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Student sports clubs as a factor in university students' enhancing social adaptation

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Abstract

The purpose of the article is to develop a model for introducing student sports clubs (SSCs) as a means of enhancing social adaptation to the reference environment for new students entering higher educational institutions via a sociological survey method. As a result, among the students actively involved in the work of SSC, 36.1% note that this type of activity has a positive effect on their social adaptation to the university. In conclusion, the indicators of socio-psychological adaptation of students are very dynamic.

Keyword: Students, universities, sports club, social.

Clubes deportivos estudiantiles como factor en la mejora de la adaptación social de los estudiantes universitarios

Resumen

El propósito del artículo es desarrollar un modelo para la introducción de clubes deportivos estudiantiles (SSC) como un medio para mejorar la adaptación social al entorno de referencia para los nuevos estudiantes que ingresan a instituciones de educación superior a través de un método de encuesta sociológica. Como resultado, entre los

estudiantes que participan activamente en el trabajo del SSC, el 36.1% señala que este tipo de actividad tiene un efecto positivo en su adaptación social a la universidad. En conclusión, los indicadores de adaptación socio-psicológica de los estudiantes son muy dinámicos.

Palabra clave: estudiantes, universidades, club deportivo, social.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern socio-economic context of societal change, one of the state policy priorities is to ensure accumulation and preservation of human capital and health of the nation, especially the younger generation, including students (Priority project charter formation of a healthy lifestyle 2017; On protecting the health of citizens from exposure to tobacco smoke and the effects of tobacco consumption, 2013; On decisions following a meeting on developing physical culture for the senior citizens 2019). Transformation of the modern Russian society and fundamental principles of life activity form the new social practices of modern students, pertinent to the nature and content of the loads associated with a more complex social life and its faster pace. Nevertheless, health remains the most important indicator of the effective functioning of all social systems. According to 2019 official records, the Russian Federation ranks among countries with a high mortality rate.

As estimated by the World Population Review, Russia ranks fifth in the world in terms of mortality (death rate = 13.648). Cardiovascular diseases were found to be the main mortality cause,

while sports activities were considered to be the best prevention for these diseases. In this regard, in 2017, the priority project charter formation of a healthy lifestyle was approved. It aimed to increase the share of citizens committed to a healthy lifestyle from 36% to 45% by the end of 2019 and to 60% by the end of 2025.

Moreover, the goal of the project was to increase the share of the population who regularly engages in physical training and sports from 34% to 38% in 2019 and to 45% in 2025 because the younger generation is a potential bearer of the future image of Russian society. Health promotion of students as a future intellectual class is crucial in this process because the development of the most important social spheres in the country, such as education, culture, management, economy, and politics, among others, depends on them (Mihajlova, 2015).

Therefore, the state of student health is one of the most important generalizing parameters of a nation's health. The state of student health in higher educational institutions is largely influenced by the process of social adaptation (Bidabadi et al., 2016; Bailey & Phillips, 2016; Gladilina et al., 2018). Frustrated processes regarding the social adaptation of university students have an adverse effect on their health and cause anxiety, restlessness, aggressive behaviors, and cardiac diseases (Karaca et al., 2019). The level of students' social adaptation largely determines the success of solving learning and educational tasks facing the higher education system as a whole.

Throughout the entire training period, students will have to interact with the social environment in the educational organization to comply with its requirements and rules, to maintain their status, and to be influenced by the educational environment, etc., which largely determines the effectiveness of the professional training process for future specialists in higher educational institutions. The need to create the required conditions to increase students' social adaptation skills requires more effective use of the potential of learning and extra-curricular activities in a higher educational institution. A significant contribution in these terms can also be made through the activities of Student Sports Clubs (hereinafter referred to as SSC), whose work, from the standpoint of a reference environment for student socialization, had not been the subject of scientific research. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to develop a model for introducing SSCs as a factor in enhancing the social adaptation of students.

As part of the study, I have analyzed the problems of interaction of social adaptation and physical activity in modern academic literature. I have also substantiated the main aspects of introducing the SSC model into the higher education system. Based on interviews with students in Russian universities, I have analyzed the priorities and attitudes of university students to SSC functioning. Following the interviews, I developed a scale to assess the level of student adaptedness at the universities under study and to evaluate the effectiveness of the SSC model as a factor in enhancing the social adaptation of students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The first year of university studies is one of the most difficult periods for students since they are supposed to adapt to a new social, ethnic, and educational environment, as well as to the requirements of teachers and academic workload. In other words, upon admission into a university, students take time getting used (adapting) to a new social environment. Therefore, the academic performance of a student in a higher educational process depends on the student successfully getting acquainted with new social realities (Miguéis et al., 2018).

Social adaptation is a process aimed at homeostasis (the state of body balance), which implies accustomization to an environment. The social adaptation of students is underlain by the following: psychological and pedagogical adaptation as a process of personality formation and development in the process of social activity (Berebussunova, 2014); psychological and pedagogical mechanisms of regulating a student's entry into the social educational university environment; and coordination of individual and group behaviors with the system of standards and values prevailing in a particular society, class, or social group (Burtăverde et al., 2018).

