.

This study represents a field research which was a part of the Sport against Violence and Exclusion project (hereinafter SAVE) funded under the Erasmus+Sport European programme (Gentile et al., 2018). One of the field research goals was to determine the frequency of aggressive behaviour and social exclusion, as well as the frequency of the prosocial behaviour and cohesion through questionnaires and observations in the youth environment.

An additional goal of this research was to measure certain personal characteristics (motivation for sport/PE classes; self-esteem, optimism and hope) of the participants to determine the frequency of personal experience of peer violence (verbally or physically) or social exclusion of the participants, as well as how much it 'hurts' their feelings. And finally, this study aimed to explore the nature of the relations between measures of social behaviour and personal characteristics in order to create sports programmes with greater efficacy in the suppression and prevention of aggressive behaviour.

The role of sport in childhood

The benefits of doing sports, especially among young children, are well established in the literature (Bojanić, Šakan, & Nedeljković, 2018; Collins, Cromartie, Butler, & Bae, 2018; Park, Chiu, & Won, 2017; Koo & Lee, 2014; Bailey, 2006; Richman & Schaffer, 2000; Steptoe & Butler, 1996; Wankel & Berger, 1989). Bailey (2006) in his review listed the most common benefits and outcomes of physical education and sport in schools. He suggested that literature on this topic found five most typically investigated outcomes, namely: physical, lifestyle, affective, social and cognitive. For example, in the domain of physical development, regular structured physical activity is positively correlated with the reduction of the probability of obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, etc. Furthermore, the development of fundamental movement skills during childhood leads to a greater activity level later during the adulthood. This is very important as it was found that physical inactivity is the major risk factor for coronary heart disease. In other words, doing sports during childhood plays a great role in the development of healthy lifestyle habits and behaviour. Benefits toward the affective development could be observed in several aspects, however, the unanimous conclusion is that well planned physical activity has a positive impact on children's mental health (decrease in the level of depression, anxiety, and stress). Furthermore, Bailey (2006) mentioned the importance of the development of perceived physical competence, or self-esteem as a self-evaluation mechanism of sport performance. In the field of the social development, the role of structured physical activities in the school is listed as the most beneficial, mostly because of the availability to all children, regardless of their social and economic status, and less emphasis on the competition and outcome of these activities. Correlation between sport activities and cognitive development is not well documented, although it has been considered by default. However, there are studies in which the academic achievement was taken as a measure of cognitive performance. In these studies, according to Bailey (2006), the positive association between the amount of physical activities and the children's school performance was recorded.

These findings about the benefits of physical activities on children's development should be a key factor for policy makers, since some studies showed that socioeconomic factors such as parental educational levels and material status are not related with the frequency of children's sport activities (Milošević et al., 2016). In other words, among activities not related to school, sport is recognized as one of the most important extracurricular occupation for children's development among parents, regardless of their educational and material status. Accordingly, implementation of any kind of new policies towards child development would be easily applied through sports activities (Mutz & Baur, 2009).

Sport and peer aggression

From the 80's, when the topic of peer victimisation draw the attention of researchers, peer aggression and its consequences on children's development has been recorded in numerous studies (Wang et al., 2015; Sokolovska, Dinić, & Marinković, 2015; Ciairano et al., 2007). Data on the frequency of peer aggression vary from sample to sample and they depend on the research criteria of aggression, ranging from 8 to 74 percent (Popadić, 2009). In a Serbian sample of more than 70 thousand schoolers (Popadić et al., 2014), one recent study found that almost 50% of the boys experienced some kind of peer violence, and about 42% of the girls as well. When indirect criteria were applied (for example, students were asked to identify the gender or the age of the bullies), the percent of experienced violence among children remained high – approximately 40%.

