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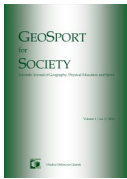
for

SOCIETY

Volume 10/ no. 1 / 2019



Oradea-Debrecen-Gdansk



© GEOSPORT FOR SOCIETY

ISSN 2393-1353

Edited by Oradea University Press
1, University street, 410087 Oradea, Romania

Journal homepage: <http://geosport.uoradea.ro/geosport.html>



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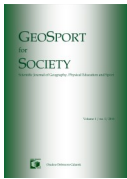


GEOSPORT for SOCIETY

Volume 10/ no. 1 / 2019



Oradea-Debrecen-Gdańsk



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Scientific Journal founded in 2014 under aegis of University of Oradea
(Romania), University of Debrecen (Hungary), University of Gdansk (Poland)
and published by Oradea University Press
ISSN 2393-1353
Journal homepage: <http://geosport.uoradea.ro>



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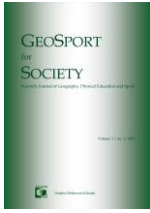
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Phone: 00.40.259.408475
e-mail: geosport@uoradea.ro
Journal homepage: <http://www.geosport.uoradea.ro>



GEOSPORT FOR SOCIETY

Scientific Journal founded in 2014 under aegis of University of Oradea (Romania),
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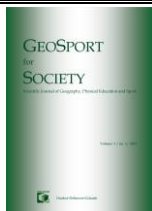
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Journal homepage: <http://geosport.uoradea.ro>



Comparative evolution of the phenomenon of geography of sports on national and global levels

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Citation: Chirazi M. (2019). Comparative evolution of the phenomenon of geography of sports on national and global levels. *Geosport for Society*, 10(1), 7-14. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gss.1001-044>

Article history: Received: 07.10.2018; Revised: 20.11.2018; Accepted: 20.01.2019, Available online: 01.02.2019

Abstract: This study is a research of national and global evolution of literature on sports and geography with a view to emphasize emergence of a new category of study, least dealt with, whose impact on environment and society is tremendous. Sport is an inseparable component of society due to both its salubrious role through its effects and its necessary equipment and infrastructure. Sport activities are extremely diverse and most of the time they require special material conditions to practice it. This determines, while practice it, a relation of dependence to other fields as well: industrial, demographic, social, cultural, and political with local, national and global influences. Having in view optimisation of sport activities, from the perspective of inter-disciplinarity, a neighbouring field has been configured and developed and it has been called „geography of sports”. Analysis of the specialised literature of the two fields (geography and sports) has led us to the conclusion that „geography of sports” has approached two main directions: geography of sports categories (it studies preference given to some sports in different areas), geography of sport infrastructure (it locates sport clubs, stadiums, sport facilities etc.) and geography of sport events (venues for organisation of sport events and their requirements). Also it has emphasised a series of studies on the influence of different geographic zones (mountains, seas, fields) on motor skills of the population, both from the point of view of preparation (athletic training) and from salubrious perspective.

Keywords: sports, geography, national, worldwide, comparison

Introduction

Space analysis of the sport phenomenon in Romania has been and it is still superficially dealt with both from geographic and sport points of view. Thus, through this work we would like to emphasise the evolution of sport phenomenon while following a geographic approach with reference to the current situation of the society. Therefore, our intention is to present some methodological and conceptual approaches specific to geography since they are useful to spatial analysis of sports. At the same time these are being argued by emphasis laid on some interdisciplinary national and worldwide representative works which converge at Gaffney's statement according to whom „sport is inherently geographic” (Gaffney, 2014, p. 109).

The vast palette of the field „geography” has resulted in the emergence of a large number of sub-fields (Onose, 2009). Numerous professionals would argue that an excessive fragmentation of geography has been produced.

David Harvey stated that postmodernity characterises itself by a massive time – space compression „in postmodernity, space and time have vanished, and this means they are lost so are their meaning and control structure” (Barney, 2006, p. 22).

For an optimal development of sport activities, one can easily remark the importance of environmental components which represent the support of the two fields: geography and sport, and the complementarity connecting them, as well as their link to other fields.

Sport can be considered, due to qualitative and quantitative characteristics of its participants and viewers, as an indispensable activity to social life (Buhaş et al., 2018a, b). At the same time, the fact that sport is part of everyday life of the citizens on local, regional and global levels, requires a geographic analysis from the perspective of two essential elements: space and time. In specialised literature, one can find a serious number of interdisciplinary studies: geography and sports, tourism and sports, geography and sports medicine, ecology and sports, etc.

“Sports” phenomenon approaches aspects connected to opinions, benefits and behaviours of the population in its quality as a beneficiary (either practitioner or spectator) in relation to physical activity. Current dimensions of the phenomenon on the global level is due to media coverage: print media, radio and television, internet. Thus, sports can provide for a physical and psychic state of mind (no matter its role: either practitioner or spectator) while geography would provide for an optimal action space due to its landforms, weather conditions and economic level.

Sport as a physical activity, due to its forms of organisation and categories, owns a specific activity and it becomes an inseparable part to society. Sports activities are extremely varied and they are organically connected to the other fields such as: economic, demographic, social, cultural and politic environments, and can be reported to different levels, from the smallest space (localities with few inhabitants) to the regional, global and planetary levels.

Scientific feature required by preparation of the logistic support for sports activities (stadiums, mountain routes, waters, etc.) confers systematic functionality to its constituents. At the end they have an impact on society and they base themselves on different working methods and techniques specific to geography which within

scientific context are being combined to those specific to sports, the most representative of them being the cartographic methods.

This study aims to follow the evolution of the relationship between sports and geography on the level of land planning and using or configuration of territorial system with a view to provide for a larger functionality for sports. On the scientific level, we identify a number of principles, methods and tools having been carefully selected to obtain the most convincing and useful results. Therefore, a series of representative scientific articles and materials will be presented to emphasise existence and importance of a systemic approach between sports and geography.

In the geographic analysis of sports, specific feature of geography is determined by two important elements: time and space. Space and time distribution of a phenomenon and configuration of a territorial pattern in compliance with characteristics of the element under analysis represents the result of a classical and entirely scientific geographic approach (Herman et al., 2016, 2018; Buhaş et al., 2017). Thus, a geographic analysis would better reflect the most representative, qualitative and quantitative aspects on the constituents of the system (Cocean, 2005).

