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# Pleasant Activities among Young Adults and Their Lack during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

The pandemic COVID-19 burst in the Slovak Republic in March of the 2020 year. Subsequently, the schools were closed on the 10th of March and the everyday life in the country was for a long uncertain time questionable. The curfew slowed down the outdoor activities and has brought sudden changes also in the lives of young active people. This can be a time of uncertainty, and the stress. To do some pleasant activities can act as a stress reliever, but in the pandemic time not all pleasant activities can be realized. We were interested in lack of doing pleasant activities during the pandemic COVID-19 time. We analyzed 195 different activities in life of young mostly sporting people, whether a given activity is popular and pleasant for individuals, the occurrence and frequency of activity implementation before pandemic, during pandemic and feelings the lack of this activity during pandemic. We found out the most pleasant activity for men – non-organized, spontaneous sporting activity and for women – laughing. We recorded statistically significant decline  $t(14.856) = 48, p < .001$  in frequency of doing pleasant activities in comparison before and during COVID-19. The most missing activity was inviting friends' visits.

**Keywords:** enjoyability, popularity of activities, frequency before COVID-19, frequency during COVID-19, feelings of lack

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The COVID-19 pandemic and the change of standard

The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic re-organized daily schedule of being and brought new requirements on adapting to new condition's existence in a day-by-day life. COVID-19 pandemics brought changes in human lives and the impact of heavy pressure on mental perceptions of these changed conditions. Changes, to what they used to live, can bring the feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and fear. Any change brings stress. The rapid changes without any preparation for the new circumstances influenced lifestyle, behavior at work (home office), and in common life in the family (home office and child's distance education at home).

People isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns is nothing exceptional in many European countries during the period of March 2020 and April 2021. But is exceptional for humans, who are the race of social life. During the pandemic COVID-19 isolation brings the symptom of being bored even if a man engages in the

things that usually used to like. COVID-19 and mental health is a link that has recently taken up many pages in scientific journals. Loss of standard life, loss of common activities, which were used to do during the day, during the month causes some problems to someone that can result in worsening mental health or mood disorders. The fear and doubt of the unknown and at the same time very dangerous does not help with mental health. When people can live with some fun and have a pleasant time it overshadows the worries, stress, fear, anxiety, inconclusiveness, and hopelessness that lie heavy on the mind. A human can feel well and satisfied when he/she makes activities, which are pleasurable for him/her. Not all activities are pleasant for all. There are activities pleasant for somebody, which are not so pleasant for any other person. A person lives his/her life with the activities that form a mosaic of wanted and also unwanted situations. If they are pleasant for a person, his/her life is peaceful and mostly satisfying. But there are unwanted situations that evoke uncomfortable feelings in a person. The COVID-19 pandemic is an unwanted situation with the unexpected prediction and till this time with 3,477,917 deaths worldwide (24th of May 2021). It brings fear, dissatisfaction with the emerging changes in everyday life, which is reflected in people's quality of life. The life at this time of COVID-19 is burdensome. Persistently and severely decreased interest or pleasure in most daily activities is defined as anhedonia [1, 2]. Authors widen the definition to knowledge that it can be decrement of pleasurable activities, or even loss of interest to action in order to get pleasure. The powerful motivational process of doing something or being captivated by an object and can feel enjoyable feelings, which are worth to stay with this activity and the object, and may have the value of further involvement in or further exploration is named interest [3]. Interest increases attention and engagement. In Levinas philosophy [4] he "enjoy thing for themselves and not for any purpose, practical or intellectual. This enjoyment is the very basis of the happiness." And Levinas continued thinking about enjoyment by [5]: "In enjoyment I am absolutely for myself. Egoist without reference to the other, I am alone without solitude". And by [6] some idea of Levinas that before any reflection, any return upon oneself enjoyment is an enjoying of enjoyment, and "enjoyment is an ineluctable moment of sensitivity".

The research of [7] examined the relationship between engaging in pleasant activities and mood as a function of age, sex, and diagnostic group. Results indicate that a substantial and significant relationship existed between mood level and the number of pleasant activities engaged in for all groups. Online survey of [8] and its results found out that burden by COVID-19 was significantly positively associated with depression symptoms, while it was significantly negatively linked to physical activity. Similar result patterns were found in all country-specific samples Germany, Italy, Russia, Spain, and the present cross-national findings emphasize the protective effect of physical activity specifically in times of Covid-19. Gender differences were found in a Canadian study of [9]. Women were significantly less physically active than men. Women who engaged in more physical activity had improved mental health scores. Less physical activity due to COVID-19 reported significantly lower mental health scores, lower social and emotional and psychological well-being, and significantly higher generalized anxiety. Physical disability was in the study of [10] associated with greater depressive symptoms and lower positive affect and meaning in life through reduced frequency of pleasant activities. The extent of performing the meaningful activities during COVID-19 lockdown in Belgium was positively related to adults' mental health [11].

Also, some kind of indication in mental health like depressive symptoms [12] in residents of the United States and Japan, depression, functionality, and socio-demographic variables [13] studied in Brazil, possible increase in mental health illnesses in the United States as a consequence of the pandemic [14], loss of meaningful

activities was strongly related to mental health [11]. The exercise as a coping strategy in the challenges of distancing during pandemic and social isolation did not bring the differences between those individuals who exercised and those who did not [4].

Pleasant activities as a part of human beings in a leisure time are the opposite activities to work, to duties. Opposite to work is a game. But [15] said that the game can be work for someone and fun for others. The game is not just a matter of leisure time, or even pastime, because from childhood, through youth to old age, the game permeates human life as a basic existential phenomenon [16]. The play is considered a human activity, but also a certain manifestation of behavior, which brings satisfaction and pleasure directly and facilitates the condition for survival [17].

When the unusual time occurs, some psychic difficulties occur too. Difficulties with sleep are either sleeping far less than is used to and in this manner being exhausted or far more, but being not enough rested, what can lead also to persistent exhaustion. Being exhausted causes negative mood, loss of pleasure and sadness. Loss of pleasure in the living own life can cause loss of sleep and can cause negative mood and loss of interest of doing any activities. The guidelines for sleep for adolescent and young people should be between eight and ten hours. Sleep is essential for recovery. Sleep is important for both, men and women, athletes, non-athletes, young and adults. The study of [18] explored the positive association of frequency of engagement in pleasant events and global sleep quality.

## **2. Methods**

### **2.1 Study design and data collection**

The objective of this study was to widen the knowledge about gender differences in the popularity of pleasant activities, their changes in frequency during COVID-19 compared to standard life before COVID-19, and the feelings of lack of these activities. The additional objective was to find out the general health and self-esteem of the persons from the sample.

We found out in the anamnestic data the gender, age, body height, body weight, Body Mass Index (BMI), waist circumference, hip circumference, Waist to Hip ratio (WHR), sporting activity – regularly organized, regularly recreational non-organized, non-regularly recreational, non-active in sporting activity, feelings of health, change the body weight during COVID-19 – no change or change (gain the weight in kg, lose the weight in kg).

In our study, we were interested about the enjoyability, popularity of selected pleasant activities, their frequency of doing before COVID-19, frequency of doing during COVID-19 and feelings of lack of these activities in young mostly sporting adults.