There are contrasting views between researchers about the presence of aggression in sport (Ciairano et al., 2007), conditioned by the high stress levels that athletes experience. According to one model, sport is related to lower aggression, as athletes through practicing sport have an opportunity to act out aggression in a socially acceptable manner and consequently decrease the level of stress (Biddle, 1995). The other model considers that the level of aggression is much higher among athletes because the stress provokes frustration which leads to aggressive responses. However, there is an integrative model, based on Bandura's social cognitive theory (Ciairano et al., 2007; Bandura, 1997; Bandura, 1977), according to which sport leads to aggression if the children lack self-regulatory efficacy, which is mainly built by coaches. Ciairano et al. (2007) found that physical aggression toward peers is not directly related to the athletes' stress level. Moreover, they revealed the importance of coaches in the educational setting in the promotion of the self-regulatory efficacy among adolescents. The effect was attenuated when coaches were involved in children's leisure time.

Several models of resilience found that prosocial behaviour and group cohesion are protective factors for peer aggression and victimisation (Whang et al., 2015). It was found that prosocial behaviour reduces adolescent peer rejection and promotes peer attachment. Accordingly, sport clubs could be seen as a social factor that promotes cohesion between club members and the place where coaches could build prosocial behaviour among children.

The motivation for physical activity

Physical activity is a crucial developmental factor in childhood and represents an important base for healthy adulthood (Bailey, 2006). It is important to explore the quality of motivation for physical activity, as it was found that more than 50% of those who had begun some organised physical activity had a tendency to drop out of it after three

months. Researchers found that athletes have a different kind of motivation for practicing sport (Weiss & Petlichkoff, 1989). Self-determination theory (Lonsdale, Hodge, & Rose, 2009; Deci & Ryan, 1985) of motivation is one that is easily transferred into the domain of sport (Lepir, 2014). This theory in its core consists of three types of motivation: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and amotivation. Intrinsic motivation is related to one's satisfaction of doing sport activity or because one want to master the skill. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation implies doing sports due to different benefits that could arise as consequence of practicing sport, for example, social benefits, acknowledgments, or it could be introjected as the need to be healthy, pretty, etc.

Self-estimation of the self-efficacy and self-esteem (Vealey & Chase, 2008), optimism and hope are variables which had been reported as significant in the prediction of sport performance. Previous studies showed moderate influence of optimism on the self-esteem of a child (Ortín-Montero, Martínez-Rodríguez, Reche-García, Garcés de los Fayos-Ruiz1, & González-Hernández, 2018). The mechanism of self-esteem is very important for athletes. Self-esteem allows athletes to monitor their self-performance compared to other competitors. In a similar manner, one meta-analytical study showed that athletes with higher optimism had better performance compared to other people (Ortín-Montero et al., 2018).

The goals of the study

As peer aggression has been such an important topic in the domain of the society and children's development, explorative field research was performed. Firstly, we wanted to obtain insight into the frequency of aggressive behaviour among elementary schoolers. Secondly, we were interested in the differences in the aggressive behaviour between students who are athletes, i.e., children who systematically practice sport, and students who do not train sport regularly and systematically. Furthermore, an important goal was to explore the difference in the motivation for sports activities between athletes and students. Finally, we aimed to discuss in detail the relations between general satisfaction of the social group aspects and participants' motivational structure.

The results of this research should contribute to the overall aim of the SAVE project, i.e. the prevention of violent and socially exclusive behaviours among youth in sport clubs.

METHODS

Participants

The survey covered 162 respondents: 85 athletes (includes volleyball, dance, basketball, judo and wrestling clubs) and 77 students. Gender structure was similar in both groups, where among the students there were 38 boys and 39 girls, while in the group of athletes there were 36 male and 49 female participants ($\chi^2(1)=.797$, $p=.431$). Considering the age structure of the sample, both examined groups had similar age (Students= 12.39 ± 1.22 ; Athletes= 12.32 ± 1.33), ranging from 9 to 15 years. Of the 77 students surveyed, only 18 of them do not engage in any sport, in other words, a total of 144 (88.9%) children are engaged in some kind of sport - 85 (52.5%) actively trained, and this is the sample that was tested by sport clubs, and 59 (36.4%) students do recreational sports. The two groups do not differ according to the general academic achievement ($t(159)=-.170$, $p=.865$).