Content

To define the area of Geography represents a different approach on its type and form and it will locally, regionally and globally generate the development of some activities due to which important benefits are to be obtained for society. Sport is defined by different ways and from different perspectives. In North America, terminology of sports is mostly associated to competitive game and it involves concepts indispensable to sport activity: time, space, specific rules (Mullin et al., 2014). Another definition relies on the fact that sport has another role as well, an un-competitive role which is mostly based on maintaining wellness (fitness) and on recreation (Baidog and Herman, 2018; Fortin, 2000; Kogiso, 2015; Simson & Jennings, 1992; Tătar et al., 2018). In international literature, relationship between geography and professional sports has been studied to a highly enough level.

Defined to a large scale, sports tourism represents the journey a person takes far from his dwelling place to participate to a sport activity for recreation or competition. Sport is well seen both as a recreational or competitive activity and a reason for travelling or visiting tourist attractions. Sports tourism represents an attractive and dynamic activity both on land (indoor or outdoor) and water environment (pools or open waters). Therefore, we could include in this category all participants to organised sport events. Sport events represent a tourist attraction to which spectators take part and they would generate several benefits in their turn since it requires a variety of services (Ilieş et al., 2014; Melo & Sobry, 2017).

Global Evolution and Development of the Area

To better observe the evolution of the inter-disciplinary relationship between the two fields: sports and geography, we would make reference to an article entitled "Sports and Geography: A Short Presentation" (Bale & Dejonghe, 2008) published by

the *Belgeo* magazine. This article presents studies written by representative authors within the area of sports geography.

Thus, the first studies to approach this area of geography and sports are considered to be information published by the French Elisée Reclus in 1879, who also presented some notions on the game of "Cricket" in *World Geography*. In 1919, Hilderbrand has "The Geography of Games" published in *National Geographic* and few years later, in 1927, the German geographer Hettner suggested that variations of health, hygiene, recreation and education, among other things, could be apprehended as a manifestation of nature of the land (Bale & Dejonghe, 2008, 157-166). In the same editorial, one can find several themes involving the same areas: geography and sports, such as sports and migration, relationship between sports teams in the proper field and local identity in the neighbourhood, impact on sport events or stadiums on a certain zone, etc.

After Hettner has his work published in 1940, the *Journal of Educational Research* would publish the work *Geographical Origin of Professional Baseball Players* by Harvey Lehman who analysed differences among USA states in terms of training of the top baseball players. This work stands for fundamentals of any further attempt to approach sports from a geographic perspective.

At mid-fifties, Jokl and his colleagues from Finland (*Sports in the Cultural Pattern of the World - 1956*) presented the outcomes of a study "Geographical Variations in the National Composition of Participants in the 1952 Olympic Games". The theme of the study aimed at identifying regions where the members of the national team of Finland came from and provided for graphs and statistics of it while reflecting changes having occurred to geography, the so-called quantitative revolution in the fifties (Bale & Dejonghe, 2008).

Another study was taken by Burley T.M. in 1966 and it was entitled "A Note on the Geography of Sport" and published in the "Professional Geographer". He showed that sport and geography have been tightly connected to other disciplines such as: economics, history and sociology and he stated that sports, more precisely mass sport (sports for all) has been a subject worthy of attention due to its economic importance, its social implications and its ability to indicate cultural origins and its contribution to the use of the urban land (Bale & Dejonghe, 2008).

Modern sports "constitutes one of the numerous forms of culture which provides a vehicle for significant expression and communication" (Giossos, 2008, p. 53). Practice of sports plays a role of identity bearer while at the same time it contributes to the construction and reproduction of a significant part of individual's identity and not last of national identity.

Gábor Kozma (2014), in his work "The spatial development of sports facilities within the cities: a Central European case study", give special attention to spatial placement and development of sports facilities within localities.

Current Stage of Geography of Sports on a National Level

Characteristics of inter-disciplinarity is emphasised to be important and at the same time complex to approach it. Our study which deals with the theme of the geo-sport phenomenon is searching for useful conjuncture information to help us

understand the situation. Thus, the political history has had an impact on sport activity. Since it has been ideologically framed, sports have been a propagandistic means of great importance while it has been used by the dictatorial regime in Romania.

Nevertheless, sport activity has made itself evident as an organised form by late 19th century and early 20th century. Specific feature of this period in sports is given by its selective characteristics and respectively by the possibility to practice sports which was granted only to a restricted group of wealthy people. Between the two wars, at the same time with the foundation of the National Institute for Sports and Physical Education in Bucharest, the first scientific studies would come into view. Thus, in 1938, an interdisciplinary theme was published in the Annals of Physical Education of the afore-mentioned institution Relation between Performance and Geographic Environment and signed by professors Iacob Mihăilă and Ulmeanu Florin Covaciu - Ulmeanu.

One of the first studies to draw a connection between the two areas is the article Contributions to cartographic representation of the sport phenomenon (Maroti & Ilieş, 1995) where the two authors achieve for the first time a map of distribution of practice of sport in our country. In the same direction, in 2005, it appears the article Possible Directions for Representation of Sport Phenomenon by Cartographic Means in Top Athletic Performance, between Utopia and Confirmation signed by Stasac et al.

Sandor I., in his doctoral thesis Rural Environment of Romania and its Possibilities to Athletic Performance, analyses and emphasises rural conditions of sportsmen to achieve athletic performances.

In his work Snow Cover in Support of Development of Winter Tourism Activities in Muntele Băișorii, the authors Gaceu et al. (2015) present the main characteristics of the snow cover in the resort Muntele Baisorii, and this allows, promotes and encourages the practice of tourism activities specific to winter season.

In his work Contributions of the Jewish Ethnics to the Development of Sports in the city of Cluj between the two Wars, Bogdan et al. (2014, 234), studies contribution of the Jewish community to the development of sports in the area of Cluj between the two Wars, while establishing some sport structures and managing it, and subsequently obtaining some results which belong nowadays to the athletic heritage of the city of Cluj.

In 2015, the authors Grama et al. (2015), in their work Evolution of the Olympic Basketball Tournaments from a Geographic Perspective present and analyse these tournaments while associating their results to the data studied by cartographic representation. In the first part of the work, the authors refer to a series of scientific articles which approach research as a result of the joint study of the professionals within the area of sports and physical education and geography.

