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The Impact of Educational Policies in High Schools with a Sports Profile

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Abstract: The aim of this research is to identify and analyse the causes that have influenced the total number of student places and career paths of graduates of a sports-program high school. In this sociological research, the case study method was used, which had in the foreground the Sports Program Suceava High school, from Romania. The sampling comprised the high school grade students (XI-XII), registered from September 2015 to August 2019. The objectives of the study are to determine the main variables that have generated major changes in the total number of student places' architecture and in graduate career choices. Socio-economic causes and educational policies justify the high flow of requests for transfer from this high school to other educational establishments, especially in the first year of training (IXth grade), but also to the school unit under consideration (frequent requests in the XIth grade). Unsustainable education policies, in relation to the requirements and exigencies of sport performance, but also the permissive legislation on operational transfer procedures, have a bearing on sporting performance, graduate career paths and, last but not least, on the ethical code (or it should have it) a sports-program high school. The psycho-intellectual development and psycho-behavioural development of sports students in an accessible school environment, tenderer and adapted to his own needs, can only be achieved through a continuous effort, in conjunction with a joint effort between school-parents-local authorities and institutions with legislative leverage.

Keywords: *Educational policies; high schools with a sports profile; transferred students; professional route; socio-economic causes.*

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1. Introduction

For any social entity, the attributes concerning the efficiency of a sport-related school unit are: the quality of teaching – transferred to skills and values acquired by students over the high school cycle, Baccalaureate exam pass rate, building on the long-term performance capacity of athletes, integration of graduates into the labor market and/or academia. But education is one of the fields of politics, these high social expectations to the rank of institutional performance cannot be achieved without the input of two landmarks that dispute their semantic crystal space in educational terms: educational policy – at "macro" and educational policies level, adapted to "educational consumers" and to the socio-cultural particularities of school – at "micro" level (Henry et al., 1997; Stronach et al., 2002; Nedelcu, 2008; Chiang, 2009; Vlieghe & Zamojski, 2020; Ball, 2015).

The challenges faced today by a vocational high school with a sporting profile are varied and complex, determined on the one hand by the action of socio-economic factors structures and negative causal conglomerates (Jigău, 1998; Clipa & Honciuc, 2020) and on the other hand, mentalities still underlying the idea of performance in integrated education with a sport profile (cataloguing the high school against some colleges or profiles and less depending on the institution's purpose and the values cultivated). The "Pygmalion Effect", once introduced into the collective consciousness, functions as a labelling model and predictive expectations the subsequent course of subjects gives rise to inequalities between educational establishments and inequalities between students, which are difficult to blur (Terrail, 2002; Pascaru, 2012;). This leads to "bias" social attitudes, targeting not only categories according to cultural criteria linked to the subject's environment, but also according to social criteria, focused on prejudices (Serdenciuc, 2016; Axt et al., 2019).

Data from literature are most often referred to in Swot analysis reports on opportunities and threats related to the institutional management of a Sports Programme Highschool (SPH), with less consideration being given, in a specific and interpretative form, to aspects related to the socio-cultural environment of sports-students (Balamuralikrishna & Dugger, 1995; Moldoveanu, 2000; Hofman & Hofman, 2011; Coman & Ronen, 2009; Niemi & Rosvall, 2013). The psycho-motor and socio-cultural peculiarities of the classes with a sports program put on them, reflect the two quips present in the literature. Whether in terms of the motor capacity, the genotypic and phenotypic component of the sport student, represented by

the "motor and cognitive portfolio" of subjects (Neagu, 2010), is subordinated to the term "a champion must choose his parents well", in the educational perspective, Bourdieu (1999), outlining the "destiny effect" and high-performance school paths, states that "it is the most advantageous of children who have chosen their parents well".

These bibliographical coordinates, which reflect a strong tendency to dependence on future school and sports outcomes, in relation to the educational and social environment of subjects, still retain their relevance today, highlighting the inequality of opportunity for a solid education for students from different backgrounds (Parcel & Menaghan, 1994; Parcel & Dufur, 2001; Clancy & Goastellec, 2007). We remain circumspect of the idea expressed in literature, according to which, "naturalization of society" was done in school, transforming the "social inequalities into skills inequalities" (Duru-Bellat & Kieffer, 2000; Baker & Horton, 2004; Roth, 2013; Păun, 2017).

