

THE PEDAGOGICAL ROLE OF SPORTS IN SHAPING THE PERSONALITY

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ABSTRACT

The work is focused on the study of the pedagogical influence of sports on the development of the personality of young people. The theoretical framework of the work includes a review of the relevant literature on the pedagogical role of sports in shaping personality. In addition to the theoretical review, the paper also contains an empirical analysis. The study examined and compared the attitudes of two groups of young people: those who actively participate in sports and those who do not. The research covered the following aspects of development: self-confidence, discipline, responsibility, socialization, emotional maturity, and self-regulation. The research established that, between the two groups of respondents, within the categories of discipline, responsibility, and socialization, there is a statistically significant difference in perception. Specifically, the group actively involved in

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sports demonstrates a higher level of discipline, responsibility, and socialization. This statistical significance was not confirmed for the other categories. The obtained results indicate the importance of pedagogical intervention in the organization and implementation of sports activities. The paper emphasizes the need for future research aimed at deepening the understanding of the conditions under which sports will have the most effective pedagogical impact.

Key words: pedagogical action, sport, personality development, young people.

PEDAGOŠKA ULOGA SPORTA U OBLIKOVANJU LIČNOSTI

APSTRAKT

Rad je usmeren na proučavanje pedagoškog uticaja sporta na razvoj ličnosti mladih. Teorijski okvir rada obuhvata pregled relevantne literature o pedagoškoj ulozi sporta u oblikovanju ličnosti. Pored teorijskog pregleda rad sadrži i empirijsku analizu. U radu su ispitani i upoređeni stavovi dve grupe mladih, onih koji se aktivno bave sportom i onih koji se ne bave sportom. Istraživanje je obuhvatilo sledeće aspekte razvoja: samopouzdanje, disciplinu, odgovornost, socijalizaciju, emocionalnu zrelost i samoregulaciju. Istraživanjem je utvrđeno da između dve grupe ispitanika u okviru kategorija discipline, odgovornosti i socijalizacije, postoji razlika u percepciji koja je statistički značajna, odnosno da grupa koja se aktivno bavi sportom ima veći nivo discipline, odgovornosti i socijalizacije. Za ostale kategorije to nije statistički potvrđeno. Dobijeni rezultati ukazuju na značaj pedagoškog delovanja pri organizaciji i realizaciji sportskih aktivnosti. Rad ističe potrebu za budućim istraživanjima koja će imati za cilj produbljivanje razumevanja uslova pod kojima će sport imati najbolji pedagoški efekat.

Ključne reči: Pedagoško delovanje, sport, razvoj ličnosti, mladi.

Introduction

The pedagogical role of sport in modern literature is gaining increasing importance. This trend is justified by the fact that sport possesses

strong potential for personality development, especially when it is implemented in accordance with pedagogical principles and content. The development of an individual through sport is a multidimensional and multidisciplinary process. All adults involved in teaching and supporting young people in sports activities (such as teachers, coaches, sports managers, and other experts) face daily challenges in connecting pedagogical activities with various aspects of sport, because the knowledge, skills, and values transmitted through sport are influenced by educational, cultural, and social factors (Armour, 2013).

The goal of the work is focused on the insightful role of pedagogical action through sport in the function of personality development. Accordingly, the aim of the research is to determine and compare the attitudes of young people who are active in sports on the one hand, and those who are not active in sports on the other hand, regarding developmental aspects within the framework of self-confidence, discipline and responsibility, socialization, emotional maturity, and self-regulation.

Formation of a sports personality

The formation of an athlete goes far beyond the work of improving and developing the individual's physical potential. It includes a synthesis of various factors related to “the nuanced interaction of coaching methodologies, teaching strategies, and holistic learning environments within sports teams” (Ismailova & Kazakov, 2023, p. 4). Sport represents an important educational tool that contributes to the development of moral values and the formation of responsible citizens who exercise their rights but also accept their own obligations (Solanes, Francisco, 2013).

According to Ogilvie (1967), a successful athlete is characterized by the following traits: emotional stability, self-confidence, the ability to withstand a high level of stress and strategies for channeling tension, setting ambitious goals, high psychological endurance, good organizational skills, and a sense of life satisfaction. With career progression and increasing success, these traits become further intensified. Warni and Rajiani (2019) point out that a successful athlete is characterized by a high level of discipline and self-control, both in behavior and in training. Discipline is developed through the long-term formation of habits that become an integral part of the personality.

