

Janusz Zieliński

University of Rzeszów

jzielinski@ur.edu.pl; ORCID: 0000-0003-0108-5029

Physical activity in the process of social reintegration of a person deprived of liberty

Abstract: Cooperation and social coexistence constitute a condition of life success and goals' realization. That is why sport, physical education or kinesthetic recreation realized in groups of young people conceives a possibility of many positive characteristic personality features' creation.

It was significant to capture relations between physical activity of persons under sentence and their progress in social reintegration. The research was conducted in two prisons in Podkarpackie Voivodeship amongst 100 men who agreed to take part in the research. The prisoners were divided into groups of workers and non-workers in prisons or outside as well as prisoners attending or not attending sport classes.

Aggression questionnaire (BPAQ) created by A. Buss and M. Perry (Aranowska, Rytel, Szymańska, 2015) as well as authorial interview questionnaire (Zieliński 2013, pp. 205) were used to collect research material. Research results were verified with the use of V Cramer, χ^2 , C Pearson function and significance level for 12 degrees of freedom.

It turns out that involvement in physical activity may become one of the ways supporting process of prisoners' recovering from maladjustment. Interestingly, the type of this activity determines the variation in the intensity of the convicted individual's occurrence of antagonistic-destructive behaviors.

Key words: physical activity, social reintegration, criminal, aggression.

Introduction

According to John Paul II, sports, as one of the most popular human activities, can have a significant impact on human behavior. It is the "(...) area of culture that should form the entirety of human behavior, human actions, and their fruits. Man develops himself by engaging in appropriate cultural-creative activity through the internal effort of the spirit: thoughts, will, and heart" (Makurat, 1995, p. 128). This specific human activity can be seen as a sports spectacle that is useful in the process of social reintegration. It is a carrier of preventive or social rehabilitation values in the socialization of people (Rejzner, 1995; Dobrzeniecki, 1998; Konopczyński, 2009, 2015; Jaworska, 2012; Martos-Garcia et al., 2009; Norman, 2015; Kostrzewska, 2018; Digennaro, 2010; Taylor et al., 2015; Morgan, Parker, 2017; Van Hout, Phelan, 2014). The common Polish statement "a healthy mind in a healthy body" takes on significant meaning in this case. It turns out that sports achievements can enhance in participants in this activity (passive and active), their motivation for work and study, and thus the process of their maturation (Rejzner, 2007, p. 219).

According to A. Rejzner (1981), the ability to cooperate and coexist with other people determines the effectiveness of achieving success in life and the ability to achieve goals. Therefore, all forms of physical activity become effective moderators of many positive personality traits. It is known that a person struggles with the need for movement throughout life and it depends on factors beyond genetics (Zalewska-Meler, 2009, pp. 167–168).

Modern knowledge, supported by empirical research, points to the important role of physical activity in modeling the human being understood holistically, along with personality and social attitudes. The role of this process in the context of social rehabilitation, however, primarily pertains to activities aimed at eliminating behavioral deficits: distorted world valuation (respect for others, responsibility, fair competition), life incompetence (ability to resolve interpersonal conflicts and set goals), proneness to risk-taking (disregard for health, addictions, self-harm, substance abuse), and deficiencies in socialization (sense of connection to the nation and social group). (Jaworska, 2012, p. 327)

When using sport in the process of social rehabilitation of socially maladjusted people, its creative function is taken into account. Through this activity that it is possible to shape the identity of individuals, who breached law, in a manner that aligns with commonly accepted norms. It is then possible to play social roles that were previously distorted or overlooked. Due to its very wide range of influence and public appeal, sports activate individuals, smuggle interpersonally valuable mechanisms that can, step by step, according to environmental expectations, modify the personal competence of people who violate the external order. (Konopczyński, 2009, p. 238–239)

Among the various means of social rehabilitation interventions, sports enable the acquisition and development of responsible behavioral traits and pro-social attitudes. However, taking care of its effectiveness, it should be integrated with broader programs of community support and involvement. According to D. B. Kostrzewska (2018), it affects various areas of people's lives. In addition to its integrative qualities, it contributes to physical and mental improvement. It shapes individual attitudes, motivations, beliefs, while learning to interact with others. Sports enables young people to gain self-confidence, improve their potential, learn to express their feelings, desires and emotions with respect for social rules, which is extremely important in the process of socialization and social rehabilitation.