#### *2.1.1 Participants*

Almost all of total of 112 university students (men and women) were recruited from the Comenius University in Bratislava, the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport. There were 63 men (56.3%) and 49 women (43.8%). All students were from the Master study grade of the faculty and are being trained as future physical education teachers with the subsequential subject (e.g., Biology, English language and literature, Geography) or sport coach and physical education teacher. Mean age of the sample was 24.46 (SD = 2.63), minimum age 21 years and maximum 40 years, mean age of men was 24.97 (SD = 3.08), mean age of women was 23.82 (SD = 1.80).

All the participants men and women were involved in sporting activity. Mostly regularly, with the frequency at least twice in a week, in a weekly extent minimum



of two hours (120 minutes). Within these criteria some of them exercised or played sports organized in a kind of organization (51.79%). Their sports age (number of years doing or playing sports in the sports organizations) were 13.48 (SD = 5.0) years in men, and 11.58 (SD = 4.88) years in women. They, who were not organized in any sports organization, exercised or played sports recreationally, spontaneously individual or with someone's else (62.50%). More of them exercised or played sports organized, and recreationally too.

The abbreviations in the whole text: n = number of participants or frequencies; % = percentage.

### 2.1.2 Questionnaire pleasant activities and their lack during COVID-19

Other research data we found out were daily minutes or hours of workload engagement, study load in school, study preparation for school, activities with mobile phone, activities on the computer, and sleep. The sum of these activities gave the work and study engagement, sleep as the time for recovery and the remainder to 24 hours was the time for pleasant activities.

We analyzed 195 different activities in life of people if given activity is popular and pleasant for individuals, the occurrence and frequency of activity implementation before pandemic time, during pandemic time and the lack of this activity during pandemic in the lives of young people. We divided the activities in several subscales: social activities (SA; n = 25), sporting activities (SpA; n = 36), activities joined with sporting activities (SpA joined; n = 5), interests activities (IA; n = 21), passive and relaxation activities (PRA; n = 34), cultural activities (CA; n = 16), educational and work professional activities (EPA; n = 13), household care activities (HCA; n = 5), intimate and personal activities (IPA; n = 10), miscellaneous other activities (MA; n = 12), activities joined with relocation on foot or by means of transport (MFMT; n = 6), activities joined with the provision of essential living necessities – food, etc. (PLNF; n = 12).

Respondents indicated the level of the popularity (enjoyability), frequency before COVID-19, frequency during COVID-19 and lack of activities (missing activities) during COVID-19 in such a **Table 1** with 195 determined activities inspired by and abstracted from Pleasant Events Schedule (PES) [19], Pleasant Activities list (PAL) [20, 21] and Pleasurable Activities List [22].

The respondents rated the activity for the popularity, enjoyability with the 3-point scale (0–2):

- 0 – this activity is not pleasant for me,
- 1 – this activity is pleasant for me,
- 2 – this activity is very pleasant for me.

Then indicated the frequency of the activity during the standard month before COVID-19 with the 3-point scale (0–2):

- 0 – before COVID-19 this did not happen in the 30 days,
- 1 – before COVID-19 this happened a few times (1 to 6) in the 30 days,
- 2 – before COVID-19 this happened often (7 or more times) in the 30 days,

Then the frequency of the activity during COVID-19 (December or January 2020) with the 3-point scale (0–2):

- 0 – during COVID-19 this has not happened in the 30 days,
- 1 – during COVID-19 this has happened a few times (1 to 6) in the 30 days,
- 2 – during COVID-19 this has happened often (7 or more times) in the 30 days,

And added scale for decision the level of missing activity during COVID-19 with the 4-point scale (0–3):

- 0 – I did not miss this activity at all,
- 1 – I missed this activity a bit,

Activity	1. This activity (popularity, enjoyability)			2. Before COVID-19 (frequency of doing)			3. During COVID-19 (frequency of doing)			4. During COVID-19 (missing)			
	Is not pleasant for me	Is pleasant for me	Is very pleasant for me	This did not happen in the 30 days	This happened a few times (1 to 6) in the 30 days	This happened often (7 or more) in the 30 days	This has not happened in the 30 days	This has happened a few times (1 to 6) in the 30 days	This has happened often (7 or more) in the 30 days	I did not miss this activity at all	I missed this activity a bit	I missed this activity very much	I did not miss this activity, because I did it daily
A	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	3

**Table 1.** Selected pleasant activity list and the level of popularity, enjoyability, the level of frequency before and during COVID-19, and the level of lack of these activities during COVID-19.

2 – I missed this activity very much,

3 – I did not miss this activity, because I did it daily.

Self-reported inventory showed the activities, which young people were enjoyed with during the period of COVID-19 pandemic. The frequency focused on frequency in the month.

Questionnaire figured out the number of pleasant activities engaged in the days for 30 days [19]. It identified the popularity, enjoyability of the submitted activities. It pointed out activities which people concern as pleasurable or needed for life. Not all activities from the list were enjoyable or popular for all, but all can be realized and for someone can be the most helpful thing to do to release the stress, bad mood or overcome some personal problems.

With the data we calculated the obtained pleasure (frequency times enjoyability).

Scores from the questionnaire will be differentiated and compared between men and women.

For the statistical analysis we used the statistical program IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 17 for Windows; SPSS, Chicago, IL, USA). Significance was considered at  $p < .05$ . Student's t-test, Mann-Whitney U Test, and Wilcoxon Test were taken in consideration of findings of statistical differences according to test of normality. We hypothesized that the mean values of the investigated research data would differ as a function of gender (men and women).

For better differentiation and understanding of the results we set several tasks.

Tasks

1. To find out and compare the popularity of the pleasant activities between men and women.
2. To find out and compare the frequency of pleasant activities before and during COVID-19 between men and women.
3. To find out and compare the lack of pleasant activities during COVID-19 between men and women.

### **3. Results**

#### **3.1 Popularity and enjoyability of the activities**

The engagement in the pleasant activities can derive enjoyment from this involving. Life is better when the mood is in a positive manner and then the feelings are better. We divided 195 activities in several subscales: social activities (SA;  $n = 25$ ), sporting activities (SpA;  $n = 36$ ), activities joined with sporting activities (SpA joined;  $n = 5$ ), interests activities (IA;  $n = 21$ ), passive and relaxation activities (PRA;  $n = 34$ ), cultural activities (CA;  $n = 16$ ), educational and work professional activities (EPA;  $n = 13$ ), household care activities (HCA;  $n = 5$ ), intimate and personal activities (IPA;  $n = 10$ ), miscellaneous other activities (MA;  $n = 12$ ), activities joined with relocation on foot or by means of transport (MFMT;  $n = 6$ ), activities joined with the provision of essential necessities – food, etc. (PLNF;  $n = 12$ ). In the list there were many activities which are pleasant to someone but can be unpleasant or indifferent to others. Each can decide how to evaluate these activities and which score should be given according to the inner opinion.

