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## QUALITY OF LIFE AND STUDENTS` SOCIALIZATION THROUGH SPORT

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### Abstract

Sport, among other factors, can be responsible for the wellbeing of adolescents life, contributing not only to their physical health but to a better socialization as Coakely (2011) and Giulianotti (2004) underlined. They consider sport activities having a large potential to contribute to problem solving and the enhancement of life quality of individuals and communities. Therefore we should militate for sport formal activities in schools and encourage extra-curricular sport activities for all children and young people.

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### 1. Introduction

If we consider quality of life as general well-being of an individual or society and we try to analyse the benefits of sport practicing in a person`s life or in the life of a community/society, it is obvious the direct relationship between sport and the level of quality of life.

One of the definitions of the quality of life consider that there are four domains that we have to analyse when we measure it, respectively the ecological one, the economical one, the political and the cultural domains

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(Magee et. al., 2012), the cultural domain being divided into 7 sub-domains. One of these sub-domains refers to the wellbeing and health, and a great contribution here can be attributed to sport.

If we consider Eurostat (2013) research concerning quality of life, they emphasise on 8+1 indicators that measures wellbeing, one of them being health, which is an essential part of the quality of life of citizens, as the report underlined. Poor health, both physical and mental, affects individuals' quality of life, and it can even modify their life expectancy. According to WHO (2013), if we estimate remaining life expectancy not only at birth, but also at various stages of a person's life, available data show that countries that joined the EU after 2004 have the lowest remaining life expectancy at 65. From this point of view Romania is situated under the EU average for this age.

At a macro-level, poor health it holds back economic and social development by reducing the available human capital of a society. Thus health is not just an important personal aim, but also an indication of societal wellbeing and success (Eurostat, 2013). Hagan et. al.(2008) elaborated the guide *Bright Futures. A Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children and Adolescents* funded by US Department of Health and Human Services in which they proposed Bright Future Themes, a number of issues of overwhelming importance to overall health and well-being in children and adolescents's life (Hagan et. al., 2008). Among the ten themes of key importance to families and health care professionals in their common mission to promote the health and well-being of children from birth through adolescence there is the issue of promoting physical activity.

Since it has been shown that factors like people's lifestyles, culture and living environment affect health outcomes, it is obvious why we have to stress upon sports' involvement, importance in providing a better life quality.

## 2. Sports in adolescents' life

Socialization on and through sport is responsible for the role of sport in any society. It is obvious that this role can be developed if the society has the economic resources necessary for investments in sport (for coaching, sport fields, clubs, players etc.) and the willingness to invest in it. High life standards create variety into the familylife style, sport practicing at any age being an indicator of the quality of life. Our investment in children's formal, informal and non-formal education has an obvious importance. We have to stress here not only on the formal-institutional approach but also on the values induced by family, other scholar activities etc. Among the values directly and indirectly cultivated through sport activities we can consider the following ones: fair-play, the capacity to organize and coordinate activities, knowledge of and following the rules (Baciu, A., 2006).

As Coakley (2011) underlined, it is widely spread the idea that sport contribute to young people development due to the fact that induces a general well-being state and other positive outputs for those who are practicing sport.

Sport promoters consider that sport inevitably leads to multiple forms of development including facilitating socialization/resocialization, community revitalization through human bonding enhancement and commitment in relationship with others. (Giulianotti, 2004). Comming from this perspective sport is seen, according to Giulianotti (2004), as a problem-solving activity meant to improve the quality of life for individuals and communities.

As we already stated, there are many benefits of sport practicing but, in what concerns adolescents and young people, sport promoters consider three major categories of positive outputs as following: personal development, positive influence upon at-risk populations (for instance juvenile delinquents, children at risk of social exclusion) and fostering social capital that leads to successful civic engagement (Coalter, 2007).

Coakley (2011:308) highlighted the following outputs that sport participation can deliver: creates motor-specific skills convertible into physical capital, improves general physical health, enhance self-esteem an self-confidence inducing a positive body image, forms well shaped characters by encouraging discipline and team work.

If we take into consideration that socialization can be defined as a complex process through which individuals, in their interactions with others, accumulate skills, knowledge, values, norms, attitudes and desirable behaviours for their existence into the society frame, we can understand the socialization role of sport.

Activities structured around generally accepted values, alternative activities conducted by adults in controlled environments, teaching them self-control, authority recognition, conformation to rules, positive adult role models, are some of the expected outcomes of sport, for at-risk populations of teens (Coakley, 2011:308).

At a closer look, the reality of sports' influences among teens are more complex, the positive effects of

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