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**SPORTS IN SCHOOL AND COLLEGE FROM INTENTIONS TO  
REALITY**

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***Abstract***

**Aim.** The aim of the study is to identify and analyze the mechanisms that influence sport competitions at school and university level through the analysis of the objectives, regulations and effects. Also it intends to reveal the effect of evaluation methods of teachers considering their results and participation in sports competitions. The competition analyzed were the Gymnasium Olympics, The National Olympics of School Sports and the University championships. The participants in this research were: experts, pupils, parents, students, referees. **Duration and Place:** the study was conducted during 2015 to 2017 in Cluj-Napoca. **Methods.** The research methods were used during competition and inter-competition intervals of time: Participatory observation, Debates, Documentation, Meta-analysis, Focus group. **Conclusions.** Competitions aimed to acknowledge talent that have not been discovered yet are actions specifically centered on this goal. The general conditions of rural education become restrictive for potential talents in this area. Teachers' evaluation criteria determine their attitude and interests. The results matter for the job description, completing the dossier for the merit grade, for prestige and for image. Under these conditions, results are most important and this does not represent the premise of performance. The evaluation criteria should create behavioral mechanisms in the sense stated by the competition aim and objectives.

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**Keywords:** Competition, aims, hidden effects, analysis.



## 1. Introduction

The Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, through the General Department For Undergraduate Education Management, organizes and coordinates each year sports competitions in schools named The National Olympics Of School Sports (NOSS) by decree no. 2880/12.20.2007. The National Olympics of School Sports is financed from the budget allocated by the Ministry Of Education, Research and Youth (The Law of Education 2007).

From 09.01.2015 till 08.01.2017 the competition called Gymnasium Olympics replaces the National Olympics of School Sports by decree no. 4405/06.30.2015 of the Ministry Of Education and Scientific Research. This competition admits pupils of the 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The Gymnasium Olympics is organized by the Ministry Of Education and Scientific Research, the Romanian Olympics and Sports Committee (ROSC) and ten national sports federations (The Law of Education 2015).

The University Championship is the competition dedicated to students.

The competitions in question are organized by the Federation of Sports in Schools and Colleges (FSSU). The general stipulations of FSSU define Physical Education and Sports as activities of national importance. They are part of the general education, through their content, having an impact on health and growth, developing motor skills, mental processes and phenomenon, encouraging socialization.

The aim and attributions of FSSU is to guarantee the frame of continuous development, organizing and performing functioning of sports in schools and colleges at the level of all its structural and infrastructural elements. FSSU organizes the following competitions:

- The Gymnasium Olympics at the gymnasium level is considered as grassroots sports
- The National Olympics Of School Sports at high school level is considered as performance sports
- The University Championships have the goal to designate winners at this level and to select players for the students' representative teams.

FSSU, through its regulations in article no. 3, has twenty-three main tasks. We quote here the initial three of them:

- Elaborates and supports the strategy of organizing and developing the sports activity in schools and colleges and represents the interests of the Ministry Of Education and Research (which will referred as MEC from now on) in relation to national sports federations;
- Suggests to MEC public policies for sports in schools and colleges;
- Initiates and suggests projects for normative acts to MEC in the field of sports in schools and colleges (The Official Monitor, part I no. 879/12.13.2011).

The activity report for 2016 of FSSU doesn't emphasize the actions taken to improve the organizing of the competitions.

Our observations, made during several years and debates on this subject, revealed participants' satisfaction but also dissatisfaction of the persons involved (Mureşan A, 2013,2014). Starting from the analysis of a few cases, our interest amplified and we decided to perform a study on the mechanism that disturb the well-functioning of the competitions and diminish the achievement of the goals that were proposed.

## 2. Problem Statement

The mechanisms that negatively influence the sport competitions at school and university level should be revealed and the information can be used to implement correct actions.

The evaluation of teachers considering their results and participation in sports competitions influence the mechanisms and deepens the false idea that teachers' basic school tasks are primarily related to performance in sports.

