

STUDENTS' SATISFACTION AND ADDED VALUES FROM PRACTICAL SKI EDUCATION

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Abstract: *Practical ski training is an obligatory course in Physical Education and Sports Bachelor's degree program at St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo. Each January, during seven days training camp in the mountain, future physical education and sport teachers are trained in skiing. Most of the students are unfamiliar with this sport until that moment and they are going to skiing for the first time. The aim of the study is to determine the level of students' satisfaction and added values from basic practical ski training during the educational course. The questionnaire method of study was applied with closed-ended questions. The results were statistically processed using frequency distribution. The results show very positive trends: students taking the course are very motivated, they are convinced that the general organisation and study process are on the required level. Most of the students confirm that they would practice ski sports in the future and they would invest in buying ski equipment and most of them deal with their fears. In general, we can conclude that the practical ski education course has a positive effect on the emotional and physical state of the students, they get a lot of new practical skills in skiing and they would practice independently this sport in the future.*

Key words: *sports teachers, ski sports, education, satisfaction, benefits*

INTRODUCTION

Skiing is one of the most exciting and emotional sports. It is built on the basis of natural human movements, which is why it is accessible to all people from the earliest childhood to old age (Kantcheva et al. 2010; Kantcheva et al. 2018).

Arena of the skiing sport is always the nature, usually at high altitude which is in great contribution to the health and physical fitness (Joksimovic, Petkovic, Acimovic & Stankovic, 2010). Great opportunities to learn winter sports skills for adolescents come from educational programs which promotes active lifestyle and healthy behavior (Chen, Zuo & Guan, 2023).

According Zgurovski et al. (2022) the methodology for initial training in alpine skiing disciplines must be in line with global trends and meet all the safety requirements of the lessons.

Roberson (2009) shares that the practical skiing educational courses for students gives leisurely atmosphere allowing time for personal learning, critical evaluation, and social learning. The interaction of the teacher with the students during breaks between the sessions and lots of other time together such as meals and time spent in the accommodation allows the social dynamic of learning which is crucial in that kind of practical education

According to Curic et al. (2023) in professionally conducted ski training for novice skiers, it is necessary to include balance exercises and directly influence the development of those motor abilities that are crucial for mastering the elements of alpine skiing techniques, as well as to resulted in a preventive effect on the possibility of injury. Yarushin, S.A. (2022) emphasizes the importance of mastering technical skiing skills for optimal dosage of physical load in ski training for students.

Zhou (2023) concludes that the skiing performance of beginners can be improved by increasing self-efficacy and decreasing fear and worry. It's the opposite for intermediate skiers where increasing worry or caution of the environment can improve performance.

It's important to consider skiing speed which is crucial in teaching methodology, it would be beneficial to determine how speed varies across ski school elements and how factors like terrain, snow, and other learning conditions influence ski technique St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo. We believe that every study of student's opinion is a testament to the quality of the training

and provides an opportunity to improve the educational process.

The literature review shows that the theoretical and practical ski training, as part of the mandatory “Winter Sports” course included in the curriculum for students at University of Veliko Tarnovo, aligns with modern achievements in skiing. This includes methodological progression and didactic principles of instruction. The training also meets the national educational standards, which outline the framework requirements for the subject of Physical Education and Sport in schools, specifying an “elective area of study content” covering “Tourism, Orienteering, and Winter Sports” (Regulation No. 5 of 30.11.2015). Therefore, it is essential for future physical education and sports teachers to undergo theoretical and practical training in alpine skiing disciplines.

The curriculum of the mandatory course “Winter Sports” provides instruction in the methodology of teaching and practical mastery of skiing techniques from class A and class B. The organization of ski training for students takes place in a field setting near Bansko ski resort, with an intensive, week-long, full-day training program.

The program is tailored to the physical capabilities and psychological states of the students (such as fear of falling, fear of uncontrollably increasing speed, etc.). It creates conditions for an emotionally engaging learning process, which enhances its effectiveness and contributes to students’ motivation for further independent practice.

The aim of the study is to determine the level of students’ satisfaction and added values from practical ski training during the educational course.

METHOD

The survey was conducted in the end of January and the beginning of March 2024 when the practical ski education of students was realized. The questionnaire method of study was applied with closed-ended and open questions. The results were statistically processed using frequency distribution.

Assessing the level of students’ satisfaction is one of the tools for measuring the quality of education. The following factors were examined: satisfaction from the educational process and general organization of the practical education; satisfaction with acquired skills and additional benefits.