Several identical rankings can be found in comparison of individual activities within the specified subscales, but this does not mean that the mean of enjoyability score is the same. Young people, according to the same place, do not like to argue with someone and criticize someone in the framework of social relationship. In the

framework of educational and work professional activities they do not like writing professional and scientific texts and articles. This is very interesting because these young people are mostly students in the final year of the study at the Comenius University in Bratislava, the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, and at the time of completing the questionnaire, they were in the phase of focusing to fulfill their study obligations, including writing professional scientific texts because of their master thesis. They do not like shopping at the clothing market, travel in the public transport, and do not like online buying grocery and household items. Dieting is also not the question for these young sports people. On the opposite side within the subscales and the same activities placed from above of the list they like non-organized, spontaneous sporting activity, showering, being in a countryside or in nature, searching for private information on the Internet, visiting the cinema and rock and pop concert, eating a healthy food, and laughing.

Given all pleasant activities for men and women in the list according to reached scores the **Table 2** presents the rankings the first five most popular activities and the activities in the last five positions from the list.

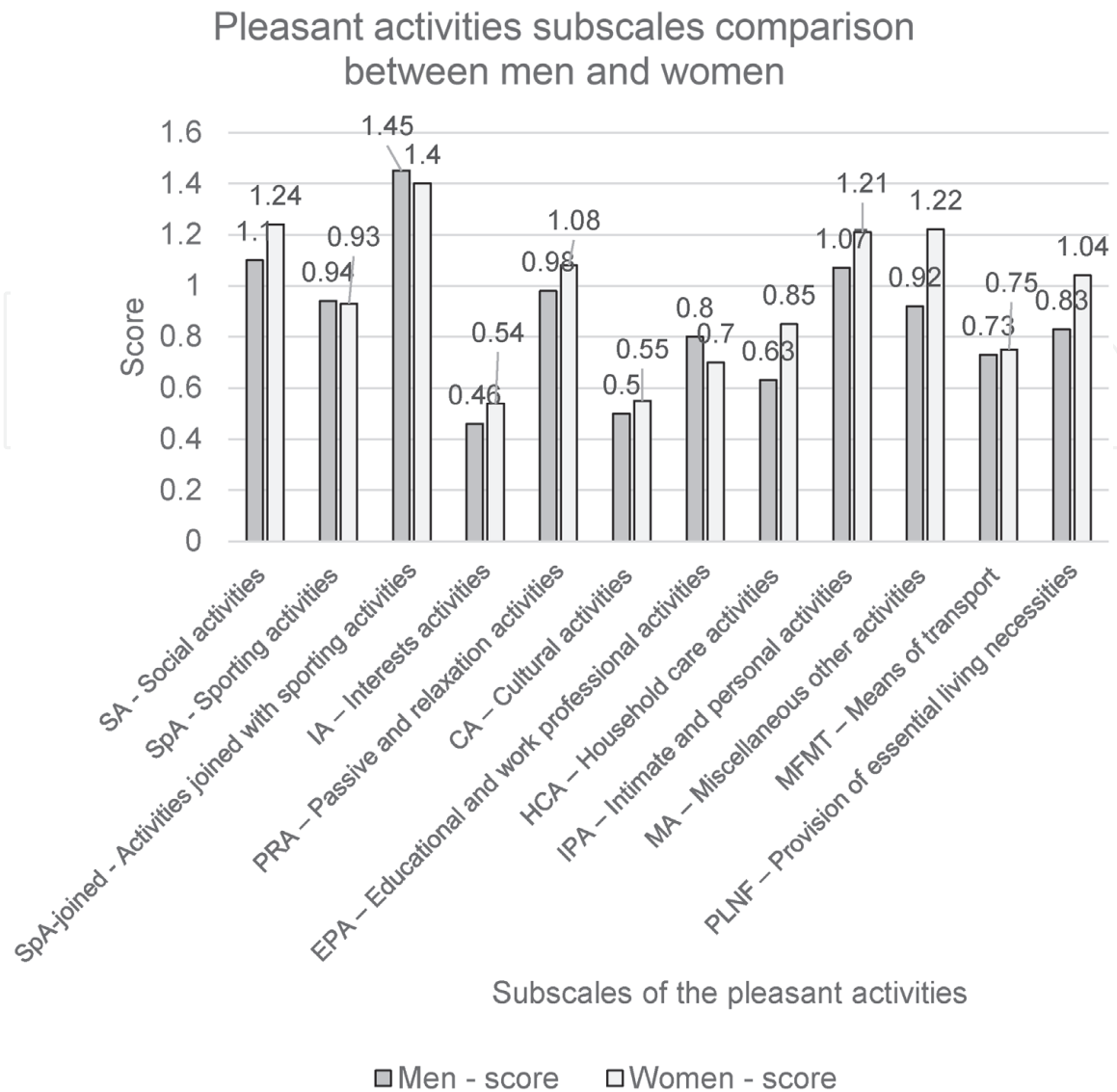
A comparison of the reached scores from all activity scores between men and women (**Figure 1**) reveals statistical significant differences for women in SA – Social activities  $t(98.505) = -2.266, p = .026$ ; in PRA – Passive and relaxation activities  $t(108.369) = -2.218, p = .029$ ; in IPA – Intimate and personal activities  $t(99.068) = -2.3776, p = .019$ ; in MA – Miscellaneous other activities  $t(108.154) = -3.834, p = .000$ ; PLNF – Provision of living necessities  $t(102.173) = -3.266, p = .001$ , in IA – Interest activities  $U = 1205.000, p = .047$ ; HCA – Household care activities  $U = 1058.000, p = .004$ .

The highest score of popularity reached both in men and women the subscale SpA – joined – activities joined with sporting activity (1.45 in men, and 1.4 in women). The lowest score was devoted both in men and women too to a subscale IA – interest activities (0.46 in men, and 0.54 in women).

Score	Overall rankings of pleasant activities (Men)	Rankings	Overall rankings of pleasant activities (Women)	Score
1.81	SpA joined – Non-organized, spontaneous sporting activity.	1.	PRA – Laughing.	1.90
1.73	IPA – Making love.	2.	PRA – Being in the countryside or in nature	1.88
1.71	SpA – Strengthening exercises.	3.	PRA – Walks, strolls.	1.86
1.71	PRA – Laughing.	4.	SpA joined – Non-organized, spontaneous sporting activity.	1.80
1.67	SpA. Exercising on the outdoor field for sports.	5.	MA – Holidays in homeland in Slovakia – sightseeing.	1.80
0.11	CA – Playing musical instrument – performance.	191.	PRA – Being alone and feeling lonely.	0.06
0.10	CA – Singing in a choir or a band.	192.	CA – Singing for others – performance.	0.06
0.08	SA – Arguing with someone.	193.	CA – Playing musical instrument – performance.	0.06
0.08	IA – Handmade knitting, crocheting, sewing, embroidery.	194.	SA – Arguing with someone.	0.04
0.06	IA – Composing songs, music.	195.	IA – Hobby – writing prose.	0.00

**Table 2.**  
*The first five places and the last five places in the overall rankings of the pleasant activities.*





**Figure 1.** Pleasant activities subscales comparison between men and women. No statistical significant differences were found in SpA, Sporting activities; SpA-joined, Activities joined with sporting activities; CA, Cultural activities; EPA, Educational and work professional activities; MFMT, activities joined with relocation on foot or by means of transport.