Complex information of sports analysis has an interdisciplinary feature, contribute to the consolidation and completion of scientific contributions, development of some specific methods while adapting it to existing methods, but also to the expression of opinions by authors such as Iosif Sandor (2005), Vasile Bogdan (2016), Ionuț Onose (2016), who have their books published as a result of doctoral studies.

Sandor (2005) emphasizes both the possibilities of the rural population from the perspective of the somatic and physiological peculiarities having been formed by

the specific of their daily routines, and disadvantages having been caused by poor economic situation.

The author Bogdan (2016), in his work *Ambient Olympic Environment and Athletic Performance*, gives emphasis to effects and economic and social importance of sports within the Olympic Games. Hence massive investments are being mentioned in relation to specific infrastructure required by competitions which will eventually remain for the use of the host locality. At the same time, it mentioned that all applicants to the Olympic Games have been the great economic powers of the world while the aspirers to front-ranks (general ranking) belong to the same countries.

In another part of the country, the region of Moldova, the work *Incidence of Geo demographic structures on General Motor Skills of Elementary School Students* appeared and it presented the outcomes of a thorough study on the influencing levels of motor skills of students who used to live in different geographic zones and altitudes (Onose, 2016).

Debates

In specialised literature, some authors would argue that in geographical studies, the space analysis of sports, the following principles have applicability: space analysis of distribution, causality, hierarchy, structuration, correlation, integration and chronology. At the same time, some methods and tools are mentioned and they would help the analysis of the phenomenon: observation, explanation, synthesis, description, comparison, modelling and not last the cartographic method - the most representative of it being achieved by GIS tools (Herman et al., 2016). Of course, part of the methods (observation, comparison, modelling) are to be encountered in sports research as well, but the fact that they are being used in geographical studies represents elements of inter-disciplinarity and facilitates apprehension of complexity of the interaction between the two scientific fields.

From the comparison of national and global ideas and types of approaches, some important causes have been identified and they eventually led to a low level of interest in geography of sports in our country:

- sport is a marginalised phenomenon within a society which is being torn by the social problems of that period;
- political transition and rearrangement of the industry to the coordinates of the market economy had led to diminished investment in sports and decreased political interest in most of sports (except for football), and depreciation of existing sports facilities;
- inexistence of some coherent directions and strategies for development of the tourism system with a view to encourage movement (mountain tourism, cycle tourism, aquatic tourism);
- habilitated institutions do not stimulate organisation and promotion of sports and physical education, and this is a field which is not currently managed by a national strategy;
- lack of some marketing strategies in relation to health tourism;
- lack of some operational strategies for landforms from the perspective of sport activities (watercourses, lakes, slopes, etc.);

- encourage and promote sports specific to different geographical zone (water sports clubs around waters and routes for cycle tourism around cities, etc.).

Conclusions

The oldest approach to a sport from geographical perspective was made by the French Elisée Reclus in 1879 who presented several notions on the game of „cricket” in world geography.

In our country, the first renowned article dealing with an interdisciplinary theme was published in 1938, in the Annals of the National Academy of Sports and Physical Education of Bucharest (Relation between Performance and Geographical Environment).

Throughout the world, studies on the geography of sports are been divided into three categories:

- studies on preference to sports in certain geographical zones;
- approaches to geographical distribution of sports facilities and their impact on the environment;
- organisation of sports events on local, national and global levels and their implications.

In our country, interdisciplinary studies between sports and geography have the same main directions but another direction may be also noticed: effects of the specific feature of geographical zones (altitude, economic level, demographic level, specific cultures) on motor skills and somatic development of populations of different ages.

Similarly, one can say that development of the area of sports geography in Romania is the fruit of the collaboration between the two categories of higher education institutions where professionals from the two areas are being trained (Faculty of Geography and Faculty of Sports and Physical Education), especially in the area of Ardeal.

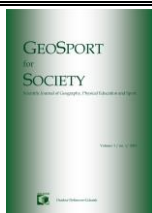
At the same time, the overall analysis of the bibliographical resources of the literature in our country has revealed that the area of sports geography makes her presence felt as a new interdisciplinary area while we are simultaneously attending an extension of studies throughout the entire territory of Romania.

As a general conclusion we could state that the study of sports from the perspective of the diverse geographical sub-domains/areas (economic geography, demographic geography, physical geography etc.) and geographical methods has led to numerous interdisciplinary studies and it determined emergence of the phenomenon „geo-sports” or „geography of sports”. In other words, the phenomenon of „sports” can be also studied from the perspective of geography while the latter cannot be influenced but to a lesser extent and only occasionally by sports.

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GEOSPOT FOR SOCIETY

Scientific Journal founded in 2014 under aegis of University of Oradea (Romania),
University of Debrecen (Hungary), University of Gdansk (Poland)
ISSN 2393-1353

Edited by Oradea University Press
1, University Street, 410087, Oradea, Romania
Journal homepage: <http://geosport.uoradea.ro>



Analysis of the North Great Plain Region's Accommodation Supply with Special Focus on Sport and Wellness Elements

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Citation: Puskás A. L., Bíró M., Hídvégi P., Molnár A., Lente L., Pucsok, J. M. (2019). Analysis of the North Great Plain Region's Accommodation Supply with Special Focus on Sport and Wellness Elements. *Geosport for Society*, 10(1), 15–24. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gss.1002-046>

Article history: Received: 09.01.2019; Revised: 20.03.2019; Accepted: 28.03.2019, Available online: 06.05.2019

Abstract: Tourism is one of the most dynamically growing sectors in the world. One of the most significant tourism products of Hungary and the Northern Great Plain region is health tourism. In our research, we examined the offer of wellness and sports services of 39 hotels in the Northern Great Plain region, broken down by the classification of these hotels. The results show that wellness elements are present in most of the hotels (84.6%), which is an element of competitiveness. Many hotels also include the word wellness in their name, which can be used in the promotion. At 35.9% of hotels, leisure sports are also on offer, this kind of sports service is greatly demanded by health-conscious consumers. The development of wellness and sports services can provide prevention and health retention for the consumers during their stay, besides delivering fun and entertainment.