Instruments

DIAS - Youth environment assessment questionnaire is a questionnaire that includes four dimensions related to the behaviour of students or athletes in their peer environment: prosocial behaviour, verbal aggression, indirect aggression, cohesion and overall satisfaction with the peer group. It has 43 items: 10 of them are related to the factor of a prosocial behaviour, five items describe verbal aggression, seven items are related to physical aggression, 12 items describe behaviour of indirect aggression, eight items describe cohesion among peers, and one item is related to the impression of general satisfaction with the group atmosphere. The reliability analysis revealed that the inter-item consistency, measured with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, was satisfactory: $\alpha=.89$.

Youth characteristics were explored through several factors, namely, Motivation for sport (intrinsic/extrinsic motivation), Self-assessment, Optimism, Hope and their Experience of violence.

The Motivation questionnaire consisted of 20 items, divided into five factors, four items per motivational factor. Three factors are related to different aspects of intrinsic motivation (to know, to accomplish, and to experience stimulation), and two factors related to aspects of extrinsic motivation (external regulation and to be identified). The inter item consistency was good: $\alpha=.94$. In the end, two motivational factors were calculated as the average scores on the items that describe intrinsic and extrinsic motivation: cumulative intrinsic and cumulative extrinsic motivation scores.

The Characteristics questionnaire measures three factors of self-assessment, namely self-esteem (10 items), optimism (six items) and hope (six items). The reliability analysis revealed solid inter-item consistency of the whole scale: $\alpha=.89$. This questionnaire measures the general attitudes toward life, the way the participants deal with the obstacles, and their level of self-satisfaction.

Variables

The scores on the individual factors of the each of the three questionnaires were calculated based on the provided key. The items had been recoded where necessary, and, after that, the scores were estimated as the arithmetic mean of the items that are related to a particular factor. These scores represented the dependent variables later in the analysis, and the independent variable was the group, the categorical variable with two levels, the students, and the athletes.

Procedures

Firstly, initial contact with sport clubs and schools were made in the interest of finding a sample of children which are actively included in sports activities in their sports clubs, and a sample of children which do not actively (systematically and regularly) train sports. Then parents or legal guardians were informed through an Information form in order to agree that their children could be the part of this study. Finally, they had to sign a Consent form. After this the measuring was carried out based on questionnaires, anonymously, while working with the groups of children. The research was conducted in November and December 2018 in Novi Sad.

Statistical analysis

The descriptive and the inherent statistical methods were deployed. For the description of the sample characteristics we applied descriptive statistics, and for testing the differences among the two samples we used the t-test. For exploration of the relation between the variables we used Pearson's correlation coefficient.

RESULTS

Differences between athletes and students in relation to the examined factors

The differences between the athletes and students were tested by the t-test for independent samples (Table 1). Although the data were also processed by the Mann-Whitney U test (nonparametric replacement for the t-test), the results of the t-test were shown, since the same results were recorded. Moreover, the t-test as a parametric technique has a higher test power (Hopkins, Dettori, & Chapman, 2018) i.e., greater power to detect differences. Based on the statistical significance or p values, it can be seen that the differences between athletes and students were significant in almost all of the tested factors. However, in the five examined dimensions, the differences were not recorded. Those were dimensions of prosocial behaviour, extrinsic motivation - external regulation, self-evaluation, optimism and hope. In other words, two groups were similar in the evaluation of prosocial behaviour among peers, had similar levels of extrinsic motivation for physical activities, and evaluated themselves in a similar manner in the domain of self-esteem, optimism and hope.

In the dimensions that describe peer interaction, namely aggressive behaviour, cohesion and general satisfaction with the social atmosphere in the group, statistically significant differences were recorded, where all the differences were in favour of the athletes. The athletes exhibited a lower degree of physical, verbal and indirect aggression compared to the surveyed students (means are presented in Table 1). Namely, when it comes to the dimensions of aggression, a lower score indicates a lower degree of manifestation of aggressive behaviour. On the basis of arithmetic means, it can be seen that, in all three dimensions of aggression, athletes had lower levels, therefore, a lower degree of aggression. In addition, a group of athletes expressed lower cohesion, that is, they are more individual, and therefore less able to adjust their behaviour to peer groups. On the other hand, the level of general satisfaction is higher in the group of athletes.

The factors describing the types of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation also present significant differences, and this is again in favour of athletes. The differences are expressed especially in the factors of intrinsic motivation, that is, athletes perform activities because of the very satisfaction in their performance, and less because of some external award that represents the motivator. Differences are not statistically significant only for the factor of extrinsic motivation related to external regulation.