Contingent of the study

In the study were included 63 responders. They are all 1st year students in bachelor program “Physical education and sports teacher” at St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria. The distribution of students is like follows: 40 men and 23 women.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 presents the results from a set of questions that indicate students’ satisfaction with the skills acquired and the additional benefits gained during the mandatory “Winter Sports” course. For the first question in the survey, Have you practiced skiing before your participation in the practical ski education course?—76.2% of respondents answered that they have not, and that was their first experience with the sport. Only a small number of the students had practiced skiing prior to their university training. In response to the next question, “Would you go skiing again?”—there is a significant difference in the proportion of responses, with the largest percentage being students who expressed a desire to continue skiing after the course, totaling 96.8% of respondents. It is unlikely that anyone who has tried skiing would deny how challenging the sport is, especially when learning it as an adult, which likely explains the 3.2% of negative responses.

Students’ attitudes toward learning a new sport are revealed in their response to the question, „Would you recommend your family and friends to try skiing?” (Figure 1). All respondents answered positively, indicating that they were not disappointed by the sport they’ve learned and would recommend it to their close friends and family. This is further supported by responses to the final question, in which 87.3% of respondents stated that they would invest personal funds to purchase their own equipment to practice this sport in future.

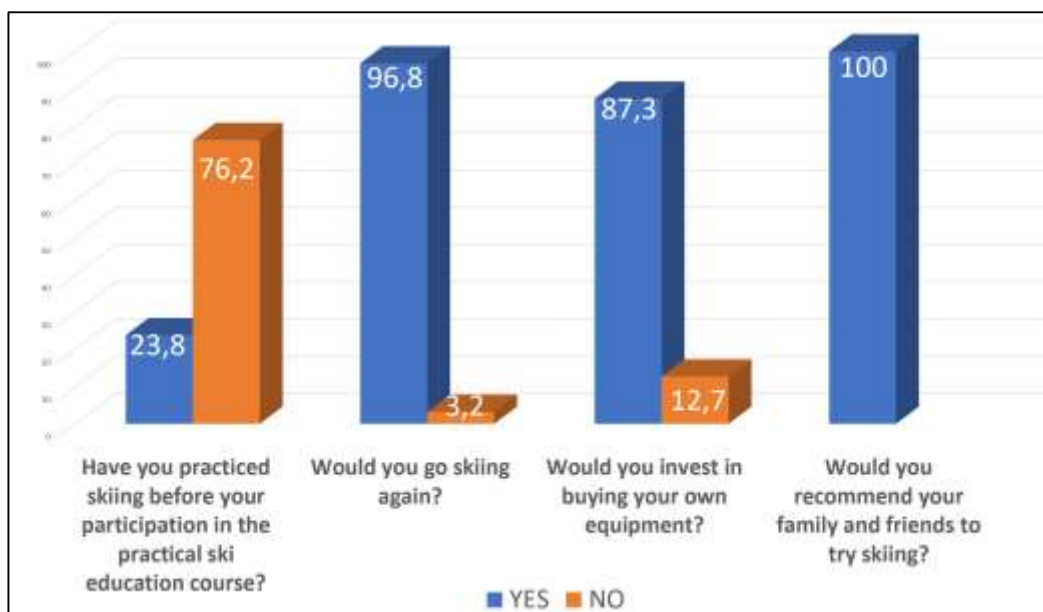


Fig. 1 General questions about the students' experience in skiing and their will to go skiing again, to buy their own equipment and if they'd like to recommend skiing to friends and family

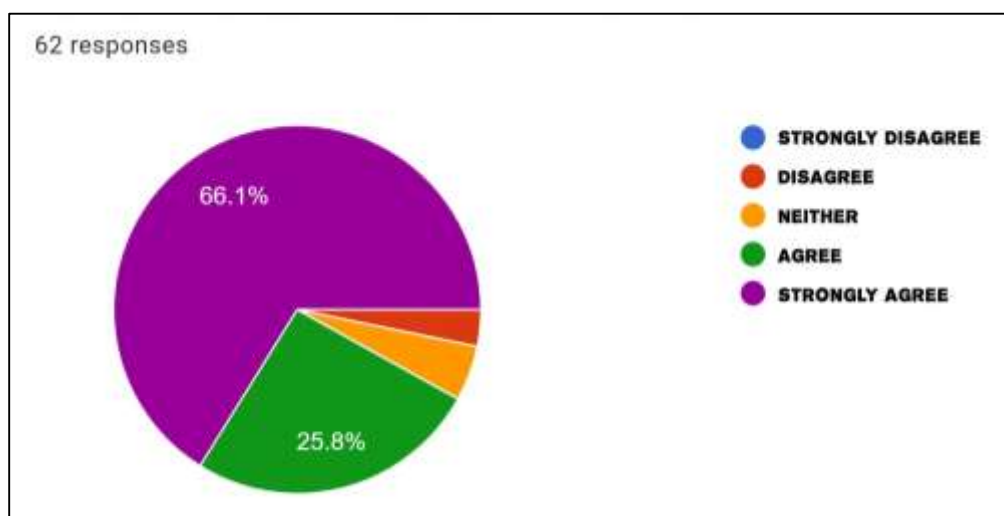


Fig. 2 Do you feel satisfied with your participation in the practical ski education course?

