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**PHYSICAL EDUCATION EFFECT ON SOCIAL ADAPTATION OF
CHILDREN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS**

Aleksandr Kornev (a)*, Marina Nekrasova (b), Margarita Petrova (c), Elena
Bakulina (d)

*Corresponding author

(a) Russian State Social University, Wilhelm Pieck St., 4, Moscow, 129226, Russia av-kornev@mail.ru

(b) Russian State Social University, Wilhelm Pieck St., 4, Moscow, 129226, Russia nekrasovamv@rgsu.net

(c) Russian State Social University, Wilhelm Pieck St., 4, Moscow, 129226, Russia petrovam.a.0811@yandex.ru

(d) Russian State Social University, Wilhelm Pieck St., 4, Moscow, 129226, Russia bakulina-lena@yandex.ru

Abstract

This article presents a study of sporting activities motives and their effect on social adaptation and integration of children with visual impairments. The search and elaboration of means, forms and methods, ensuring equal conditions both for classes with children during their inclusive education and for classes with visually handicapped children within any special institutions allow determining the importance of adaptive physical education and adaptive sports in the light of social adaptation of such children into the present-day society.

An analysis of sporting activities motivation was made to determine the influence of sports clubs activities on socialization of children with visual impairments. Nikolayev's method (2003) determined the basic motives of sporting activities of children with special needs. The rating scale was reduced up to 5 points for the children attending special (rehabilitative) schools to ease their answers.

The study identified the most and the least significant sporting activities motives for the schoolchildren in general schools and those with visual impairments, who are engaged in sports clubs. Motives aimed at the sporting activity process itself and personal development are the most significant motives for all schoolchildren. A "Material reward" is considered as the least significant by the schoolchildren. In general, it was determined that physical education and sports have a clear effect on social adaptation of children with visual impairments.

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Keywords: Children with visual impairments, social adaptation, physical education, sporting activities motives.



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1. Introduction

The Russian education system is currently at the stage of reform and adjustment to the up-to-date economic, political and social conditions. The education process for children with any health disorders is no exception. The adopted international and domestic public regulations on the rights of persons with disabilities, the society's rethinking of its attitude to people with special needs have strong influence on the special (rehabilitative) education process in Russia. There are many methods aimed at "inclusion" of a disabled child into the education process with healthy schoolchildren. The inclusive education method characterized by its equal attitude both to healthy and disabled children has become most popular among them (Kislyakov et al, 2016). The inclusion education problem is a rather multi-scale one and has not been yet resolved. Therefore, special rehabilitative schools continue to be a basis for the disabled children education aimed at ensuring teaching, educating and curing children with special needs, promote to their social adaptation and integration (Grishchenko & Ivanova, 2016). Many schoolchildren both at general and special (rehabilitative) schools have various visual impairments. The search and elaboration of means, forms and methods, ensuring equal conditions both for classes with children during their inclusive education and with visually handicapped children within any special institutions allow determining the importance of adaptive physical education and adaptive sports in the light of social adaptation of such children into the present-day society.

2. Problem Statement

Children and teenagers (11-20 years old) have rapid physiological growth, puberty and are concerned how they look in the eyes of others, feel the need to find their professional calling, capabilities, skills etc. There is no doubt that the same period is more complicated in children with visual impairments due to illness seriousness and secondary impairments. At this particular time, it is important to keep the child's mind off the problems in himself/herself and direct his/her energy and interest to the right track (Shapovalenko, 2007). It is necessary to consider sports clubs activities as one of the means to solve a multi-scale problem of recreational activities for schoolchildren with special needs. Sporting activities facilitate physical and mental development (Konovalova et al, 2010), discipline and give knowledge about healthy lifestyle. And there is a chance that a child will not get into a "bad" peers' company.

Currently, there is a problem of involving children with special needs into systematic physical education and sports. This is caused by a number of circumstances associated with insufficient information about available sports clubs and classes, disabled children's parents' fears and misunderstanding of the importance of physical activity for rehabilitation and social adaptation, intense academic load in educational institutions, etc. All this has a negative effect on the children with special needs attitude to systematic physical education and sports.

Systematic physical education and sports for visually handicapped children are very important for rehabilitation of blind and partially sighted children (Tolmachev, 2004). Sport today is an efficient means for social adaptation and integration of children with special needs into society. The variety of physical education and sports tools teaches visually impaired children to accurate, right movements, saving strength, develops free spatial orientation in all aspects (sound, memory, muscle sense, feeling of

obstacle, etc.). The wise use of various means and methods of physical education will not only facilitate general physical recovery and eliminate motor function defects, but also improve visual functions. Scientific studies show that physical training has no contraindications in case of visual diseases and any visual acuity is subject to the proper selection of exercises and physical activity control. Moreover, people having residual vision can improve it during systematic physical education and sports (Sinitsina and Perfiliev, 1988).

3. Research Questions

An analysis of sporting activities motivation was made to determine the influence of sports clubs activities on socialization of children with visual impairments. The analysis of sporting activities motivation for special (rehabilitative) schools pupils is one of the means to determine the ways of motor function rehabilitation of such children and the method that allows defining the schoolchildren's commitment to various aspects of social activity (Germanov et al, 2015; Kornev et al, 2016; Korneva et al, 2014; Makhov, 2013; Stepanova and Osokina, 2012). Building of the need for individual physical exercises and understanding the healthy lifestyle value in children with special needs are required for their future successful social adaptation and self-fulfillment within the society.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to define the effect of physical education and sports on social adaptation of children with special needs through the prism of sporting activities.