### **3. Research Questions**

What are the mechanism that disturb the well-functioning of the competitions and diminish the achievement of the proposed goals?

What are the actions taken to improve the organizing of the competitions in order to achieve the objectives?

What is the effect of teachers' evaluation considering their results and participation in sports competitions?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

We aim to identify and analyse the mechanisms that negatively influence the sport competitions at school and university level through the analysis of the objectives, regulations and effects. Also we intend to reveal the effect of evaluation methods of teachers considering their results and participation in sports competitions.

### **5. Research Methods**

Participants in this research were: experts, pupils, parents, students, referees.

Duration and Place: the period between the years 2015 to 2017 in Cluj-Napoca.

The research methods that were used during competition and inter-competition intervals of time were:

#### **5.1. Participatory observation**

The observation were made from the position of Representative of the Romanian Olympic Academy in the district and trainer of students' team in the University Championships.

#### **5.2. Debates**

The debates were made with guests of the sports broadcast at the local station Someş TV. Colleagues, teachers, school masters, school inspectors, pupils and students and referees were invited to debate about aims, goals and the evaluation of the effects of the competitions.

#### **5.3. Documentation**

The documentation covered the normative documents and the rules of the competitions.

#### **5.4. Meta-analysis**

The Meta-analyse covered the reports about different stages of the competitions.

#### **5.5. Focus group**

The social inquiry made by the focus group involved eleven experts: three methodologist teachers from the School County Inspectorate of Cluj district; three NOSS participating teachers from urban areas; three teachers from rural areas; two representatives of the University level – the authors.

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### **6. Findings**

Focus group debating issues were:

#### **6.1. Analysis of the Gymnasium Olympics objectives**

The competition called Gymnasium Olympics has the following goals (we will add our observations here):

- Attracting to sports as many children as possible;

The idea is excellent and many children at this level express the desire to be champions and to win medals. However the undifferentiated participation of students practicing sports at sports clubs next to or versus pupils practicing the sport in physical education classes leads to discouragement and even frustration of them which will be a reason for discouraged students to stop participating in a subsequent edition.

- Developing the selection area for practicing performance sports at a national level;

The selection aims at identifying talent, and the competition aims at exploiting it. We noticed that the goals of these activities are confused and cognitive dissonances occur both at the level of teachers and pupils.

- Discovering young talents and registering them in performance sports programs;

Young talents are, in fact, gymnasium pupils. A more suitable formulation would be “discovering young talents in order to register them in performance sports programs”. The aim is redundant for most; it can be found at the previous item. At this age, the primary selection for performance clubs is completed.

- Educating young talents in the spirit of an active way of life based on physical practicing regularly;

Not all the participants proved their skills during the primary selection at a level that allows them to be called “young talents”.

We consider that all the pupils should be educated for an active way of life, not only the young talents. This is a formative process on a long term.

- Ensuring competition opportunities suitable to the age as a factor that affects the formation process of the sportsmen;

Competition really enforces a special behaviour having formative attributes. Group culture is shaping up by trainers that are concerned with pupils' education.

- Conversing multi-sport Olympic experience in a national project;

A national project involves strategy in sports, thing that is now missing.

Parents' awareness about the educational role of sports and Olympic Spirit;

Pupils' education is made by parents with the support of the schools but parents also need education. The education or the lack of education may be noticed during competitions. Certain parents involved themselves tempestuously causing regrettable manifestations that disturbed the normal course of competitions. This kind of education is totally necessary but also is needed feedback about the application in the final report of the organizers.

## **6.2. Analysis of the NOSS objectives**

This chapter will present the goals of NOSS and we analyse rigorously each of them.

Through its system of activities and sports competitions, NOSS aims to:

- Individual's harmonious development;

The formulation is elusive and difficult to evaluate, it requires clarifications and refinement.

