

## TEACHING BASKETBALL FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MEN AND WOMEN PHYSICAL AND SPORT EDUCATION TEACHERS IN UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN EASTERN SLOVAKIA

### VYUČOVANIE BASKETBALU V NÁZOROCH UČITEĽOV A UČITEĽIEK TELESNEJ A ŠPORTOVEJ VÝCHOVY NA 2. STUPNI ZÁKLADNÝCH ŠKÔL NA VÝCHODNOM SLOVENSKU

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#### Abstract

The authors of the study used a questionnaire to find out whether there are significant differences in teachers' views on teaching basketball from a point of view of gender differences. The sample consisted of 450 physical and sport education teachers (274 men and 176 women) who teach in 17 districts in eastern Slovakia, in upper primary schools. Significant differences at the  $p < 0.01$  level were found in the popularity of teaching basketball. While for 20.45% of women, basketball is the second most popular taught sport after volleyball (39.77%), for 13.14% of men, basketball is the fourth most popular taught sport after football (40.51%), volleyball (21.90%), and floorball (19.71%). Despite significant differences ( $p < 0.01$ ), more than 54% of men and 48% of women teach basketball most often for 6-10 hours within a single thematic unit. A negative finding is that 3.28% of men and 11.36% of women do not teach basketball. Game-oriented didactic approach dominates in teaching for both genders (54.72% of men and 55.77% of women). According to 32.85% of men and 40.91% of women, the main disadvantage of teaching basketball is the low interest of pupils in learning the sport. The second most frequently chosen shortcoming of basketball teaching was the low time allocation of the subject (29.59% of men and 28.41% of women).

**Keywords:** didactic approaches; teaching shortcomings; teaching scope; sport games

#### Súhrn

Autori príspevku zisťovali prostredníctvom dotazníka či existujú signifikantné rozdiely v názoroch učiteľov na vyučovanie basketbalu z pohľadu intersexuálnych rozdielov. Skúmaný súbor tvorilo 450 učiteľov telesnej a športovej výchovy (274 mužov a 176 žien), ktorí vyučujú na 2. stupni základných škôl zo 17 okresov východného Slovenska. Signifikantné rozdiely na hladine  $p < 0,01$  boli zaznamenané v obľúbenosti vyučovania basketbalu. Zatiaľ čo u 20,45 % žien je basketbal po volejbale (39,77 %) druhou najradšej vyučovanou športovou hrou, tak u 13,14 % mužov bol basketbal po futbale (40,51 %), volejbale (21,90 %) a florbale (19,71 %) až štvrtou najradšej vyučovanou športovou hrou. Napriek signifikantným rozdielom ( $p < 0,01$ ) viac ako 54 % mužov a 48 % žien vyučuje basketbal najčastejšie v rozsahu 6 – 10 hodín v rámci jedného tematického celku. Negatívnym zistením je, že basketbal nevyučuje 3,28 % mužov a až 11,36 % žien. Pri vyučovaní dominuje u oboch pohlaví (54,72 % mužov a 55,77 % žien) herne orientovaný didaktický prístup. Podľa 32,85 % mužov a 40,91 % žien je hlavným nedostatkom vyučovania basketbalu nízky záujem žiakov o vyučovanie tejto športovej hry. Druhým najčastejšie zvoleným nedostatkom vyučovania basketbalu bola nízka časová dotácia predmetu (29,59 % mužov a 28,41 % žien).

**Kľúčové slová:** didaktické prístupy; nedostatky vyučovania; rozsah vyučovania; športové hry

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## Introduction

Sport games are characterized by interactions between teammates and opponents in a game situation with or without a ball, with the aim to achieve a defined goal of the match (Duarte et al., 2016). As for the popularity, sport games are often identified as the most popular thematic unit in the perspectives of both students and teachers (Tillinger, 1994; Paugschová & Jančoková, 2008), and they are an inseparable part of the curriculum in Slovakia, holding a significant position in schools since 1946 (Slovík et al., 1993). Despite the fact that for both genders of teachers, sports games are the most popular subject unit, so in terms of comparing the views of men and women, there are differences in the popularity of teaching a particular sports game. This is evidenced by several research studies such as Adamčák et al (2018a) or Adamčák & Beňák (2018).

