

## THE FUNCTIONS OF SPORT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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(Professional paper)

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### Abstract

*The goal of the paper is to explore the role and functions of sports in higher education. The significance of the problem subject to analysis stems from the fact that, as far as primary and secondary level of education are concerned, the functions of sport and physical education as well as their social role are well-defined, but no such definition has yet been offered as regards tertiary education. The function of sport to facilitate social integration and communication and to promote health and recreation are intrinsic to the process of physical education and sports in college and at university. The research is applied Critical review of specialized theoretical literature concerning the problem and Content analysis.*

**Keywords:** *sports, specific functions of sports, general functions of sports, physical education and sport students, educational process, physical exercises, professional careers, motor activities of students, free time activities.*

### INTRODUCTION

All forms of organized or unorganized locomotive activity aimed at the manifestation or improvement of physical fitness and psychological resilience, establishment of social relations, or achievement of results in competitions at all levels are defined as sports. Thus, as a social phenomenon, sports enhances social well-being and promotes health; it creates an environment well-suited for the purposes of education and social integration; it is also fundamental to the development of a democratic society; facilitates application of the principles of tolerance and plays an increasingly important role in economics.

The etymology of the term 'sport' goes back to Old English (disport) where it used to mean entertainment, game, drill (Dasheva & Ivanov, 2001).

The role of physical education and sports in colleges is to aid the educational process as a whole by enhancing students' physical and mental efficiency and capacity for work, thus preparing them for their future professional careers (Belberov, 1997). Physical education and sports stimulate the best qualities of the student. The efficiency of the educational process in colleges and universities is closely related with students' energy and health condition. The educational process in colleges or universities is conducted within a specific timeframe determined by the curriculum.

Physical education in higher schools is in

the focus of an increasing number of studies and discussions (Ivanov, 1996; Ivanov & Tomov, 2010; Kostov, 2007). The time allotted in the curriculum is insufficient for young people to work out and exercise their bodies properly. Sports are restricted to one class a week.

Students' locomotive activity is fundamental to the functional condition of their bodies. It is an amalgamation of a variety of locomotive actions and movements performed in a systematic and result-oriented manner, which a person conducts in his/her free time in order to achieve a salutary effect upon his/her organism. Locomotive activity is a social, biological, and pedagogical category, whose basic component is movement.

### METHODS

The research has applied Critical review of specialized theoretical literature concerning the problem and Content analysis.

Scientific research on the issues demonstrates that the proper physical development, the amelioration of physical fitness and health, the efficiency of locomotive habits and skill mastered during sports education depend on the locomotive activity of students. It represents a holistic complex, which, for the purposes of analysis, can be contingently divided in two spheres: obligatory scheduled activities and free time activities. The latter are usually intended to meet the immediate material and spiritual needs of the personality.

One of the basic social functions of sport in the modern world is its bio-adaptive role and its significance to the psychological balance; this provides the individual with an adequate (Zhelyazkov, 1998).

As a subject to be studied, physical education and sports have a combined effect on the organism of those who practice it. In the process of primary education, for example, this effect is manifested in the variety of functions that physical activities realize:

- Educational functions;
- Health preventive and therapeutic functions;
- Functional development (development of locomotive skills);
- Communicative functions;
- Ethic and aesthetic appreciation functions;
- Recreation and entertainment functions (Zhelyazkov, 1998).

One of the goals of physical education and sports in higher schools is to relieve psychological tension and maintain the high level of students' working capacity so as to facilitate their adequate participation in the educational process and establish an environment conducive to mastering professional competencies.

On this basis it is reasonable to analyze the functions of sports and their significance to sports education in higher schools.

The working definition of the functions of sport the present study adopts is its intrinsic characteristics and their objective effect upon the individual and upon interpersonal relations, which meet and develop specific demands of both the society and the human personality. The functions of sports can be divided in two groups: specific ones (characterizing sports as a phenomenon) and general ones. The former incorporates competitiveness and model emulation as well as heuristic discovery and achievement (cognitive) functions. The latter includes the functions that have social and communal significance. These are the learning and educative function, the developmental function, the recreation and health function, the vicarious emotion function, the social integration function, the communicative function, and the economic function.

### **Competitiveness and model emulation function.**

Competition is the basic characteristic specifically intrinsic to sport. It incorporates the standardized comparison, the objective evaluation, and the full elicitation of certain aspects of the human potential realized in the process of victory-oriented competition or the aspiration to personal satisfaction from one's own results. The meeting of established standards and norms during which records and achievements are

made receives wide acclaim and can serve as an indicator for the potential of an individual. Unlike standards and norms in technology, the standard to be achieved in sport is subject to historical change; it evolves in the course of time and stimulates athletes' self-perfection. The function of sport to stimulate the compliance with a certain norm or standard is most articulate in competitive situations where high achievements are expected. Still, it is ineliminable in sports as a whole, including types of sports practiced non-professionally for general purposes within a system for organization of competitions.

