

## STUDYING SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN COLOGNE AND LJUBLJANA

(An intercultural comparison)

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## ŠTUDIJ ŠPORTA IN TELESNE (ŠPORTNE) VZGOJE V KÖLNU IN LJUBLJANI

(Medkulturna primerjava)

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### Abstract

The article has been based on an intercultural research project comparing the university education of specialists in sport and physical education in Germany and Slovenia. 400 German students and 200 Slovene students were questioned concerning the perception and evaluation of the study and their living conditions and their professional future expectations. We applied Chi<sup>2</sup> and t-test. Results of our study shows parallels between the situation of the German and Slovene students as well as differences. The established quantitative differences are discussed in the light of more complex qualitative differences. Some conclusions concerning the idea of unified curriculum and equal job perspectives in united Europe are drawn. At the same time, however, the importance and the value of national cultural identity should not be neglected.

*Keywords: studying sport, international comparison, students, perception, evaluation, expectations, living conditions*

### Izveček

Članek je plod mednarodne raziskave, ki obravnava in medsebojno primerja univerzitetni študij športa in telesne (športne) vzgoje v Nemčiji in v Sloveniji. V vzorec je bilo vključenih 400 nemških in 200 slovenskih študentov. Spraševali smo jih o zaznavanju in vrednotenju njihovega študija, njihovih življenjskih pogojev in o njihovih poklicnih pričakovanjih. Za ugotavljanje razlik smo uporabili Chi<sup>2</sup> in t-test. Rezultati raziskave kažejo tako podobnosti kot tudi razlike v položaju nemških in slovenskih študentov. Ugotovljene kvantitativne razlike so obravnavane v luči bolj kompleksnih kvalitativnih razlik. Podani so tudi nekateri zaključki glede ideje poenotenega kurikulumu in enakih poklicnih perspektiv v združeni Evropi. Kljub temu je izpostavljena pomembnost in vrednost nacionalne kulturne identitete.

*Ključne besede: študij športa, mednarodna primerjava, študenti, zaznavanje, vrednotenje, pričakovana, življenjski pogoji*

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## INTRODUCTION

The actual situation of most western industrialized societies is characterized by social changes, which show an increasing speed. Central aspects of these changes are processes of differentiation and individualization (Beck, 1986). Sport as a subsystem of societies is influenced by these changes too and influences also other subsystems. Compared with the traditional sport system today we have a lot of new kinds of sport and new organizational frames - beneath the sport clubs there are commercial offers like fitness centers and, quantitatively much more important, privately organized activities like jogging. These changes are caused or accompanied by new motivational structures of the active people, especially fun and health in a preventive perspective attract more and more persons. Whereas the traditional sport system attracted mainly young male people, nowadays the percentage of females and elder age groups has increased. On the whole sport nowadays has become more complex, the former monolithic sport system was relieved by various sport systems which are more and more independent of each other. Many new professions emerge, professions that combine physical activity with health, leisure time, economy, mass media etc. These developments must be understood and taken into account in the education of specialists in physical education and sport. Traditional university curricula cover only few aspects of the actual sport reality.

At the same time the perspective of European integration becomes more and more important. Especially inside the European Union there are many processes of rapprochement, cooperation and integration. In these countries, representing a lot of different languages, cultures and traditions, the need to understand each other and to adapt social, economic and professional structures to each other, is increasing. This perspective plays also a special role for those countries which want to enter the European Union during the next decade. Most of these countries were parts of the former communist Europe, therefore the actual changes for the societies are more dramatic for them. On that basis we decided to do an intercultural research project comparing the university education of specialists in physical education and sport in Germany and Slovenia. This research can be seen as an extension of a more extensive research project, comparing sport activity, health and body concepts in Germany, Russia and the Czech Republic (Mrazek, Fialová and Bykhovskaya, 1998).

