

THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL TRAINING AND SPORT EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS, HIGH SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

BIVOL George-Cosmin^{1*} MOISE George-Dan²

¹ Student-Faculty of Law-University of Bucharest, Romania

² Department of Physical Education and Sport, University of Bucharest, Romania

*Corresponding author: geobi78@yahoo.com

Abstract

Physical training and sport education in schools, high schools and universities is essential due to its biological character with positive effects and benefits from educational, social and cultural perspective. Through various forms of practice, physical training and sport involves emotional side of personality, contribute in strengthening the body and spirit, stimulates creativity, will of affirmation, inclusion in group, team building and development and evolution of students personality.

Since antiquity latins affirmed: "Mens sana in corpore sano!" meaning: Healthy mind in a healthy body! Modern education in schools, high schools and universities should focus more on importance for students of physical training and sport, in addition to disciplines included in educational curricula since knowledge acquired is better integrated and applied by healthy and strong students.

A great benefit for student's health and education are the mandatory sport hours, part of the educational curriculum and pro-grams. Every student has to follow those classes, planned and performed through a variety of exercises, activities and sports like soccer, handball, volleyball or basketball. Accomplishing those classes, many students develop a spirit for competition and some of them also a passion for a sport or another.

Nevertheless, the inter -schools competitions like "Cup of high schools" or universities competitions (such as Decathlon or Spartakiada) are opportunities for teenagers to taste the victory and performance. The teachers/instructors that select students with specific skills and abilities for a sport can foster the process of forming future champions in various sports or at least performers that become professionals athletes that could have a healthy and wealthy life.

Keywords: Physical training, educational curricula, healthy benefits, competitions, students.

Introduction

Physical training is a pillar for personal development. It helps the individuals to discover themselves, to develop and link with others in spirit of action, competition or even performance. It is very important in education at all levels through its core dimensions: biological, social and educational.

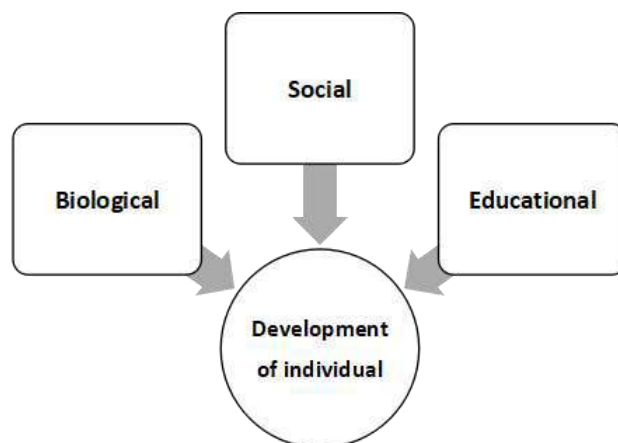


Fig. 1- PT dimensions

a) **Biological dimension** - PT contributes in developing physical abilities, enhances health of the individual, makes the body stronger, more agile and sharpens the senses. Students at all levels need during their self - development process the PT. Studies revealed that anxiety and depression is substantially prevented and mitigated by PT activities. Engaging various group of muscles, practising a complex set of movements and

activities, put individual body in shape and increase resistance and immunity. PT plays an critical role in process of education at all levels. PT also may correct some health issues or helping in recovery process.

b) Social dimension - PT activities are often practised in small or larger group of people. PT and sports gather people sharing same values, beliefs or goals. When belonging to a group, the individual becomes stronger and eager to fit in that group. For students, membership and affiliation to a group means development of responsibility, awareness and adaptation. Sports require specific rules to follow, as well as the sense of respect and fair - play and facilitates social inclusion and integration.

c) Educational dimension - PT and sports have a critical role in individual education. They include a schedule which stimulates discipline. Specific rules to follow, various requirements, limitations imposed contribute in shaping individual attitudes, behaviours and help building a mindset. The students practising PT and sports are integrating easier in society. They tend easier to be punctual, flexible and disciplined.

At the development of personality level the educational PT focuses on following directions: *intellectual, moral, aesthetic and professional*.