It can play an important socialization role, inspiring the creation of educational and social programs, carried out not only in conditions of freedom. The effectiveness of this process is determined by the reliable involvement of its participants and competent organization. Sporting too sporadic, short-lived, with low intensity or inadequate cooperation with other educational institutions, may not produce the positive, expected social rehabilitation effect. Based on empirical and theoretical reports, it can be concluded that sports can be an effective instrument for resolving many contentious social issues. The level of effectiveness of its pro-social impact on the personality of the criminal depends on the following conditions:

- a) persistence and frequency: sports must be practiced for a long time and frequently;
- b) a multidimensional and person-centered approach: the people involved in the process must participate in activities that cover all their personality dimensions (social, educational, physical and cultural dimensions);
- c) networking: a coordinated program, with the participation of many social institutions;
- d) effective management: competent coordinators and implementers;
- e) awareness of the intervention goal. (Digennaro, 2010).

Sports activities constitute also an element of social rehabilitation process for those serving sentences in penitentiary units. A significant proportion of socially maladjusted people serving prison sentences are physically neglected. The reason for this is an unhygienic lifestyle or lack of exercise. This results in worsening of the hypokinetic state and disruption of psychosocial functioning (reduced control of emotions and behavior). (Rozporządzenie Ministra Sprawiedliwości z dnia 10 kwietnia 2013 r. w sprawie sposobów prowadzenia oddziaływań penitencjarnych w zakładach karnych i aresztach śledczych [Regulation of the Minister of Justice of 10 April 2013 on ways of conducting penitentiary interventions in penal institutions and detention centers], Journal of Laws 2010, No..... item 1067; Jaworska, 2012)

It should be noted that apart from the benefits such as: developing interests and talents, unleashing activity, releasing excess energy, proper cooperation

(Makrut, 2007, p. 298), coping with stress, and learning to overcome difficulties, sports also develop endurance, strength, courage, and cunning – traits that are particularly valued in criminal environments, although often used differently by them. Only through skillful management of physical activity in places of incarceration, proper education of the control of one's own behavior, the selection of appropriate exercises, attention to the observance of generally applicable rules of the game, etc., it is possible to reduce mutual hostility and build interpersonal relations based on correct and ethical social attitudes. (Jaworska, 2012, p. 330).

Therefore, it was important for this study to capture the relationship between the physical activity of convicts and their progress in social reintegration. At this stage of consideration, a practical goal emerges – substantive guidance for future modernization of reintegration interventions. Any effort to achieve the set goals must be preceded by an attempt to answer the research questions: What is the role of physical activity in the process of social reintegration of incarcerated individuals? and To what extent does the length of the sentence determine the reintegration process of inmates participating in physical activity?

One measure of the effectiveness of the process of social reintegration through physical activity is the rate of aggression among inmates. According to M. Jarvis (2003, p. 47), aggression is a behavior that results in causing annoyance to another person in verbal and nonverbal forms. Effective social reintegration among convicts should be based on reducing these unfavorable behaviors.

Material and methods

The research was conducted in two prisons in Podkarpackie Voivodeship amongst 100 men who agreed to take part in the research. To answer the research questions, groups of respondents working and not working physically in or outside prisons and attending or not attending sports activities were created. The group of respondents working physically and additionally attending physical activity classes available in prisons was the most numerous (40%). Working individuals who do not attend physical activity classes accounted for 26% of those surveyed. A separate group was made up of 20% of respondents who are reluctant to work and engage in various physical activities. 15% of inmates attend classes improving their fitness level only.

In order to clarify the main research problem, it was important to determine the variation in the length of imprisonment imposed among convicts. It turned out that the largest group was represented by those serving prison sentences of up to 3 years (39%). Those sentenced to a sentence of 3 to 5 years in prison accounted for 25%, while those in the 5–10 year range accounted for 20% of respondents. The least numerous are groups of criminals with sentences of 15 years (10%) and 25 years.

Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ) was used to collect research material (Aranowska, Rytel, Szymańska, 2015). This questionnaire includes 29 statements designed to measure aggressive tendencies (verbal as well as physical aggression) as well as hostility and anger. The task of the person filling out the questionnaire used is to rank answers to specific questions appropriately, using a scale from 1 indicating the statement — “does not describe me at all” to 5 which means “perfectly describes me”. The variety of statements in this questionnaire identifies four key factors: verbal aggression (VA) — five items, physical aggression (PA) — nine items, hostility (H) — eight items and anger (A) — seven items. The authors of the questionnaire noted that both verbal and physical aggression exhibit a behavioral component of human behavior. Hostility (feelings of resentment, grief and injustice) represents the perceptual component of behavior. The issue of anger raised in the questionnaire is related to physiological arousal and therefore exhibits the emotional component of behavior.

The second research tool used in this exploration is an interview questionnaire conducted with prison personnel. The questions used in this questionnaire were adapted from the Susceptible to Social Rehabilitation Interventions (SSRI) scale (Zieliński, 2013, p. 205). It contains five categories of questions, i.e., about the convict’s environment, hygiene and appearance, attitude to other people, to himself, and to additional activities/tasks. The employed questionnaire’s categories of questions allow the evaluation of inmates in terms of their tendency to be susceptible to the impact of the programs used in correctional facilities and relate to their daily functioning in the facility. Using the statistical functions of Cramer’s V, chi-squared test, Pearson contingency coefficient and the level of significance for the 12 degrees of freedom, it was possible to verify the results of the study.

Study results

Length of sentence is a variable that determines inmates’ susceptibility to resocialization influences and determines the level of recidivism (Zielinski, 2013). For this purpose, taking into account the organizational capacity of the study and the specifics of the criminals, five groups were formed with different isolation times. The first group is formed of respondents serving sentences of up to 3 years in prison (Table 1).

Analyzing the results of the study in Table 1, it can be concluded that people who work and participate in leisure-time physical activities showcase the lowest levels of aggression (68). Such a tendency is noticeable when interpreting physical aggression (working and physically active people – 23, working and physically inactive people – 28, non-working and physically active people – 31, non-working and physically inactive people – 30), verbal aggression (working and physically active people – 15, working and physically inactive people – 17,

non-working and physically active people – 21, non-working and physically inactive people – 19), anger (working and physically active people – 19, working and physically inactive people – 24, non-working and physically active people – 23, non-working and physically inactive people – 28) and general aggression (working and physically active people – 68, working and physically inactive people – 96, non-working and physically active people – 103, non-working and physically inactive people – 106). Only hostility is differentiated from the other components. It was revealed by a tendency to elevated levels in those actively involved in the two social structures in question (those working and physically active – 35, those working and not physically active – 27, those not working and physically active – 28 and those not working and not physically active – 29). Despite the elevated ceiling, this type of aggression does not deviate from the standardized norm (8–40).

Table 1. Types of aggression in the context of physical activity and employment of respondents serving sentences of up to 3 years in prison

Aggression		Time served up to 3 years			
Type of aggression	Standardized score ranges*	Working and physically active people**	Working and physically inactive people**	Non-working and physically active people**	Non-working and physically inactive people**
Physical aggression	9–45	23	28	31	30
Verbal aggression	5–25	15	17	21	19
Anger	7–35	19	24	23	28
Hostility	8–40	35	27	28	29
Overall level of aggression	29–145	68	96	103	106
Chi-squared test		7.5635			
Pearson contingency coefficient		0.1120			
Cramér's V		0.0572			
Deg. of freedom		12			
p		0.8182			

* standardized score ranges according to the proposed research procedure (Aranowska, Rytel, Szymańska, 2015); ** scores obtained during the survey for each group of respondents

Source: the author's own study.