In nine comparison cases, women scored higher on the subscales of pleasant activities (SA – social activities, IA – interest activities, PRA – passive and relaxation activities, CA – cultural activities, HCA – household care activities, IPA – intimate and personal activities, MA – miscellaneous other activities, MFMT – Activities joined with relocation on foot or by means of transport, and PLNF – Activities joined with the provision of essential living necessities – food, etc.). Males obtained higher scores in only three subscales of pleasant activities (Spa – sporting activities, SpA – joined – activities joined with sporting activity, and EPA – Educational and work professional activities). The mean score of all pleasant activities for men is 0.87 (SD = 0.258) and for women 0.96 (SD = 0.181). The comparison of these results between men and women presents statistically significant difference  $t(108.914) = -2.250, p = .026$ , which is in favor of women.

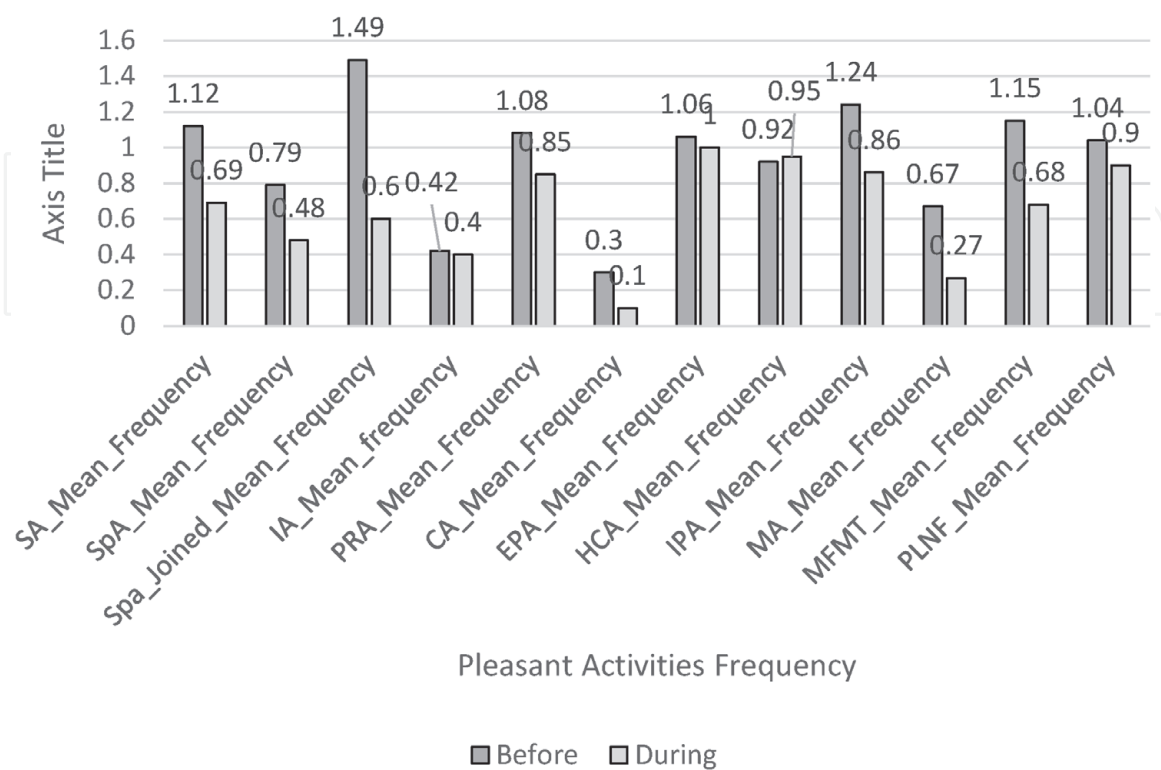
### 3.2 Frequency of pleasant activities before and during COVID-19

Frequency is the number of occurrences of a repeating event per unit of time. We measured the frequency of occurrence of the repeating pleasant activities in a

month (0 – this did not happen in the 30 days, 1 – this happened a few times (1 to 6) in the 30 days, 2 – this happened often (7 or more times) in the 30 days. The mean score was calculated as the mean of the scores 0–2.

The highest frequency of doing activities before COVID-19 in men (**Figure 2**) had activities joined with sporting activity (SpA – joined), followed by the intimate and personal activities (IPA), miscellaneous other activities (MA), social activities (SA), and passive and relaxation activities (PRA). The lowest frequency of doing activities before COVID-19 in men was by the subscale of cultural activities (CA), followed by the subscale of interest activities (IA). The biggest difference between the mean score of the frequency of doing pleasant activities before COVID-19 and during COVID-19 was recorded for the following subscales: SpA – joined – activities joined with sporting activity ( $\Delta = .89$ ); MFMT – activities joined with relocation on foot or by means of transport ( $\Delta = .47$ ); SA – social activities ( $\Delta = .43$ ); MA – miscellaneous other activities ( $\Delta = .40$ ); IPA – intimate and personal activities ( $\Delta = .38$ ); SpA – sporting activities ( $\Delta = .31$ ).

A Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed that the mean score of frequency of doing the activities before and during pandemic COVID-19 in men refers to the statistically significant changes in all activities joined in the subscales: SA – Social activities ( $Z = -6.850, p < .001$ ); SpA – Sporting activities ( $Z = -6.867, p < .001$ ); SpA – joined – Activities joined with sporting activities ( $Z = -6.576, p < .001$ ); PRA – Passive and relaxation activities ( $Z = -6.777, p < .001$ ); CA – Cultural activities ( $Z = -6.182, p < .001$ ); EPA – Educational and work professional activities ( $Z = -1.865, p = .033$ ); IPA - intimate and personal activities ( $Z = -6.580, p < .001$ ); MA – miscellaneous other activities ( $Z = -6.637, p < .001$ ); MFMT – Activities joined with relocation on foot or by means of transport ( $Z = -6.232, p < .001$ ); PLNF – Activities joined with the provision of essential living necessities – food ( $Z = -4.216, p < .001$ ); except the activities from the two subscales IA – Interest activities ( $Z = -.908, p = .193$ ) and HCA – Household care activities ( $Z = -.531, p = .312$ ).