From *intellectual* perspective, students acquire knowledge about physiology and hygiene of physical effort, mechanics of acts and movements, psychology and methodical. This knowledge contributes in scientific approach of PT and enhancement of abilities as: attention, memory, spirit of observation, imagination and fast thinking.

PT simulates also *moral* development of the individual. Focus falls on development of attitudes and behaviours concentrated on fair - play, honour, respect of decisions of referees and discipline.

By exercises, tactics, techniques and procedures, PT cultivates taste for *aesthetic*, enhances influences on certain qualities like rhythm, harmony, grace and others.

From *professional* perspective, PT contributes in discovering talents for various sports, enhances individuals performance, making them to become professionals and athletes, also to choose a career in area of sports.

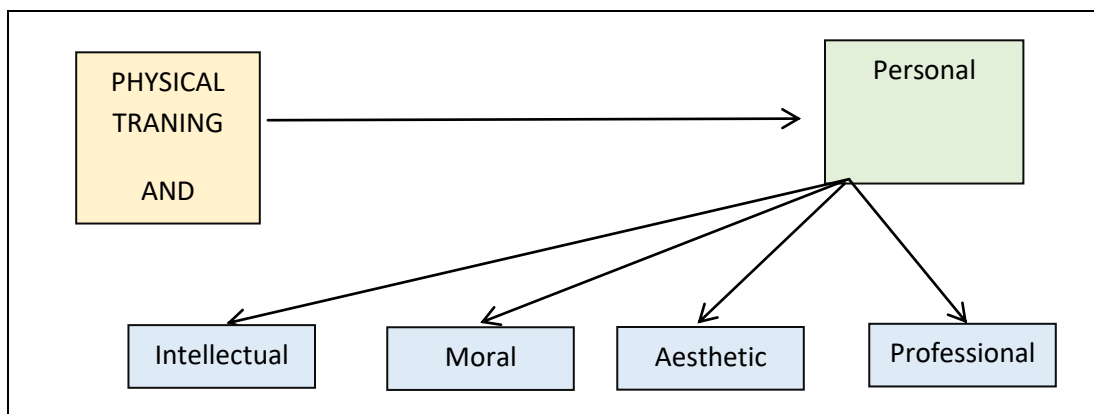


Fig. 2 - PT educational dimension

Physical training and sport education in schools, high schools and universities

All institutions of education at all levels should take in consideration that PT and sports are essential parts of education thus contributing in students development and evolution to a mature individual that integrates and become active member of society.

Curricula of each institution of education may differ, still must not exclude PT & sports, as they may be adapted in accordance with physical characteristics of students, abilities and acceptance.

Conditions will consider training students within a convenient program, avoid dangerous activities, ensure necessary materials, set up measures of protection, awareness on importance of PT&sport both among teacher and students and harmonizing learning process with PT&sport activities.

Fortunately, the Romanian educational system includes dedicated schedule for PT&sport activities up to high school level but in most of universities this is optional or misses at all.

Many studies revealed the benefits of PT&sport in schools and high schools, the adults who had PT&sport in curricula of education are twice as likely active today.