- Favouring socialization among children and pupils;

Discussions on this aspect of the competition reveal that teachers' views and student opinions are similar: sportsmen do not have time to exchange ideas, opinions and feelings; they share only technical or organizational data. A part of the students enjoy travelling to another locality and notice interesting things from a different environment. Those from the rural area or from small towns are impressed by the city-style environment. The travels take also the shape of cultural tourism.

- The growth of the number of pupils that practice performance sports by developing and diversification of the selection activity;

We think that conceptual errors have been shed in this formulation, which we wish to exemplify. Recruiting at a high school age requires concentrating attention on singular situations and this does not ensure growth of the number of the performance sportsmen.

- Cultivating fair-play spirit among children and pupils;

The people involved do not find NOSS informative materials with reference to a code of moral conduct and the promoted values, sessions dedicated to education except the game rules. Interviewed educational staff values the need to implement a code of moral conduct simultaneously across the country.

- Promoting the habit of practicing independently one or more sports disciplines;

Practicing sports independently is one of the goals of the Physical Education. If at this level the declared aim is performance, practicing several branches of sports is an unfounded proposal.

- Optimizing the health condition of children and pupils;

Health condition is a basic objective of Physical Education. Vaguely presented, with no indicators, without the ability to evaluate the teacher's activity or the health of the pupils, it is a somewhat implicit aim, a redundant requirement in this context.

- Developing the emulation spirit among children and pupils and between educational institutions;

Children or coaches often search revenge for the coming years. Prerequisites for increasing the level of training are created.

- Supporting the practice of traditional Romanian sports;

The competition program includes only one traditional Romanian sport - oina.

- Introducing new disciplines that have international correspondence;

The NOSS competition takes place at ten disciplines, most of them being Olympic ones. Rigorous analysis reveals that the inclusion of sporting disciplines that have international correspondence can be detrimental to Olympic sports and this decreases the number of practitioners. In the absence of a governmental sports policy for new disciplines, pupils should be consulted too.

- Attracting and involving decision-makers of the local administration, other natural or legal entities, in organizing and developing sports activities in schools;

Interlocutors have shown that attracting resources often involves a political arrangement, a personal relationship or other biased means. The study of the FSSU's operating regulation states that this institution must ensure financially the progress of the competition. This role belongs rather than otherwise to the Parents Committee. An ethical framework ensures equal opportunities for all participants.

- Establishing partnerships with individuals and legal entities that are disposed to organize sports competitions in schools outside the national competition calendar in cooperation with the competent structures of the Ministry of Education and Research;

The interlocutors believe that this requirement was designed to support associations in school sports, which are financially inoperative. Interviewed experts believe that these actions would fall under the attributions of school boards.

- Promoting the creation of a sports identity for each educational unit;

The foundation of sports school associations is registered at the County Department for Youth and Sports (CDYS). CDYS can report statistics about their existence but it does not have any authority or control over associations and has no way to intervene in their support.

The hidden effect consists in the fact that, from this point of view, DJTS can justify a redundant organization chart. Things are known to be inoperative, but they remain in ambiguity.

- Growth in the efficiency of sports competition at the level of each educational unit;

The inability of school sports associations is obvious all across the country.

### **6.3. University championships**

The analysis of the regulations and the actual participation in these competitions justifies making the following assessments:

- A part of the student teams sportsmen are university students but they practice performance sports at other clubs and partially benefit of classroom exemption in order to get better prepared.
- The hidden effect consists of sports training in the detriment of professional training.

## **7. Conclusion**

### **7.1. Discussions on the Gymnasium Olympics**

The aim of the Gymnasium Olympics is the continuous development, organization and functioning of the national system of Physical Education and Sports and the correct application of the legal provisions in effect.

At the level of the Gymnasium Olympics, the investigation revealed that the pupils enjoyed the COSR medals more than the equipment provided by the same organization.

Attracting pupils to sports is influenced by ethical issues such as the quality of refereeing, which in some cases has disappointed the participants and the parents that were assisting.