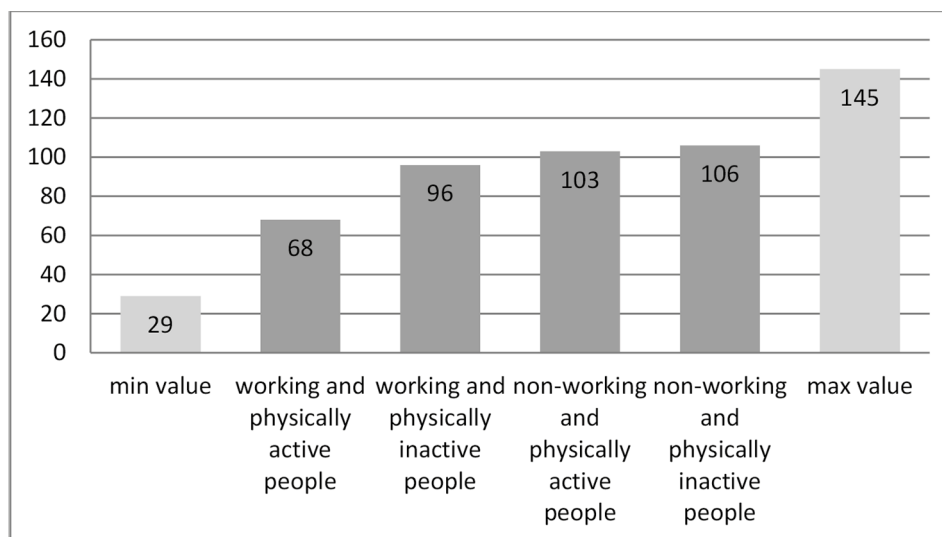


Chart 1. Overall level of aggression among inmates serving up to 3 years of prison with standardized score ranges according to the proposed research procedure (Aranowska, Rytel, Szymańska, 2015) and the scores obtained during the survey for each group of respondents

Taking into account the components of aggression (physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger and hostility), it can be concluded that with the involvement in both spheres of the studied activity, the level of general aggression of the subjects serving a prison sentence of up to 3 years simultaneously decreases (Chart 1). This aggression, taking into account the interpretive procedure of the authors of the research technique used, falls between the designated standardized limits – minimum (29) and maximum (145). It turns out that convicts involved in physical activity (working and training – 68) are far more likely to have low levels of general aggression than those not interested in this form of social functioning (not working and not training – 106). Interestingly, professional activity (103) ahead of sports (106) is a decisive submissive factor in triggering behavior that is commonly socially unacceptable.

Prison personnel indicate that convicts serving sentences of up to 3 years in prison, working and training physically take care of their own surroundings and hygiene and personal appearance. In addition, they are characterized by self-acceptance and the approval of fellow inmates, although in this group there are some convicts with problems returning from furloughs on time. A similar attitude is represented by respondents who do work but are not physically active. In this group, arrogant behavior toward staff is more common than in those fully engaged in physical activities, convicts are reluctant to cooperate in a group, and are characterized by difficulties in sharing their property. Convicts who only practice sport, in addition to acceptable behavior (attention to hygiene and personal

appearance), are inclined towards risky groups. The most maladjusted social group can be considered convicts not engaged in any additional activity. It is in their behavior that disrespect for fellow inmates and staff, unwillingness to obey the daily schedule, and a tendency to commit crimes on the prison grounds become apparent. These individuals often provoke other convicts into aggressive behavior.

The second group analyzed is those serving a prison sentence of 4 to 5 years. Table 2 presents the point correlation that occurs between the level of aggressiveness and manifestations of physical activity among convicts.

Table 2. Types of aggression in the context of physical activity and employment of respondents who are serving a prison sentence of 4 to 5 years

Aggression		Time served for 4 to 5 years			
Type of aggression	Standardized score ranges*	Working and physically active people**	Working and physically inactive people**	Non-working and physically active people**	Non-working and physically inactive people**
Physical aggression	9–45	23	29	33	31
Verbal aggression	5–25	25	20	20	22
Anger	7–35	16	25	24	25
Hostility	8–40	24	31	21	30
Overall level of aggression	29–145	76	109	104	108
Chi-squared test		7.0076			
Pearson contingency coefficient		0.1061			
Cramér's V		0.0542			
Deg. of freedom		12			
p		0.8571			

* standardized score ranges according to the proposed research procedure (Aranowska, Rytel, Szymańska 2015); ** scores obtained during the survey for each group of respondents

Source: the author's own study.