Pursuant to the educational standard of physical and sport education, which is anchored in the state educational program ISCED 2, sport games belong to the part called "Sport activities of the movement regime", with a proposed time allocation of 25% (National Institute for Education, 2015). The national educational program defines 4 mandatory sport games (basketball, football, handball, and volleyball), which, based on their long-standing position in physical and sport education, can also be marked as traditional. Sports games are often taught in the traditional way, and it is primarily the objective side of teaching and learning that is taught, forgetting the procedural side. In this way of teaching, perceptual mechanisms and cognitive processes are left behind (Dobrá, 2010). In contrast to traditional teaching, most alternative approaches to teaching sports games (Velenský, 2001) rely on the requirement that the conditions in the acquisition of the movement skill match the target form of realisation right from the start. In the use of modified games, according to Light (2010), the requirements for technique are reduced so that all pupils can participate in the game, emphasising the tactics of the game with the simultaneous development of movement skills.

Based on the above, we consider it appropriate to focus on investigating whether there are differences in views between genders also in the set of upper primary schools physical and sport education teachers who were involved in our survey. We were predominantly interested in the teaching of which sports game men and women prefer with a primary focus on the teaching of the sports game of basketball, the extent to which basketball is taught within a thematic unit as well as the preferred didactic approach to teaching this sports game.

## Methodology

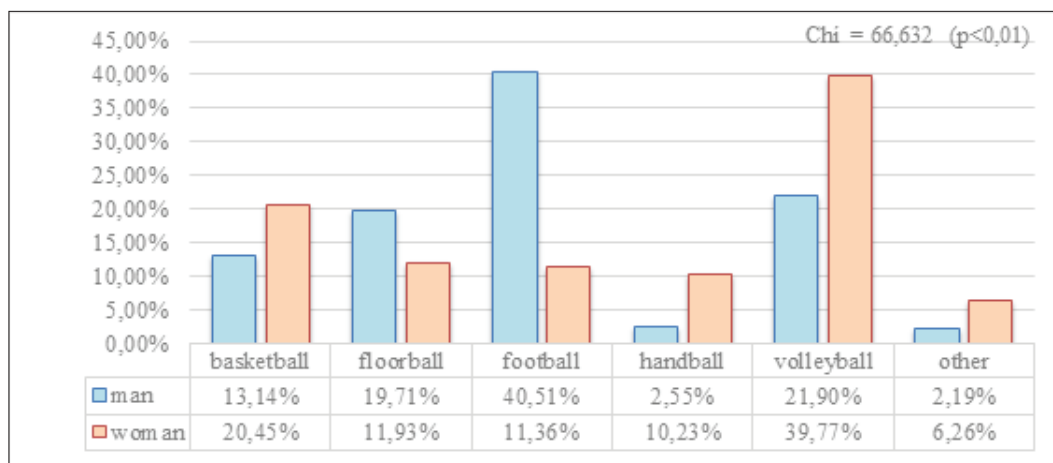
The research sample consisted of 450 physical and sport education teachers (274 men and 176 women) working in upper primary schools in 17 districts of the eastern Slovakia. The research was realized during the school year 2022/2023. A non-standardized questionnaire with 39 items, created by Beňák & Popelka in 2022 for the needs of the grant project KEGA No. 005UMB-4/2023, was the main research method. The questionnaire was distributed to teachers in a combined form (in person or electronically). All teachers contacted completed the questionnaire correctly. Students of the Faculty of Sports Science and Health of the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica helped with the distribution of the questionnaire. The paper presents selected questions from the questionnaire, evaluated in terms of gender. Teachers' responses were subjected to statistical processing using chi-square test, at significance levels of  $p < 0.05$  and  $p < 0.01$ . The results of statistical processing are presented in figures. The research is part of the grant project KEGA No. 005UMB-4/2023 Creation of didactic multimedia textbooks focused on teaching basketball and volleyball within physical and sport education in upper primary schools.

## Results

Initially, we were interested in which sport game teachers enjoy teaching the most in physical and sport education classes. We present the results in Figure 1. While women predominantly taught volleyball (39.77%), men predominantly taught football (40.51%). Basketball was the second most popular sport among women with 20.45%, followed by floorball and football. For men, volleyball was the second most popular sport (21.90%), followed by floorball (19.71%) and basketball (13.14%). In the category "other", teachers of both genders indicated that they enjoy teaching all sports equally or do not have a particular sport they enjoy teaching the most. For this question we found significant differences in the responses of men and women at the  $p < 0.01$  significance level.

Obrázok 1./ Figure 1.