In addition to the above factors, as a necessary condition for success in

sports activities, Perović and Đukić (2023) emphasize positive communication, the presence of which contributes to motivation, team cooperation, and sports performance, while its absence negatively impacts sports outcomes. This confirms the importance of addressing the social interaction of an individual while respecting their individual specificities.

In the literature addressing the topic of personality development through sports, it is also emphasized that the most successful personality development in sports is achieved when there is harmony between two essentially different processes: socialization and individualization (Nakhodkin et al., 2015).

Foster and colleagues (Foster et al., 2022) state several key conditions for sports success:

- natural talent and predispositions that should be nurtured ;
- good health as a prerequisite for bearing the load and effective recovery;
- early onset of development leading to peak performance after age 20;
- consistency and long-term commitment to the sport;
- quality and effective leadership (coaching);
- availability of training, coaches and sports community;
- setting clear and achievable goals;
- favorable objective circumstances: choosing an adequate coach at the right time, economic support, involvement of parents, availability of sports resources, avoiding injuries and the like.

Pedagogical approach to sports

The pedagogical aspect is crucial in the process of youth development through sports. Pedagogical action is primarily aimed at the all-round development of personality. Its influence is manifested through purposeful processes in various segments of human life. In the context of sports, pedagogical action implies the application of learning principles, work methods, and the provision of organizational conditions that serve to realize the full potential of the individual (Ismailova & Kazakov, 2023).

In the framework of sports pedagogy, activities aimed at the systematization, organization, and application of pedagogical methods in educational work and the training process are carried out (Paes et al.,

2006). Sports pedagogy represents a comprehensive approach that, besides enhancing biological, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being, also seeks to develop social and civic values such as friendship, cooperation, and tolerance, as well as personal life skills like self-awareness, perseverance, self-control, and self-improvement (Rosado, 2015). Children's sports should be viewed in the context of an educational environment created, organized, and implemented by adults. Such an environment is a consequence of interpersonal interactions that influence the activities of both children and adults (Telama, 2000). Teaching through sport is realized through interpersonal human relationships, whereby knowledge is transmitted within various social contexts such as family, school, community, and sports clubs (Bolaños, 2021). The realization of this concept depends on the conscious and critical engagement of families, coaches, and physical education teachers, who, with support and adequate training, are enabled to respond to the ethical and educational challenges of contemporary society and younger generations (Isidori, 2017). An individual is part of a learning community, which represents a social and educational environment within which each member, through active participation, interaction, and cooperation, achieves personal progress and contributes to the development of the collective (Stoiljković et al., 2024). This is precisely why some authors refer to sport as a "double-edged sword," because its effect depends on how adults organize it and what methods they use to transmit knowledge, skills, and values (Coelho, 2004). Accordingly, some argue that sport in itself does not carry a positive or negative value, but rather the value of sport depends on how it is planned and organized to become a tool for achieving various educational and upbringing goals (Agramonte, 2011). Pedagogical science observes sport as a means of education and development of children's personality, through encouraging the process of self-realization of the individual. In pedagogical literature, self-realization is described as a process that connects the personal characteristics of an individual with purposeful activity aimed at achieving personal goals and self-realization (Nakhodkin et al., 2015). Playing sports holds irreplaceable importance for children within the framework of pedagogical science, as it contributes to the achievement of one of the basic pedagogical goals – the formation of a well-rounded personality. The pedagogical approach to sports is reflected in several segments:

- influencing the attitudes, behaviors and skills of practitioners, parents and sports leaders;
- meeting the developmental needs of children and young people;
- encouragement of sports initiatives;
- identifying conditions for effective learning, teaching and improvement of sports techniques;
- developing critical thinking and a reflective attitude towards reality (Coelho, 2004: 13).

Ismailova and Kazakov (2023) indicate the need to respect the following teaching principles in pedagogical work in sports:

- developmental and educational learning ;
- awareness of the connection between theory and practice ;
- visibility and activity (initiative and creativity),
- accessibility (individualization) ;
- systematicity and consistency ;
- durability of learning through repetition (Ismailova & Kazakov, 2023: 4).

Numerous studies shed light on the pedagogical contribution of sport to personality development. The development of motor skills in children is not only related to their physical fitness but, as certain studies show, is also closely linked to cognitive processes such as self-expression and self-affirmation, as well as to the spiritual and moral development of the individual (Kochurova et al., 2018). These results lead us to consider sport not only as a physical activity but also as a pedagogical category, emphasizing its transformative role through educational work.