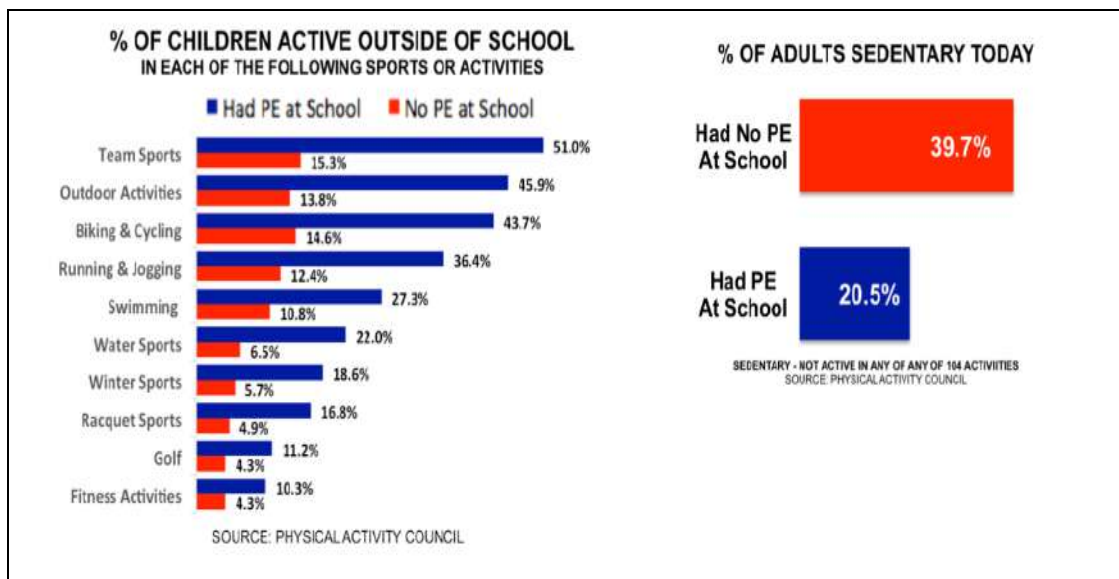


Fig. 3 - US studies on PT&sport in schools, and adults today

The studies also revealed that PT stimulates brain activity and exists a strong correlation between high scores in PT activities and high academic scores. Some of the results are shown in figure below.

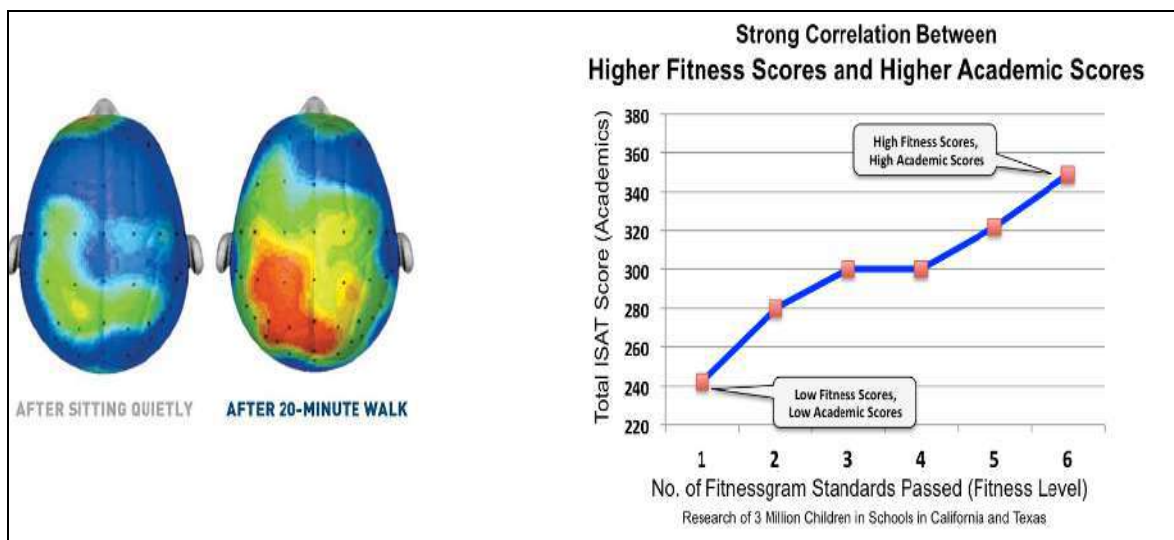


Fig. 4 - US studies on PT&sport in schools and adults today

We may observe on the left side of figure brain activity with no or with PT. Colour blue represents inactivity of the brain (source: University of Urbana). The chart to right show active students with better results.

In United States Journal of School Health, published in 2010 the results of a research named “Relationships Between Youth Sport Participation and Selected Health Risk Behaviours from 1999 to 2007” that analysed various factors like: race, age, gender, behaviours, in various groups. Based on that the advantages of PT & Sports have been outlined.

We present you some of them below.

Table 1.