Students taking the course are very motivated and they are satisfied with the general organisation and study process during the practical education. This is confirmed in Figure 2, where 66.1% of respondents say they are completely satisfied with their participation in the practical winter sports course. Another 25.8% "agree" that they are satisfied. Less than 10% gave answer "Neither" and "Disagree". We believe that these answers are related to requirements for mandatory participation in the practical course, the course schedule, fears and other factors. Nevertheless, the majority of students are pleased with the knowledge they gained and with the professional competences of the instructors and general organization of the practical education.

A similar study was conducted with students from Sofia University who are also studying to become physical education and sports teachers (Prokopov, 2024). The results show that the sports training practice met the expectations and needs of the participating students, who gave positive evaluations regarding both the organization and the quality of training and sports services provided.

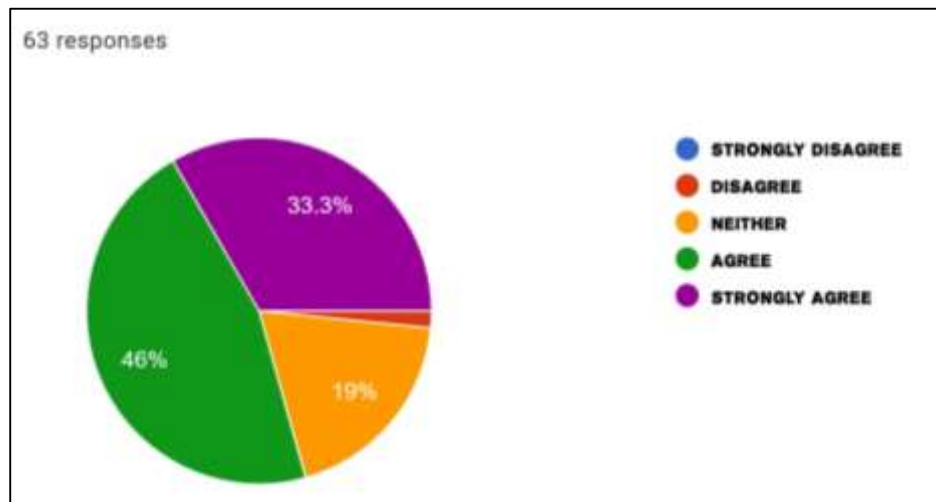


Fig. 3 Do you agree that you are prepared for skiing on your own after the practical ski education?

Despite the solid practical training students receive during the winter sports course, many are not entirely confident that they can practice winter sports independently after the course. Only 33.3% of respondents feel fully confident in their abilities. The largest percentage, 46% of students, feel confident in their skiing skills but likely need additional practice to become fully independent. The smallest percentage consists of students who are unsure about assessing their skills definitively.

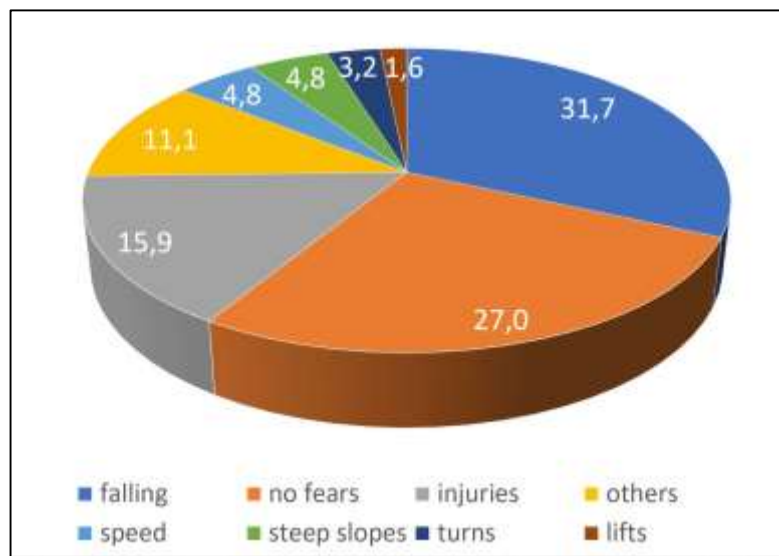


Fig. 4 What were your biggest fears on the first day of the practical ski education?

There is a wide range of opinions in response to the question “What were your biggest fears on the first day of ski training?” as shown in Figure 4. The most significant concern, according to responses, is the possibility of falling, cited by 31.7% of course participants. Next are students who reported no fears when practicing skiing, accounting for 27% of respondents. 15.9% were feared of injuries. Other fears includes steep slopes, speed, attitude of the lifts, turns and others. These concerns may stem from emotions, challenges with technical elements, indecisiveness, and more.