2. Methodology of Research

2.1. Problem of Research

The case study method was used in the research, which targeted high school students (IX-XII), registered at the Sports Program Suceava High School (SPH), from Romania, from September 2015 to August 2019. The choosing for this case was generated by two major reasons which drew attention: the "metamorphizations" in the total number of student places over the years (due to the dynamics of transfers in this school unit) and lack of interest in continuing profile university studies, as in the city of residence of the sports unit is the "Stefan cel Mare" University, which encompasses, in its structure and the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport.

This case study does not only involve a cross-cutting approach to research, which is quantitative-based, but above all a longitudinal, predominantly qualitative approach (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Vlăsceanu, 2013). Tackling the problem is of an inductive nature because the surprised entity (SPH Suceava) relates to several time points (one high school cycle - four school years). The chosen case is relevant in that a theme that addresses the social reality, generated by the intentions of the subjects and the aims pursued, is constantly changing and has not been addressed in the published literature.

2.2. The purpose and objectives of the research

In respect of the purpose of the research, which consisted in identifying the causes that can influence the number of students enrolled during a high school cycle and the professional path of the graduates, the following objectives were established*:*

1. Determining the causes that generated changes in the number of schooling during a high school cycle (2015/2016 - 2018/2019).
2. Identifying the professional options of XIIth grade graduates.

2.3. Research hypothesis assumed that, once enrolled in the IXth, at a high school with a sports program, students will complete high school cycle in the same high school unit and the skills acquired in a vocational profile will be decisive in choosing a professional career in sports.

2.4. Instrument and Procedure

The methods used in this case study were to be founded on: the archive analysis, the bibliographical study and generation of theory for the qualitative analysis (Chelcea, 2007; Onuţ, 2017).

The statistical data were collected from the official documents of SPH Suceava. The thematic axes of analysis were based on the parameters monitored each school year by the Ministry of Education and Research (MER, 2014; MER, 2020). The analysis grids were designed according to the criteria for evaluating followed by Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education (MER, 2012).

In relation to the purpose of research and with the objectives pursued in each of the four school years starting in 2015-2016 and ending in 2018-2019, statistical information was collected, analyzed and interpreted for each level of education (IXth grade, Xth grade, XIth grade and XIIth grade), after the following indicators: number of grades, number of students enrolled at the beginning of the school year – number of students remaining at the end of the school year, number of sudents leaving by transfer – number of students transferred, number of students declared as repeat/abandoned, reasons given in the transfer applications. Three sociological parameters have shown interest in the research: the students' background who depart from SPH (urban – U/rural – R), the time of traveling by public transport to school and the skills of school graduates with a sport program and their professional career paths.

The results obtained were centralized and entered in tables. By interpreting the obtained data, the percentage of the collected variables was calculated.

Disagreements on research design guidelines, approaches to the subject under investigation, thematic axes of analysis, analysis and interpretation of the data collected have been resolved through critical discussions, reaching a full agreement on the synoptic of the relevant research variables and the establishment of conclusions.

3. Results

Statistical data, evolving and differentiated accounted, for school years, shows a dynamic in the total number of student places figure (Table 1). During each school year there are both quantitative, formal changes (the number of students remaining at the end of the school year compared to the number of students enrolled at the beginning of the school year) and qualitative changes, content (ratio of departing and transferring students).

Table 1. The Dynamics of School Class Numbers

School year	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019
Number of classes	18	17	16	16
Enrolled	433	424	403	396
Leave by transfer	37	38	40	38
Come by transfer	39	31	45	42
Repeat, abandon/expel	12	15	18	23
Remaining	423	402	390	377

The natural consequence of the decrease in the number of students choosing in IXth grade for SPH is the reduction in the number of classes. In contrast, each school year there is a steady increase in students coming from the transfer, the number of students being significantly higher than those leaving the school. The difference between the number of students present at the end of the school year compared to those enrolled at the beginning of

the school year is due to the number of students declared to be students, who are unemployed or expelled on the basis of the high number of non-motivated absences.

The dynamics of transfers during the four school years vis-a-vis the number of students leaving by transfer compared to those who are transferred show relatively close values (Table 2). However, detailed analysis of the figures reveals large and very large discrepancies between the number of transfers from and to SPH. Thus, in all four school years, the highest number of transfers is recorded in the first year of high school, in the IXth grade, and the lowest, at the end of the high school cycle, in the XII th grade. In the case of students coming by transfer to SPH, if in IXth grade, the Xth grade and the XIIth grade the number is significantly close, there is a very large inflow into thet XIth grade each school year.