PT & Sports	
Benefits	Can lead to reduction of:
<i>Weight control</i>	Abandon of school
<i>Self esteem</i>	Teen pregnancies
<i>Skills in problem - solving</i>	Juvenile arrests
<i>Academic achievement</i>	
<i>Social competence</i>	

As we may observe, sports are activities that have a special role for people's physical and mental health, a fact that has been acknowledged since antiquity through the dictum «Mens sana in corpore sano» and this is the reason that for then since nowadays Physical training (P.T.) has remained one of the main disciplines.

Psycho-pedagogical specialists highlighted the biologic, motor, psychological and social benefits of sports, and recommend that it should be practised for at least one hour daily for children and teenagers.

In accordance with these studies and in order to strengthening the body and spirit, the educational curricula from children to students includes mandatory Physical training (P.T.) classes.

The children usually have weekly 1 hour of P.T. and 1 hour of "play&sport" and the PT classes continues till university when there are usually 10 classes per semester that means 1 hour weekly.

For those who have a passion and perform in a particular sport there are many competitions at different age categories – inter-schools/high schools and universities.

The Romanian competitions are not as famous as the United States ones, but also gather a lot of competitors and fans and give them the opportunity to self-improve themselves and to taste the sweet cup of victory, fame and glory.

I would mention the high schools football and basket cup, as well as the student competitions:

- 1) Spartakiada – the competition between military universities
- 2) Hexagon – the competition between the main 6 Law University of Romania together with the State University of Moldova, competition that in 2019 will be hosted by the University of Bucharest.

Modern approach on PT & sport in educational programs at all levels is studied under all forms and aspects and it is an integral part of general education of each individual.

In sport performance comes in time with proper practice. A nation which aspire to progress and economic growth can not ignore the fact that PT & sport is essential . Is already demonstrated that economic performance is directly linked to level of education and general status of health of a nation. Perspectives of low level health and diminished agility abilities of population endanger not only durable economic development but as well national security.

Practice of sport activities within a organizational framework like sport organizations and structures, sport classes, hobby - type events tackle new challenges. Statistics regarding general status of population health in special young population, show worrying increase of the rate of mortality, sedentary, obesity, use of alcohol as factors that generate physical and psychical illnesses. All these lead to a worrying trend regarding violence among youngsters and a high rate of school abandon.

Violence in schools and universities is generated by several factors.

From one side the lack of culture for sport activity practice weakens the strength of family and its educational role. On the other hand, weaknesses of the system to create a organizational framework for cultivating practice of sports reduces the interest of members of society in practising or supporting sport.

Family, the basic social entity, is nowadays less interested in practice of sport activities, considered not to be a priority. Therefore, cases of deviant behaviours and violence in schools appear.

Youngsters follow models from their environment or copy their behaviours, without making difference between right or wrong. 'Value' like most expensive electronic gadgets, socializing platforms, use of cigarettes and alcohol, makes more difficult the activity of teachers and school to maintain the line of educational and moral values, corrupt and attract more and more students.

In other words Anatoli Karpov highlighted the fact: 'Energy at youngsters is like nuclear fission, if you know how to control it, you have energy! If not, you have a bomb!'. Students tend to stay in front of computers or choose to stay in the virtual environment provided by gadgets and socialization platform rather practice of sport or recreational activities. This leads to an unhealthy style of living.

Obesity progress quickly among young generation, at global level 22 millions of kids under age of 5 years. Obesity became factor of risk for 3 of 4 illnesses and 1 of 2 kids has weight problems their number increased last ten years with 18%. More than 8 students of 100 have with 20 - 30% more weight than normal.

Juvenile obesity has taken alarming proportions in European Union, where 14 millions children are obese and their number increases yearly with 400.000.

Recent studies outline that Romania occupies second place with cases of infantile obesity. According to World Health Organization, 30% of population suffers of obesity.

Sedentary style became a modern social issue. Regional Office for Europe reports that 5,3 millions people die annually in the world because of sedentary lifestyle.