Keywords: Health tourism, North Great Plain region, wellness, sport services

Introduction

Tourism is today one of the fastest growing sectors, and its importance in Hungary is becoming increasingly significant as it can stimulate the economy to stimulate economic growth and improve economic balance (Árva et al., 2008; Darabos, 2015; Hegedűs, 2006; Herman, 2017, 2018; Ilie et al., 2017; Mudruczó-Szenyesy, 2005). It can promote the economic catching-up of underdeveloped regions, preserving their natural, cultural values, and improving the living conditions of the population (Michalkó and Rácz, 2011).

Health tourism in Hungary has long been a development priority. In the New Széchenyi Plan (2011) Healing Hungary-Health Industry Program, the development priority is two-pole, one is the development of tourism based on the health industry, and the other is the development of the thermal health industry. Hungarian health tourism is a brand that attracts not only a lot of domestic tourists but also a lot of foreign tourists in the motivation of destination choice (Sörös, 2013; Müller et al., 2011; Dávid et al., 2013; Lengyel, 2016; Müller, 2018).

Tourism is one of the flagships of the Northern Great Plain region, as the spa and thermal water stock is outstanding among the region's features, which can provide a good chance for several cities to compete in tourist destinations.

Among the tourist attractions, several Hungarian tourism regions also report on the success of spa-based bath developments (Müller et al., 2009; Kerényi et al., 2009; Müller and Szabó, 2009; Barta et al., 2011; Bozóti, 2015; Bakucz et al., 2016; Müller et al., 2016a, 2016b).

Domestic research on the Northern Great Plain region also highlights the region's health tourism product development, in which bath developments also occupy a central place (Müller and Könyves, 2006; Müller and Kórik, 2009; Molnár et al., 2010; Lövei-Kalmár, 2017; Darabos and Nagy, 2018). Quality development is the backbone of success as the expansion of quality supply is an element of competitiveness (Go-Govers, 2000; Rulle et al., 2010).

Several studies report that tourists require different health-care and wellness elements during their travel. Tourism trends (Myers et al., 2000) also show that with an active lifestyle becoming more widespread the active recreational activities are getting more and more popular as well (Kiss and Török, 2001; Sziva, 2010). The availability of these services may be suitable for designing a destination health tourism brand and influencing the destination choice of tourists, thus increasing guest satisfaction as well (Kincses, 2005; Müller et al., 2018).

Literature review

Tourism contributes to the performance of several other sectors of the national economy as well. However, the most robust relationship is with the accommodation and catering industry, with a share of 1.6% of total domestic GDP in 2007. If we compare the Northern Great Plain region to the national average, we get a better picture, as in the area this rate was 1.8%. Thus, the economy of the North Great Plain region as a national economic sector has a higher importance than the national average (Mező and Maczik, 2010).

At the end of July 2017, 3411 commercial accommodations were registered in Hungary, where more than 98,000 rooms and 352,000 beds provided the conditions for the reception of tourists. On July 31, 2017, 1094 hotels with 62,000 rooms and 43% of all commercial lodging facilities (151,000 beds) provided tourists with accommodation. The number of functioning accommodations and seats has slightly increased compared to the statistics of 2016. The number of functioning hotels has increased by almost 200 since 2010, displaying a 22% increase in the number of seats. The expansion of the accommodation was necessitated by the increasing demand, as the volume of domestic and international tourism has also increased and is growing steadily.

50% of the Hungarian population took part in a multi-day trip for domestic tourism at least once in 2017. The shorter, 1-3-night trips, which were chosen by 42% of tourists, were the most popular, with only 25% of tourists picking a longer one. In 2017, the population spent 58 million days on a multi-day trip during 14 million travels, 0.4% and 1.8% less than in 2016, respectively. In 2017, hotels were the most popular among commercial accommodation establishments, where the share of time spent rose from 30 to 32% (KSH, 2017).

In recent years, however, there has been a fluctuating but positive trend for foreign arrivals. From 2010 to 2017, the number of international visitors increased by 38% over the seven years, with overnight trips up by 29% and multi-day trips by 66% (KSH, 2017).

The table below shows the regional distribution of the number of guests between 2015 and 2017. The data shows that the North Great Plain region is the 5th most touristic tourist region, preceded by Budapest and Central Danube region, Lake Balaton, Western Transdanubia, and Northern Hungary. The number of guests arriving in the North Great Plain region between 2015 and 2017 realized growth in demand (table 1).

Table 1. Regional distribution of guests in 2015-2017

Year	Budapest- Central Danube Region	Out of this: Budapest	North Hungary	North- Great Plain	Lake Tisza	South- Great Plain	Central Transdanubia	Lake Balaton	South- Transdanubia	West- Transdanubia	Total
Guests (thousand)											
2015	4389	3805	951	720	111	690	438	1573	426	1105	10403
2016	4711	4085	1008	759	105	730	499	1692	450	1163	11117
2017	4988	4273	1083	821	134	818	552	1788	478	1222	11884

The table below shows the number of guest nights and its regional differences between 2015-2017. We can state that the region is also ranked 5th in this indicator, similarly to the number of guests. The number of guest nights in the North Great Plain region also increased from 2015 to 2017 (table 2).

Table 2. The regional development of guest-nights between 2015-2017

Year	Budapest- Central Danube Region	Out of this: Budapest	North Hungary	North- Great Plain	Lake Tisza	South- Great Plain	Central Transdanubia	Lake Balaton	South- Transdanubia	West- Transdanubia	Total
2015	9887	8768	2149	1945	309	1609	1009	5078	1023	2878	25888
2016	10579	9323	2280	2055	300	1710	1165	5452	1052	3037	27629
2017	11462	10072	2446	2161	367	1913	1312	5760	1121	3227	29769

If we analyze the evolution of the tourist traffic data of the hotels in the North Great Plain Region (figure 1), we can state that since 2010 the number of guests in the region has been growing steadily, showing the linear trend line. This growing trend shows the increasing demand for the North Great Plain region as a tourist destination. In the region, Hajdú-Bihar County is the most sought-after destination, as evidenced by the growing guest turnover of commercial accommodations.

