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Physical Education in Universities Researches – Best Practices – Situation

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Physical Education in Universities: Researches – Best Practices – Situation

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Introduction

You are holding a book “Physical Education in Universities: Researches - Best Practices - Situation” prepared by FIEP, Slovak Technical University and Comenius University in Bratislava.

The book is part of the 4th Physical Education World Wide Survey, which is carried out by UNESCO in cooperation with FIEP and its partners. The publication is part of one of its lines, focusing on mapping the basic characteristics of physical education and physical activities of children and youth in the world at individual levels of schools, from pre-school education to universities.

In 2017 the book "Physical Education in Primary School: Researches - Best Practices - Situation", edited by D. Collela, B. Antala and S. Epifani, was published by Pensa Multimedia in Italy and has 502 pages. 102 authors from 27 countries and 5 continents participated. In 2018, it was followed by a publication "Physical Education in Secondary School: Researches - Best Practices - Situation", published by the University of Montenegro in cooperation with the Montenegrin Sport Academy. The editors were S. Popović, B. Antala, D. Bjelica and J. Gardašević. It had 343 pages and was prepared by 84 authors from 24 countries and 5 continents. The publication "Physical Education in Early Childhood Education and Care: Researches - Best Practices - Situation" was published in Slovakia by the Slovak Scientific Society for Physical Education and Sport in 2019. Its editors were B. Antala, G. Demirhan, A. Carraro, C. Oktar, H. Oz and A. Kaplánová. It had 464 pages. 120 authors from 32 countries from 5 continents participated. A series of these 4th Physical Education World Wide Survey publications will continue in 2021 with the publication of "Physical Education and Sport for Children and Youth with Special Needs: Researches - Best Practices - Situation".

This book is divided into four parts. In the first part of the publication called "Researches", we bring the latest research findings aimed at exploring the physical activity in universities, faculties and institutes. The second part, the “Best Practices” brings examples of good practice from different countries of the world and the third part “Situation” is focused on presenting knowledge related to the characteristics of the state of the issue in various countries in the world. Last, fourth part of the book is focused on French language write articles. Due the agreement between FIEP and CONFES, the book was open for articles write in French language also. Seven articles, especially from African countries, are situated in this last part of the book.

136 authors from 28 countries and five continents participated in the book, of which 13 were European countries/regions (France, Italy, Ireland, Kosovo, Nord Macedonia, Portugal, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom), 2 countries from America (Mexico, USA), 4 countries from Asia (Lebanon, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore), 6 countries from Africa (Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, RSA, Senegal, Tunisia) and 3 countries from Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, Samoa). Therefore, the publication brings a broad international perspective on the issue of university physical education and physical activities.

A book “Physical Education in Universities: Researches - Best Practices -Situation” is prepared also for celebration of 60th anniversary of Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Comenius University in Bratislava in Slovakia where FIEP have already many years its European seat. Book celebrate also 80th anniversary of Faculty of Chemical and Food Technology from Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava. Its Department of Physical Education and Sport is a partner for preparation of this book. More complex information about these two important Slovak institutions are presented in the beginning of book in the part Introduction.

A thank you goes also to the reviewers who, through their comments and advice, helped the authors improve the quality of their contributions. We thank also the Foundation for Development of Faculty of Chemical and Food Technology of Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava and the faculty management for financial and moral support in publishing this publication.

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Editors

Physical Education and Sport at the Universities in the Republic of North Macedonia

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Abstract

Universities are not just a place to gain knowledge and build academic profile but also a place to contribute to complete development of personality of the youth, improving their social, emotional and mental health and overall wellbeing. In this regard, considering this important role, universities and their structures have many possibilities to work in direction to promote healthy and active lifestyle. This paper analyses different forms of organization of sport at six state universities in North Macedonia. We focused on analyses of legal acts that regulate sport at university, approaches in implementation of sport as subject implemented in study programs at all faculties, as well as different forms of extracurricular sport and recreational activities and university sport competitions. Many differences between universities are noted mainly in the segment of representation of sport curriculum represented in the status of the subject, representation on faculties, evaluation etc. Differences are also noted in other segments of organization of sport. Existence of department for sport or university center for sport is underlined as positive and influencing factor for higher representation and better organization of sport curriculum at analyzed universities. We presented our suggestions how to improve each segment and impact positively on student's overall wellbeing.