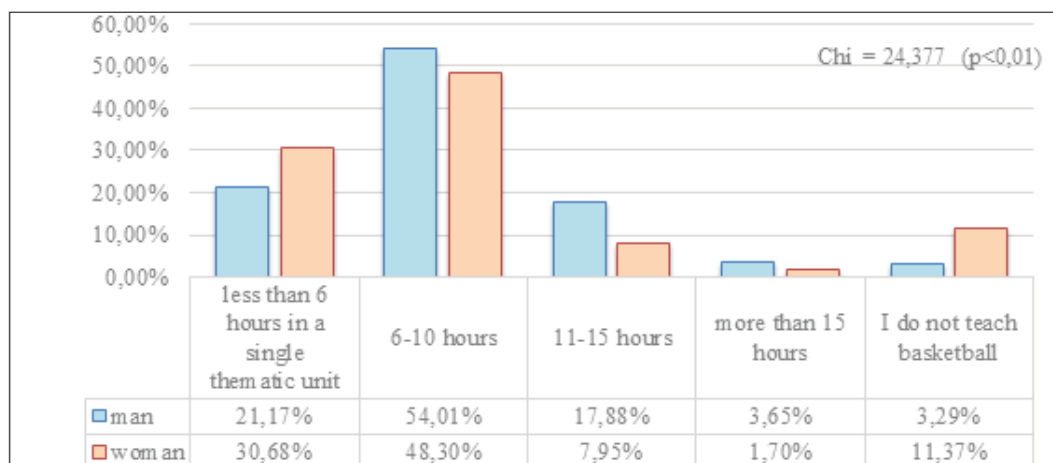
*Najradšej vyučovaná športová hra./ Most popular sport game taught by teachers.*



Further, we were interested in the number of hours teachers dedicate to teaching basketball within a single thematic unit. Differences in responses were significant at the  $p < 0.01$  significance level. As many as 54.01% of men and 48.30% of women teach basketball for 6-10 hours in a single thematic unit (Figure 2). More than 21% of men and 30% of women teach basketball for less than 6 hours within a single thematic unit. It is worth noting that 3.29% of men and as many as 11.37% of women, which represents a total of 29 teachers in upper primary schools, do not teach basketball at all.

Obrázok 2./ Figure 2.

*Rozsah vyučovania basketbalu./ Time allocation for basketball teaching.*

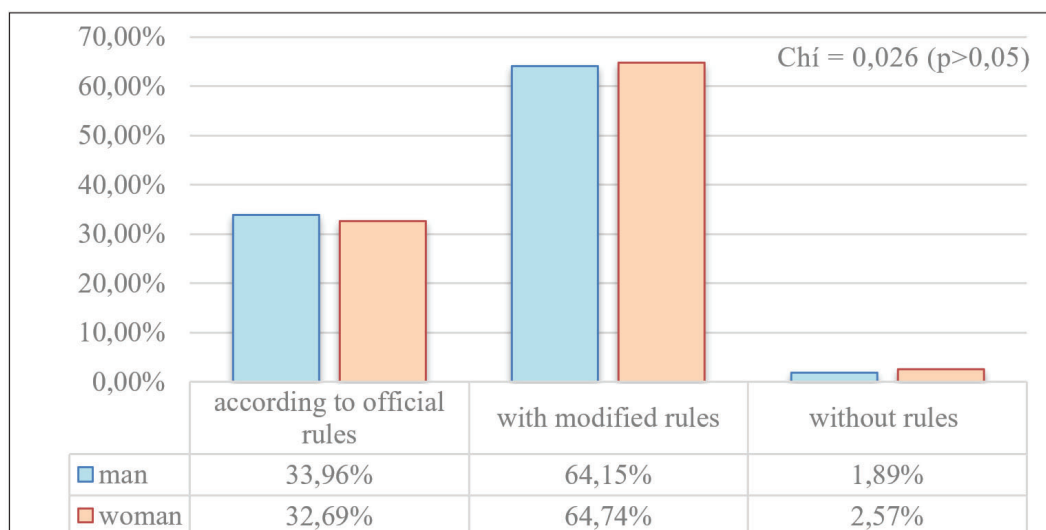


We were also interested in whether students play basketball according to official rules, modified rules, or without rules. More than 64% of both men and women stated that students play basketball with modified rules in their classes (Figure 3). Approximately one-third of respondents reported that students play basketball according to the official rules.

There may be significant differences between genders in terms of the diversity of content and the use of didactic approaches in teaching basketball. Therefore, we were interested in which didactic approach teachers of different genders prefer when teaching basketball. There were two options to choose: a technically oriented didactic approach, which is focused on practicing and improving technical skills outside of the game, or a game-oriented didactic approach, which is focused on practicing and improving technical skills within the game. More than 54% of men and 55% of women predominantly use a game-oriented didactic approach (Figure 4).

