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EDUCATIONAL, SOCIALIZING AND PREVENTIVE HEALTH EFFECTS OF THE SPORT-CONTESTING ACTIVITY IN CHILDHOOD

ОБРАЗОВНИ, ДРУШТВЕНИ И ПРЕВЕНТИВНИ ЗДРАВСТВЕНИ ЕФЕКТИ СПОРТСКО - ТАКМИЧАРСКЕ АКТИВНОСТИ У ДЕТИЊСТВУ

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Abstract: The aim of the present research, completed in the gymnastic clubs “Yunache“ in Bulgaria, is to determine the educational, socializing and preventive health effects of the sport-contesting activity. Subject of the study are pupils from I to IV grade, who are members of the gymnastic clubs “Yunache“, their teachers and parents. Subject of study are also the educational and socializing effects as a result of the activity in the gymnastic clubs.

Keywords: Olympic Education, Gymnastic Clubs, Pupils, Sport Competition

Сажетак: Циљ представљеног истраживања, реализованог у гимнастичким клубовима „Юначе“ у Бугарској, је утврђивање образовних, друштвених и превентивних здравствених ефеката спортско-такмичарске активности. Предмет студије су ученици од I до IV разреда, који су чланови гимнастичких клубова „Юначе“, њихови учитељи и родитељи. Предмет студије су такође образовни и друштвени ефекти као резултати активности у гимнастичким клубовима.

Кључне речи: Олимпијско образовање, гимнастички клубови, ученици, спортска такмичења

1. INTRODUCTION¹

In this research we are exploring some of the basic educational, socializing and preventive health effects of the sport-contesting activity of children and especially of students from I to IV grade.

At school age the sport-contest activity is of significant importance. Its meaning is important for the regular sport exercising and for the development of the ambition to be achieved competent skills. The sport competition, the contest is a forum, where the participants test themselves, place new goals, follow them, and then again test themselves. The contest observes criteria for achievements and performance, which appear important for the sport and for the life. In consideration the ambition of the competitors to meet the above criteria we have to underline that the contest is almost never focused on other competitor or team. This is a contest with oneself, trying to surpass objective criteria for achievement. Another important element of the contest is the rivalry. In sport exist many different kinds of rivalry: individual against (other) individual; team against team; individual against the clock or against some other objective criterion [1].

The contest as a phenomenon with the envisaged competitive stress in it has a positive influence in the subsequent professional realization as it “stimulates the development of a common strategy for coping with the difficulties“ [2]. Interpreted in such a way, the contest is a serious educational factor and prepares the participants for the life. It is also a factor for development of the system of values for the rising generation and factor for overcoming the isolation and developing social integration. There are traditions within the system of the Bulgarian school education for realization of sport events.

They comprise the subjects, envisaged in the curricula as well as programs for the different classes and educational degrees. The students have opportunity to “assess“ their knowledge and skills in contests of various nature – school, municipal, regional, national and international. Students’ games are realized for revealing the skills and capabilities of the student in the field of Sport. They are included into the national sport calendar of the Minister of education and science.

For each school year is made individual calendar. The students are divided in three age groups: V-VII class; VIII-X class and XI-XII class. The included sports are: basketball, volleyball, handball, football, table tennis, badminton, athletics, and chess.

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Within the school are created favourable conditions for the students to practice sport and to voluntary engage in organized forms of sports competition.

For the youngest students (I – IV class), there is a calendar of the sports competitions in school disciplines set in the curriculum for the respective class.

It strikes that sport contests are not envisaged. The subject “Physical education and sport” is not included into this contest calendar. The students from school are deprived from official sport-contesting activities. It has to be considered the fact that because of the social-economic processes in the country the exercising of sport became “activity for the elite”, many children do not exercise sport put of school and the hours on PES and actually they don’t have opportunity to participate in contests since early age [3,4].

The lack of unified sport calendar according the curriculum of the school physical education and sport for the above age group and in the calendar of the sport federations appear negative factor in the modern system of the sport for children and youngsters in Bulgaria.

This was noticed by the managing Board of the Union of Bulgarian gymnastic associations “Yunak”. The associations make efforts for overcoming the negative trend as they “revive” the heroic conventions amongst the “unoccupied gap” – the gap of the student’s sport at the initial stage of the primary educational degree. In order to escape from this vacuum – exercising sport by the youngest students and their participation at official contests, events of sport and cultural nature, the Union “Yunak” started to realize its sport-pedagogical activity. The union develops a program for accustoming in love and affiliation to the sport; joy of the systematic activity with sport; provoking interest of the children to physical activity; raising and making more various the opportunities for participations in different kinds of sport during the leisure time, for their physical, moral and intellectual development, strengthening the health and making the organism of the child more healthy by establishing of hygienic habits.