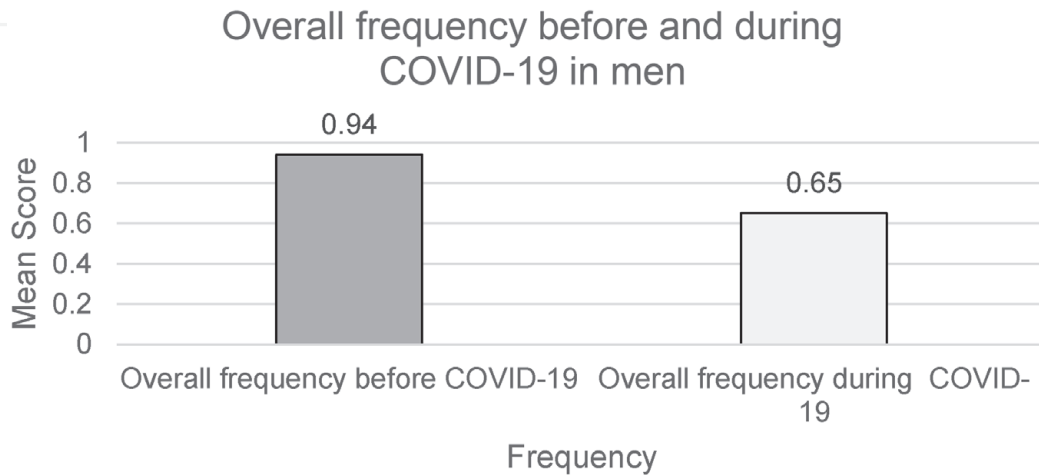


**Figure 2.**  
 Frequency of pleasant activities before and during COVID-19 in men.

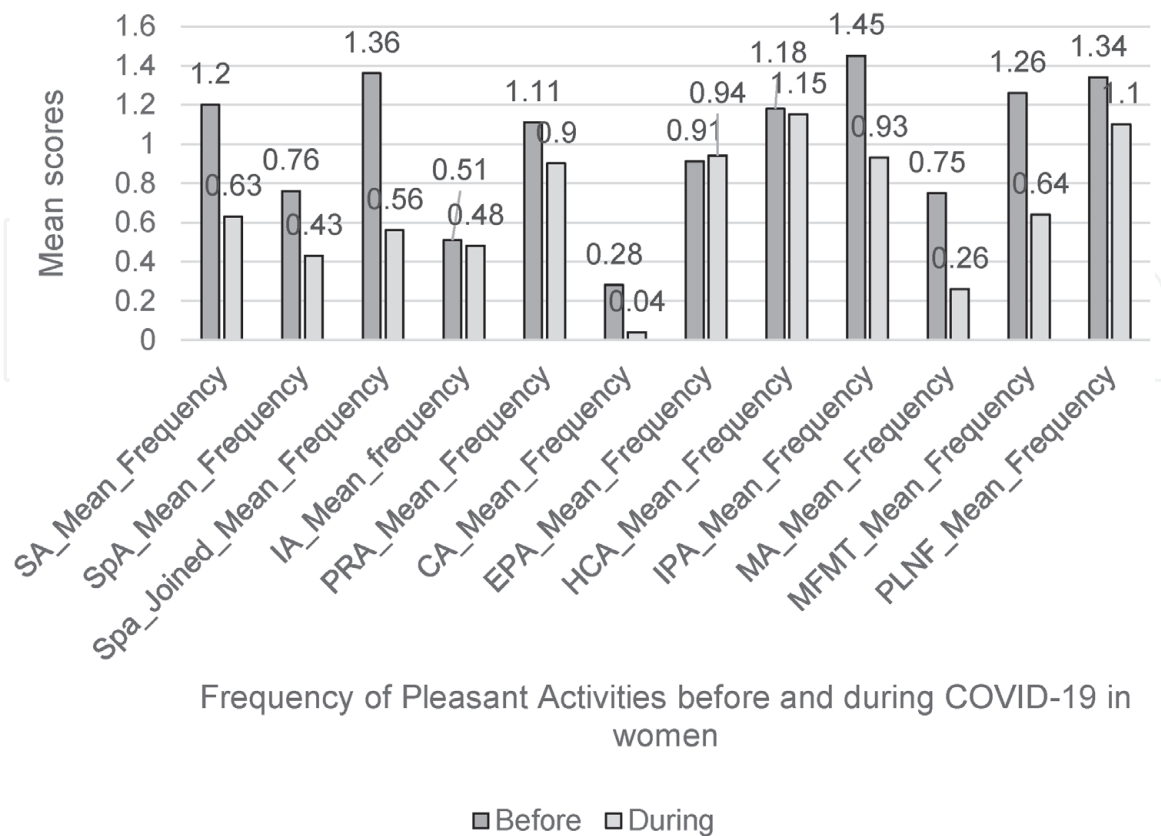
We recorded decline in overall frequency of doing pleasant activities in men during pandemic COVID-19 in comparison to the standard monthly doing these activities before pandemic COVID-19 (**Figure 3**). The decline represented statistically significant difference  $t(16.513) = 62, p < .001$ .

The same data like in men we monitored in women (**Figure 4**).

The highest mean score in frequency of doing pleasant activities before COVID-19 reached women in subscales IPA – intimate and personal activities, followed with subscales SpA – joined – activities joined with sporting activity, PLNF - activities joined with the provision of essential living necessities – food, etc., and MFMT – activities joined with relocation on foot or by means of transport. The lowest



**Figure 3.**  
The overall frequency of doing activities before COVID-19 and during COVID-19 in men.



**Figure 4.**  
Frequency of pleasant activities before and during COVID-19 in women.

frequency of doing activities before COVID-19 in women was by the subscale of cultural activities (CA), followed by the subscale of interest activities (IA).

We found the biggest differences between the mean score of frequency of doing before and during pandemic COVID-19 in following subscales: SpA – joined – activities joined with sporting activity ( $\Delta = .80$ ); MFMT – activities joined with relocation on foot or by means of transport ( $\Delta = .62$ ); SA – social activities ( $\Delta = .57$ ); and IPA – intimate and personal activities ( $\Delta = .52$ ).

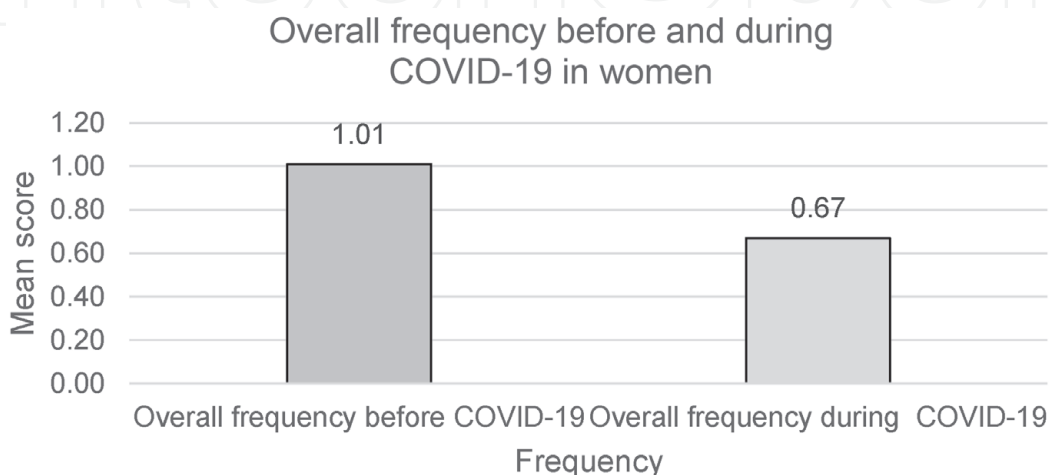
A Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed that the mean score of frequency of doing the activities before and during pandemic COVID-19 in women refers to the statistically significant changes in all activities joined in the subscales: SA – Social activities ( $Z = -6.101, p < .001$ ); SpA – Sporting activities ( $Z = -3.646, p < .001$ ); SpA – joined – Activities joined with sporting activities ( $Z = -5.790, p < .001$ ); PRA – Passive and relaxation activities ( $Z = -5.790, p < .001$ ); CA – Cultural activities ( $Z = -5.717, p < .001$ ); IPA – intimate and personal activities ( $Z = -6.105, p < .001$ ); MA – miscellaneous other activities ( $Z = -5.828, p < .001$ ); MFMT – Activities joined with relocation on foot or by means of transport ( $Z = -5.850, p < .001$ ); PLNF – Activities joined with the provision of essential living necessities – food ( $Z = -4.945, p < .001$ ); except the activities from the two subscales IA – Interest activities ( $Z = -1.926, p = .054$ ), EPA – educational and work professional activities ( $Z = -.806, p = .420$ ), and HCA – Household care activities ( $Z = -.951, p = .342$ ).