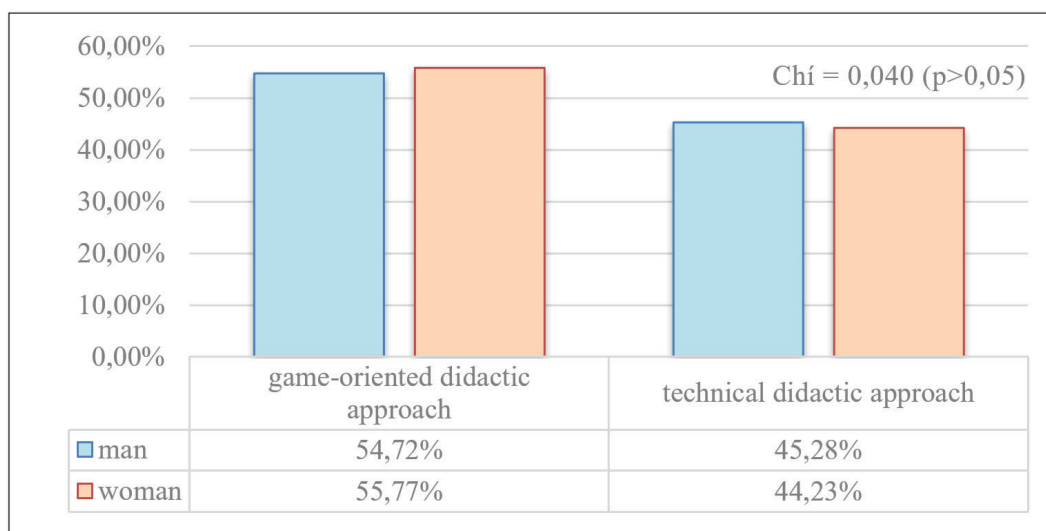
Obrázok 3./ Figure 3.

*Pri vyučovaní hrajú žiaci basketbal najčastejšie./ Students most often play basketball.*



Obrázok 4./ Figure 4.

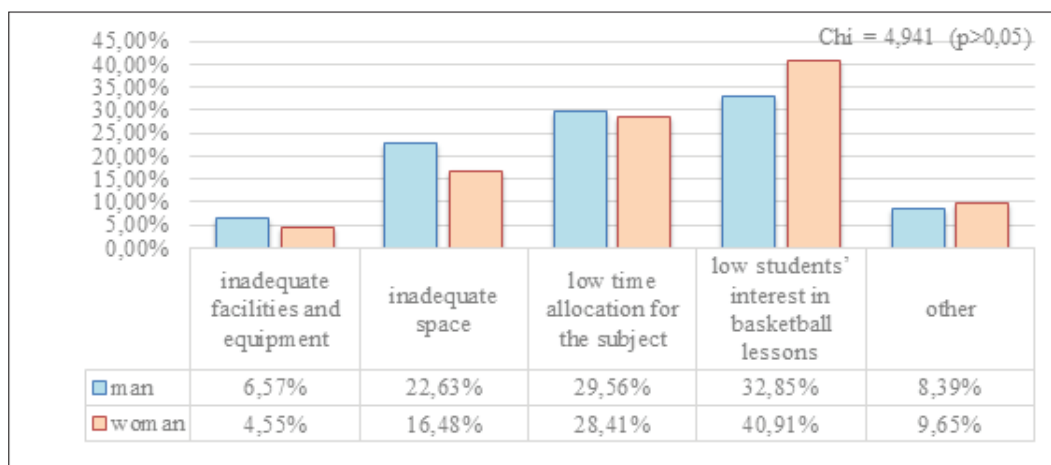
*Preferovaný didaktický prístup pri vyučovaní basketbalu./ Preferred didactic approach in basketball teaching.*



Every teaching has its own limitations. In the research, we were interested in what teachers consider to be the main shortcoming for teaching basketball at the school where they teach. The ranking of shortcomings was the same for both genders. Students' low interest in basketball lessons was the dominant shortcoming, followed by a low time allocation for the subject and insufficient space. Within the category "other", most teachers stated that they do not see any shortcomings, however, some stated that they consider the low level of students' motor skills and abilities to be the biggest shortcoming (Figure 5).

Obrázok 5./ Figure 5.