These differences remain the same even when students who do not play sports are excluded from the sample of students.

Table 1 Differences between the examined groups based on the measured factors

Variables	Mean \pm SD		t test	p value
	Students	Athletes		
Prosocial behaviour	3.79 \pm .60	3.83 \pm .56	-.418	.676
Physical aggression	2.21 \pm .83	1.40 \pm .48	7.68	.000
Verbal aggression	2.59 \pm .85	1.77 \pm .64	6.895	.000
Indirect aggression	2.08 \pm .7	1.51 \pm .60	5.576	.000
Cohesion	4.19 \pm .85	3.58 \pm 1.12	3.839	.000
General satisfaction	3.92 \pm 1.24	4.47 \pm 1.05	-3.038	.003
Intrinsic motivation (to know)	3.48 \pm 1.20	4.19 \pm 1.20	-4.487	.000
Intrinsic motivation (external regulation)	3.00 \pm 1.23	3.36 \pm 1.22	-1.875	.063
Intrinsic motivation (to accomplish)	3.70 \pm 1.29	4.34 \pm .78	-3.888	.000
Extrinsic motivation (identified)	3.27 \pm 1.17	3.84 \pm .90	-3.512	.001
Intrinsic motivation (experience stimulation)	3.57 \pm 1.2	4.30 \pm .77	-4.587	.000
Intrinsic motivation (cumulative)	3.58 \pm 1.09	4.27 \pm .68	-4.889	.000
Extrinsic motivation (cumulative)	3.14 \pm 1.08	3.60 \pm .97	-2.896	.004
Motivation general	3.36 \pm .99	3.94 \pm .76	-4.182	.000
Self-esteem	3.82 \pm .84	3.86 \pm .71	-.301	.764
Optimism	3.53 \pm .72	3.60 \pm .08	-.604	.547
Hope	3.83 \pm 1.00	3.90 \pm .69	-.500	.618

Experience of violence between the students and athletes by gender

Table 2 shows the frequency of the experience of violence among the sample of athletes and students. Distribution frequencies are shown in a relation to tested groups of young people as well as gender. On the total sample, 32% of the young people experienced violence in some degree (51/161), with no significant gender differences: 15% (24/161) of boys and 17% (27/161) of girls ($\chi^2(1)=.036$, $p=.85$). The similar differences are present when it comes to different groups, so 15% of athletes experienced some degree of violence and 17% of the students, and those differences are not significant: $\chi^2(1)=.99$, $p=.32$.

Among the children who had experienced some kind of peer violence, 49% of them have estimated that it was extensive and completely hurt their feelings, 21% said that their feelings were hurt moderately, while 30% said that such an experience had little or no effect on their feelings.

Table 2 Experience of violence in relation to the groups tested and gender

Gender			Group		Total
			Students	Athletes	
Male	Experience of violence	Yes	16	8	24
		No	22	28	50
	Total		38	36	74 (46.0%)
Female	Experience of violence	Yes	11	16	27
		No	27	33	60
	Total		38	49	87 (54.0%)
Total	Experience of violence	Yes	27	24	51 (31.7%)
		No	49	61	110 (68.3%)
	Total		76 (47.2%)	85 (52.8%)	161

Relational analysis of the individual factors

Table 3 shows Spearman's correlations between General satisfaction with their class, Intrinsic, Extrinsic and Total motivation, and Self-assessment, Optimism and Hope. Significant correlations are marked by asterisks. The analysis revealed that General satisfaction is significantly positively associated with intrinsic motivation, Self-esteem, Optimism and Hope, meaning that higher levels of general satisfaction with the social climate in the class is accompanied with higher levels of intrinsic motivation, Self-esteem, Optimism and Hope. Intrinsic motivation in addition to other scores from the motivation scale had a significant correlation with all other constructs. In other words, those students who are intrinsically motivated to engage in sports are more satisfied with their class, but they also assess themselves with high scores on the self-assessment, hope and optimism scales (Drid, Trivić, Marinković, & Milovanović, 2019). When it comes to the scales examining character, the Hope scale achieves the highest correlation with other variables, and even with extrinsic motivation. This scale had significant positive correlations with all other scales.