There was a lack of hygiene in accommodation, the insecurity of the dorm rooms, things the local organizers can deal with more carefully.

We think that young talents are educated through the training process and the formative process of Physical Education lessons. It is unlikely that the active way of life is educated during the competition.

The Gymnasium Olympics shows that sometimes, in isolated cases, passion and desire to win surpass the norms that fair-play imposes.

Regarding transposing the multi-sport Olympic experience into a national program, here we believe that not transposing but adapting the Olympic experience to the needs and necessities of the nation is more appropriate.

### **7.2. Discussions on NOSS**

The clear definition of goals and objectives determines the entire training of participants in coherent actions (Kirişescu C, 1943). Evaluators benefit from the feedback needed to improve the organization of events.

The harmonious development of the individual in performance sports is done in accordance to the specific model of each sport. Physical training is specific to every sporting branch. The chess competition can only provide harmony between physical and mind.

Competitions generally provide more or less socialization. Coaches cannot participate in prize-giving ceremonies either in artistic cultural programs or in promoting Olympic spirit, which would prolong travels due to low budgets. The fair-play spirit can be cultivated through the formation of game regulations which will look for it. The conduct of referees and opponents could be evaluated by both coaches and sportsmen and appreciations may become game points. Otherwise, they play at the limit of the rules and the only thing that counts is the final score. Education cannot be done without investment.

In school representative teams there are usually students in the final years, when the final selection for performance takes place. The selection aims at identifying talent and the competition aims at exploiting it. The goals of these activities are confused and cognitive dissonances occur.

The confusion lies in the fact that teachers' basic school tasks are not related to performance in sports. In this respect, teachers' tasks are concerned with identifying, initiating pupils that possess abilities

and to inform the parents and the institutions that deal with performance in sports. These tasks are not presented in the evaluation sheets.

Specialized units such as private clubs, school sports clubs, sports high schools, or sports-class schools concern with sporting performance.

The skills and abilities of the sportsmen can be evaluated in games with no score, where physical endowment, technical gain, tactics and competitive attitude are proved (Şiclovan, 1972). This implies expenses that some schools do not accept.

The regulation of the competition ensures equal participation conditions based on the same number of preparation hours and training level. The teacher, who works hard, in addition to the job description, is not necessarily the best. Activism as well as masked volunteerism create similar situations to misdemeanour and alter authentic classification.

For example, a school with a team whose training is the basic norm of the teacher does not have the same expectations with a school where the team is made up of registered sportsmen in performance institutions. The participation of this kind of schools' representatives may have other purposes, including targets other than performance: emancipation, motivation, socialization, education, etc.

Promoting sports practicing is not an achievable aim in schools with no sports facility, so those who work in such situations and teachers in the rural area, informed us. Teachers state that the 15 to 20 minutes of the lesson that are allocated to learn a sports discipline is insufficient. The result is that in the team participating in NOSS are those who practice sports, those who abandoned it and others that are skilled in several disciplines.

Teachers in rural area believe they have no chance against schools with children who are registered in sports clubs. Attendance is often due to the passionate teachers who organize children's trips to the city.

Teachers' evaluation criteria determine their attitude and interests. The results matter for the job description, completing the dossier for the merit grade, for prestige and for image. Under these conditions, results are most important and this does not represent the premise of performance.

For the evaluation of Physical Education teachers, we offer the following criteria as an example:

- The number of identified pupils who fall within the somatic type of the international model, physical condition, health condition
- The pupils level of gaining basic skills

There are situations when coaches and sportsmen regret defeat and hope to train better and win in other competitions.

Teachers', school inspectors' and players' comments who wish to promote the game of oina are related to the sports facility, balls, the knowledge of the game regulation and impact in the urban area where the focus is on fashionable sports.

Electronic sports become more and more visible in competitions involving hundreds and thousands of pupils and students. We consider that electronic sports on a particular subject and chess have a strong formative function while physical effort is excluded.