We recorded decline in overall frequency of doing pleasant activities in women too during pandemic COVID-19 in comparison to the standard monthly doing these activities before pandemic COVID-19 (Figure 5). The decline represented statistically significant difference  $t(14.856) = 48, p < .001$ .

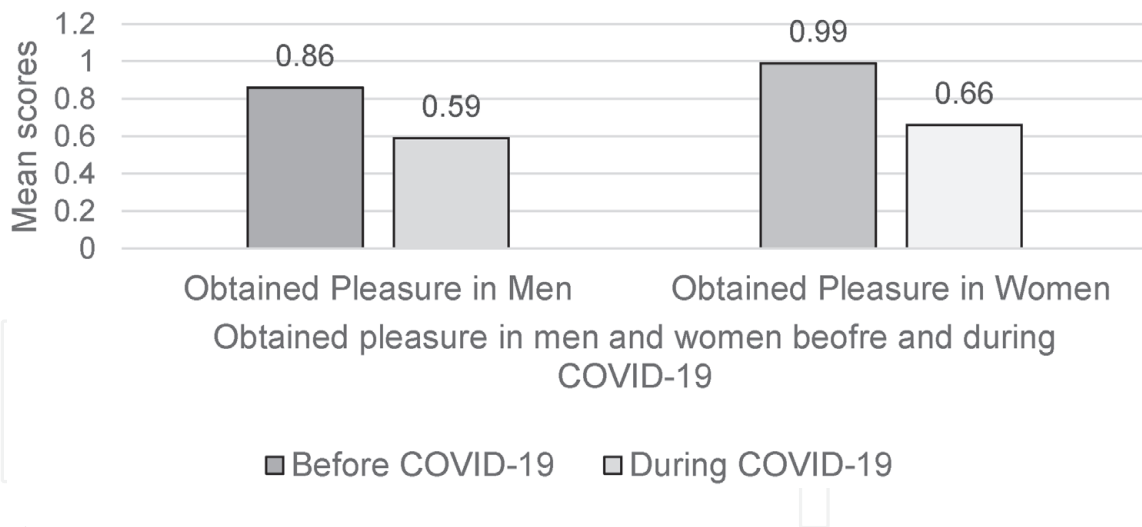
### 3.3 Obtained pleasure

An obtained pleasure score [19], in our case (Figure 6) is created by multiplying the overall frequency score by the overall popularity, enjoyability of all 195 pleasant activities in men and separately in women. Obtained pleasure is popularity (enjoyability) times frequency and is an approximate measure of response-contingent positive reinforcement (ibid).

Statistically significant differences were found in comparison of obtained pleasure in men and in women too. Obtained pleasure before COVID-19 in comparison to obtained pleasure during COVID-19 in men and in women shows statistical significant differences in higher obtained pleasure before COVID-19 (in men:  $t(62) = 12.154, p < .001$ ; and in women:  $t(48) = 12.853, p < .001$ ).



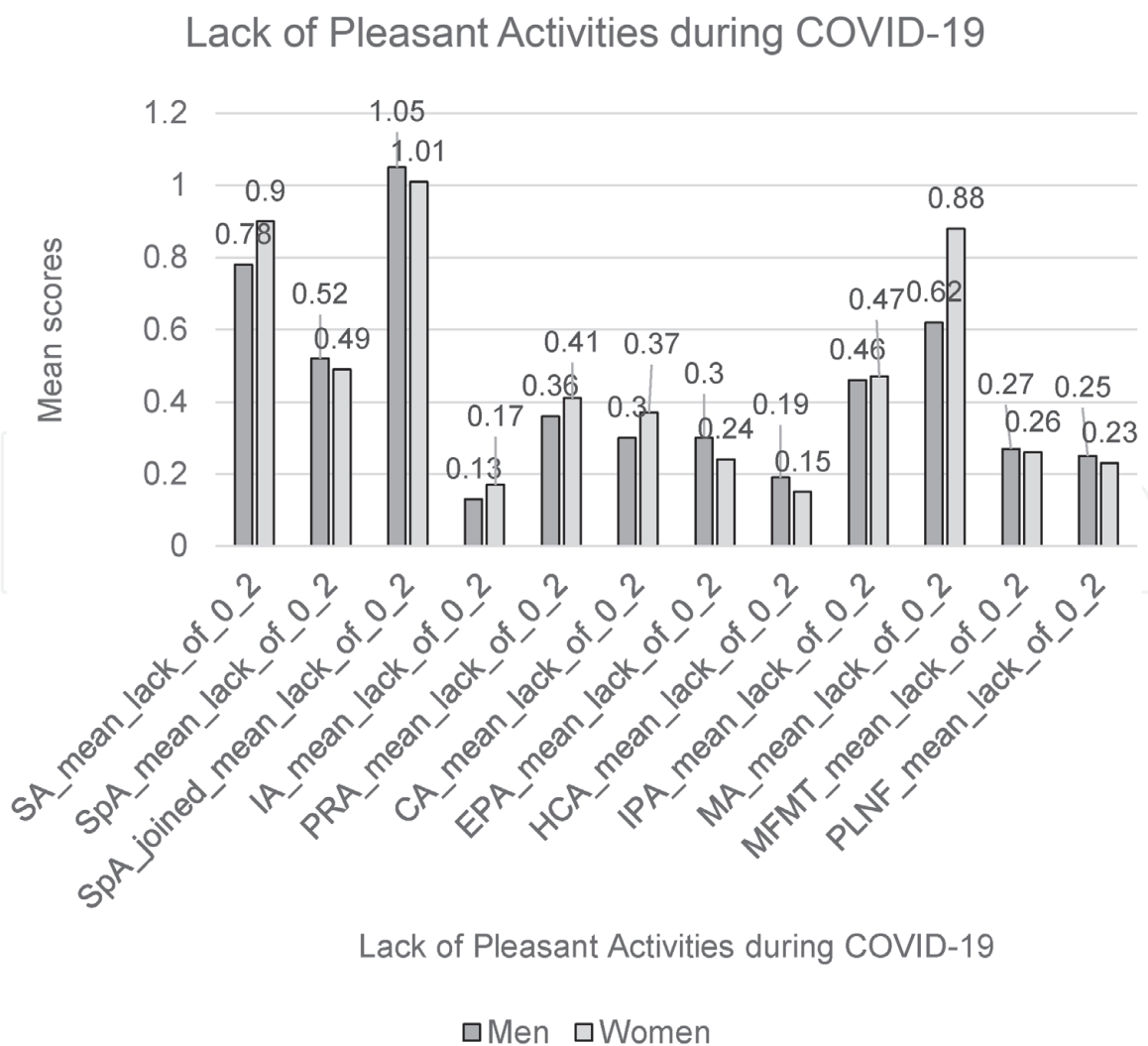
**Figure 5.**  
The overall frequency of doing activities before COVID-19 and during COVID-19 in women.



**Figure 6.**  
Obtained pleasure in men and women before and during COVID-19.

### 3.4 Lack of pleasant activities during COVID-19

Pleasant activities are any kind of activities that someone find enjoyable. Lack of pleasant activities might be a cause of depression, bad mood, and some kind of emptiness too. **Figure 7** presents the comparison of the lack of pleasant activities between men and women.