The central objectives are to compare the education of students of physical activity and sport on the basis of the curricula as well as on the basis of subjective data representing the students' perception and evaluation of the study, the professional future and the li-

ving situation. Furthermore data were collected (and will be presented in another article) concerning sport activities outside of the curriculum, health state, health behavior and body concepts.

Differences between the German and Slovenian students are expected not only as a result of different curricula, but also as a result of different cultures, different sport traditions and different economic situations.

## METHODS

The surveys of students of physical education and sport were not representative for the whole countries, they were done at the German Sport University (Deutsche Sporthochschule) in Cologne (Germany) and the Faculty of Sport at the University of Ljubljana. Cologne is the biggest places for education in PE and sport in Germany, while Ljubljana is also the only one in Slovenia. In Cologne 420 students were questioned, in Ljubljana 200. The German sample was surveyed in the frame of a previous cross-cultural research project, comparing German, Russian and Czech students (Mrazek, Fialová and Bykhovskaya, 1998).

The questionnaire developed for this research, includes subscales concerning fitness and sport activity, health status and health behavior, risk behavior and nutrition, physical appearance and the self, the actual situation of the study, evaluation of the study and professional plans. For the last topics some scales were adapted from a questionnaire developed by Hartmann-Tews and Mrazek (1994).

In the following selected results of the students of PE and sport are presented, concerning the perception and evaluation of the study, the professional future and the living situation. This group of students is of special interest – not only because we are teaching them, but also because it is a very homogeneous group in age, education, socialization, actual interests and professional plans. Therefore it can be assumed that differences between cultures can be seen more clearly in such a homogeneous population.

We applied Chi<sup>2</sup> and t-test. The computation was performed using the SPSS statistical software.

### Study Programmes of Physical Education and Sport in Cologne and Ljubljana

The German Sport University in Cologne educates more than 7000 students, the Faculty of Sport in Ljubljana about 600 students. Apart from the large difference in the number of students, also their curricula differ. The German Sport University in Cologne offers their students two general programmes. The first one is named "Diploma Course Sport Science". This is a

sport science studies with the academic degree of a "Diploma of Sport Science". Period of the study lasts 8 semesters. This programme offers the following five specialisation options after the 4<sup>th</sup> semester: Training and Performance, Leisure and Creativity, Prevention and Rehabilitation, Economy and Management, and Media and Communication. The second programme is "Teachers' Training Courses", which educates school teachers of physical education. Studies for teachers of two primary school levels (classes 1-4 or classes 5-10) lasts 6 semester, while studies for secondary school level teachers (classes 11-13) lasts 8 semesters. Finally, despite of a diploma thesis future teachers must pass the First State Examination for teaching to successfully finish their studies.

The Faculty of Sport in Ljubljana has a single general study programme »Diploma Course«, which lasts 8 semesters and students obtain a bachelor degree. After the 4<sup>th</sup> semester students may choose among the following specialisation options: Sport Coaching (in one sport branch), Sport Recreation or Special Physical Education. On the Slovene diploma certificate the chosen specialisation is also declared (e.g. coach of handball). Despite of differences in organisation of programmes, both universities predominantly educate specialists in Sport Science and Physical Education.

## RESULTS

Actual study situation among respondents is established first, followed by the respondents evaluation of their studies. Furthermore, personal expectations for their future career are analysed and mutually compared. Finally, their living conditions are analysed and correlated to the existing differences between both societies.

### Actual study situation

German students are in average two years older than the Slovene students, although children in Germany start to attend the primary school sooner (after the completed age of 6 years). Examined population of Germans students has finished in average five semesters, while Slovene ones only four. Regardless of this large difference in actual semesters, students from both places expect the same length to finish the studies, i.e. just less than 5 semesters. The expectations predict that German students on the whole need 10

	Means		t
	G	SLO	
Actual number of semesters	5.32	3.98	5.65***
How many semesters more	4.62	4.80	-0.92 ns
Age	23.90	21.70	8.98***

G = Germany      SLO = Slovenia

semesters to take their degree, Slovene students 9 semesters.