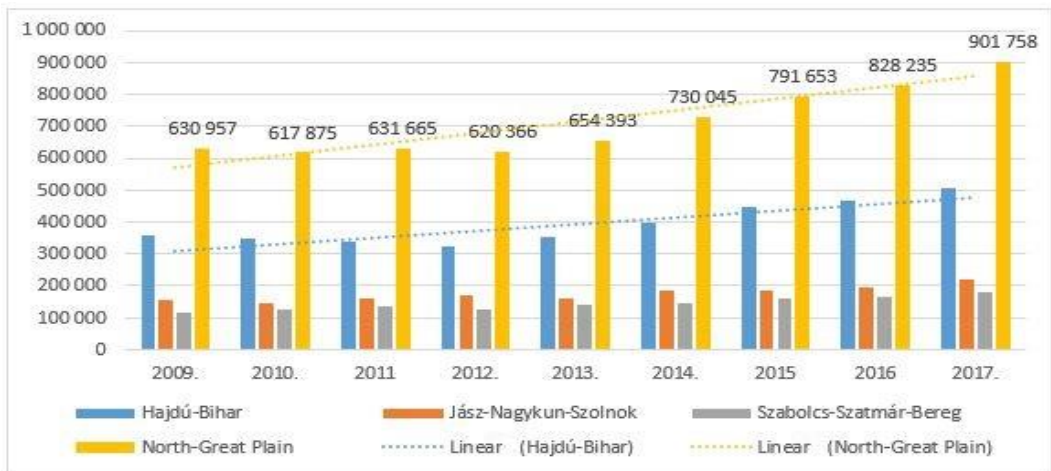


Figure 1. Visitor turnover of commercial accommodations in the North Great Plain Region 2009-2017 (person)

Material and Method

In our research, we used a questionnaire survey among three, four and five-star hotels in the North Great Plain region. By the available database, we have sent out a questionnaire for all hotels that we have compiled to measure the fitness and wellness service elements. The response rate was 86.6%, 39 out of 45 hotels sent us the completed questionnaire. In our research, we sought to find out what health and wellness services are available for guests in different classifications of different hotels. The data was processed using the Spss statistical program, in addition to the basic statistics we used a chi2 test to examine the correlations.

Results

In the course of our investigation, we analyzed the supply elements of 39 hotels in the Northern Great Plain Region.

Table 3. Distribution of the examined hotels by classifications in the North Great Plain region

County/Hotels	Three stars pcs (%)	Four stars pcs (%)	Five stars pcs (%)	Total
Hajdú-Bihar	3 (21,4)	14 (58,3)	1 (100)	18
Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg	4 (28,6)	6 (25)	0	10
Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok	7 (50)	4 (16,7)	0	11
Total	14 (100)	24 (100)	1 (100)	39

In the case of the hotels we surveyed, the hotels with higher qualification in Hajdú-Bihar County are significantly overrepresented compared to the other two counties ($\chi^2 = 7.34$, $p = 0.09$), 18 of the 39 hotels examined are in this county (table 3).

Since health tourism plays a decisive role in the region and the related wellness and health services are a very important attraction, we were curious as to how many hotels use a brand value of health tourism (Kerényi et al., 2010) and how many of them use it in their name.

Out of the hotels examined, 23.1% (9pcs) of them states that the word "wellness" occurs in their name; out of these 28,6% (table 4) have three-star classification. 20.55% (table 5) of the four-star hotels said the same. These hotels use of the opportunity to link brand building to an old or domestic health tourism brand (Mosonyi et al., 2013).

The name of the spa appears in 15.4% (table 6) of the examined hotels, 28.6% (table 4) of the three-star hotels, 8.3% of the four-star hotels (table 2) said the same.

The classification of commercial hotels was previously regulated by GKM enactment 54/2003, amended IKIM enactment (Borbély and Müller, 2008), which was in effect until 2012. Based on this enactment, the number of wellness rating among the hotels we examined was the following, de-scribed in figure 2.

Table 4. Distribution of the hotels examined, by previous wellness classification

Classifications of the hotels					
		Three stars pcs (%)	Four stars pcs (%)	Five stars pcs (%)	Total pcs (%)
According to earlier classification: the hotel operates as a wellness institute	Yes	3 (21,4)	9 (37,5)	0 (0)	12 (30,8)
	No	11 (78,6)	15 (62,5)	1 (100)	27 (69,2)
	Total	14 (100)	24 (100)	1 (100)	39 (100)

It can be observed that 21.4% of the three-star hotels and 37.5% of the four-star hotels operated as a wellness hotel (table 4). Although according to the new classification wellness hotels are no longer registered, they only have to be classified according to the star criteria based on quality, yet the existence of the wellness supply

elements increases the competitiveness of the hotels as they follow the consumption trends of the health-conscious consumers of our time (Müller and Kerényi, 2009; Sörös et al., 2012; Csirmaz and Pető, 2015; Bíró et al., 2018a).

Table 5. The appearance of wellness elements in the examined hotels

		Classifications of the hotels			
		Three stars pcs (%)	Four stars pcs (%)	Five stars pcs (%)	Total pcs (%)
Does the hotel offer wellness services?	Yes	10 (71,4)	22 (91,7)	1 (100)	33 (84,6)
	No	4 (28,6)	2 (8,3)	0 (0)	6 (15,4)
	Total	14 (100)	24 (100)	1 (100)	39 (100)

33 (84%) of the hotels have wellness items (table 5). Based on the results, it can be stated that more of the 4-star hotels provide wellness services to the guests than the 3-star hotels. The diversity of well-ness offerings (Müller et al. 2005) and its diversification can provide health-conscious guests with a state of physical and mental well-being.

Table 6. Table The availability of fitness facilities in examined hotels

		Classifications of the hotels			
		Three stars pcs (%)	Four stars pcs (%)	Five stars pcs (%)	Total pcs (%)
Does the hotel have a fitness facility?	Yes	2 (14,3)	10 (41,7)	1 (100)	13 (33,3)
	No	12 (85,7)	14 (58,3)	0 (0)	26 (66,7)
	Total	14 (100)	24 (100)	1 (100)	39 (100)

Also, we also examined whether the hotels have a fitness room. The results showed that 41.7% of the 4-star hotels and only 14.3% of the 3-star hotels had a fitness room and provided this opportunity to their guests (table 6). The former wellness hotel enchantment required the provision of air conditioning rooms for guests, which may have emphasized the wellness concept related to the development of physical health as this kind of sporting service is not a seasonal supply element provided throughout the year.