Key words: University, Students, Sport curriculum, Extracurricular sport activities, University sport competitions

Introduction

The period of university studies is important period in the life of the young people. It's not just a step in new educational level. Moreover, is a period of developing complete, competent and responsible person, prepared to overtake personal and social responsibilities, actions and challenges of modern living and to answer on proper manner. Therefore, University and it's faculties should facilitate complete education, or education that goes over just pure academic knowledge and offers possibilities for complete, harmonious development of future citizens of the world. One of the aspects of complete development of the young people, is creation of "physically educated person". According to Hardman (2011), "physically educated person or a person that have adopted abilities for engagement in various physical activities which provide easier maintenance of good health and wellbeing throughout the entire life; person who engages in certain physical activities on regular basis because they are highly enjoyable and because of the pleasant feeling they bring, understands the values of the physical activity, as well as the gains derived from the active and healthy manner of life" (Hardman, 2011). In this regard, physical education, physical activity and sport at universities are logical consequence in the educational system in the process of sport education of the youth.

Implemented in university curricula and university life, sport is manner of personal promotion of the students - athletes, possibility for personal growth and development but also a manner to promote the values of sport, values of university and university education as well. This indicates the complementarity of sport with the harmony of university spirit and mission. This is underlined in the philosophy of International University Sports Federation (FISU), emphasizing that "promotion of sport at university in fact is promotion and encouragement of friendship, fair play, integrity, cooperation and communication among students; new dimension of university spirit, research and discipline through affirmation of complete development of the personality and society as whole. This development is not just intellectual, but also moral and physical as well" (The FISU Philosophy, <http://www.fisu.net/fisu/today>). There is no doubt that these messages emphasize the great importance of sport and PE in overall development but also increase awareness for the importance of PE and sport at university as the last chain in the system of institutional education. Therefore, each country and each university as a core of changes and development should take care of the youth as a moving force of the society and should provide possibility for quality and active lifestyle offering possibilities for sport and physical activity at university.

In this regard, this paper is a short review of the situation with physical education and sport at Universities in Republic of North Macedonia, analyzing the current conditions, manners of organizations, problems and difficulties that university are faced with but also to suggest possible solutions and share some positive actions that are taken.

Universities in Republic of North Macedonia and legal regulations for physical activity and sport at universities

University education in Republic of North Macedonia could be achieved at seven state universities and nineteen private universities located in different cities in the country. Considering the variety of study programs within the Faculties and Universities, for the purposes of this work, we will focus on analyses of conditions with physical education and sport and in this frame a representative institution for its realization (Faculty of sport, department of sport or university sport center) only at state universities. They are following (listed according the year of establishment):

▪ ***St “Chiril and Methodius” University – Skopje (UKIM)***. The oldest and first ranking state university, established in 1949. Located in Skopje with educational centers at two more cities in Macedonia. Totally 23 faculties exist within this university, including Faculty of physical education, sport and health which is responsible for the education of most of PE teachers and coaches in the country. Within this faculty, exist a Center for sport and physical education which cover all sport activities and PE curricula for students from other faculties.

▪ ***St “Kliment Ohridski” University in Bitola (UKLO)***. Established in 1979, this university integrates 11 different faculties. Teaching activities are mainly realized in Bitola and in four other cities. There is no faculty of Sport and PE at this university.

▪ ***State University in Tetovo (DUT)***. Established 2004 and cover the work of 10 faculties including Faculty for physical culture responsible for education of PE teachers and coaches. For the purposes of sport and PE of students from all faculties, University Sport Center is established. The teaching process is realized in Tetovo and in five other cities, mainly located in western part of the country.