Educational systems in both countries differ in several aspects. An important difference is that Slovene students role in for each year (and not for each semester like in Germany) and they are allowed to repeat the year only once – afterwards he loses the student status. In this way the expected average length of Slovene students to finish the studies in 5 semesters is realistic with regard to the study program, since it actually means the period to finish with the lectures. In this light, a question arises how much time do they really need to take their degree. Especially taken into account that they relatively quickly finish their lectures, but usually several exams have to be passed. These last exams they are allowed to take later, even when their student status runs out.

German students are allowed to organize their study courses individually, therefore the number of semesters needed to finish the study varies broadly. Only few German students finish their study in the formally given time of 6 or 8 semesters, in average they need six to seven years to graduate. But Slovene students are not much quicker. Therefore the reasons for in average two years older German students should not be looked for only in longer study period. Slovene students in average lose one year so that their period of lectures lasts 5,1 years in average (Jarnovič, 1998). More credible reason for older population among German students of sports is to be found in different secondary educational systems. Primary and secondary school together lasts 13 years, while in Slovenia 12 years. Furthermore, German boys serve the army before they enter the university studies, while Slovene boys serve the army after the studies.

Slovene students are present at the faculty one day more per week than the German ones and accordingly they spend more hours at the faculty. Slovene students spend 22 hours a week at the faculty; from this time they spend 14 hours for attending the theoretical lectures (tutorial classes or exercises), and 7.9 hours for attending the practical subjects. Their German colleagues have approximately 10 hours of the-

	Means		t
	G	SLO	
Days per week at University	3.74	4.73	-14.48***
Hours per week at University	15.63	21.94	-10.33***
– of these: practice	5.29	7.85	-6.74***
– of these theory	9.81	13.99	-8.26***
at home (studying)	5.86	6.51	-1.32 ns
in libraries	1.32	1.55	-1.31 ns
– Studying a second subject	44.4%	4.0%	Chi <sup>2</sup> = 101.84***

G = Germany      SLO = Slovenia

ory and 5.3 hours in the practical part of the study programme. The two groups of students differ statistically significantly in the above mentioned variables. Such large differences are most likely attributable to different programmes of studies. At the German Sport University of Cologne (DSHS) students can choose between two different levels of education, e.g., Diploma and Teacher's Training Courses, while in Slovenia all who conclude their studies at the Faculty of Sport attain the same level of education – diploma degree. Those who decide to teach sports education in Germany can pass only the first state examination and do not need a diploma; however, they must combine their studies at the DSHS with the study of a second subject, usually at the University of Cologne. This is also one of the main reasons why even 44.4% of the German students study a second subject in parallel. Among the students attending the Faculty of Sport there are only 4% such students since at schools in Slovenia it is usual practice that the teachers at schools teach solely sports education. As for the rest, Slovene students as well as German ones have the same (bad) study habits. Slovene students study at home only 6.5 hours a week, and German students study 5.9 hours a week. It is interesting that despite the fact that German students have incomparably better study possibilities in the faculty library than Slovene students, they study even less (1.3 hours) in the library than their colleagues in Slovenia (1.5 hours).

**Evaluation of the study**

In order to establish to what extent they are satisfied with their studies at the both universities, students were asked to rate a list of special aspects of the study situation on a scale from 1 (very bad) to 5 (very good). All aspects were rated between average and very good. In general, all students are satisfied with their studies as 88% of Cologne students and almost 92% of Ljubljana students would choose the same studies again. Students at both universities are the most satisfied with contacts with other students; to this fact also point the highest values assigned by them to this aspect (G = 4.1 and SLO = 3.9). However, they assigned the lowest values to the contacts with their professors. Slovene students are even less satisfied with the contacts with their professors (3.0) than their German counterparts (3.1). Statistically significant differences between the groups occur in the variable »spatial situation«, in which students at the FS express greater dissatisfaction with the lecture rooms, halls, playgrounds, etc., than the students at the DSHS. Correlation between theory and practice, forms of teaching and learning, and contents of study are rated by Slovene students slightly higher than by the German ones; however, statistically significant differences do not occur.