5. Research Methods

Nikolayev's method (2003) determined the basic motives of sporting activities of children with special needs. The rating scale was reduced up to 5 points for the children attending special (rehabilitative) schools to ease their answers. A substance of the method is in evaluation of 20 provisions that reflect six basic groups of sports activity motives. The motives are aimed at the process; achievements; self-improvement; necessity; material reward; communication. Schoolchildren of Ivanovo Region special (rehabilitative) school of the IV type (n=34) and the general school (n=44), aged 11-13 and involved in sports clubs, participated in the study. Schoolchildren with visual impairments go in for athletics, swimming and goalball – a sport team game that is the most popular with blind and partially sighted sportsmen today.

6. Findings

The analysis of data obtained during the questionnaires of the children attending sports clubs revealed the most and the least important motives in healthy children and children with visual impairments. This questionnaire and explanations of guidance counselors made it possible to determine the effect of sporting activities on the social adaptation of children with visual impairments.

Children attending the special (rehabilitative) school of the IV type showed the most clearly expressed motive aimed at self-improvement (4.6 ± 0.6); children attending the general school showed the motive aimed at the process of physical education and sports (4.5 ± 0.55). It should be noted that children with visual impairments participating in competitions have access to sporting events where familiar and unknown sportsmen surround the child. Each child told the counselor he/she tried to be physically fit, neatly dressed and to look after himself/herself and the manners in order to make good impression on sportsmen from various cities.

Schoolchildren attending the general school have the least expressed “material reward” motive (4.1 ± 1.17). Schoolchildren with visual impairments have the similar attitude towards that motive (3.7 ± 1.4). “Material reward” motive got the lowest points in children attending special (rehabilitative) school of the IV type, as compared to the average of other motives evaluations (3.7 ± 1.4).

The distribution of average relevance motives in the children with visual impairments is the following: the motive aimed at process of physical education and sports (4.4 ± 0.9) is the second largest; the motive aimed at communication (4.05 ± 1.2) is the third largest; the motive supposing sporting achievements is in the fourth place (4.03 ± 1.2); the necessity motive is in the fifth place (4 ± 1.3). It is worth noting that there is a minimum average difference between the motives aimed at communication, sporting achievement and necessity, so it is considered unreliable.

It is necessary to focus on the motive reflecting interaction between children during the obtained data interpretation. It is the communication in which children with visual impairments sometimes “compete” in their way during big interregional sporting events, where they try to make as many new friends and acquaintances as possible. First, this demonstrates deficit of communication at the special (rehabilitative) school with not so many schoolchildren as compared to the general school, for example. Second, children with visual impairments attending any competitions understand that, in fact, there are many children having similar impairments; they find common interests, someone with whom they can discuss their visual problems that they cannot voice during their interaction with healthy peers. Third, children improve their communicative skills during their sporting activity. Sometimes crossing over their communication phobias, they broaden their horizons, thereby opening new interpersonal interaction opportunities.

Ranking of the average relevance motives in general schoolchildren is as follows: the motive aimed at the sporting achievement (4.39 ± 0.86) is the second largest; the motive aimed at self-improvement (4.29 ± 0.92) is the third largest; the necessity motive is in the fourth place (4.25 ± 0.9); the motive aimed at communication is in the fifth place (4.23 ± 1.1). Motives aimed at self-improvement, communication and necessity have close average values.

“Material reward” motive supposing benefits, chance for getting sports uniform and equipment, for trips to any training camps and competitions turned to be the least important for nearly all children attending sports clubs. This motive proves that children at the age of 11-13 have entirely different priorities than the high school seniors. In this case, the material reward is not a priority for the average age group of children though these priorities will most likely become different in a few years.

The authors’ data analysis and the results of other authors’ studies suggest that sporting activities have a pronounced positive effect on socialization of children with visual impairments. Ball team games,

such as goalball, torball and football may serve as means, forms and methods of adaptive physical education and adaptive sport having a positive effect on socialization of children with visual impairments. Goalball is the most popular team sport with blind and partially sighted sportsmen. It is included into Summer Paralympic Games and fully ensures the conditions for children's socialization, representing the total of agents and institutions that form, direct, encourage and develop the child's personality. In this case, an adaptive physical education teacher or a coach, team friends, competition friends and parents serve as socialization agents. School and a sports team act as a primary socialization institute, and school administration and mass media act as a secondary one.

Participation in a goalball contest, especially all-Russia contests, motivates the child to study better, to be involved into physical education and sports. Besides, it is explained by the fact that poor academic performance, missing classes or unsatisfactory grades may be a reason for non-admission to any away competitions that is an effective measure for the sportsmen. Immersion into atmosphere of sports helps the child to lead a healthy way of life free from smoking, alcohol and drugs. In fact, many disabled children from socially adverse families, where completely different priorities are set, take negative habits as a norm failing to see any alternatives.

Both players' physical and technical training and psycho-physiological abilities development are required to achieve a successful result during the goalball team game. A special attention must be given to the players' development during the training process, in this regard.

7. Conclusion

Thus, the study identified the most and the least significant sporting activities motives for the schoolchildren in general schools and children with visual impairments, who are engaged in sports clubs. Motives aimed at the sporting activity process itself and personal development are the most significant motives for all schoolchildren. A "Material reward" is considered as the least significant by the schoolchildren.

Involvement into physical education and sports has a positive effect on the social adaptation of children with visual impairments. Guidance counselors, teachers and tutors confirm this on the whole. Experts note that most of the children engaged in sports clubs became more neat, clean and social as compared to their behavior prior to their going in for sports. The schoolchildren demonstrated better diligence, hard work and performance at schools. In summary, it is safe to say that the motor activity and sports help their successful overcoming of any difficult life situations that the children face and will face during their life.

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