It turns out that the length of imprisonment only slightly differentiates the level of aggression in each type. It is still possible to conclude that as respondents become more involved in professional and free-time activities, their level of behavior unacceptable in prisons decreases. In contrast to the group of convicts under 3 years, those inmates preferring active social functioning are only more likely to use verbal aggression in interpersonal relationships.

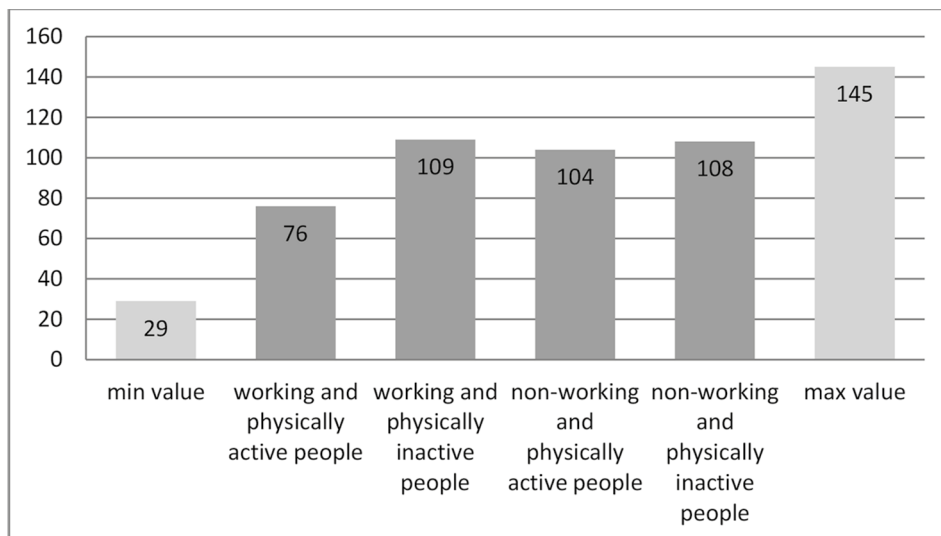


Chart 2. The overall level of aggression among inmates serving sentences of 4 to 5 years of imprisonment taking into account the standardized score ranges according to the proposed research procedure (Aranowska, Rytel, Szymańska 2015), as well as the score values obtained during the survey for each group of respondents

Also, for inmates serving 4 to 5 years of imprisonment (Chart 2), one can see a decrease in the trend of aggressive behavior with a concomitant increase in physical involvement (criminals who are professionally active and practice sports – 76; criminals who does not work or practice sports – 108). The exception is the group of employed-only inmates, where the index of their level of aggression is 109-point.

Educators point out that individuals serving a sentence of 4 to 5 years who are working and are physically active show a positive attitude towards additional activities. Individuals in this group are accepting of themselves and fellow inmates, do not provoke other convicts to aggressive behavior, and are not arrogant toward staff. In addition, it was noted that these individuals do not avoid contact with their families. Similar results in the survey were obtained by the other three specified groups of convicts. However, according to educators, people in these groups are more likely than physically active criminals to be unaccepting of fellow inmates, unwilling to help others, arrogant, aggressive and demanding of staff.

The third group analyzed is inmates in penitentiaries serving sentences of 6 to 10 years.

Table 3. Types of aggression in the context of physical activity and employment of respondents who are serving a prison sentence of 6 to 10 years

Aggression		Time served for 6 to 10 years			
Type of aggression	Standardized score ranges*	Working and physically active people**	Working and physically inactive people**	Non-working and physically active people**	Non-working and physically inactive people**
Physical aggression	9–45	21	30	32	32
Verbal aggression	5–25	16	16	18	19
Anger	7–35	19	21	21	18
Hostility	8–40	22	19	31	30
Overall level of aggression	29–145	77	89	100	99
Chi-squared test		3.7553			
Pearson contingency coefficient		0.0813			
Cramér's V		0.0414			
Deg. of freedom		12			
p		0.9875			

* standardized score ranges according to the proposed research procedure (Aranowska, Rytel, Szymańska 2015); ** scores obtained during the survey for each group of respondents

Source: the author's own study.

Respondents (Table 3) who are working and additionally physically active compared to the entire study group show the lowest level of physical aggression – 21 points. Engaging only in work (30) or only in sports activities (32) or lack of physical involvement (32) predisposes to the manifestation of more frequent physical aggression behavior. Similar trends are revealed for other types of aggression.