*The social and communal function of sports* is mainly represented by the role sports play in education, upbringing, and personality development. Sport offers huge opportunities for physical perfection as well as for ethic, aesthetic, and intercultural education. The power of sport to attract and the high standards for the manifestation of man's physical and mental abilities offer great opportunities for attainment of psychological and spiritual qualities such as empathy, willpower, sympathy, respect. What is of utmost importance is that the achievement of the educative goals depends not only on sports as a phenomenon but also on the social orientation of the system of education and development. In other word, the educative functions of sports are realized through the system of educative relations, accrued in the sphere of sports. Thus, as a component of the educative system of a society sports represents an active instrument of physical education.

*The health and recreation function* is best detected in the salutary effect of sport upon the fitness of the organism and the functioning of the individual. This beneficial effect upon the maturing body is to be observed at its clearest in sports practiced at an early age and in adolescence. For the adult population sport is mainly a means of recreation, a counterforce against psychological fatigue and one of the most popular forms of entertainment – a property which is to be seen in the practicing of sports for general purposes.

*The vicarious emotion function* originates from the aesthetics of sports manifested in the harmony between physical and mental qualities. It is in many respects very much like art itself. Such sports are eurhythmic and sports gymnastics, figure skating, water jumps, etc.

*The beauty of the human body*, technical complexity and accuracy of the movements, the festive mood all attract true sports fans. The popularity of sports is also attributable to the universality of the language of sport. Without the sports fans sport the social dimensions of would be seriously undermined.

*Social integration and personality socialization function* sport is a powerful means of social integration and an instrument in the

formation of social relations. The relations specifically established in the practice of sports (interpersonal, group, team relations) make it possible for people to participate in the formation of social relations. Sports movement as a social phenomenon plays a part in social integration and on the basis of shared interests and common activities it unites people in groups, unions, and clubs. The contribution of sports achievements and success in sport to national prestige makes it possible for the state to exert influence on national consciousness as well.

#### *Communicative function*

The humanization of society at the current stage of human development turns sport into a mediator in international relations, mutual understanding, and cultural collaboration between nations. For a long time sport has played a significant role in international communication. Today the International Olympic Committee incorporates 205 national Olympic committees.

#### *Economic function*

Sport has been acquiring an increasing economic significance, which is manifested in the financial means being invested in the development of sports and their beneficial effect upon the health of the population, their capacity for work and the prolonged life expectancy. The development of sport, the sophisticated sports facilities and the professional preparation of athletes facilitate the practice of sports at an early age and in adolescence, sports for general purposes, and competitive sports. The role of sport in this respect is invaluable.

International sport as a social and cultural phenomenon is rather controversial. It has an important cultural role in international relations as "an ambassador of peace", which spans a bridge for the establishment of good relations and a spirit of collaboration between countries and their peoples. The realization of the cultural potential of international sport, its value depend on a variety of objective and subjective factors and, above all, on the nature of sport itself and the system of social, political, economic, and cultural relations of the participating countries.

#### *Cultural norms in sport*

As a sociocultural phenomenon - sport is characterized by specific norms and content. The cultural standards in sports are seen as a holistic complex, incorporating four spheres of norms. These spheres are not isolated from each other. Rather, they are intrinsically connected and form a system that regulates and manages the behavior of an athlete. In this way it ascribes cultural content to his/her actions.

Norms of competition in sport - Competition characterizes a number of activities, performed in the context of conflict of interests,

such as politics, economics, science, etc. Sport, however, is a social sphere where competition occurs not as a consequence of social relations but as their most important manifestation. Participating in competitions, man inevitably adopts the norms of competition in sport. The practitioners of sports in this case become part of the rival - opponent system in which the status of the participants determines their interaction, thus shaping the social relations in the world of games.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The social integration function of sport, the communicative function, and the health and recreation function are intrinsic to the process of physical education and sport in colleges and at universities. The principle of fair play unites human morality with the norms established in sport, while the norms emergent as a result of behavioral patterns are humane and they do not counteract against the concept of victory in competition.

The autonomy of universities makes it possible for them to organize sports education in accord with students' interests, the qualification of the faculty, and the sports facilities available. This increases the efficiency of the educational process and the perfection of the body, as well as the formation of socially integrated and fulfilled young people. This in turn facilitates the realization of the role of sport in the development and perfection of the body, as well as the formation of personalities that are socially integrated and functional.

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## ФУНКЦИИТЕ НА СПОРТОТ ВО ВИСОКОТО ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ

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 (Съручен ируд)

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### Апстракт

Целата на трудот беше да се проучи и анализира улогата и функциите на спортот во високото образование. Интересот за тоа, беше диктиран од функциите на спортот И физичкото воспитување, пред сè, се дефинирани во спортот како социјален феномен, но не и во физичкото воспитување и спортот на студентите. Функциите на спортот: социјално-интегративната, комуникативната, здравствено-рекреативната, се својствени на наставниот процес на физичкото воспитување и спортот. Во трудот е применета метадата на критичка анализа на библиографските извори и метадата на сожинска анализа.

**Клучни зборови:** *специфични функции на спортои, енерални функции на спортои, физичко воспитување и спорти на студентите, воспитен процес, физичко вежбање, професионална кариера, моторни активности на студентите, слободни спортиски активности*

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