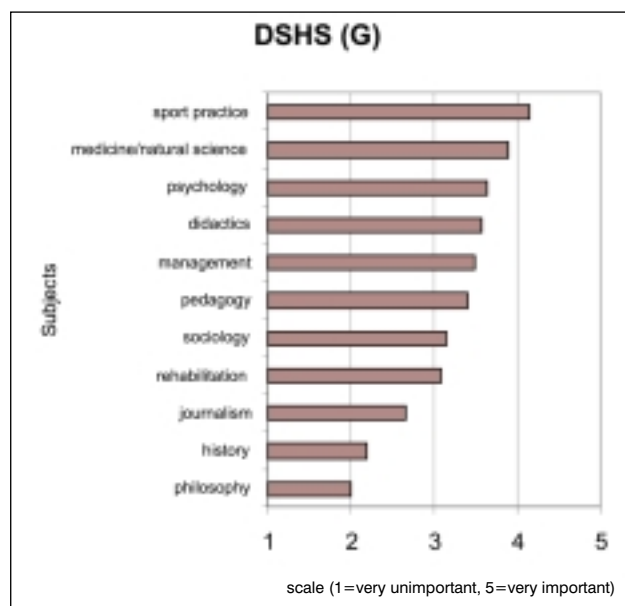
Table 3: Satisfaction with the study

	Means		t
	G	SLO	
Rating of study situation*:			
-correlation between theory and practice	3.23	3.34	-1.46 ns
-forms of teaching and learning	3.23	3.34	-1.62 ns
-contents of study	3.35	3.38	-0.32 ns
-spatial situation. (rooms gyms. fields)	3.74	3.49	2.87***
-contacts with lectures/professors	3.08	3.03	0.56 ns
-contact with other students	4.12	3.94	2.24*
I would choose this study again	88.1%	91.6%	Chi² = 1.34 ns
* scale from 1 = very bad to 5 = very good			
G = Germany SLO = Slovenia			

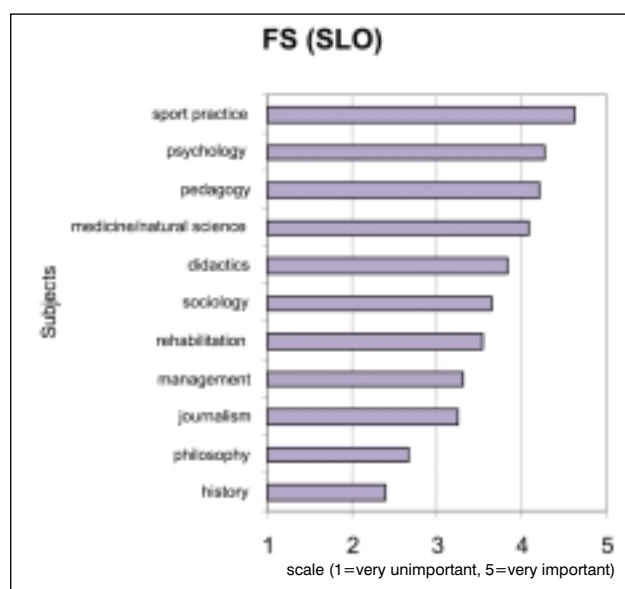
Students were asked to rate, how important are different subjects for their job future on a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important). The students attending the FS rated all contents of study, except economy (management), higher than the students of the DSHS. For all, the most important contents of study is sports practice. They also attribute greater importance than to other subjects to psychology, pedagogy, didactics, and medicine. They rate the lowest philosophy and history. The results of rating of individual subjects must be taken with a certain degree of caution since some students at the DSHS never listened for instance to philosophy or history, etc., because they can choose partly individual subjects according to the system of credit studies. The students at the FS, however, do not have philosophy, journalism, and also not economy (management) in their programme of studies. Despite that, they are to some extent already aware of the importance of economics in sports, of course, in accordance with the development of market economy in Slovene society, which is certainly at a lower level of development than in Germany.