It turns out (Chart 3) that the lowest level of general aggression (77 points) was recorded for those who work and participate in sports activities. Along with the lack of declaration by convicts to participate in physical activities, the level of general aggression increases (those working and not physically active 89; those not working and physically active 100; those not working and not physically active 99). However, all of these behaviors fall within a standardized norm (29–145).

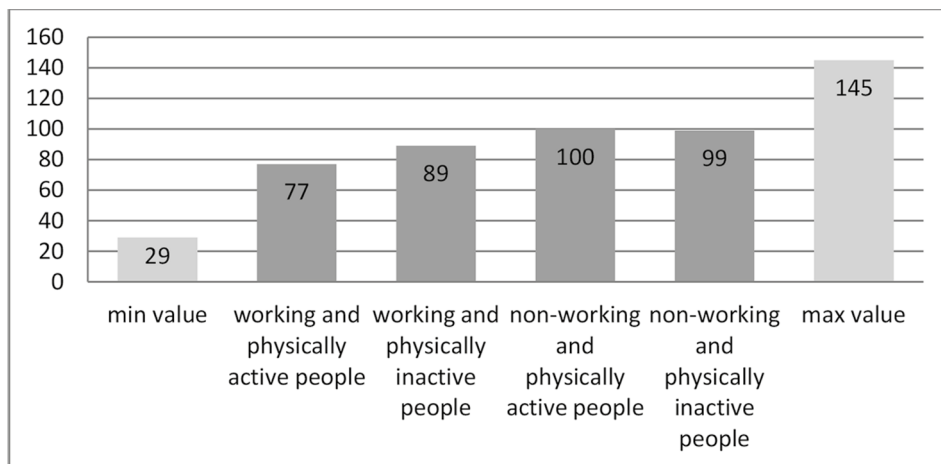


Chart 3. The overall level of aggression among inmates serving sentences of 6 to 10 years of imprisonment taking into account the standardized score ranges according to the proposed research procedure (Aranowska, Rytel, Szymańska 2015), as well as the score values obtained during the survey for each group of respondents

Educators confirm that among convicts serving prison sentences of 6 to 10 years, those who work and are physically active at the same time exhibit the lowest levels of aggressive behavior relative to inmates who are less frequently physically active. These individuals do not provoke fellow inmates to aggressive behavior, generally do not use vulgarities in conversations with staff. These convicts respond well to program resocialization activities. Higher levels of aggression and social maladjustment are shown by convicts who have taken up employment but do not attend sports activities. This group of convicts is characterized by compliance with the prison's daily schedule but is reluctant to participate in additional activities. Similar point scores were obtained by groups among which, there are people who are not working and are physically active or inactive. Both groups show a lack of respect for other people, an unwillingness to work together in groups, and a lack of willingness to help others.

A similar distribution of scores is seen among those serving 11–15 years of imprisonment (Table 4). As criminals' physical involvement increases, their propensity for aggressive behavior decreases.

Such a condition is confirmed by analysis of general aggression (Chart 4) and the opinions of prison educators. Although the level of this aggression is within the designated norm (29–145), tendencies of lowering the level of aggression in the respondents as a result of their greater professional and leisure involvement are revealed.

Table 4. Types of aggression in the context of physical activity and employment of respondents who are serving a prison sentence of 11 to 15 years

Aggression		Time served for 11 to 15 years			
Type of aggression	Standardized score ranges*	Working and physically active people**	Working and physically inactive people**	Non-working and physically active people**	Non-working and physically inactive people**
Physical aggression	9–45	27	26	33	39
Verbal aggression	5–25	12	15	19	22
Anger	7–35	20	24	22	24
Hostility	8–40	24	30	29	34
Overall level of aggression	29–145	83	94	103	119
Chi-squared test		2.2999			
Pearson contingency coefficient		0.0609			
Cramér's V		0.0310			
Deg. of freedom		12			
p		0.9988			

* standardized score ranges according to the proposed research procedure (Aranowska, Rytel, Szymańska, 2015); ** scores obtained during the survey for each group of respondents

Source: the author's own study.