Table 3 Correlations between the examined scales

	General satisfaction	Intrinsic motivation	Extrinsic motivation	Motivation general	Self esteem	Optimism	Hope
General satisfaction	1	.409**	.169*	.290**	.286**	.264**	.340**
Intrinsic motivation		1	.646**	.871**	.215**	.274*	.463**
Extrinsic motivation			1	.925**	.035	.066	.151
Motivation general				1	.117	.160*	.294**
Self esteem					1	.653**	.546**
Optimism						1	.571**
Hope							1

Legend: ** p<.01; * p<.05

DISCUSSION

This research was part of a field study, a part of the SAVE project funded under the Erasmus+ Sport European programme (Gentile et al., 2018). The study aimed to provide the answers about the benefits of practicing sport in the reduction of peer aggression. The first goal was to explore the frequency of experience of violence among elementary schoolers. The second goal was to determine how the groups of athletes and group of students differ in the level of verbal, physical and indirect aggression and in the level of prosocial behaviour and group cohesion.

In line with the set goals, this study provided several important insights. Firstly, it was showed that 32% of the sampled children, with an average age of 12.3 years, had

experienced violence in some degree, with no significant gender differences: 15% of the boys and 17% of the girls. The differences are not significant when the frequency is observed between groups of students and groups of athletes. The importance of exploration of the violence frequency among peers becomes obvious when those children who experience some form of violence are asked about how that experience affected their emotional life. Half of them estimated that such events completely hurt their feelings, about one quarter stated that their feelings were hurt moderately and the rest of them considered that those occurrences had little or no emotional effect.

When it comes to prosocial behaviour and cohesion, they are present to a high degree in the examined sample. Namely, from the graphs showing the distribution of percentages of individual responses in each measured scale, it can be seen that almost 80% of the examined children responded that cohesive behaviour is either often or extremely often present in the group (sports club), just like prosocial behaviours. However, athletes consider their clubs more cohesive, or with more frequent prosocial behaviour compared to the students' assessment of their classes.

In accordance with a high level of cohesion and prosocial behaviour, there is a rare presence of any type of aggression (physical, verbal and indirect) in school or in a sports club. This data goes in line with models of resilience, where high group cohesion and the prosocial behaviour represents a protective factor for the appearance of aggressive behaviour among peers and promotes peer attachment (Wang et al., 2015).

However, there are small but significant differences in the manifestation of aggressive behaviour among the students and athletes. Namely, among the athletes, the degree of aggression is lower than for the students (although the levels in both groups are extremely low). These results could be in line with the model according to which athletes through practicing sport have the opportunity to act out aggression in a socially acceptable manner and consequently decrease their level of stress (Biddle, 1995). Therefore, this effect represents a small but significant indicator of advantage of practicing physical activities especially through sport clubs.

When it comes to testing motivation among athletes and students, the results indicate that athletes show a more pronounced motivation to deal with sports than students, as well as all forms of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. These results are in accordance with some previous studies (Lepir, 2014; Weiss & Petlichkoff, 1989). When looking at the score of overall motivation, it is more saturated with intrinsic motivation, where the average score is very high, while the score on extrinsic motivation falls into high scores. In other words, athletes in this sample are driven by intrinsic motivation more than by extrinsic motivation. The differences between athletes and students could be attributed to differences in the motivation and the amount of physical activity, because, there are no recorded differences in personality characteristics between the two examined samples.

When it comes to correlation among variables, it has been noted that the General satisfaction with the climate in the class positively correlates with intrinsic motivation, Self-assessment, Optimism and Hope. Intrinsic motivation, among other scores from the motivation scale, has a significant connection with all other constructs. In other words, those students who are intrinsically motivated to engage in sports are more satisfied with classes, and also assess themselves with high scores in relation to hope and optimism scales.

The main disadvantage of this study is reflected in a small and unrepresentative sample, in a way that we could not generalize the results on the whole population of elementary

schoolers and athletes. Furthermore, the specificity of instruments could affect the measurements, although the significant effects of physical activity were captured.