Table 4: Importance of study subjects

	Means		t
	G	SLO	
medicine/natural science	3.89	4.08	-2.56***
rehabilitation	3.08	3.55	-4.48***
pedagogy	3.40	4.21	-10.04***
psychology	3.63	4.28	-9.29***
sociology	3.14	3.64	-5.69***
philosophy	1.99	2.67	-7.59***
history	2.19	2.40	-2.75***
economy/management	3.48	3.32	1.69 ns
didactics	3.58	3.84	-3.22***
sport practice	4.14	4.63	-7.60***
journalism	2.66	3.26	-6.71***
G = Germany SLO = Slovenia			



Graph 1: Importance of study subjects (G)



Graph 2: Importance of study subjects (SLO)

### Professional future expectations

Students of the FS are more confident than students of the DSHS that after concluding their studies they will be able to get a job in the field of sports. The most desirable professions among the Ljubljana students are the coach and the teacher of PE. These are also the two professions which can (at least in Slovenia) often be pursued side by side. Because the personal income of an individual increases accordingly, it is not surprising that about 60% of the Ljubljana students wish to work as a coach or teacher of PE. German students do not express so frequently the wish to pursue a certain profession than Slovene students. Their wishes concerning employment in individual sports fields

	Means		t =
	G	SLO	
Estimated probability to get a job in the area of sport (scale from 1 = very low to 5 = very high)	3.17	3.69	-6.55***
			Chi²
Wanted profession (multiple ratings possible)			
- coach	29.2%	60.1%	53.01***
- teacher of P.E.	32.6%	58.1%	35.62***
- manager in sport	30.4%	29.6%	0.02 ns
- rehabilitation/health sport	27.8%	18.7%	5.60*
- leisure time sport	16.5%	9.4%	5.10*
- sport journalist	16.7%	3.0%	22.71***
- sport scientist	15.7%	25.1%	7.24**
- top level athlete	7.7%	19.2%	16.53***
	G = Germany	SLO = Slovenia	

are much more equally distributed. About 30% of the students of the DSHS wish to work as a coach, a teacher, a manager, or to get a job in the field of rehabilitation.

Professional wishes of the students are in compliance with the programme of studies at the two institutions. Thus, it is not surprising that only a few Slovene students (3%) wish to work as a sports journalist since they cannot become qualified for this kind of work at the Ljubljana FS. On the other hand, 17% of the Cologne students, who have all the conditions necessary to work well in the profession of a sports journalist, wish to pursue such work in the future because they have in the Diploma Studies the possibility to choose the field of Media and Communications. However, it is surprising that even 25% of Slovene students and 16% of German students wish to become sport scientists. Their wishes are even more incredible if we take into account that on average they study relatively long, spend little time for studying in the library and place the greatest emphasis on sports practice.

	Means		t
	G	SLO	
high income	3.45	3.71	-3.70***
pleasure in job	4.78	4.72	0.92 ns
active doing sport	3.71	4.14	-5.29***
to teach sport	3.52	4.17	-7.89***
to mediate fun in sport	4.07	4.44	-4.95***
multiple tasks	4.24	3.80	6.24***
good climate in work	4.60	4.39	3.04***
high social status	2.87	3.36	-6.01***
self determination	4.09	4.15	-0.84 ns
contacts to other people	4.24	4.20	0.59 ns
	scale from 1 = very unimportant to 5 = very important		
	G = Germany	SLO = Slovenia	