In the modern psychological and pedagogical scientific literature, it is clear that researchers have studied the process of student adaptation for a long time. Many researchers have explored this research problem, such as Bidabadi et al. (2016); Bailey and Phillips (2016); and Berebussunova (2014), and have also revealed a close

connection between the processes of social adaptation of students and their health status (Mihajlova, 2015; Karaca et al., 2019). Many scientists have also proved that, owing to controversies in the student environment and interpersonal confrontation, more than 70% of students are in a state of severe psycho-emotional stress (Cameron & Schoenfeld, 2018; Clinciu, 2013). According to Shemetova and Dudrova, the researchers observed a health deterioration of varying degrees in 60% of students, while as much as 20% of students can be considered healthy upon graduation.

Adverse student environment, high conflict intensity, a low level of student health status, and a lack of methodic work to build a general health culture negatively impact the social adaptation of students (Cid & Diaz, 2017). In turn, this leads to their maladaptation, depleting adaptive capacity, and reduced academic performance levels in course of the learning process. It is paramount that the problems underlying the social adaptation of students mean that researchers should pay attention to the formation of health culture and enable an environment in the student community in higher educational institutions. A significant step towards increasing the academic performance of students is to enhance their physical activity. For this reason, it is essential to understand the extent to which physical activity is related to student performance and how it can be facilitated.

In recent studies, researchers have suggested a positive relationship between exercise and academic performance in primary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions (Mckay et al., 2019).

Sedentarism is a risk factor for students' cognitive functions, which are a cornerstone in students' academic performance and, consequently, in the process of their adaptation in a new environment (Moran et al., 2019). Such scientific findings allow one to consider physical activity as a new tool for cognitive development and not only place a responsibility on physical activity as a factor in the physical health of students and their motor ability, but also as an active and concomitant mechanism of developing students' academic performance by means of enhancing their adaptive skills (Mckay et al., 2019; Edwards & Rowe, 2019).

In the modern educational environment, educators often fail to pay adequate attention to forming a health culture and raising the levels of students' healthy lifestyle, which exacerbates the problems of social adaptation of students. Further, poor awareness regarding the fundamentals of a healthy lifestyle and uninformed motivational attitudes results in students having low adaptive abilities (Moran et al., 2019).

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

We formed the methodological foundation of the study using a sociological survey method that was used along two lines: 1) to study the involvement of students in sports activities in higher educational institutions of Russia and the priority activity areas of university sports clubs; 2) to assess the effectiveness of setting up sports clubs at

universities and its impact on the adaptation of students. In the first area, we studied the problem regarding students' involvement in sports club activities across the country. The respondents were 400 first-year students from Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University (BFU), Kaliningrad State Technical University, Moscow City Pedagogical University, Ural Federal University, and Ural State Technical University, for whom adaptation was particularly relevant.

WE also conducted a pedagogical experiment to evaluate the impact of sports clubs on students' adaptation to the class and training activities among 285 first-year students of Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University (BFU) and Kaliningrad State Technical University. The minimum sample size requirements for a large population (> 30 people), which is the number of students in higher educational institutions of Russia, are 273 people. Within the framework of the study, we designed a questionnaire survey for the selected sampled population of 400 and 285 people, respectively, which corresponds to the minimum sufficiency criteria and indicates representativeness of the research results in the two areas.

4. RESULTS

A questionnaire survey of students in 20 higher educational institutions of Russia ($n = 285$) has shown that the majority of students know through social media that a student sports club operates in their

university, yet, the vast majority of students (78.9%) never turn to SSC (Figure 1).

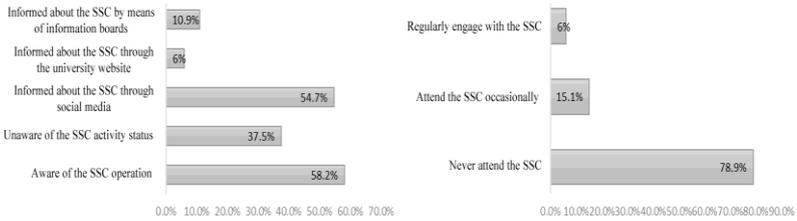


Figure 1: The results of interviewing students in Russian universities (a sample of 400 respondents)

In the modern context, SSC activities are not limited to organization of sports and recreational activities. Recently, other activities, such as sports volunteering, have begun to grow rapidly. However, according to the survey results among Russian students, one can testify that only 26% of respondents are interested in physical culture and sports activities of SSCs (Figure 2).