*Hlavný nedostatok pre vyučovanie basketbalu./ The primary limitation of teaching basketball.*



## Discussion

In the long-term perspective, sport games appear to be the most popular thematic unit for both teachers and students. This is proved by several researches (e.g., Paugschová & Jančoková, 2008; Dismore & Bailey, 2011; Bendíková et al., 2016). In our research, 40.51% of men identified football and 39.77% of women identified volleyball as their most popular sport game to teach. Adamčák et al. (2018b) also found a preference for teaching football among men and volleyball among women in their research. Antala et al. (2012) found high popularity of these sport games among students of upper primary schools. Basketball ranked second among women and fourth among men. The reason behind may be the fact that teachers consider basketball to be a sport game with the most complex rules (Adamčák et al., 2018a).

When examining the scope of basketball teaching within a single thematic unit, we found that teachers of both genders (54.01% of men and 48.30% of women) most often teach basketball for 6-10 hours. An interesting finding was presented by Adamčák et al. (2018a), who found in their research that two-thirds of men and more than half of women teach sport games within a single thematic unit for 11-16 hours. We believe that the teachers in our research allocate more time to sport games that they prefer teaching over basketball. We consider it negative that 3.28% of men and up to 11.36% of women, which is a total of up to 29 teachers, do not teach basketball at the second level of primary school.

Physical and sport education teachers can positively influence students using various teaching strategies (Bulger et al., 2001). Therefore, we were interested in which didactic approach teachers prefer when teaching basketball. There were two options to choose from: a technical didactic approach (focused on practicing and improving skills outside of the game) or a game-oriented didactic approach (focused on practicing and improving skills within the game). We are aware of the existence of multiple didactic approaches but we chose to provide these two options for the purpose of making a clear decision, recognizing that a game-oriented approach naturally involves exercises predominantly associated with a technical approach. Our results show that over 54% of respondents prefer a game-oriented approach, while differences between men and women were minimal. The effectiveness of various didactic approaches in teaching sport games has been examined by Balakrishnan et al. (2011).

Several experts have examined the state of physical and sport education as well as the teaching of sport games. Common shortcomings include students' lack of interest (Antala et al., 2012), insufficient staffing (Mesiariik, 2012), low time allocation (Lehocký, 2010; Šimonek, 2011), and inadequate facilities and equipment for physical and sport education (Slezák & Melicher, 2008; Šimonek, 2011). We were interested in what shortcoming teachers in our study face when teaching basketball. The most significant shortcoming for 32.85% of men and 40.91% of women was students' low interest in basketball lessons. Antala et al. (2012) investigated the reasons behind students' disinterest in physical and sport education, finding that 40.8% of girls and 24% of boys stated laziness and convenience. For

boys, the most common reason was unattractive lesson content (stated by 30.2% of boys and 28.8% of girls). The content of basketball lessons should be diversified with movement games that would make the pupils more involved in the lessons. Teachers also identified insufficient time allocation for the subject as another shortcoming. This issue has been the subject of a rather heated debate in recent years. Opponents of a mandatory third hour of physical and sport education argue that 40% of primary schools lack a gym, however this statistic is skewed by schools with small numbers of students, as around 85% of students have access to a gym (Pietová, 2023). Without strengthened government support for physical and sport education position, significant changes in this area cannot be expected. Many teachers perceive insufficient space or equipment of schools as a shortcoming when teaching basketball. We believe that state support is essential in this regard.

We see the limitations of the findings presented in the size of the research sample. Further attention should be paid to this issue and the research sample should be expanded to include teachers from other parts of Slovakia. The questionnaire can also be considered as partly limited and it would be useful to add a few more questions. For example, men teachers state that they prefer to teach football. An additional question could be focused on whether they actually teach it or just throw the ball to the pupils to play football.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we focused on the teaching of basketball as perceived by 450 physical and sport education teachers working in upper primary schools in 17 districts of the eastern Slovakia. On the basis of the analysis of Beťák & Popelka questionnaire from 2022, we found the following within the framework of the grant project KEGA No. 005UMB-4/2023:

- Significant differences ( $p < 0.01$ ) between men and women's responses regarding the popularity of teaching sport game and the extent of basketball teaching within a single thematic unit;
- Teaching basketball with modified rules and a game-oriented didactic approach predominates for both genders;
- Both men and women identified low interest of students in basketball and insufficient time allocation for the subject as the main shortcomings.

We perceive the presented findings only as preliminary/partial and they cannot be generalized. It is necessary to continue in research on a larger sample of teachers and in other regions of Slovakia.

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