▪ ***Goce Delcev University in Stip***. It’s one of the youngest but fast developing Universities in the country and also a second rank university in the country. It’s established in 2007 and unites the work of 13 Faculties and 3 Academies (art, film and dance). Beside in Stip, some of the faculties has campuses in 5 other cities, located mainly in the eastern and central part of the country. Starting from 2010, the university established The University Sport Center which is responsible for organization of all sport activities for the students from all faculties within the Goce Delcev University. In 2018, the University sport center was renamed as University sport and cultural center covering both sport and cultural activities of the students.

▪ ***University for informational technologies “St. Aposotol Pavle” – Ohrid***. Established in 2009, integrates the work of five different faculties.

▪ ***University St Mother Theresa – Skopje***. The youngest University in the country, established in 2016, this University offers education in the natural and the social sciences through five faculties.

The organization of physical education and sport at university is regulated with different legal acts and regulations. Starting from 2010, in the high education institutions in Macedonia started the implementation of regulations of Bologna Declaration, European credit transfer system and implementation of Bologna process in high education. This not implicated any changes or recommendation for particular organization of sport at universities.

From the aspect of national legal documents, there is no unique legal act that regulates the issue of sport at University. Some aspects are regulated with the Law for sport and Law for high education. The Law for sport (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia No29/2002 from 07.05.2002) had two regulations that directly not regulate the sport at University but regulates the absence of student (professional athlete) for participating in training process and competitions (article 33, paragraph 3) and possibility for organization of sport events “sport competitions and events organized by sport clubs and national sport federations (paragraph 1, article 57)”, which in this case refers to organization of sport competitions and events from University Sport Federation of North Macedonia in which competitions participate sport teams from all universities in the country. In the National Strategy for Youth for period 2016 – 2025 suggested by the Agency for Youth and Sport, there is no particular goal for development of university sport. Moreover, the emphasis is given to the concept “Sport for all” (National strategy for youth, 2016). From the other hand, the Law for High Education (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia No 35 from 14.3.2008) that regulates the work of universities, has several acts that regulates sport in high education, mainly possibility the university to allocate finances for support

of sport activities (Article 18, page 19), establishing organizations for sport like institutes, departments, university sport centers for realization of sport and recreation of students and employees in the universities (Dimkov, 2018; Popeska, Jovanova – Mitkovska, Dimkov & Smilkov, 2017).

Summarizing the results from legislation, it could be concluded that in Republic of North Macedonia, there is no clearly defined regulation that particularly defiant the representation of PE and sport in study programs at university level. The legislative gives possibility to create departments/centers/institutes for sport or establish university sport clubs aimed to promote and develop sport among students and employees but no particular instructions for the number of suggested hours, manner of realization etc.

Different forms of physical activity and sport at universities

At Universities, physical education and sport could be realized at different manners and it can be represented in different forms. These depends from many factors, including: national strategy for sport, youth and education; state legislative; university statute and regulations; educational or organizational body responsible for physical education and sport; available material resources, human resources. All these factors are also closely related with the vision of university to promote physical activity and their resources to do so. Analyzing the situation in State Universities in Macedonia, following forms of organization of PE and sport universities are present:

- Physical education and sport as obligatory and/or optional (elective) subject within study programs at Faculties at University.
- Sport competitions (competitions between faculties within same faculty, competitions between faculties within university, university sport competitions on national and international level).
- Extracurricular sport activities suggested and supported by university.

Within each group, there are variety of sport activities that are organized and supported by university, particular faculty or department/ center for sport. Forms of sport activities at the university as well as the number and variety of sport contents available for students are closely related with available sport facilities and sport bases that can be afforded by the universities, available sport equipment for effective realization of different sport contents, qualified teachers, finances provided for sport as well as university body that is responsible for sport (Popeska, Barbareev, Janevik – Ivanovska, 2015; Dimkov, 2018; Popeska at al, 2018;).