Observing and analysing certain cases of the parents of the sportsmen behaviour, we find that parents have often proved to be disruptive both in the educational process and especially in the pedagogic one. Passion, love, hate or envy distort things.

The competitions outside the regular calendar involving partnership require resources. Teachers should report to those who supported the activity financially. We believe that a mechanism has been put in place where participants' roles cause dysfunctions. On the other hand, however, for other people it also creates considerable advantages. Drastic measures against teachers who deceive are needed.

We consider it's damaging for the teacher to be put in inferiority, to find him or herself in a situation of refusal, indebtedness, or other humiliating circumstances.

From an ethical point of view, this objective places teachers in a conflict of roles and situations (Rotariu & Iluţ, 1996, 2001).

We think that, in this situation, attention should be directed to the reformulation of the sponsorship law.

School financial resources become a serious problem in achieving the goals of the competition. Sub-budgeting of the education system has definitely led to problems that we mostly noticed in this research. The budget allocated to education drastically restricts the achievement of targets and the statement that Physical Education and Sports are activities of national interest becomes unconvincing. It continues to remain a political statement. Founding school sports associations is losing ground due to fiscal inoperability.

### **7.3. Discussions on the University Championship**

Sport in universities is suffocated by performance sportsmen grouped, as a rule, in sports colleges. University championships, the centres stage, are won by these teams. The mightiness and the professional authority of the coaches training these teams are diminished.

The effect is that, after several editions, teachers from other faculties or universities no longer want to present themselves with students at competitions. The university sports community polarizes emulation from faculties decreases, people surrender and quit.

The evaluation of the cadres in the university system of Physical Education and Sports based on the performances obtained at student competitions of national or international level provokes hidden effects. The coach or accompanying competitor is the head of the discipline or another arbitrarily appointed decision-maker. The cadres who recruit students in university representatives and obtain results in competitions earn points for the job description and, implicitly, the promotion or merit scorecard, but this must be corroborated with the work of the coaches that train the students in the sports club they activate (Mureşan & Bulduş, 2016).

The induced confusion lies in the fact that this result is not the result of a successful professional activity but is the result of a conditional speculation. The performance or sporting result of the teacher's evaluation is others' work. Real hierarchy designed to create emulation, loyal competition or success is undermined. This triggers the alteration of a working environment based on meritocratic, ethical and collegial criteria and leads from disguised and obedient attitudes to electoral arrangements, etc.

We also consider that the actual existence of the academic teams and the recognition of the teacher's activity consistent in the job description, the criteria for advancement, or merit grading would become a method of including students from all faculties in the sports life, an auspicious mechanism for scientific research and the real promotion of universities' image.

The competitions analysed don't have a precise specification of the purpose regarding: performance, selection, promotion, emulation, socialization, etc.

Implied objectives are secondary and should be evaluated in order of priority.

The purpose and the goals of the competition are to provide evaluable indicators in a quantitative or qualitative analysis.

The evaluation criteria should create behavioural mechanisms in the sense stated by the competition purposes:

- Performance competition should use a delimitation system based on points, meters, seconds, etc.
- Selection action should present criteria defining skills and score grids;
- Promotion imposes marketing criteria;
- Socialization should ensure exchange of values, value judgments, experiences, non-formal information, and other.

- Competitions aimed to acknowledge talent that have not been discovered yet are actions specifically centred on this goal.

The general conditions of rural education are restrictive for potential talents.

The budget allocated to education drastically restricts the achievement of targets and the statement that Physical Education and Sports are activities of national interest becomes unconvincing. It continues to remain a political statement. Founding school sports associations is losing ground due to fiscal inoperability.

The teacher's evaluation in the university system of Physical Education and Sports based on the performances obtained as coaches at student competitions of national or international level provokes hidden effects. A lack of vision which would allow all institutions to play an important role in the health of the citizens was remarked.

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