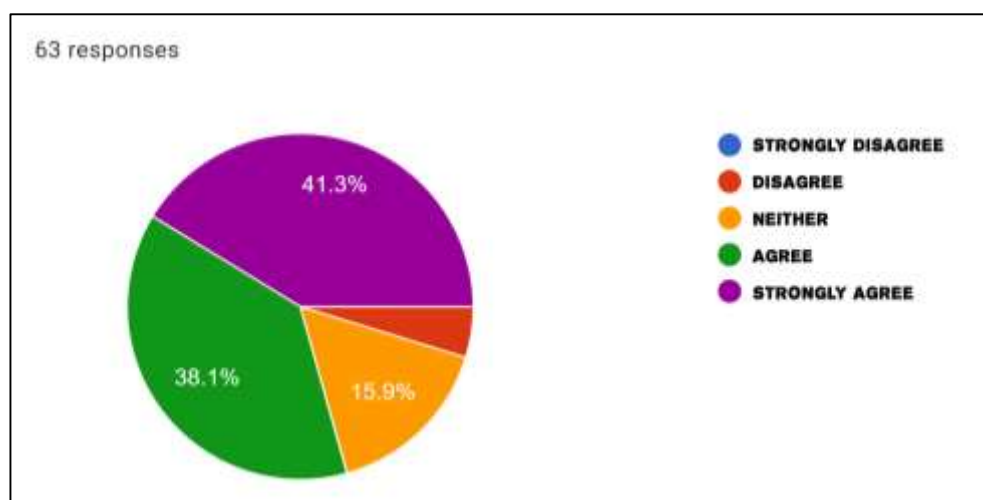


Fig. 5 Do you agree that you were able to overcome psychological barriers (fear, uncertainty, etc.) during the training?

The data from the next survey question, shown in Figure 5, illustrates the extent to which skiing has helped students overcome various fears. The results shows that the course had a very strong impact on 41.3% of participants who “Strongly agree” that they overcame psychological barriers. A further 38.1% were less certain in their assessments of their concerns and took “Agree” as an option. Only 15% of students felt that the course had not helped them overcome the different fears associated with skiing.

CONCLUSION

Skiing has unlimited potential for cultivating various qualities and character traits in individuals. Practiced outdoors in high mountains, it serves as an excellent means of resilience-building and has an extremely positive effect on mind and body. As noted above, student satisfaction is an important indicator for future development, significantly influencing both the success in acquiring skiing skills and the quality of organization of practical courses and education process.

Based on the analysis of the survey results, generally it can be stated that the students participating in the “Winter Sports” course at St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo fully meets their expectations. Respondents gave positive evaluations regarding both the organization of the sessions and the quality of instructions, and they are satisfied after their ski education.

We can also identify the main added values from the practical ski education as follows: most of the students confirm that they would practice ski sports in the future, and they would invest in buying ski equipment; most of the students feel enough prepared to do skiing independently in the future; most of the students deal with their fears related to ski education.

In general, we can conclude that the practical ski education course has a positive effect on the emotional and physical state of the students, and they get a lot of new practical skills in skiing.

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ZADOVOLJSTVO STUDENATA I DODATNE VREDNOSTI IZ PRAKTIČNOG SKIJAŠKOG OBRAZOVANJA

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Sažetak: *Praktična obuka skijanja je obavezan predmet na diplomskom programu fizičkog vaspitanja i sporta na Univerzitetu Sv. Kirilo i Metodije u Velikom Trnovu. Svakog januara, tokom sedmodnevnog kampa na planini, budući nastavnici fizičkog vaspitanja i sporta se obučavaju u skijanju. Većina studenata do tog trenutka nije upoznata sa ovim sportom i po prvi put ide na skijanje. Cilj studije je da se utvrdi nivo zadovoljstva studenata i dodatne vrednosti iz osnovne praktične obuke skijanja tokom nastave. Upitnički metod proučavanja primenjen je sa pitanjima zatvorenog tipa. Rezultati su statistički obrađeni korišćenjem distribucije frekvencije. Rezultati pokazuju veoma pozitivne trendove: studenti koji pohađaju kurs su veoma motivisani, uvereni su da su opšta organizacija i proces studiranja na potrebnom nivou. Većina studenata potvrđuje da će se ubuduće baviti skijaškim sportom i ulagati u kupovinu skijaške opreme i većina njih se nosi sa svojim strahovima. Generalno, možemo zaključiti da kurs praktičnog skijaškog obrazovanja pozitivno utiče na emocionalno i fizičko stanje studenata, stiču mnogo novih praktičnih veština u skijanju i da bi se u budućnosti samostalno bavili ovim sportom.*

Ključne reči: *nastavnici sporta, skijaški sport, obrazovanje, zadovoljstvo, beneficije*