Table 7: Wanted organizational context for future job

	Means		Chi <sup>2</sup>
	G	SLO	
Rehabilitation centre	29.5	15.8	12.73***
Sport club	34.3	63.4	45.42***
School	30.2	58.9	45.61***
Sport federation	25.4	27.2	0.16 ns
Faculty (University)	26.6	31.7	1.51 ns
Sport facilities	9.2	14.4	3.20 ns
Commercial sport centre	27.3	33.7	2.36 ns
Mass media	16.7	12.4	1.62 ns
Firm	7.5	12.9	4.03*
Tourism	27.5	30.7	0.52 ns
Sport industry	26.6	11.4	17.60***
Other	4.1	2.5	0.63 ns

G = Germany      SLO = Slovenia

For the both groups of students, the enjoyment they derive from the profession is the most important reason for their professional orientation. Good working environment and contacts with other people seem equally important to them. For Slovene students, a challenge in professional life means also that they can impart the enjoyment in sports to other people. This is even more important to them that good working environment. It is also important to them that they can teach other people different sports. Larger orientation towards fellow men in the students of the FS is very obviously associated with their professional wishes to become a coach or a teacher. The students of the DSHS are much more than the Ljubljana students attracted in their future profession by the various tasks the profession offers to them in the field of sports. Professional orientation of the students of the both faculties is to the least extent affected by prestige in society and high income. We expected that Slovene students would rate the wishes for good payment and prestige in society higher than German students; however, only the values of the rates are higher in the Ljubljana students (high income: Slo = 3.7 and G = 3.5). It is obvious that Slovene students, despite the fact that they live in a less prosperous society than German students, have also reached that stage of understanding of the meaning of the profession and hence the meaning of life, at which work does not mean struggling for money, but above all enjoyment and satisfaction.

**Living conditions (accommodation and economic situation)**

As the students of the both universities differ with regard to their study habits and professional expectations, they also differ with regard to their living conditions (accommodation and economic status). Even 46% students in Slovenia live during their studies at the FS with their parents, while only 15 % of the DSHS students do this. Without doubt, here we have to do

Table 8: Living conditions

	Percent		Chi <sup>2</sup>
	G	SLO	
parents	14.7	45.8	152.42***
relatives	0.2	2.5	
Stud. dormitory – single room	17.1	12.8	
Stud. dormitory – share a room	5.3	21.2	
flat – alone	22.6	5.9	
flat – partner	13.9	4.9	
flat – others	26.2	6.9	

G = Germany      SLO = Slovenia

with cultural differences as well as economic differences which cause different life styles of the students. For Slovene youth it is typical that they live with their parents during their studies and often also when they have already their own families (extended family), while in Germany, the young move away from their parents even if their parents live in the same place where they study to become independent. During their studies, German students live more often in a (rented) flat together with other students (26%) or alone (23%), while Slovene students, if they do not have the possibility of living with their parents owing to distance, most often live in students' dormitories together with other students (34%), which is also the most acceptable possibility of accommodation as regards the costs.

Taking into account that almost a half of the Slovene students live with their parents, they also need accordingly less money per month than the German students. Interesting cultural differences also show in that Slovene students get 57% and German students 44% of money they need per month from their parents. This is also one of the reasons that even 95% of the DSHS students (87% of the FS students) work during their studies; among them even 79% of the DSHS students (62% of the FS students) work during the term, accepting various jobs, also such outside the field of sport. The work of Slovene students is more often connected with sport. The essential difference between the two groups of students does not lie in the number of hours, which they spend on average for work per week, but in the height of payment, which the students receive per hour of work. German students earn 840 DEM a month for 12 hours of work per week, while Slovene students get for 13 hours a week only 386 DEM a month. In other words, students in Germany earn on average 17 DEM per hour, while in Slovenia they earn only 7.4 DEM per hour. Approximately such a relationship is also between the average gross salary in Germany and in Slovenia. We could say that the results of our research reflect proportionally the degree of development of the German and Slovene society in the field of economy and also in the field of education.