Comprehensive development of an individual requires holistic action to encourage such growth. In response to the need for comprehensive development through an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary framework, current literature highlights the importance of an integrative approach to teaching and learning. The value of this approach lies in its comprehensive nature and the connection of different contents into a unified whole (Simijonović, 2024). This approach is also applicable when aiming to improve the educational effects of sports activities.

Methodology

For the purposes of the research, two independent samples of 50 young people aged between 18 and 22 were formed. The first group consists of 50 young individuals who are regularly involved in sports (practicing a sport for more than five years), while the second group includes 50 young people who do not participate in sports. For the research, a questionnaire was created based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – totally disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – neutral, 4 – agree, 5 – completely agree).

Claims relate to the following categories:

I) Self-confidence (examined by statements from number 1 to number 3)

II) Discipline and responsibility (examined by statements from number 4 to number 6)

III) Socialization (examined by statements from number 7 to number 10)

IV) Emotional maturity and self-regulation (examined by statements from number 11 to number 13).

Based on previously defined categories, the following research hypotheses were formed:

- Hypothesis 1 (H1): Regular participation in sports contributes to a higher degree of self-confidence among young people;
- Hypothesis 2 (H2): Regular sport contributes to a greater degree of discipline and responsibility among young people;
- Hypothesis 3 (H3): Regular participation in sports affects a higher level of socialization of young people;
- Hypothesis 4 (H4): Regular participation in sports affects the emotional maturity and self-regulation of young people.

Data processing was performed using the statistical software SPSS 20. The research methods applied in the study include descriptive and comparative analysis, induction and deduction, as well as content analysis of the available literature. To examine the statistical significance of the differences between the attitudes of the analyzed groups, the independent samples t-test was used to assess the significance of differences in arithmetic means.

Results

Table 1 shows descriptive statistical indicators, i.e. arithmetic mean and

standard deviation of respondents' attitudes for the analyzed statements.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of respondents' attitudes for the analyzed statements:

Claims	Sports	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1. When I decide on something, I am confident that I am making good decisions	Do it.	50	3.9200	1.15776	,16373
	He doesn't deal with it.	50	3.4200	1.37158	,19397
2. I believe in my ability to successfully solve difficult situations	Do it.	50	4.0400	1.02936	,14557
	He doesn't deal with it.	50	3.6600	1.34938	,19083
3. I don't feel the fear of failure	Do it.	50	4.2200	1.01599	,14368
	He doesn't deal with it.	50	3.4200	1.53981	,21776
4. I regularly plan my obligations and stick to that plan	Do it.	50	4.0200	1.20357	,17021
	He doesn't deal with it.	50	3.3600	1.48131	,20949
5. I can control myself to successfully complete the planned activity even when something distracts me	Do it.	50	4.1200	1.11831	,15815
	He doesn't deal with it.	50	3.5600	1.55393	,21976
6. I try to be an example to others when it comes to work habits	Do it.	50	4.2800	,99057	,14009
	He doesn't deal with it.	50	3.7400	1.24228	,17569
7. I easily get in touch with new people	Do it.	50	4.2800	1.06981	,15129
	He doesn't deal with it.	50	3.6200	1.42700	,20181

8. I rely on my friends when I have a problem	Do it.	50	4.0600	1.21907	,17240
	He doesn't deal with it.	50	3.3600	1.54867	,21901
9. I have a developed sense of belonging and acceptance in the social environment in which I move	Do it.	50	4.4200	1.01197	,14311
	He doesn't deal with it.	50	3.7400	1.35240	,19126
10. I easily cooperate with others in a group or team in order to achieve a common goal	Do it.	50	4.1800	1.17265	,16584
	He doesn't deal with it.	50	3.4800	1.51509	,21427
11. I was able to control my emotions in stressful situations	Do it.	50	3.9600	1.19455	,16893
	He doesn't deal with it.	50	3.8200	1.22374	,17306
12. I do not transfer my negative emotions to other people	Do it.	50	4.3600	,87505	,12375
	He doesn't deal with it.	50	4.0800	1.06599	,15075
13. I understand the causes of my emotions	Do it.	50	4.0000	1.16058	,16413
	He doesn't deal with it.	50	3.8200	1.30447	,18448

Source: Author's calculation using the statistical program SPSS

Table 2 shows the results of the T-test of the difference between the arithmetic means of the attitudes of two independent samples.