We should outline following facts regarding Romania:

- **the one hour or two of sport per week included in curricula is not sufficient** for a student to achieve an acceptable level of abilities or competences necessary at the end of high school;
- **lack of obligation to participate at additional sport classes determines a low participation of students in this type of activities, lack of awareness of importance of sport in shaping a healthy lifestyle, the character of future adult** as european healthy, strong, informed, educated individual;
- more than 85% of enrolled students practice only the classes of sport (1 hour per week).

We highlight that PT & sport bring **a critical contribution to social and economic cohesion as well as to form a better integrated society promoting affiliation to a common social and cultural area.** This role is even more important for less represented groups, persons with special needs, or immigrants. Practice of PT & sport should not be limited by discriminatory measures nor based on criteria like race, age, gender or nationality. In this respect, European Commission encourages to put at use the spaces and facilities for PT & sport as positive social interaction instruments. On the other hand, is outlined the contribution of PT & sport in creating jobs and building resilience of a society. In high schools and universities, the socializing environment of PT & sport offers models transferable in daily life. **Social cohesion, tolerance, social group and cultural integration are effects of practice of PT & sport in various forms. Through PT & sport in all levels of education, are countered racism, xenophobe attitudes, and exclusion of less cultivated students.**

The addition of two more hours of PT & sport in curricula of high schools would be a plus for development of future citizens. However the legal framework should be adapted and programs developed. In universities would be necessary to introduce mandatory PT & sport classes or presented an offer of sport disciplines students may choose among of.

As a part of permanent education, PT & sport should be promoted among young generation. Sport events organized at high school or university level, should more often involve a higher number of participants. External motivation should be stimulated by identifying appropriate sponsors for such events. Many universities for example, obtain equipment, gears, or other sport items from various sponsors in change of advertising them through various sport events. In Romania, in last years, sponsorship for sport events became more and more popular.

Analysis from method and theory perspective of essential values linked with practice of sport in universities, should be connected with objectives and competences, quality of motivation of students variety of proposed activities, advantages and limitations in practice as well as from efficiency evaluation. Those should be connected with social preparedness through sport, stimulating academic development and benefits for students.

Sport activities in university will consider the individual particularities of students, options made and degree of training. Adapting the university sport classes or activities means stimulating development of students abilities combined with teamwork and leadership. PE & sport in university should develop aptitudes of future specialists in various areas because promote responsibility, spirit of competition and fair play beyond classes tailored with their future activities in real life and areas they will operate.

The modern approaches and qualified personnel in teaching sport classes in Romania, give us hope that next generations will take advantage of the benefits of practising sport in schools, high schools and universities. An integrated perspective of different types of sports, disciplines and activities will help in strengthening our society and our nation.

Romania integrated itself, at European model of education but steps are to be done to align our national standards and methods practising sport in schools, high schools and universities.

Programs and facilities have to be adapted at actual requirements of quality and efficiency for sport at educational institutions level. Funding is to be tailored for development of educational sport facilities and existence of European funds is furthermore to lead to absorption and use of these funds in order to build new sport facilities or to restore some existent.

The importance of sport in education institutions as schools, high schools and universities, regards the actual status and future of a nation, being in a way a matter of national importance.

We may affirm that sport in education provides a large contribution in future development and evolution of a nation. Romania must seek for positive evolution within Europe, and may shift the effort on education of young generation, offering adequate educational programs adapted to modern challenges.

Conclusions

The specialists highlighted the PE classes benefits for children such as:

- the overall health of the body ;
- through sports, they will be able to consume in a useful, healthy and constructive way the energy surplus;
- developing their focus and memory capacity, the will and the character.

There are studies in different Western countries that have shown that each dollar invested in physical education and sports correspond to a \$ 3.8 reduction in medical expenses.

That's why the government and educational policies, should focus on offering to children and teenagers enough PE classes in educational curricula as well as providing good professors, coaches /instructors and sports halls.

Whether in ancient times there was the saying "Mens sana in corpore sano", now it is said that "Sports give days to life and life to days".

References

- Cojocaru, C., (1975). *Creativitate și invenție*, Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică Publishing House
Epuran, M., (1990). *Modelarea conduitei sportive*, Oltenia Publishing House
Holdevici, J., (1988). *Autodepășirea în sport*, Sport-Turism Publishing House.