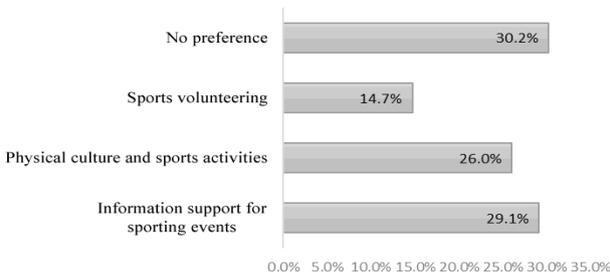


Figure 2: Priority areas for SSC activities among university students of Russia (a sample of 400 respondents)

The experimental model of a student sports club as a means of social adaptation of students in a higher educational institution, based on taking into account students' proclivity to various types of extracurricular activities in the framework of this study was evaluated by studying the indicators of students' adaptedness to the class and academic activities in the control and experimental groups, using the test Adaptedness of students in higher school (Table 1).

Table 1: Indicators of student adaptedness in higher schools of Russia

Immanuel Kant BFU						
Universi ty	Scale of adaptedness to the class			Scale of adaptedness to academic activities		
	Before the experim ent	After the experim ent	$\Delta\Delta$, %	Before the experim ent	After the experim ent	$\Delta\Delta$, %
Score	4.31	6.76	++56 .8	3.98	6.1	++53 .3
Adaptati on level	Low	Average	6↑	Low	Average	↑↑
KSTU						
Universi ty	Scale of adaptedness to the class			Scale of adaptedness to academic activities		
	Before the experim ent	After the experim ent	$\Delta\Delta$, %	Before the experim ent	After the experim ent	$\Delta\Delta$, %
Score	2.73	2.9	++6. 2	2.71	3.38	++24 .7
Adaptati on level	Low	Low	→→	Low	Low	→→

To analyze the results of introducing the SSC model in the universities of Russia under study, a scale of qualitative and quantitative levels for assessing students' adaptedness to the process of education (to academic activities and to the class) has been developed (Table 2).

Table 2: Description of the students' adaptation assessment levels in the learning environment (points)

Qualitative level	Quantitative level
High level	(9.92; 16]
Average level	(6.08; 9.92]
Low level	[0; 6.08]

Initially, the BFU students showed a higher level of adaptedness to the class than the KSTU students. There is a reason to believe that this result is caused by the specifics of specialties for which training programs are implemented in each of the universities. This assumption is confirmed by research findings Lebedeva (2001) that point out to social adaptation challenges of technical students. Mathematical and statistical processing of the experimental results in terms of studying the level of student adaptedness to the class has shown a substantial increase in this indicator among the BFU students—by 56.8%. The results obtained at the KSTU revealed an increase in the level of the students' adaptation to the class by 6.2%. Indicators of student adaptedness to learning activities among the BFU students were initially higher than those of their peers at the KSTU. During the experiment, the BFU students showed substantial growth in their

adaptedness to learning activity—53.3% compared to 24.7% in the KSTU students.

5. DISCUSSION

Based on the research results, it is possible to testify that SSCs play a significant positive role in terms of social adaptation of students to the conditions associated with acquiring higher professional education. This study has shown that the model proposed by us contributes to an increase in the number of students actively involved in the preparation and conduct of SSC events. At the beginning of the school year, the number of most active students was 29 people; by the beginning of the next school year, there were already 175 most active students.

In this study, we have addressed the problem of the formation of students' professional identity. Povarenkov focuses on the fact that professional identity is the leading characteristic of students' professional development, indicating the degree of acceptance of their chosen professional activity as a means of self-fulfillment and development, as well as the degree of recognition of themselves as a professional. Among the indicators of professional identity, I highlight assessment of their professional and educational opportunities, satisfaction with the chosen profession and their educational outcomes, forecast of the motivational capacity of the profession, etc.

However, the same research makes it obvious that the specifics of students' professional identity begins to manifest much later after they have completed the internship that stimulates the development of a professional identity based on a major restructuring of students' attitude to themselves as a professional and to their future professional activities. Accordingly, it is concluded that first-year students do not yet have a professional identity, which is a prerequisite for passing the tests given by them (Marbán & Mulenga, 2019).

6. CONCLUSIONS

In general, based on the results of studying the adaptedness of the students of Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University and Kaliningrad State Technical University to the class and academic activities, it can be concluded that the experimental model of student sports club activities, proposed by me taking into account individual proclivity to a certain occupation, contributes to the social adaptation of students to the environment of higher educational institutions. The results obtained by me indicate that during the entire period of study at university, the indicators of students' adaptedness can change. The research findings confirm that the indicators of socio-psychological adaptation of students are very dynamic. By the end of the first semester, about 43% of students significantly increase their adaptedness to the class and up to 39 %—to the learning activities. The socializing role of student sports clubs should not be limited to engaging students in vigorous sports activities.

What is promising from the point of view of student socialization is activities that are not directly related to their participation in sports events as athletes. Referee activities, sports journalism and volunteering are also occupations that would allow students to successfully complete the process of social adaptation to school. It is at college age that young people most often begin vigorous labor activities, plan to start a family, and take other important steps in life. All this can significantly change life priorities, enhance, or, conversely, eliminate the motivation for a particular activity. That is why student sports club activities should satisfy the needs of students for self-fulfillment varying with age.

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