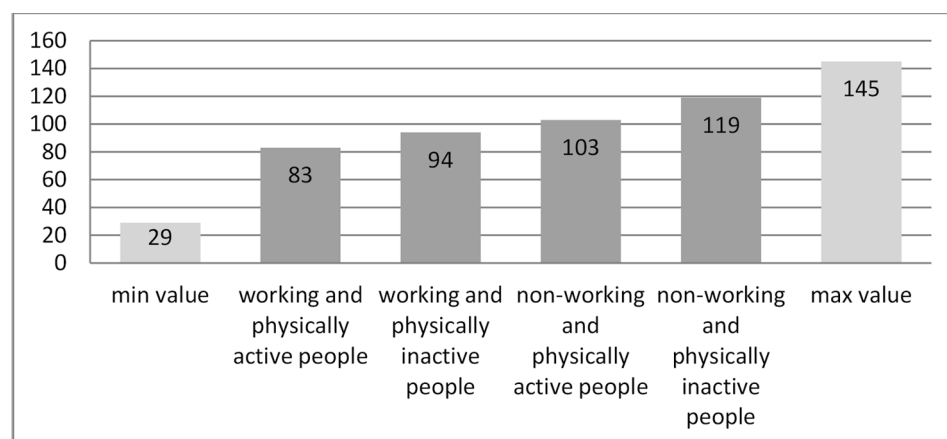


Chart 4. The overall level of aggression among inmates serving sentences of 11 to 15 years of imprisonment taking into account the standardized score ranges according to the proposed research procedure (Aranowska, Rytel, Szymańska, 2015), as well as the score values obtained during the survey for each group of respondents

The least aggressive and responsive to resocialization interventions group of convicts are those who are in employment and physically active. These convicts exhibit the positive behaviors listed in the SSRI scale questionnaire. According to educators, the exceptions are the issue of untimely return from temporary release and unfounded demanding attitude. The study showed that convicts who are not working and are physically inactive have problems accepting other inmates, against whom they often prefer aggressive behavior. They also occasionally show problems with self-acceptance (self-harm, inability to explain one's behavior, and a tendency to act in violation of the rules and regulations). These convicts do not attend program resocialization classes.

Table 5. Types of aggression in the context of physical activity and employment of respondents who are serving a prison sentence of 16 to 25 years

Aggression		Time served for 16 to 25 years			
Type of aggression	Standardized score ranges*	Working and physically active people**	Working and physically inactive people**	Non-working and physically active people**	Non-working and physically inactive people**
Physical aggression	9–45	21	31	0	37
Verbal aggression	5–25	14	18	0	23
Anger	7–35	16	26	0	29
Hostility	8–40	22	24	0	37
Overall level of aggression	29–145	72	99	0	126
Chi-squared test		1.2386625			
Pearson contingency coefficient		0.0533			
Cramér's V		0.0323			
Deg. of freedom		8			
p		0.9962			

* standardized score ranges according to the proposed research procedure (Aranowska, Rytel, Szymańska, 2015); ** scores obtained during the survey for each group of respondents

Source: the author's own study.

A similar trend to the previously discussed point distributions is seen among convicts serving prison terms of 16 to 25 years (Table 5). Those who are working and physically active are characterized by physical aggression at 21 points, verbal

aggression at 14, anger at 16 and hostility at 22. The overall level falls within the normal range and is lowest in physically engaged individuals (72).

By depicting the results of the study graphically (Chart 5), it was possible to see the variation in the level of general aggression among convicts in the context of their physical activity. The lowest levels of this aggression are shown by those who are working and physically active, with 72 points. The 99-point score was achieved by those who work but do not take advantage of physical activities at the penitentiary. The highest score, at 126 points with a standardized maximum of 145 points, was given to those who were not working and were physically inactive while serving their isolation sentence.