Physical education and sport withing university curriculum in different universities in North Macedonia

The period of university studies is specific period in the lifespan where many changes occurs – changes in emotional and social aspect in the life of young people, often change of place of living, increased freedom but also increased obligations, responsibilities. Considering these changes and having in mind the fact that university is probably the last instance for educational impact and creation of live – long habits for healthy and active lifestyle, is clear why is important to have PE and sport as subject during university studies. This is confirmed in many studies referring to university students, reporting for positive effects of physical activity and sport during studies on students health (Küchelová et al, 2014; Kondric et al, 2013), improvement of movement performances (Kondric, et al, 2013), better academic achievements (Serikov &

Serikov, 2016), socialization (Yusupov, 2014; Beni, Fletcher & Chróinín, 2016; Kondric, et al, 2013), emotional benefits (Broáni et al, 2013), positive self – esteem and self – confidence (Lapa, 2014; Nemček & Wittm Annova, 2013). Having in mind these findings and considering the fact that the need of health, productivity, social and emotional wellbeing is important for all professions and people, it's clear how important and beneficial will be to have sport and PE integrated in university curricula. This importance is recognized by the management of some universities in North Macedonia.

Sport and PE curricula implemented in study programs at Universities in Macedonia is aimed to improve student's personal health, level of physical activity, personal motor performance and overall wellbeing. From six state universities in Republic of North Macedonia, PE and sport curriculum is represented only at three Universities located in Skopje, Stip and Tetovo. Considering that sport curricula at these universities are different, following we make a short overview of their structure focusing on representation per semester, status within different study programs and Faculties, sport contents, requirements for students, models of evaluation, ECTS and requirements for teaching staff. Other three universities in Bitola, Ohrid and Skopje (University Mother Teresa) are excluded from this analysis considering that they don't offer sport in study programs of their faculties.

Sport curriculum at St “Chyryl and Methodius University” Skopje.

At St “Chyryl and Methodius University”, the establishment of sport curriculum is regulated by each Faculty independently and therefore, the subject is realized differently at different faculties including different number of hours and requirements for the students. The subject is named “Physical education” and is established as obligatory and optional subject. At two from two from totally 23 Faculties – Faculty of Music and Faculty of technology, the status of sport is obligatory, with 16 hours during the semester, 60 minutes per week. It is realized in first year of studies at first or second semester depending from the study program. It is delivered only as practical exercises, without theoretic lectures. There is no final exam, nor ECTS credits. Students are only required to attend the practical exercises regularly, and minimum 12 hours per semester. Students are also obligated to take part of students hiking tour which is traditionally organized by the University at the beginning of each academic year in October.

Similar form of organization of practical exercises, but status optional, sport curriculum is established at Faculty of Medicine and some study programs at Faculty of Technology. At this two faculties, the subject is evaluated with final exam and with 2 ECTS points. Depending from the faculty, students take colloquiums and final exams or only final exam from this subject.

The responsibility for design of sport curriculum, its organization, realization and evaluation is given to the academic staff at Center for physical education, established in the frames of Faculty of physical education, sport and health. Responsible teachers are required to have master or PhD degree in kinesiology. The subject is delivered only in Skopje.

Sport curriculum at Goce Delcev University in Stip.

In study programs at Faculties integrated in the Goce Delcev University, sport was established in academic year 2010/2011. It is named “Sport and recreation” and is established as obligatory and optional subject at all 16 Faculties within the university. Beside the status, the obligatory and optional subject has completely different organization and requirements for the students.

As obligatory subject, Sport and recreation is mandatory for all full-time students in first year of studies at all faculties and all study programs at the University. It is delivered in summer or winter semester depending from the specific program of study of each Faculty. The subject Sport and recreation is represented with 0+0+2 hours, which means that students only attend practical exercises in period of 60 minutes, once a week. It is not evaluated with ECTS credits nor with final exams. Students are obligated to attend exercises regularly or minimum 60% of total number of teaching hours. Sport and recreation are realized in all teaching centers where University has teaching campuses, particularly in 5 different cities. The main goal of the Sport and Recreation curriculum is to fulfill student's needs for movement and physical activity, in compliance with their personal abilities, needs, and affinities and striving to decrease sedentary style and develop habits for health and active lifestyle, providing possibilities and access to different sport contents. Regarding the structure and contents within curriculum, different types of physical activities and sports are included. These sports activities are: complex of exercises for basic physical preparation realized during the first three weeks of realization as a manner for physical preparation of students and involvement in other activities; aerobic and pilates; martial arts and self-defense, sports games (basketball, volleyball and handball), badminton, table tennis and outdoor activities. Outdoor activities are mainly focused hiking or cross running and are realized twice during the month, in Saturdays. Suggested syllabus is unified for all faculties. Facilities for proper realization of contents as well as required equipment is provided University sport center and is available in all teaching centers. The teaching process is delivered by specialized PE teachers, with master degree or PhD in kinesiology, PE or particular sport, employed in University sport center at full time or part time.