There is training for teachers who shall realize this activity and shall educate the children to adhere to the heroic and Olympic values and ideals. Exactly the sport pedagogues need to encourage the young students to participation (in sport events) and good performance. The teachers need to develop from an early age this ambition. The victory should not be an absolute aim. It is necessary for the above teachers to focus on the progress of each student and the efforts, made for the latter. The result is not of so big importance. The students have to be educated from an early age to be sportsmen and to respect the fair play.

Educational, socializing and preventive health effects

The aim of the present research is to be determined the educational, socializing and preventive health effects of the sport-contesting activity, realized in the clubs “Yunache”.

These gymnastics clubs were established at the respective schools and since 1996 became members within the structure of the Union of the Bulgarian Gymnastics Societies “Yunak”. These clubs organize activities during the school year.

At the final stage there is a convention, during which the children demonstrate their knowledge and skills in contesting conditions. In the clubs is realized Olympic education.

Subject of research appear students from I to IV grade, members of the clubs.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

For the needs of the research and outlining the educational, socializing, and preventive health effects of competitive sport activities in childhood, we implemented field observations, interviews, and inquiry with questionnaires specially developed for:

- the teachers, working under the innovative methodology for Olympic education, which is applied in the gymnastic clubs “Yunache” and who have taken participation with teams on the Jubilee X national Olympic convention for children “Yunache”, held on 1-2 June 2014 in Lyaskovet;
- current and former participants in the competition activities of the sportive festivals.

3. RESULTS

We ascertained from the terrain observations during the Jubilee Olympic convention for children and the discussions with the children that the adherence to the Olympic symbols and rituals, envisaged in the conduction of the national Olympic conventions for children “Yunache” influence significantly the children as far as the education is concerned. The children are very proud and excited to participate at the convention. They feel that they belong to a special community – the club “Yunache”; they feel grateful to the previous generations; they have national identity; their contest spirit is encouraged; they have stimulus to proceed with exercising sport actively and in a organized way; they develop their creational skills and the knowledge about the history of the Bulgarian sport and the Olympic movement.

The target group has influences in a positive way: continuous habits are established at an early student age for: sport for health, for physical and constructive development; ambition for individual and collective appearance; skills are developed to lose and to win; hygienic and esthetical habits are formed; it is worked for

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forming a discipline, responsibility in the pursuance of individual and collective tasks; the students are educated to be grateful and respectful to the teacher/couch/school and to be proud from belonging to the certain community and not on the last place - the students are educated to be grateful to the previous generations and to respect the efforts of the others.

The students, who participate in contests influence on their classmates, who don’t participate in such events, in an educational way. By their personal example they motivate their classmates to exercise sport.

We argument the suggestion that younger students need opportunities for showing off with the fact that over half (52.6%) of the interviewed children answered to the question for students from III and IV class “Why do you like to participate in the activities of the club Yunache?” that the possibility to participate in a competition is the motive to like membership in the clubs. In a on-line inquiry of former members of these clubs (n=33), 70% of the respondents answered to the same question that they liked the opportunity to take part in a competition.

Almost all of the respondents, i.e. 88% the interviewed former members of the “Yunache”clubs, believe that due to their participation in such festivals they have learned how to win and loose since childhood age. Development of competitive spirit and skills to participate in such activities on the one hand has a positive effect on the development of the personality of the children and on the other hand educates them in the Olympic spirit. By an early involvement in sports and competition activities the students acquire valuable and useful personal qualities.

The Olympic Festivals for Children “Yunache” are organized in different towns of the country. Thus the younger students have the opportunity to visit new places and to discover the landmarks of the host city.

Results based on the answers to the questionnaire for teachers show that:

- participation in sports-competitive events has a strong motivating impact on the students;
- increased interest in sports and in the motivation in engagement in sports;
- enhancement of the motivation of the students to learning (compared to their non-participating peers).

According to expert opinion of teachers the students improve their personal and communication skills; enlarge their circle of friends; they appreciate highly their value system. As a result of the educational impact and the participation of the planned activities the students managed, at relatively high degree, to observe a healthy

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lifestyle; to improve greatly their physical development; improved body posture is observed and in some cases a reduction of body weight is found.

In the questionnaire, especially developed for the teachers we placed a question, concerning the students in disadvantaged position. We wanted to know whether these children feel comfortable during the conventions and whether the participation in them helps the children as regards their participation in the social community. According to the data from the answers of the children they do feel comfortable. The conventions caused positive affect on the children in disadvantaged position and at the same time such participation helps for their social participation.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The Olympic conventions for children are conducted in adherence to the Olympic principles. Thus the conventions become a sport and art fests; a motive for future sport activity; a reason for active sport exercising. For enhancing the sport atmosphere respective rituals are envisaged at the ceremony for opening and closing of the convention.

For the children at this age it is important to be noticed and rewarded for their achievements. From instructive point of view this is very important for the improvement of their motivation to perform the respective activity and in particular sports. During a sporting competition could be achieved that very objective.

These results emphasize on the need of unified sport calendar and the opportunity for the students to have chance to participate in sport activities since the initial stage of the primary educational degree.

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