Table 2. T-test of differences between arithmetic environment for independent samples (independent samples t-test)

Independent Samples Test							
	t-test for Equality of Means						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differ.	Std. Error Differ	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
1. When I decide on something, I am confident that I am making good decisions.	1,970	95,314	,052	,50000	,25384	-,00391	1.00391

2. I believe in my ability to successfully solve difficult situations	1,583	91,602	,117	,38000	,24002	,09672	,85672
3. I don't feel the fear of failure	3,066	84,867	,003	,80000	,26089	,28126	1.31874
4. I regularly plan my obligations and stick to that plan	2,445	94,059	,016	,66000	,26992	,12407	1.19593
5. I can control myself to successfully complete the planned activity even when something distracts me	2,068	89,021	,042	,56000	,27075	,02203	1.09797
6. I try to be an example to others when it comes to work habits	2,403	98	,018	,54000	,22470	,09409	,98591
7. I easily get in touch with new people	2,617	90,857	,010	,66000	,25222	,15898	1.16102
8. I rely on my friends when I have a problem	2,511	92,878	,014	,70000	,27873	,14649	1.25351
9. I have a developed sense of belonging and acceptance in the social environment in which I move	2,847	90,775	,005	,68000	,23887	,20549	1.15451
10. I easily cooperate with others in a group or team in order to achieve a common goal	2,584	92,203	,011	,70000	,27095	,16189	1.23811
11. I was able to control my emotions in stressful situations	,579	98	,564	,14000	,24185	-,33994	,61994
12. I do not transfer my negative emotions to other people	1,436	98	,154	,28000	,19504	-,10705	,66705
13. I understand the causes of my emotions	,729	98	,468	,18000	,24692	-,31001	,67001

Source: Author's calculation using the statistical program SPSS

The research was carried out for a significance level of 0.05, i.e. at a confidence interval of 95%.

The results for the p-values of the test indicate that:

- Within the self-confidence category, the statistical significance of the difference between the arithmetic means of young people's responses was not confirmed for statement No. 1 ($p = 0.052$) and statement No. 2 ($p = 0.117$), while it was confirmed for statement No. 3 ($p = 0.003$).
- Within the discipline and responsibility category, the statistical significance of the difference between the arithmetic means of the responses of the two groups was confirmed for each statement, with the following values: statement No. 4 ($p = 0.016$), statement No. 5 ($p = 0.042$), and statement No. 6 ($p = 0.018$).
- Also within the discipline and responsibility category, the statistical significance of the difference between the arithmetic means of the responses of the two groups was confirmed for statements No. 7 ($p = 0.010$), No. 8 ($p = 0.014$), No. 9 ($p = 0.005$), and No. 10 ($p = 0.011$).
- Within the category of emotional maturity and self-regulation, the statistical significance of the difference in arithmetic means was not confirmed, with the following values: statement No. 11 ($p = 0.564$), statement No. 12 ($p = 0.154$), and statement No. 13 ($p = 0.468$).

The results suggest that sport, as an instrument of educational action, achieves its goals in encouraging and developing discipline and responsibility. Young people who are actively involved in sports show a greater commitment to adhering to their plans for performing duties and do not allow other circumstances to distract their attention and focus. They also perceive themselves as examples of good practice for others to emulate in terms of work habits.

Another important outcome achieved through sports activities is reflected in the positive impact on the socialization of young people. The portion of the sample that is active in sports demonstrates that they establish contacts with new people more easily and rely more on the help of their friends when solving problems. These young people also rate highly their sense of belonging to the social community to which they belong and within which they maintain interpersonal relationships. It is important to emphasize the result confirming their higher commitment to teamwork and cooperation in achieving common goals compared to the segment of the sample consisting of young people who do not participate in sports.

In accordance with this result, studies also indicate that sport encourages the development of key personal characteristics such as self-discipline, leadership skills, collaborative spirit, conscientiousness, and openness to social interaction (Alvi et al., 2025). These elements

form the basis for the development of a functional and psychologically stable personality. Furthermore, research focusing on the overall impact of sports on personality development confirms that children who were actively involved in sports at a younger age later exhibited a higher degree of extraversion, lower levels of neuroticism, as well as better emotional regulation, which places sport at the center of preventive pedagogical practice (Sharma, 2021).

When it comes to examining self-confidence, both groups of young people have similar self-assessments regarding their ability to make good decisions and successfully solve difficult situations. In contrast, the group of respondents who are actively involved in sports exhibit a significantly lower fear of failure when taking action.

An additional important dimension of personality development is emotional maturity and self-regulation. The research did not establish significant differences in the attitudes of the two groups of respondents, particularly in aspects such as controlling emotions in stressful situations, refraining from transferring negative emotions to others, and the ability to understand the causes of one's own emotions.