As optional subject, Sport and recreation is established on the list of University optional subject and can be selected from students from all faculties in the seventh or eighth semester, depending from the study program of the Faculties. The subject is evaluated with final exam and brings 2 ECTS points. Following the concept of university optional subjects it has theoretical lectures from different aspects of physical activity, sport and health including: role of physical activity in everyday life, PA in leisure, PA at work and as active break; effects of movement and regular PA, different contents of sport recreation – how to choose and how to practice them; PA and nutrition; PA and effects on mental and emotional health, stress reduction; frequent injuries during PA, outdoor PA – what to choose and how to practice etc. From the aspect of participation in practical activities, such contents are not obligatory for students. Considering the nature of the subject and emphasis on movement and PA, students had possibility to participate in different extracurricular activities provided by University sport center: participation in organized recreational groups of students (running and cycling), hiking, aerobics, sport games and competitions, monthly hiking tours organized in all teaching centers, winter camps etc. The aim of such organization is students to gain knowledge for values and benefits from PA in everyday life, proper selection of activities based on personal abilities and interest etc. The optional subject is delivered by teachers with PhD in kinesiology

Sport curriculum at State University in Tetovo.

The subject named "Sport" is established optional subject at Faculties in the frames of State University in Tetovo. It is delivered from first to fourth year of studies in different semesters, depending from the Faculty and study program. It has mainly a recreational character and it is realized as practical exercise with 0+0+2 number of classes, 45 minutes per week. It is not evaluated with ECTS and there is no final exam. The subject is delivered by teaching staff from

Faculty of physical culture. This Faculty is also responsible for organization and realization of the subject.

The summary for the status, structure, organization and realization of the sport and PE at universities in North Macedonia is given in Table 1.

Table 1 Establishment of sport curriculum at different universities in five countries

	University	Status of the subject	Name of the subject	Representation by semesters	ECTS	Exam & final grade
North Macedonia	St Chyrlil and Methodius University- Skopje	Optional 2 faculties	Physical education	One semester	2	Yes
	St. Kliment Ohridski University Bitola	/	/	/	/	/
	State University in Tetovo	Optional all faculties	Sport 0+0+2	One semester, different years	NO	NO
	Goce Delcev University Stip	Compulsory 1 – year at all faculties	Sport and recreation 0+0+2	One semester, 1 st or 2 nd	NO	NO
		Optional, 4 th year at all faculties	Sport and recreation	One semester, 7 th or 8 th	2	Yes
	University in Ohrid	/	/	/	/	/

Presented results are part from larger study conducted by Dimkov (2018), aimed to determine the management of university sport in Macedonia and surrounding countries. The results were provided using specially designed questioner for responsible persons for sport at each included university. Based on provided information in Table 1, big differences are noted among all universities. In general, at Universities that have Faculty of PE and sport and/or University sport center, that are responsible for sport and physical activity of the students, there is greater awareness for the importance and benefits for physical activity and there is established subject Sport. Within these Universities, if the regulation is determined by the University, there is a unique organization and representation of the subject, as case of Goce Delcev University. When regulation of the status is given at Faculties, great differences in representation, evaluation and requirements for students are noted. Compared with other countries from the region, the countries in which universities are obligated by legislation or by university acts to organize sport activities for students have greater representation of sport curriculum implemented in study programs as compulsory or elective subject. Such examples are universities in Bulgaria where by state legislative sport is obligatory at universities (Popeska et al, 2016; 2018; Dimkov, 2018).