Recreational trends show that regular health-conscious exercise is essential for today's health-conscious consumers, who want to do it during their stay (Lenténé et al., 2018).

Table 7. The appearance of leisure sports services in the examined hotels

		Classifications of the hotels			
		Three stars pcs (%)	Four stars pcs (%)	Five stars pcs (%)	Total pcs (%)
Is there an opportunity for leisure sport, east or aerobic type of sport?	Yes	5 (35,7)	9 (37,5)	0 (0)	14 (35,9)
	No	9 (64,3)	15 (62,5)	1 (100)	25 (64,1)
	Total	14 (100)	24 (100)	1 (100)	39 (100)

For leisure sports, 35.7% of 3 the star and 37.5% of the 4-star hotels provide opportunity for their guests (table 7). The expectation for leisure sports is that it should be fun, excitement-centered and have a wide range of movement repertoire according to the expectations of different target groups. In our previous survey, we have evaluated the leisure sports offerings of the hotels in the counties of the region. The results showed that most hotels are located in Hajdú-Bihar County, and the most popular in leisure sports in them are: yoga, aerobics, bicycle tours and water training (Lenténé et al., 2018).

Among sports services, the most popular among hotel guests, are suitable for prevention, the improvement of fitness level and for the support of the physical, psychological and social well-being, which fact is also confirmed by trends (Müller and Bácsné, 2018; Bendíková, 2017).

Recreational sports offerings are available in many domestic and foreign hotels, as tourist trends show that active holidays are replacing passive holidays more and more (Müller et al., 2016). Health conscious guests require a variety of active pack refill services during their stay.

Conclusions

Tourism and health tourism product development is vital for the North Great Plain region, as the development of the tourism market is based on reasonable conditions. This is especially important given that the region's commercial accommodation has been able to increase its number of guests since 2010. Quality parameters should also be taken into account in the development of supply elements, as the extensive and intensive development of services together represents competitiveness in tourism (Molnár et al., 2014; Bíró et al., 2018b). The wellness and sports offer are predominantly seen in the hotels in the North Great Plain region as additional services. The expansion of these services is justified by to-day's recreational trends, which show that regular exercise is important for health-conscious consumers, who want to do it during their holidays.

Our research has shown that the inclusion of wellness offerings in the hotels of the Northern Great Plain region is markedly marked. The addition of wellness elements in the offers of the hotels is definitely an essential element of competitiveness, as it meets increasing demand. The word well-ness appears in many names of the Northern Great Plain region's hotels, thus in the marketing communication sends a message to the guests, this attraction factor is used predominantly in the promotion. Fitness and sports offerings are also available in many hotels, which can provide active leisure for health-conscious consumers.

Acknowledgment

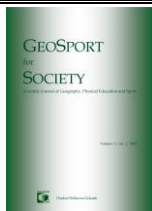
This study was supported by the EFOP-3.6.2-16-2017-00003 project which is financed by the European Union and the European Social Fund.

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GEOSPORT FOR SOCIETY

Scientific Journal founded in 2014 under aegis of University of Oradea (Romania),
University of Debrecen (Hungary), University of Gdansk (Poland)
ISSN 2393-1353

Edited by Oradea University Press
1, University Street, 410087, Oradea, Romania
Journal homepage: <http://geosport.uoradea.ro>



The appearance of product innovation in the life of a Hungarian SMEs in the global market of sporting goods - implications from a research

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Citation: Mórik, V. K., Bácsné Bába, E., Müller, A., Ráthonyi, G.G., Molnár, A. (2019). The appearance of product innovation in the life of a Hungarian SMEs in the global market of sporting goods-implications from a research. *Geosport for Society*, 10(1), 25–38. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gss.1003-045>

Article history: Received: 07.01.2019; Revised: 20.03.2019; Accepted: 20.04.2019, Available online: 08.05.2019

Abstract: For a Hungarian SME to keep its already acquired position in the global market of sporting goods is a continuous and complex task in which innovation plays a key factor. The purpose of our research is to certify the necessity and the appearance of innovation in the life of a product in the sports business - this case concerning the production of NAJADE fins. This work helps to identify the trends of the consumer attitudes, which is an essential information in product development. The result of the survey (N=200) regarding the needs of consumers shows that however product design plays a secondary role to the quality, durability and the results reached with the product, it is still an influencing factor in product selection. Since sports equipment are used to achieve better results with, the technical improvement of the product is an important aspect of product innovation. Furthermore, the biological acceleration of the generations and the specific needs of the different kind of underwater sports should be taken into consideration when manufacturing these products. Moreover, to reach lower income, developing countries with our products, cheaper, cost-effective technological proceedings could mean a solution.

Keywords: sport, innovation, underwater sports, sporting goods, product innovation

Introduction

In the global market of sporting goods, international competition is quite strong for Hungarian companies. A good portion of this market is ruled by the Far East, but the United States gets its share as well. For a Hungarian product to keep its already acquired position, get more customers, and to expand, it is essential to continuously develop its products and to monitor and analyze the participants of the market and even the market itself.

Nowadays innovative thinking and co-operation play a significant role in increasing the competitiveness of domestic SMEs and multinationals. Because of this reason, the importance of the role of innovation with producing sporting goods should be emphasized. In the field of sport, the diverse profiles of product development require the content of innovation, which in exchange enables companies applying it to achieve better results (Könyves and Müller, 2007).

In addition to product innovation, it is also important to mention marketing innovation, which refers to the novel application and combination of "marketing tools" as a result of which consumers have new products, better shopping situations, other advertising, etc. (Bauer and Berács, 2001). Besides producing and distributing the products, it is of great importance for the distributing company to carry out sport marketing activities. "The two main areas of sports marketing are the sale of services and sporting goods directly to consumers of sport, and the sale of industrial products and services using sport as a promotional tool" (Mullin et al., 1993).

In this research, we aimed to map out the popularity of the different types of NAJADE fins used in underwater sports. To meet the needs of customers, it was our priority to look at the observations of the competitors regarding these sports equipment. Based on these results our main focus was on product innovation. Our goal was moreover to examine the most common factors affecting the purchase of these fins, including size selection, product design, color, material, comfort, the results achieved with the examined product, and what would the athletes change about our products.

