

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SLOVAK AND CZECH UNIVERSITIES FROM THE POINT OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Jaroslav Kompán

*Martin Babiar

Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica
Faculty of Humanities, Department of Physical Education and Sport
Tajovskeho 40, 97401, Banska Bystrica, Slovakia
jaroslav.kompan@umb.sk, martin.babiar@umb.sk

Abstract

The submitted analysis compares the offer of education in the field of outdoor activities at universities in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. These countries and their universities are compared on the base of the curricula of particular departments offering the study of physical education and sport, available on the Internet. Specifically, we compare universities in Prague, Olomouc, Brno, Usti nad Labem, Hradec Kralove, Ceske Budejovice, Ostrava and Liberec in the Czech Republic and Bratislava, Presov, Nitra, Komarno and Banska Bystrica in Slovakia. This complex analysis of their courses of study aims at options to study outdoor activities as an independent field of study and it also compares the subjects the students can complete, as well the outdoor certificates they can obtain. The article also shows the potentiality of both countries for performing outdoor activities compared to the real state of educational options in this field from the point of both countries and their universities. This article is a partial component of VEGA 1/0808/09 grant.

Keywords: outdoor activities, university studies, education

Introduction

Slovak and Czech governments' conceptual materials aimed at society's sustainable development from the point of education focus mainly on application of new trends and activities in the educational process of the whole levels. The reaction on changing socio-cultural conditions as well as one of the options of their positive development is an early and appropriate implementation on new approaches, information and methods, which in educational practice means a creation and application of new, attractive and, especially perspective fields of study that can react on these changes adequately and influence their development.

A targeted support of particular regions' development and their services in the tourism creates new requirements for qualified workers. Simply, regions have great historic, natural, cultural potential, but are not able to make use of it. The trend of using outdoor activities is moving rapidly these days. The sphere of the outdoor is very attractive, including wide range of activities from the various sports performed outdoors to the area of education in the outdoors. Because of these reasons, the development of education and a creation of competent educators in the field of outdoor activities is considered as one of the options how to use the regions' potential for the tourism development.

We have focused our article on a comparison of study options in the field of outdoor activities in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Despite the fact that we created one unit in the past, in the present we can see big differences between both countries arising from their mentalities, but not at all from their overall potential for performing outdoor activities.

Natural resources for hiking and outdoor activities in Slovakia are very good, what lags is technical infrastructure and services. It is very important to focus our attention on the local people, their motivation for a lifelong education, learning and protection of cultural and natural resources of Slovakia (Kompán-Görner, 2007).

Neuman (2004) states, that the popularity of outdoor sports and activities is a reaction to the changes of our lifestyles. We have more leisure time, we care more about our environment and we are noticing the lack of activity in our lives. It is easier to get from one place to another, and we are better and more informed than we used to be. For this reason, it is considered very important that in many European as well as other countries in the world we will be solving the following problems:

- expand areas for outdoor activities so that they correspond to the needs of people,
- control the development of outdoor activities in order to preserve our environment,
- form and realize outdoor education so that people get interested in spending their free time outdoors,
- develop the interests of people that include varied use of their leisure time, physical activities and relationship to the environment.

We also agree with the opinion of Gilbertson et al. (2006) that as interest in the outdoors continues to grow, in part due to the stress people experience in everyday life, so also grows the demand for instructors who are highly trained and competent in the outdoors. Professional training in a variety of dimensions is essential in order to provide a deliberate experience that is appropriate for the audience's needs and expectations.

It is clear that only professionals who have a clear vision about the outdoor education, who have sufficient experience in organizing outdoor courses and activities, and who have an adequate outlook about outdoor education in other countries in the world, can influence people in this way. Such people can bring and apply this knowledge into concrete cultural and social conditions and they can influence people in their vicinity to a bigger use and creation of suitable conditions for outdoor activities performance.

As Neuman (2004) adds on, while we will be solving these problems, we will look for optimal ways to use outdoor sports and activities in order to educate the young generation.

1 Aim

The aim of this paper is to compare the offer of education in the field of outdoor activities at universities in Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

2 Methods

The data for our survey were collected by a study of the compared universities' and their departments of physical education and sport's websites, available on the Internet. All the universities providing the study of physical education and sport as the sphere covering the outdoor activities were included in the survey. We have successively analyzed the universities in Prague, Olomouc, Brno, Usti nad Labem, Ostrava, Hradec Kralove, Liberec a Ceske Budejovice in the Czech Republic and Bratislava, Presov, Nitra, Komarno and Banska Bystrica in Slovakia. To complete the missing information we also inquired competent employees and teachers of particular departments. However, some departments did not respond to our queries and therefore we do not hold complete information. Because of this fact it is not possible to see these results as complete, but we consider them as sufficient to compare and illustrate the differences of study options of both countries.