Table 2. The dynamics of student transfers per year of study

Students leave through transfer				
Class	IX	X	XI	XII
2015/2016	28	7	1	1
2016/2017	31	4	3	0
2017/2018	31	4	3	2
2018/2019	27	8	3	0
Total	117	23	10	3
General total		153		
Students coming through transfer				
Class	IX	X	XI	XII
2015/2016	6	8	17	8
2016/2017	4	7	15	5
2017/2018	10	10	18	7
2018/2019	13	4	20	5
Total	23	29	70	25
General total		147		

However, detailed analysis of the figures reveals large and very large discrepancies between the number of transfers from and to SPH. Thus, in all four school years, the highest number of transfers is recorded in the first

year of high school, in the IXth grade, and the lowest, at the end of the high school cycle, in the XIIth grade. In the case of students coming by transfer to SPH, if in IXth grade, the Xth grade and the XIIth grade the number is significantly close, there is a very large inflow into the XIth grade each school year.

The reasons given in the transfer requests, by parents, tutors or legal representatives of students, which led to significant changes in the architecture of the total number of student places each school year, are set out in Table 3.

Table 3. Reasons for student transfers between school years 2015-2019

When leaving SPH		Coming to the SPH	
The reason for the transfer	Number of responses	The reason for the transfer	Number of responses
Proximity to home	98	School scheme incompatible with the practice of performance sport	59
Failure to adapt to the specific characteristics of the sport vocation profile	42	Not adapted to the specific nature of the real/human profile	88
Promoting performance sport in higher echelons	13	Promoting performance sport in the upper parts of performance	0
Other reasons: Medical conditions, family reunification outside the country.	0	Other reasons: Family resettlement outside Romania's borders.	0

Two main reasons are given for centralizing data for both categories of transfers. A common one, covering the student's time budget: on leaving the SPH, 98 students (64.05%) citing the "proximity to home", and on coming to the SPH, 59 students (40.13%) mentioning in the requests for

transfer the "program incompatible with the practice of performance sport". The other reasons for these annual permutations are the least significant but not negligible. "Non-adaptation to the specific characteristics of the sports vocation" is a much more solid argument in calling for 42 students to leave SPH (27,45%), compared to the intention of the 88 students (59.86%) coming through transfer to classes 9-12, from other school establishments (with a completely different profile: Real/human), wishing to complete his high-level studies at SPH. "Promoting performance sport in higher echelons" is the third reason invoked. If this reason was not found during the four school years in any request for transfer to SPH, 13 sport students (8.49%), with an outstanding piece of motor baggage, requested the transfer from SPH to other school or high school facilities with a sports profile in Romania.

Graduates of high school cycle, sports profile, have at graduation in the "motor and intellectual portfolio" a range of skills that can help them integrate more easily into the professional and/or academic environment (Table 4).

Table 4. Skills certification and the career path of high school school graduates, sports profile

School year	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019
Professional attestation: enroled/promoted	53/53	88/71	59/57	71/69
Baccalaureate: enroled/promoted	76/50	73/44	78/45	94/45
Admitted at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport	8	7	6	5
Admitted at a faculty from the structures of the Ministry Of Internal Affairs	10	8	7	7
Admitted to faculties with socio-human specializations	10	8	5	5
Teacher as a sports instructor	0	0	0	0
Unskilled workers in Romania	4	5	7	6
He does not work	8	7	9	6
Left outside Romania's borders	10	9	11	16

Following the number of students enrolled and those who passed the examination for professional instructor in sport, there are slight fluctuations, the promotion being as follows: 2015-2016 (100%), 2018-2019 (97.18%), 2017-2018 (96.61), 2016-2017 (80.68%). The number of those who subsequently profess as a sports instructor is 0 (0%) for each generation of students under analysis.

The main fair of all graduates – Baccalaureate, is falling significantly in terms of the percentage of promotions. The number of students enrolled each year was relatively close, with the percentage of those who managed to pass the maturity exam -- the baccalaureate, falling significantly from one year to the next. In the school year 2015-2016, of the 76 students enrolled, only 50 (65.78%) were able to promote. In 2016-2017, 73 pupils registered and promoted 44 (60.27%), in 2017-2018, of the 78 enrolled promoted 45 (57.69%), so that in the 2018-2019 school year the percentage of promotions was below the 50% threshold: of the 94 students enrolled promoted 45 (47.87%).