**Figure 7.**  
Lack of pleasant activities subscales comparison between men and women.



Both gender felt a lack of pleasant activities during COVID-19, and in some subscales women felt these activities statistically significantly more (SA – social activities  $U = 1186.000$ ,  $p = .036$ ; IA – interest activities  $U = 1174.500$ ,  $p = .028$ ; and MA – miscellaneous other activities  $U = 915.500$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Tables 3–8** present several individual rankings (as a mean score) of lack of detailed pleasant activities from selected subscales SpA – joined – Activities joined

Score	The first five rankings of Lack of Activities joined with Sport in Men	Rankings	The first five rankings of Lack of Activities joined with Sport in Women	Score
1.24	SpA joined – Organized sports at the club, sporting unit.	1.	SpA joined – Sports competition – matches, races.	1.14
1.21	SpA joined – Sports competition – matches, races.	2.	SpA joined – Training or coaching someone.	1.00
0.98	SpA joined – Training or coaching someone.	3.	SpA joined – Organized sports at the club, sporting unit.	1.00
0.92	SpA joined – Non-organized, spontaneous sporting activity.	4.	SpA joined – Being trained, coached by someone.	0.98
0.79	SpA joined – Being trained, coached by someone.	5.	SpA joined – Non-organized, spontaneous sporting activity.	0.94

**Table 3.**  
*The first five rankings of lack of sporting activities joined with sport.*

Score	The first five rankings of Lack of Social activities in Men	Rankings	The first five rankings of Lack of Social activities in Women	Score
1.40	SA – Inviting friends’ visits.	1.	SA – Inviting friends’ visits.	1.69
1.22	SA – Going to friends’ visits.	2.	SA – Drinking coffee. Tea with friends.	1.69
1.21	SA – Drinking coffee. Tea with friends.	3.	SA – Going to friends’ visits.	1.57
1.18	SA – Visit to a restaurant.	4.	SA – Visit to a cafe.	1.55
1.18	SA – Dining with friends.	5.	SA – Going to a family visit.	1.51

**Table 4.**  
*The first five rankings of lack of social activities.*

Score	The first five rankings of Lack of Sporting activities in Men	Rankings	The first five rankings of Lack of Sporting activities in Women	Score
1.38	SpA – Exercising on the outdoor field for sports.	1.	SpA – Swimming in the pool.	1.37
1.18	SpA – Downhill skiing.	2.	SpA – Downhill skiing.	1.29
1.08	SpA – Swimming in the pool.	3.	SpA – Fitness workout in the fitness centres.	1.25
0.98	SpA – Fitness workout in the fitness centres.	4.	SpA – Exercising on the outdoor field for sports.	1.14
0.95	SpA – Football.	5.	SpA – Volleyball.	1.06

**Table 5.**  
*The first five rankings of lack of sporting activities.*

Score	The first five rankings of Lack of Interest activities in Men	Rankings	The first five rankings of Lack of Interest activities in Women	Score
.59	IA – Nature camping.	1.	IA – Nature camping.	.80
.19	IA – Book reading.	2.	IA – Photography and filming.	.37
.18	IA – Gardening.	3.	IA – Book reading.	.33
.18	IA – Computer games.	4.	IA – Care and training of pets.	.25
.18	IA – Searching for private information on the Internet that interests me.	5.	IA – Editing photos and movies.	.23

**Table 6.**  
*The first five rankings of lack of interest activities.*

Score	The first five rankings of Lack of Intimate and personal activities in Men	Rankings	The first five rankings of Lack of Intimate and personal activities in women	Score
1.16	IPA – Visit to a hairdresser, barber.	1.	IPA – Visit to a hairdresser, barber.	0.98
0.84	IPA – Kissing.	2.	IPA – Visit to a beauty salon.	0.80
0.79	IPA – Making love.	3.	IPA – Making love.	0.78
0.70	IPA – Flirting.	4.	IPA – Kissing.	0.51
0.32	IPA – Use of perfumes.	5.	IPA – Use of perfumes.	0.47

**Table 7.**  
*The first five rankings of lack of intimate and personal activities.*

Score	The first five rankings of Lack of Miscellaneous other activities in Men	Rankings	The first five rankings of Lack of Miscellaneous other activities in women	Score
1.35	MA – Holidays Abroad – residential stay.	1.	MA – Holidays Abroad – residential stay.	1.67
1.18	MA – Holidays Abroad – sightseeing.	2.	MA – Holidays Abroad – sightseeing.	1.59
1.10	MA – Holiday – in homeland Slovakia – residential stay.	3.	MA – Holiday – in homeland Slovakia – sightseeing.	1.53
1.08	MA – Holiday – in homeland Slovakia – sightseeing.	4.	MA – Holiday – in homeland Slovakia – residential stay.	1.47
.76	MA – Vacation planning.	5.	MA – Vacation planning.	1.16

**Table 8.**  
*The first five rankings of lack of miscellaneous other activities.*

with Sport, SA – Social activities, SpA – Sporting activities, IA - Interest activities, IPA – Intimate and personal activities, MA – Miscellaneous other activities.

For the research group, the most missing activities during COVID-19 were those activities, which are joined with sport (**Table 3**), because our respondents were students in the final (fifth) year of a study at the Faculty of Physical education and Sport, of which up to 52% were still organized in some kind of sports organization. In addition to regular training, their work also included regular competitions, races or matches.

Most of them were at the time of questionnaire fulfilling, engaged as the trainers and coaches for someone. And they lacked all this, what is a good sign for their future employment, that they felt most the lack of those activities that will be the content of their work and job after completing the school study.

Social activities were in the second place of the most missing activities that these young sporting people felt as a lack of these activities.

In the research sample of men and women, the first place of the most missing activity from the social activities' subscales during COVID-19 appeared the same activity, which we named "Inviting friends' visits" (Table 4).

The next two places occupied activities that are connected with friends – going to friends' visits, and drinking coffee, tea with friends. The fourth place is dedicated to the lack of "going out", men going to restaurants and women going to cafes. In fifth place, men lacked dining with friends and women lacked family visits.

The lack of sporting activities was represented by activities related to outdoor sports (outdoor exercising, swimming in the pool, downhill skiing), to exercising in a fitness center or a sports game, which requires the presence of other players (football in men and volleyball in women) (Table 5).

Interest activities and their lack are presented in Table 6. The most missing activity was for both gender nature camping.

The most missing activity from the subscale intimate and personal activities (Table 7) was a visit to a hairdresser, barber. Young people felt the lack of the activities like kissing, making love and flirting (in men) too.

From the subscale of miscellaneous other activities, were the most missing activities for young people the holidays abroad, but also in the homeland.

The Table 9 presents overall the first 10 rankings of the activities that the persons did not feel as a lack of pleasant activities during COVID-19 because they did it daily (presented in percentage from the related sample).