3 Results and discussion

In the beginning we were interested if the surveyed universities offering physical education and sport studies (faculties, departments) also have independent department dealing entirely with outdoor activities. In the Czech Republic, we have found such a workplace in 5 universities – Faculty of Physical Education and Sport in Prague has a Department of Outdoor Sports, and in addition to that they also have a Section (Department) of Turistika, Outdoor Sports and Outdoor Education. In Olomouc there is a Department of Recreology, in Brno there is a Department of Athletics, Swimming and Outdoor Sports with a separate Section of Outdoor Sports and in Usti nad Labem there is a Department of Outdoor Activities. Here we can also put Hradec Kralove, where we got information that there exists a Section of Outdoor Sports. Within the remaining universities we have not found such a separate workplace.

In Slovakia we have found out that only at Faculty of Physical Education and Sport in Bratislava there is such a separate workplace – Department of Outdoor Sports and Swimming with a Section of Outdoor Sports.

Afterwards we wanted to find out, if the department dealing with outdoor activities also has an independent course of study in the area of outdoor activities. We found out that in the Czech Republic 4 departments offer such a study: Faculty of Physical Education and Sport in Prague has an Outdoor Activities programme (Master), in Olomouc there is Recreology programme (Master), and even in 2 separate spheres: Lifestyle Management and Recreation and Sport Management. Usti nad Labem offers Outdoor Activities programme (Bachelor), the study of Recreology (Bachelor) is also possible in Ostrava. The remaining Czech universities, according to our findings, do not offer the study of outdoor activities.

The situation in Slovakia in the field outdoor activities is diametrically opposite. An independent specialized programme of outdoor activities is not provided by any university, so it is impossible to graduate and get a degree, bachelor or master, in this area.

Another area we focused on was the possibility to extend one's qualification and expertise leading to personal and professional growth arranged by obtaining a kind of licence or certificate either during the university studies or in further education. Again, we found enormous differences between both countries. In the Czech Republic each university provides in average almost 8 courses to obtain a licence or certificate. Most of them are offered in Prague – 14, Olomouc – 9, and Usti nad Labem – 19 of such accredited courses. In Slovakia, on the other hand, the offer to obtain a licence for students during their university studies, as well as the offer of further education for other school teachers and people interested and working in this area is in particular universities limited to skiing and snowboarding instructors, and possibly, to hiking instructors.

Subsequently, we compared particular subjects of both countries' universities. Slovakia was again overtaken by the Czech Republic, whose universities' offer is more generous and miscellaneous. They use a wide range of different outdoor sports for outdoor and physical education students, but also for the rest of the students – from traditional hiking, water touring, cycling and skiing to more specific branches such as sport climbing, artificial wall (indoor) climbing, bouldering and mountaineering as sub-branches of hiking, followed by canoeing, rafting, yachting, windsurfing and diving in the water sports, and also mountain biking, ski touring or even survivals. This calculation is obviously shortened, showing only some most interesting subjects.

Such outdoor courses are not absent in Slovak universities, of course. We found a wide use of hiking, skiing, snowboarding or cross-country skiing, windsurfing, and yachting which the students can attend during their studies.

The biggest difference is, though, the use of the outdoors not just as the means necessary to perform the outdoor activities in, but mostly as the means serving for a further development of personality. In the Czech Republic we have found a great deal of courses with various names serving to fulfil this goal. The offer of Slovak universities lacks, unfortunately, such subjects, which we consider as a big deficiency.

In the end we compared the surveyed universities from the point of the subjects they offer to the rest of the university students who do not study physical education or the outdoor specialization. We have also found a great divergence and mostly the width of the offered subjects. While Slovak universities offer their students more or less similar or the same subjects as to the physical education and outdoor specialization students, Czech universities are much more creative here and offer their students many more subjects. These are, for instance, Summer Outdoor Courses, Outdoor Games and Exercises, Orienteering Sports, Winter Outdoor Courses and Winter Survivals.

Conclusion

In our survey we have found out a big disproportion between Czech and Slovak universities. It is noticeable chiefly in the fact that Slovak universities do not offer any single specialized outdoor activities course of study. In the Czech Republic, though, 4 universities, a half of them, offer such programmes and thus allow students to get education and a degree, bachelor or master, in the field of outdoor activities. Also, in the field of students' specialization and further education, Czech universities offer a wider variability and more options of personal and professional development, as we found more than 20 various courses allowing people to get an outdoor licence. We have also found a bigger diversity as well as the multitude of study subjects for the outdoor specialists as well as for the remaining students of particular universities.

From the above mentioned we can see that the orientation of Slovak universities and the offer of subjects in their particular courses of study aim particularly at gaining basic skills necessary for performing various kinds of motor activities as well as the motion itself in the outdoors. Unfortunately, they do not use the nature's potential for education of young people as it is understood in the Czech Republic. While in the Czech Republic mastering of basic skills is just a halfway, serving for realization of further activities connected with outdoor education, in Slovakia we have only settled for gaining basic motor activities and we are kicking against outdoor education in the form of experiential education and adaptation courses.