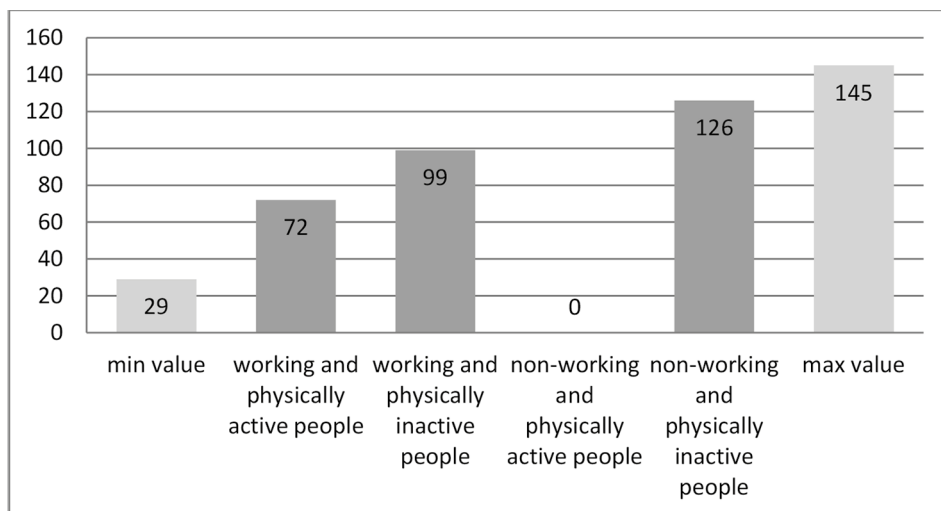


Chart 5. The overall level of aggression among inmates serving 16 to 25 years of imprisonment taking into account the standardized score ranges according to the proposed research procedure (Aranowska, Rytel, Szymańska 2015), as well as the scores obtained during the survey for each group of respondents

It turns out that inmates with sentences of up to 25 years of imprisonment who are employed and physically active are characterized by optimal motivation for additional activities, positive attitudes towards themselves and other people, and do not provoke other inmates to aggressive behavior. They take care of their appearance and their own hygiene. On the other hand, convicts who work and are physically inactive find it difficult to adapt to the prevailing daily schedule in the penitentiary. These people do not take care of their own surroundings and personal hygiene. The highest level of aggression and the lowest level of effectiveness of rehabilitation interventions is noticeable among prisoners who do not work and do not attend sports activities. Individuals in this study group often get involved in conflicts with other inmates, often use vulgarities, rarely contact their families and prefer aggressive behavior as a way to solve problems that arise.

Conclusions

An essential aspect of this exploration was capturing the correlation between the broader physical activity of criminals and their susceptibility to reintegration interventions. The statistical function used does not confirm statistically significant variation among the subjects. However, the analysis of the results obtained from the study has led to the most important conclusion. It turns out that engaging in physical activity can become one of the ways to support the process of reintegrating criminals into society and overcoming social maladjustment. Interestingly, the type of this activity determines the variation in the severity of the convict's antagonistic-destructive behavior. It can be stated that one of the effective ways of reintegrating a person is through their active participation in sports activities. Through this participation, the level of aggression decreases regardless of its type, and the behavior of the subjects during social exposure does not significantly deviate from socially acceptable norms. This prospectively positive state may be reinforced by the fact that people deprived of their liberty are becoming active in the labor market. Vocational work, in addition to its adaptive function, has modernizing qualities for human personality. It is known that activity, even at the cellular level, is a decisive factor for the survival of the human being. Therefore, any motor stagnation can lead to adverse effects on the human body and, thus, hinder the social reintegration of criminals.

The presented research results do not constitute a complete analysis of the discussed issue. They only indicate specific trends related to the described problem and must be comprehensively recognized in addressing the highly significant issue of the social rehabilitation of individuals exhibiting socially unacceptable behaviors. Expanding the scope of research and increasing their diversity (e.g., based on gender, etc.) can enhance the completeness of these research inquiries, contributing to the development of new, more effective strategies for rehabilitative interventions.

Physical activity used as a tool in the reintegration process should be based on sociocentric, allocentric, intellectual, perfectionist, emotional, aesthetic, health-related and moral values (Makurat, 2007, p. 298). It should be an inseparable method of reintegration work in the environment of socially maladjusted children, youth, and adults. The value of this activity in the process of reintegrating convicted individuals is conditioned by the appropriate selection of actions, including sports exercises, their proper preparation, and supervision, so that they effectively contribute to the improvement and maintenance of psychosocial health.

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