Extracurricular sport activities and sport competitions at universities in North Macedonia

Universities in North Macedonia provide and organize different recreational extracurricular activities for students aimed to increase the level of PA and motivation for sport. These activities are also used to promotion not just sport but also university, faculty. Such activities also promote positive values of sport such as: team work, support, fair play, socialization, inclusion, equal access etc. Extracurricular activities are suggested as contents of student's leisure time suggested by University or faculty. Sport competitions are organized in different sports and all levels (university, national, international).

Extracurricular sport activities at St “Chyryl and Methodius University”

Activities such traditional hiking tour on Mountain Vodno, participation in Skopje Marathon, Days of Francophonie and other activities are provided for students at St “Chyryl and Methodius University”, organized and supported by Faculty of PE, sport and health, Center for physical education supported by commission for sport of the University and Student parliament. Within the framework of the University there are also sport competitions for man and female athletes in the following sports: basketball, handball, volleyball, futsal, table – tennis, football, chess, swimming, cross-country.

Extracurricular sport activities and sport competitions at Goce Delcev University in Stip

University sport center at Goce Delcev University is responsible for organization of extracurricular and recreational sport activities for both students and employees. During the academic year, for students at all years of study at all faculties are provided terms in university sport hall for basket 3x3, basketball, handball, volleyball, futsal, table – tennis, badminton, functional training. These activities are realized by previously prepared schedule available at university web page, where terms for each particular sport are determined. Students participate in them based on their preferences and available time. Sport and recreation professors support students with professional advice and help if needed, sport equipment etc. Furthermore, during the year, different period students can participate in other recreational and competitive activities provided by USC. They are following:

- Hiking tours organized during the weekends at different mountains around the country;
- Cycling race organized for the University day, supported by National Cycling Federation and included recreational and competition races. The aim of this event is to promote physical activity, active transportation as well as awareness for protection of the environment. It is organized by the university and supported by local community, schools, kindergartens etc.
- Participation of students and employees at different running races organized by National Athletic Federation, supported by community. Such races are Women race, Skopje Marathon race, Night race in Stip organized for the day of liberation etc. The participation in such events is aimed to promote PA, to motivate students and staff to be active and also to promote the university as responsible organization, aware of the need of healthy and active lifestyle. Following the positive feedback from participants, their successful stories how this initiated to put running at their list of weekly activities, the University sport center put running in their year program and works on organization of similar events at the University as well as to continue the participation on other similar one.

Extracurricular sport activities and competitions at University “St. Kliment Ohridski” in Bitola

During academic year, students have possibility to use university sport hall for recreation, twice a week for each faculty separately. Different sports can be practices, mainly ball games, depending from students’ interests. Organization of these activities is responsibility of university, particularly the administrator for sport, recreation and student’s life.

At **State University in Tetovo, University “St. Apostol Pavle” in Ohrid and University “Mother Teresa” in Skopje**, extracurricular sport activities and recreational activities are not organized for the students.

Conclusion

University sport is important segment of university life and evermore important segments from student's life. Different types of sport activities provide multiple benefits for the student's overall development and wellbeing as well as unforgettable memories and experiences. Therefore, organization of sport at universities should be considered and understand very seriously if the goal of the university is to be close to the students and their needs. Analyzing different activities that are organized at the universities in North Macedonia in the segment of university sport, it can be concluded that some things are already started, well established and functional; others are still developing and should be improved but yet, many things still should be done. Different situation at the universities within the country suggest on different approach and strategies regarded sport and physical education but also different level of awareness for the benefits of this segment. Furthermore, the lack of material facilities, equipment and finances are additional reasons for variable results and effects. In this regard, future actions should be oriented toward joining efforts of authorities in sport from all universities to promote the benefits and importance of sport at universities as well as to integrate their efforts with the efforts of Agency of Youth and sport, Ministry of education and Government and to work on national strategy to improve this segment which is essential for the future of the country and people that should be the future of the state.

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