The admission to the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport comes as a natural continuation of the development of the skills acquired during high school and of the addition of other competences, of methodical, psychological and managerial invoice. Over the course of the four years there has been a lack of interest in this faculty, with the number of those motivated to become physically and sport teachers or coaches being very low; every generation of students have a lower interest rate every year. The highest number was recorded at the end of the school year 2015-2016, when 8 baccalaureate graduates (16%) were registered as university students. In the coming years, their number has gradually decreased, 7 at the end of the school year 2016-2017 (15.90%), 6 at the end of the school year 2017-2018 (13.30%), and the lowest percentage was at the end of the school year 2018-2019, when only 5 high school graduates were declared (11.10%). Relatively close percentage values to those at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport are also recorded in the option of graduates of the high school with a sport program for faculties with a socio-human profile.

I draw attention to statistical data on options for the faculties in the structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (police, constabulary, fire brigades), with the number of those admitted being higher than that of students at physical education and sport faculties (Table 4).

In the category of baccalaureate graduates who have remained in Romania, those employed in positions without qualifications or those who

do not work have been monitored. It was found that the number is significantly higher than those who preferred to leave outside Romania, except for the one recorded at the end of the school year 2018-2019.

4. Limits and discussions

The analysis of trends in a sports-related vocational high school can only be carried out on the basis of statistical data reflecting the image of the social and cultural status of students with above-average motor skills, with a view to carrying out a sporting discipline at the level of performance.

Based on canonical data, this research can be objective only from outside, because, discussing the school environment, the socio-psycho-pedagogical perspective would require a posting on the human side, which is almost impossible to achieve, because the understanding of the subjectivity behind objective external reasons (Iluţ, 2009; Beneke & Park, 2019) in the requests for transfers increases the complexity of the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. Of course, the repetition, abandonment and transfers that take place during a school year are of the type "homeostasis", in the sense that the system's Regulation and self-Regulation processes ultimately lead to a certain degree of stability and to the forecasting of school figures for the next school year. However, these arguments fall within the parameters of normality up to the point of analysis of the reasons for the high flow of transfers, as this "massive migration" from one school to another does not always have objective causes.

4.1. The dynamics of transfers

The large number of transfers from SPH to other school units is decisive (Table 2) and determined by the "Proximity of home" (especially in IXth grade) or the "Failure to adapt to the specific characteristics of the sport vocation profile" (frequently in Xth grade) (Table 3).

Statistical distribution over school years, on student's background, urban/rural and on their journey time to school, provides new data relevant to this research (Table 5).

Table 5. The background of students who leave by transferring from SPH and traveling time to school

School year	Urban(U)/ Rural (R)	Residence in the same locality as school/ in another locality (rent or school stay)	Place of residence in another locality – daily commuting: less than 30' / between 30' – 60'/ greater than 60'
2015/2016	4/33	0/9	12/13/3
2016/2017	4/34	0/7	9/20/2
2017/2018	3/37	1/11	8/18/2
2018/2019	2/36	1/13	11/10/1

The requests for leaving the school unit where students were initially registered are, in most cases, fully justified, if we refer to the management of the student's time budget, because traveling time to school places its direct mark on the student's life regime. All aspects of daily life, which are regarded as hygienic, school work, lessons training, leisure activities, training, sleep, recovery and functional restoration, condition school and training/competition performance. The way in which the sport-student is managing his time during the 24 hours is reflected in the activity of the next day's body, strongly influencing functional and mental overcompensation.

In the absence of a proper adviser at the end of the lower secondary school (VIIIth grade), many transfers that take place on leaving the SPH are the effect of parents' inability to correctly perceive educational offers for high school, to risk a potential inadaptation of the child to a profile requiring a special type of daily program and, last but not least, to estimate the budget allocated to material support expenditure for student throughout his schooling (Abbott & Collins, 2004; Hanushek et al., 2004; Erickson et al, 2009; Sutton et al., 2013; Collins et al., 2015; Tomaszewska-Pękała, 2019).

If the dynamics of transfers by educational level and by school years among students who are transferred to SPH do not show any major fluctuations, there are clearly increasing demands in the Xth grade (Table 2.).

As it gives rise to many question marks, the explanations (on these coordinates) can only be subjective, remain open themes for further research:

- analysis of "not adapting to the specificity of the real/human profile", which occurs after two school years (mid-high school cycle);
- how real is the level of the motor-level the students should demonstrate at the time of the transfer request, because they should be at the level of the requirement of the junior I, at the stage of the 3rd training (high performance oriented training), with real prospects of becoming high performance or becoming internationally established?

With a lower percentage, but not negligible at all, 40.13%, are the legitimate students competing in competitions for SPH Suceava (before the transfer request), but they are registered at other high schools, with different profiles than sports (Table 3). Since their school program is incompatible with the requirements of performance sport, discussions vis-a-vis this topic can only be marked in the socio-cultural area, which marks a lack of interest for SPH in the initial admission options to high school at the end VIIIth grade.