% from the sample	Overall, the first 10 rankings of the activities that the men did not feel as a lack of pleasant activities during COVID-19 because they did it daily (Men)	Rankings	Overall, the first 10 rankings of the activities that the women did not feel as a lack of pleasant activities during COVID-19 because they did it daily (Women)	% from the sample
80.95	IPA – Showering.	1.	IPA – Showering.	85.71
57.14	PRA – Laughing.	2.	PRA – Listening to the music from mobile phones, CDs, MP3s, etc.	75.51
53.97	PRA – Listening to the music from mobile phones, CDs, MP3s, etc.	3.	PRA – Resting while sitting.	67.35
53.97	PRA – Resting while laying.	4.	PRA – Resting while laying.	63.27
47.62	SpA – Strengthening exercises	5.	PRA – Laughing.	61.22
41.27	PRA – Watching TV.	6.	PNLF – Cooking.	53.06
38.10	PRA – Walks, strolls.	7.	SA – Enjoying time with family.	51.02
36.51	IA – Searching for private information on the Internet that interests me.	8.	PRA – Walks, strolls.	51.02
36.51	MFMT – Driving a car.	9.	PRA – Watching TV.	48.98
36.51	PNLF – Eating a healthy food.	10.	IPA – Kissing.	48.98

**Table 9.**

*Overall, the first 10 rankings of the activities that the men and women did not feel as a lack of pleasant activities during COVID-19, because they did it daily.*

Score	Overall rankings of Lack of pleasant activities during COVID-19 (Men)	Rankings	Overall rankings of Lack of pleasant activities during COVID-19 (Women)	Score
1.40	SA – Inviting friends’ visits.	1.	SA – Inviting friends’ visits.	1.69
1.38	SpA – Exercising on the outdoor field for sports.	2.	SA – Drinking coffee, tea with friends.	1.69
1.35	PRA – Sitting on the outdoor terrace of the restaurant.	3.	MA – Holidays Abroad – residential stay.	1.67
1.35	MA – Holidays Abroad – residential stay.	4.	PRA – Sitting on the outdoor terrace of the restaurant.	1.61
1.24	SpA joined – Organized sports at the club, sporting unit.	5.	MA – Holidays Abroad – sightseeing.	1.59
0.03	PRA – Meditation.	191.	IA – Hobby – writing prose.	0.00
0.03	CA – Singing in a choir or a band.	192.	PRA – Resting while sitting.	0.00
0.03	CA – Playing a musical instrument – performance.	193.	PRA – Talking to yourself – intracommunication.	0.00
0.016	IA – Painting pictures with colors.	194.	CA – Singing for others – performance.	0.00
0.016	IA – Handmade knitting, crocheting, sewing, embroidery.	195.	PNLF – Dieting.	0.00

**Table 10.**  
The first five places and the last five places in the overall rankings of the lack of pleasant activities during COVID-19.

**Table 10** presents the first five places and the last five places in the overall rankings (as a mean score) of the lack of pleasant activities during COVID-19.

The most missing activity from all 195 activities was the activity – Inviting friends’ visits – for both, men and women.

#### 4. Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic affected many people’s lives that included lack of enjoyment, loss of pleasure and many difficult moments during these unpleasant days. People focused on preventing the spread of the virus and limiting the number of deaths, but there were not only physical health problems, there was a mental problem by all age stages category of both genders of the population. This deserves serious attention, because now we cannot predict the impact of these days on the next days. One cannot live one’s life with only worries. He/she must find for himself/herself and his/her life some activities that will bring him/her joy and pleasure. The pleasant activities are the vivid ingredients in the one’s life and better the mood. A significant association between mood and pleasant activities was found [23]. There were large individual differences in regard to the magnitude of the correlation between mood and activity.

For the young people remains 6–7 hours daily, which they can spend with the activities that they choose from various offers.

Men and women enjoy doing pleasant activities. The most pleasant activity for men is non-organized, spontaneous sporting activity and for women is laughing. We found several identical rankings in enjoyability and popularity of some pleasant activities from the subscales. Study of the correlation of pleasant and unpleasant

events on mood by [24] identified 49 pleasant and 35 unpleasant moods-related events. Pleasant activities are accompanied by positive mood. Pleasant Events schedule [19] presented for the age group 20–39 (the same age group as our sample) average ranges of the mean pleasantness score 0.86–1.26. The mean score of all pleasant activities for men is 0.87 and for women 0.96, what is within this range. Mean frequency score by [19] for the same age group (20–39 years) was in the average ranges 0.63–1.03. The sample of young sporting male people had the frequency score 0.94 before COVID-19 and 0.65 during COVID-19, and young sporting female people had the frequency score 1.01 before COVID-19 and 0.67 during COVID-19. All the frequency scores of our research sample are within the average ranges of the mean frequency score in the Pleasant Events Schedule [ibid]. Pleasant activities and their influence on mood presents the group comparisons in research by [21] indicated that patients with substance use disorders reported lower frequency, enjoyability, than healthy control group.

Our respondents, young sporting people, showed statistically significant decline in doing sporting activities and activities joined with sport. Exercise frequency before and during COVID-19 and its influence on mood during the pandemic tested [25]. The data from 13,696 respondents in 18 countries using online survey were processed and the results showed that those who exercised almost every day during the pandemic had the best mood, regardless of whether or not they exercised before pandemic. Those who reduced their exercise frequency during the pandemic reported worse mood compared to those who maintained or increased their pre-pandemic exercise frequency. 44.2% of the participants reported no change, 23.7% reported a decrease, and 31.9% reported increase in their exercise frequency during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study by [25] suggests that under similar lockdown conditions, about two thirds of those who never or rarely exercise before a lockdown might adopt an exercise behavior or increase their exercise frequency.

Sport and exercise in times of self-quarantine in Germans provided the research by [26] that showed a significant decline in leisure time sport and exercise activities. Overall, 31% of Germans reduced their leisure time sport and sport and exercise activities, while 27% maintained, 6% intensified their sports activities and 36% were not engaged in sports activities.

In our research both genders felt a lack of pleasant activities during COVID-19, and in the three subscales, women felt these activities statistically significantly more – social activities, interest activities, and miscellaneous other activities. The most feeling of lack of doing activity was the activity – inviting friends' visits. Survey data about the effect of social isolation on well-being and life satisfaction during pandemic [27] was collected from 309 adults who ranged in age from 18 to 84. While the entire sample reported at least some perceived social isolation, young adults reported the highest levels of isolation,  $\chi^2(2) = 27.36$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Authors [28] argue that COVID-19 significantly threatens the basic human need for human connection with the mental health consequences of this disease.

## 5. Conclusions

Bringing diverse fields of knowledge about the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on life is the duty of the researchers. Research with health issues is important, but also research with sociological and psychological research issues. Therefore, we focused on research on pleasant activities among young adults and their lack during the pandemic COVID-19. The experience of pleasant and enjoyable activities contributed in positive mood and emotionality. Men and women had 6–7 hours of the



day that they can spend in doing pleasant activities. They slept 7–8 hours, what is enough for recovery. The most pleasant activity for men is non-organized, spontaneous sporting activity and for women is laughing. We recorded decline in frequency of doing pleasant activities in comparison before and during COVID-19. The most missing activity was inviting friends' visits. Further research should bring interesting results also.

## **6. Limitation of the study**

Some limitations of the study have to be kept in mind. The data collection was only from the young sporting people. It is needed to widen the research and consider a wider scope of socio-demographic variables, for example, depended on a different age, age and gender, sport active and sport inactive people, people in various studies, people employed, people working at work and people working at home office.

## **Conflict of interests**

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

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