A definitely hindering element is a language barrier that keeps us from "western" countries know-how with a highly developed outdoor education base. We also keep a weak responsiveness to any outside intervention and we are too much bearing on our own customs and dogmas. We believe that a great benefit would be a bigger acceptability to new outdoor education trends, wider interconnection to foreign universities and international cooperation on the grants, projects as well as human resources exchange – students or teachers – through exchange programmes.

After this experience we take a completely different view of the outdoor education and we consider the creation of outdoor education experts very essential. The young people's way of thinking can be changed and thus brought to the outdoors only by people who have a close relation to the outdoors, who are experienced with preparation and organization of outdoors courses, as well as methods and means used in outdoor education. The most important thing is to create the feeling for the outdoors in young people; the rest is only up to them. And such a

feeling can only be fostered by people who know much about the nature and the outdoor activities, and our task is to do as much as possible to start creating such professionals.

Literature

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ANALÝZA MOŽNOSTÍ VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ V OBLASTI OUTDOOROVÝCH AKTIVIT NA SLOVENSKU A V ČESKÉ REPUBLICI V RÁMCI VYSOKÝCH ŠKOL

Předkládaná studie porovnává nabídku vzdělávání v oblasti outdoorových aktivit na univerzitách na Slovensku a v České republice. Jednotlivé země a školy jsou porovnávány na základě studijních programů jednotlivých pracovišť nabízejících studium tělesné výchovy, dostupných z internetových zdrojů. Konkrétně se jedná o univerzity v Praze, Olomouci, Brně, Ústí nad Labem, Hradci Králové, Českých Budějovicích, Ostravě a Liberci v České republice a Bratislavě, Prešově, Nitre, Komárně a Banské Bystrici na Slovensku. Komplexní analýza příslušných studijních programů se zaměřuje na možnosti studia outdoorových aktivit, ať už z hlediska samostatných studijních oborů, jakož i z pohledu jednotlivých předmětů, které mohou studenti během studia absolvovat, případně z nichž mohou získat určitý certifikát z oblasti outdoorových aktivit.

ANALYSE DER AUSBILDUNGSMÖGLICHKEITEN IM BEREICH DER OUTDOOR-AKTIVITÄTEN INNERHALB DER UNIVERSITÄTEN IN DER SLOWAKEI UND DERTSCHECHISCHEN REPUBLIK

Die vorliegende Studie vergleicht das Ausbildungsangebot im Bereich der Outdoor-Aktivitäten an den Universitäten in der Slowakei und der Tschechischen Republik. Die einzelnen Länder und Schulen sind an Hand des Studienangebotes der jeweiligen Standorte, die Sportunterricht anbieten, welche im Internet zugänglich sind, zu vergleichen. Es handelt sich konkret um die Universitäten in Prag, Olomouc, Brno, Usti nad Labem, Hradec Kralove, Ceske Budejovice, Ostrava und Liberec in der Tschechischen Republik und um jene in Bratislava, Presov, Nitra, Komarno und Banska Bystrica in der Slowakei. Die komplexe Analyse des betreffenden Studienprogramms befasst sich mit den Möglichkeiten des Studiums von Outdoor-Aktivitäten nicht nur aus Sicht eigenständiger Studiengänge, sondern auch aus dem Blickwinkel einzelner Fächer, die die Studenten während des Studiums absolvieren können. Eventuell können sie ein entsprechendes Zertifikat im Bereich Outdoor-Aktivitäten erhalten.

ANALIZA MOŻLIWOŚCI KSZTAŁCENIA W ZAKRESIE DYSCYPLIN PLENEROWYCH NA SŁOWACKICH I CZESKICH UCZELNIACH WYŻSZYCH

Niniejsze opracowanie stanowi porównanie oferty kształcenia w zakresie zajęć plenerowych na słowackich i czeskich uniwersytetach. Poszczególne kraje i uczelnie porównano w oparciu o programy studiów w poszczególnych placówkach oferujących studia wychowania fizycznego, które są udostępnione w internecie. Badaniami objęto uniwersytety w Pradze, Ołomuńcu, Brnie, Ústí nad Labem, Hradcu Králové, Českich Budějovicach, Ostrawie i Libercu w Czechach oraz w Bratisławie, Prešovie, Nitrze, Komárně i Banskej Bystricy na Słowacji. Kompleksowa analiza określonych programów studiów dotyczy możliwości studiowania dyscyplin plenerowych, czy to pod kątem samych kierunków studiów, jak również z punktu widzenia poszczególnych przedmiotów, w których studenci mogą w czasie studiów uczestniczyć, ewentualnie mogą zdobyć odpowiedni certyfikat z zakresu dyscyplin plenerowych.