Theoretical background

The traditional course of product development changed over time completely (Rohács, 1997). While the traditional process started with an idea and progressed towards producing and sales, modern product development starts from consumer needs. The market clearly specifies what product do they need, on what price and with what characteristics.

The global business of the sports industry is growing rapidly and has been providing numerous entrepreneurial opportunities. The dynamic nature and scope of sports industry development and the growing market make it critical for SMEs to compete for consumers in need for them to stay alive. According to Chikán (2008), innovation is the act of customer satisfaction on a new, higher quality level. To get more customers, SMEs need to meet the demands of the potential buyers. This can be achieved by producing better than rival companies in every aspect (material, quality, durability, functions, etc.).

The prerequisite of the success of businesses is the ability of the adaptation to changes (Chikán, 2008). Companies need to offer their product, so as customers will be willing to pay for it more than for the products of the competitors.

By the definition of OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2005) “An innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations”.

The Oslo Manual for measuring innovation defines four types of innovation (Katona, 2006). Product innovation: A good or service that is new or significantly improved. This includes significant improvements in technical specifications, components, and materials, software in the product, user-friendliness or other functional characteristics.

Process innovation: A new or significantly improved production or delivery method. This includes significant changes in techniques, equipment, and software.

Marketing innovation: A new marketing method involving significant changes in product design or packaging, product placement, product promotion or pricing.

Organizational innovation: A new organizational method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations.

In this study, our main focus falls on product innovation (figure 1). As a result, product innovation could provide sustainability in a rapidly growing sports industry sector. With this type of development profit and market share can be increased, prestige can be improved since it is an effective way to increase sales with expanding the circles of customers, as well as regular customers. Moreover, last, but not least as a collateral externality product innovation can create new jobs as well (figure 1).



Figure 1. The purpose of product innovation

Source: Own editing based on Szakály – Innovation management (2013)

Based on their source of origin we can categorize product innovation in two groups, namely the demand-driven: demand-pull, and the technological knowledge induced: technology push.

Change in customer needs can generate knowledge-change, as certain customer needs direct developers towards new solutions. The pressure of the customers, as a motivational factor has a crucial importance in this. Professionals analyzing the market, state that those companies who have the potential to develop need to have the following three types of customers (Szakály, 2013): profit-making, stable customers; volume growth ensuring "joiners"; change enforcing "cognoscenti".

To the utilization of the available knowledge, those present in the market contribute to the highest degree, but to start the knowledge-change new customers are needed.

This change in the needs of the customers, with the changing market environment and the new social needs, create new products, or the modification or improvisation of an existing product because it is intended to satisfy those changing needs. In this aspect new products can be categorized by the following order (Szakály, 2013): product with a new function; old product with new performance; existing product with the utilization of a new technology; new, complementary function; transfer to a new market; integration of old products into a new product; simplification of an existing product to create mass-product; disassembling of an existing product to new components; newly designed product. However, it is not enough to simply develop the "new product". As previous researches show the success rate of the introduction of a new product to the market is below 25% on the average (Nagy, 2013). This means the more in-depth we know the key factors in the success of the product- and service-innovation, the better chance we have, to achieve better results than our competitions in the market.

Henard and Szymanszky (2001) identified five key product characteristics as the predictors of new product performance on the market: 1. Product advantage, which comes from the superiority and differentiation over competitive offerings; 2. Product meets customer needs: the extent of which product is perceived as satisfying desires/needs of the customer; 3. Product price, as perceived price-performance congruency (value); 4. Product technological sophistication, the perceived technological sophistication (high-tech, low tech) of the product; 5. Product innovativeness, the perceived newness / originality / uniqueness / radicalness of the product (figure 2).



Figure 2. Predictors of new product performance by product characteristics

Source: Own research (2019)

Introducing the product

The popularity of water sports (Bíró et al., 2015) is illustrated by the fact that more and more literature deals with its development or the methodological aspects of its organization. The increase in the number of water sports shows that its mass base is widening and the demand is increasing.

The CMAS, the World Underwater Federation oversees ten underwater sports including Apnoea, Aquathlon, Finswimming, Underwater Hockey, Underwater Rugby, Orienteering, Visual, Spearfishing, Sports Diving, CMAS Games (CMAS, 2018). In all of which athletes use different types of rubber fins. However, besides the typical users, we have to mention lifeguards, and hobby divers as well as the swimmer and the water polo who also use rubber fins for their workouts, which can help them to improve foot muscle and improve foot technic. NAJADE fins are among the sports products that feature both product features and service features at the same time, and also appear as promotional tools (Hoffman, 2000). The manufacturing and distribution company is a sports company, i.e., a company that works in the field of sport to meet consumer needs while achieving a profit (András, 2003).

Continuous monitoring of trends in the field of sport and recreation is important because it can affect the competitiveness of SMEs. These trends reflect the current consumer habits in the field of sport, which are important for product development. In the field of sport and fitness, such trends are uniqueness and style, or the need for comfort and quality that influences customers in product selection both with sports equipment and services (Müller, 2009; Müller et al., 2013; Borbély-Müller, 2015; Müller et al., 2017).

In addition to the production and distribution of the sporting goods, our company is also engaged in sports sponsorship to promote its products (Bíró et al., 2015), doing so through several international underwater sports competitions such as World Cups, European and World Championships in which underwater hockey, water rugby athletes are given free products. In this way, it reaches its promotional and marketing goals (Mullin et al., 1993, p. 208). In exchange for the sponsorship, advertising space may be requested from the organizers, and from the sponsored national athletes to take part in the competitions wearing the NAJADE logo.

Since the NAJADE fins manufacturing company has been present on the international market for seven years, it is likely that during this time the needs and expectations of the athletes against the product have changed, which can be supported by the market research conducted.

The downward price strategy is probably a good choice, as it does not affect the purchasing decision of the professional athletes, but the price differentiation is likely to be necessary, as well as the development of lower-priced products. The latter are mostly demanded by the athletes in the developing countries, as well as in countries with lower discretionary income and lower GDP (such as Egypt, India). Paár (2013) states that in the case of a decline in household income, the reduction in the price of sports products can compensate for the negative trend in demand reduction, although this alone is not enough for a rapid increase in demand, but it must be a sports policy that NAJAD can achieve with different price differentiation with different discretionary income. Customers in countries with a declining or declining consumer income.