This result differs from the analysis presented by Bailey et al. (2009), which points out that sport, in addition to having significant positive effects on the physical, social, and cognitive development of children, also positively influences their emotional development. However, the authors emphasize that the extent of these influences depends on the pedagogical context.

Discussion

Results research they state on conclusion on acceptance other (H2) and third research hypothesis (H3), partial acceptance first research hypothesis (H1) and non-acceptance fourth research hypotheses (H4).

First research hypothesis (H1) that regularly dealing with sports contributions larger degree self-confidence at young people who are they dealing with? you can do sports partially to accept This hypothesis can accept if for measurement self-confidence benefits the statement "I don't feel fear from failure " because there is statistical significant difference between arithmetic environment answer young people who regularly deal with sports and about those which do not deal with regularly sports , at What is arithmetic? environment answers young people who are engaged in sports 4.22 , while arithmetic environment answers young people who are not engaged in sports 3.42. First

research the hypothesis cannot be accepted if for measurement self-confidence use statements "I believe in my ability to successfully I am solving heavy situations" and "When about something I decide confident I bring it myself good decision", due to the fact that it does not exist for the mentioned days statistical significant difference between arithmetic environment answers young people who regularly deal with sports and about those which do not deal with regularly sports.

Acceptance others research hypothesis (H2) indicates on conclusion that regularly dealing with sports contributions larger the level of discipline and responsibilities at young people. For the statement "I regularly plan my obligations and stick to that plan", there is a statistically significant difference between the arithmetic means of the answers of young people who regularly play sports and those who do not regularly play sports, where the arithmetic mean of the answers of young people who play sports is 4.02, while the arithmetic mean of the answers of young people who do not play sports is 3.36. There is also a statistically significant difference between the arithmetic means of the answers of young people who regularly play sports and those who do not regularly play sports for the statement "I can control myself to successfully complete the planned activity even when something distracts me", where the arithmetic mean of the answers of young people who play sports is 4.12, while the arithmetic mean of the answers of young people who do not play sports is 3.56. The statistical significance of the difference between the arithmetic means of the answers of young people who regularly play sports and those who do not regularly play sports for the statement "I try to be an example to others when it comes to work habits" where the arithmetic mean of the responses of young people who play sports is 4.28, while the arithmetic mean of the answers of young people who do not play sports is 3.74.

The decision to accept the third research hypothesis (H3) leads to the conclusion that regular sports influence a higher level of socialization of young people. For the statement "I easily get in touch with new people", it was determined that the arithmetic means of the answers of the two observed groups are statistically significant (the group that plays sports 4.28, the group that does not play sports 3.74). The difference in the answers of young people was also determined for the statement "I rely on my friends when I have a problem", where the arithmetic mean of the answers of young people who play sports is 4.06, while the arithmetic mean of the answers of young people who do not play sports is 3.36. The statistical significance of the difference between the

arithmetic means of the answers of young people who regularly play sports and those who do not play sports for the statement “I have a developed sense of belonging and acceptance in the social environment in which I move” was confirmed, where the arithmetic mean of the answers of young people who play sports is 4.42, while the arithmetic mean of the answers of young people who do not play sports is 3.74. For the statement “I easily cooperate with others in a group or team in order to achieve a common goal”, there is a statistically significant difference between the arithmetic means of the answers of young people who regularly play sports and those who do not regularly play sports, where the arithmetic mean of the answers of young people who play sports is 4.18, while the arithmetic mean of the answers of young people who do not play sports is 3.48.

The research results suggest that the fourth researcher’s hypothesis (H4) cannot be accepted, on the basis of which it is concluded that regular sports does not affect greater emotional maturity and self-regulation. For the statements “I was able to control my emotions in stressful situations”, “I understand the causes of my emotions”, “I do not transfer my negative emotions to other people”, there is no statistically significant difference between the arithmetic means of the responses of young people who regularly play sports and those who do not regularly play sports.

Conclusion

The research has shown that active participation in sports has a positive impact on the development of discipline, responsibility, and successful socialization among young people. We can also conclude that pedagogical action must be contained within every sports engagement in order to ensure the conditions for optimal all-round personality development. Bearing in mind the wide range of influence that sports activities have on personality development, we suggest additional research that would contribute to the improvement of the educational role of sports. It is important to note certain limitations of the study, such as a small sample size, lack of control variables like type of sport, training intensity, and socioeconomic factors. Future in-depth research could include a larger number of categories of personality development, an increased number of statements within each category, possibility of examining moderating effects (the role of coaches, family, etc.) and a wider sample of respondents.

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