At the superior high school cycle (grades XI-XII), requests for transfers from SPH to other school establishments or high schools with a Romanian sports program aim in particular to promote high-performance sports in the upper classes (8.49%). The fact that this reason is not invoked by any student at the coming to the SPH highlights two aspects. On the one hand, investment problems in high-performance sport infrastructure at city level, and on the other hand, the lack of national clubs or teams to capitalize on the exceptional qualities of selected and trained (by the time of transfer) junior staff, procedural and materials from SPH Suceava.

4.2. Repetition, school leaving and expulsion are the belated effects of poor cooperation between school and accredited institutions to monitor and prevent these problems from arising. Students in this situation often come from either organized families (with one or both parents working abroad) or single-parent families (and the parent is outside Romania's borders), or from families in the country, but the only sources of income are those of a social nature, which are insufficient to support a child who aims to practice performance sport and to complete high school education. In the absence of an educational alternative, the student is declared repeating, statistically appearing in the next year's schooling, thus generating the same type of "cold" statistics in the chain without concrete solutions and effective interventional programs (Cemalcilar & Gökşen, 2014; Freistadt & Strohschein, 2012; Dupéré et al., 2015; Hughes et al., 2017).

4.3. Skills certification and the career path of high school school graduates, sports profile

From the analysis of the statistical percentage of those practicing as sports instructors, during the four years of school under investigation, it is found to be 0% (Table 4.). The relevance of discussions on the percentage of those who passed the skills certification examination compared to those who have signed up is only justified insofar as the sport-related vocational secondary school provides this opportunity for graduates through the legislative framework on which it is based, to obtain a qualification certificate, important (only) for the personal CV.

The decrease in the percentage of high school graduation promotions, from one year to the next, is due to the number of those who want to continue their studies in the university environment. The increasing percentage of options for the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport highlights the low interest in the profession. It is a surprising element, given the profile of the secondary school (Butt & Molnar, 2009). The arguments could be linked to the low salaries of early teachers, the lack of career opportunities or the low number of open-source teachers in urban areas or surrounding areas. By analogy, the same interest, as a number of options, has been shown over the course of the four years evaluated statistically, socio-human faculties. This highlights the cognitive purchases of graduates during high school due to the quality of teaching by SPH teachers.

Over the past four years, there has been a major interest in admission to the structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with the institutions preparing officers and sub-officers also attractive offers for the police, constable or fire brigade career.

For material reasons or because they have not been admitted to a faculty, a considerable number of graduates prefer to leave the country to work abroad or to work in a post without qualifications.

In a rhetorical formulation, there are still open research themes such as: "How many of the students who graduated with the SPH Baccalaureate degree have been included in the total number of student places since the very beginning of the IXth grade?", "How many of the students who have applied for the transfer to SPH have been admitted to the faculties and what is their profile?", "How many of the graduate students prefer to leave outside the country, to the detriment of continuing their studies?", "What is the dynamics of the total number of student places of during a high school

cycle at the profile of other vocational secondary schools, as an example, the art high school?' etc.

Although it involved extensive (temporal) analysis and large sampling, the results of this case study remain at the level of "micro". However, the findings of this case study generate, separately or on areas of interest, other complex subjects, which means it can be extended to the "macro" level, projecting the overall picture of all sports schools in Romania. Apart from analyzing these "cold", objective statistical data, the most important human aspect should not be overlooked. Behind the statistical figures are young people, trained personalities, professional and sports ideals, who need to be supported by concrete educational policies, to evolve and develop in an accessible school environment, tenderer and to their own needs.

5. Conclusions

The results obtained from this study do not validate the research hypothesis. The conclusions that emerge from the analysis of this case study are significant for future research in the field of education.

Unsustainable educational policies in relation to the socio-economic and cultural needs of the subjects, the lack of institutions to monitor, advise the remaining students in the country without the psycho-emotional support of parents leaving for work in western countries, but also the poor cooperation between school and social workers in the homes of minors, they are the main causes of school repetition and early school leaving.

Permissive legislation on transfers of students from one school unit to another, declining demographic background and "run after students" due to per capita funding, puts the system under pressure and managerial (pseudo) compromises.

At the crossroads between social, cultural and economic, educational policies and legislation in the field will always create (positive or negative) the effect of the "snow ball", regardless of the type of education system or the characteristics of a sport-related school unit in a region or country.

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