CONCLUSION

This research showed a significant correlation between physical activity and prosocial behaviour, group cohesion and satisfaction of participants with their group. Further, lower levels of aggression were recorded among athletes compared to students. Although this difference is small, it is in line with some previous studies and it is an indicator of sport benefits in the suppression of peer aggression. This finding is very important for policy makers, because, some research showed that regardless of SES, the sport is seen as favourite extracurricular activity among parents. In other words, the sport could be used as a tool for the promotion of an anti-violence project among peers.

However, violence in general, and peer violence as one of its manifestations, represents a social problem that is still present in contemporary societies for several decades, since it came into the focus of researchers in the field of numerous social sciences. Although this research was carried out on a small sample, and for the needs of a certain research project, it is nonetheless compatible with all the research that has been conducted so far on the issue of peer violence in our society, i.e., more specifically in the city of Novi Sad. The lives of children and youth in urban environments also imply greater exposure to violence – in school, on the streets, in the media, and on social networks. As there have been numerous cases of different forms of attacks near schools on the territory of Novi Sad in recent years, the students themselves and other members of the local community have appealed to the authorities to provide better security measures. Bearing this in mind, the need to involve all social actors in addressing peer violence issues is clear. In the future, it is necessary to repeat this research and the matching type on a larger sample. The results of such research should further help in the systematic prevention of peer violence in primary and secondary schools, as well as during extracurricular activities, with the aim of creating a safe social environment.

In addition to educating children in regards to recognizing forms of peer violence, it is also important to educate adults who are professionally (in terms of pedagogy) focused on working with children (teachers, students of faculties whose work shall concern working with children and youth in the future, sports trainers and other stakeholders). By improving their knowledge and skills in regard to the prevention and response to peer violence, the local community shall gain empowered social actors who shall address the said social issue in the long run. The SAVE project, whose segment of research has been presented in this text, is an effort by a part of the academic community to empower the students of the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, as well as sports trainers, through the acquisition of knowledge and skills for identifying and solving cases of peer violence in school and in sports trainings. However, peer violence represents an issue of a wider social scope. Thus, it should be observed and targeted in such a way as to systematically reduce the exposure of children and youth to violence.

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DA LI JE OMLADINSKI SPORT BITAN? ISTRAŽIVANJE NA UZORKU UČENIKA IZ OSNOVNE ŠKOLE U ISPOLJAVANJU AGRESIVNOG I PROSOCIJALNOG PONAŠANJA

Ovo istraživanje realizovano je kao deo SAVE projekta, koje je bilo finansirano od strane Erasmus+Sport Evropskog programa. Cilj istraživanja bio je da omogući odgovore o benefitima primene sportskih aktivnosti, u redukciji vršnjačkog nasilja, na uzorku učenika starijeg osnovnoškolskog uzrasta. Utvrđeno je da je učestalost agresivnog ponašanja uopšteno niska i podjednaka u obe testirane grupe dece. Rezultati su pokazali da postoji značajna veza između fizičke aktivnosti i prosocijalnog ponašanja, grupne kohezije i zadovoljstva sopstvenom grupom. Nadalje, sportisti su imali niži nivo agresivnost u poređenju sa učenicima koji ne treniraju sistematski sport. Iako je uočena veza niska, ona je značajna i u skladu je sa prethodno realizovanim podudarnim istraživanjima. Takođe, predstavlja indikator benefita koje sport ima pri suzbijanju vršnjačkog nasilja. Taj nalaz je od velikog značaja za socijalnu politiku, jer su istraživanja pokazala da bez obzira na socioekonomski status porodice (SES) sport je od strane roditelja ocenjen kao vannastavna aktivnost čiji su benefiti najkorisniji za psihofizičko zdravlje dece. Samim tim, rezultati ovog istraživanja mogu doprineti ispunjenju opštih ciljeva SAVE projekta, koji se tiču prevencije vršnjačkog nasilja. Ipak, vršnjačko nasilje je problem šireg društvenog obima. Tako ga treba posmatrati i targetirati na putu sistematske redukcije izloženosti dece i omladine nasilju.

Ključne reči: sport, obrazovanje, vršnjačko nasilje, prosocijalno ponašanje