During the research, we were looking for answers to the following questions:

- How do the needs of different underwater sports develop against the fin? How can fins meet the needs of different underwater sports?
- How are the buying habits of athletes in different underwater sports and what are the most important aspects that influence the purchase?
- What innovation opportunities do we have for the NAJADE fins company in product development based on expectations from athletes?

Material and methods

The data for our primary research was collected via questionnaires. The questionnaire has been compiled to provide answers to the factors influencing product selection in different types of underwater sports. We created open-ended and close-ended questions. To examine the influencing the effect of different factors we have created a five-point Likert in which, one is the least, and five the most typical statement for the respondents.

The questionnaires were filled out in our consumer circles, on paper in Hungarian, English and Russian language. They were collected from the following international swimming competitions:

- World Cup Eger, Coral Springs / Florida / United States;
- Junior World Championship Tomsk / Russia;
- Adult Europe Championship Wroclaw / Poland;
- 2018 Adult World Championship Belgrade / Serbia;
- Junior European Championships in Istanbul / Turkey;
- U19 and U23 World Championships in Hobart / Tasmania / Australia;
- Adult Europe Championship Eger - 2018 Championship Teams Europe Cup Castellon / Spain;
- Adult World Cup Quebec City / Canada

The operative work was carried out with the help of the SPSS statistical data analysis program, in which descriptive statistical analyzes dominate (mean, standard deviation, median, mode).

In addition to descriptive statistics, we used the Chi-square cross table test to determine the relationship between two variables.

Introducing the sample

In the end, 211 questionnaires were filled out successfully, from which after data-cleaning, 200 was used. After analyzing the socio-demographic section, we received the following picture of the respondents. 55.5% of them (111 people) are women, 44.5%, or 89, are men, with an average age of 23.76 (standard deviation 7.234).

As NAJADE fins are primarily Hungarian products, it is not surprising that the largest percentage (13%) of our consumer range is provided by Hungarian customers. In the second place, Canadian and Colombian partners are represented by 9 - 9%, but a good portion of customers from the leading nations Italy (7%), Argentina (4%) and the United States (4%) are also present (figure 3).

As for the distribution within underwater sports, the NAJADE fin manufacturing company targets three major sports with its products (of course, not disclosing any other water sports). Because of this reason in our questionnaire, only the three

targeted sports are represented (Finswimming, Underwater Hockey and Underwater Rugby). Table 1 shows that almost half of the respondents (48,5%) are Finswimmers.

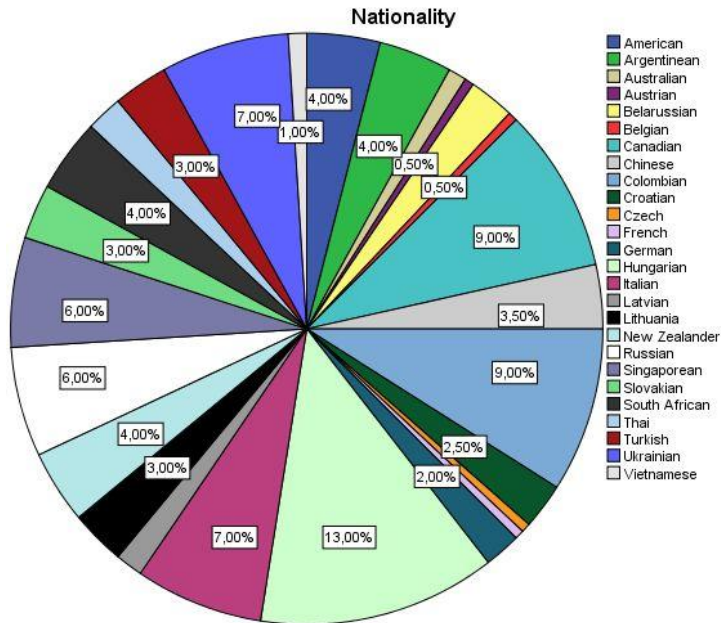


Figure 3. Nationalities of the customer circle
Source: Own research (2019)

	Frequency (Persons)	Percent (%)
Finswimming	97	48,5
Underwater Hockey	59	29,5
Underwater Rugby	44	22,0
Total	200	100

Table 1. The frequency of the respondents in different types of underwater sports (2019)
Source: Own editing (2019)

The results corroborate to the presence of a long-standing trend in the underwater community. Finswimming is the cheapest of the 3 mentioned sports, due to its low equipment need. Also, Finswimming has fewer financial implications, thus enabling the wider masses and less well-off classes to get involved. Furthermore, it is important to mention the fact that underwater sports are the first in the New Countries because their base is swimming, they are spectacular and give more opportunities to compete in.

There is another reoccurring trend about the age of the athletes and what type of underwater sports do they participate in

Sport of respondents	16-23 age bracket % (persons)	25-50 age bracket % (persons)
Finswimming	<u>98 (95)</u>	2 (2)
Underwater Hockey/Rugby	30,1 (31)	<u>69,9 (72)</u>

Table 2. Coherency between the age of the participants and their sports (2019)
 Source: Own research (2019)

Among Finswimmers, the younger age group appears to be more active, from the age of 16 to the age of 23. These athletes usually stop their active career (as in most competitive sports) at the end of their academic studies. This trend can also be seen from our research, as the majority of the finswimmers, (98%) are from the age group of 16-23, while in the 25-50 age group a drastic decline could be seen (table 2).

The base of our research and questionnaire are the products of NAJADE. Based on the use in major underwater sports and on sales statistics, we examined the following 4 product categories: Speed, Sprint, Iron and UW.

As the name of the equipment indicates, the use and design of the Speed and Sprint fins makes the product types used for Finswimming (where speed is the most important factor). In contrast, Iron and especially UW fins are products made of harder and stiffer material, which makes them more suitable for underwater rugby and underwater hockey.

The majority of respondents prefer SPEED and SPRINT products (24% - 38%), which can be explained by the fact that they are used by Finswimmers, who have shown a higher percentage of involvement out of the 3 mentioned sports. IRON and UW products were picked by nearly the same number of respondents (18.5% and 19.5%). In order to examine the factors affecting the purchase, we have created a 5-point Likert-scale, in which one is the least, 5 is the most influential factor on the respondents (figure 4).

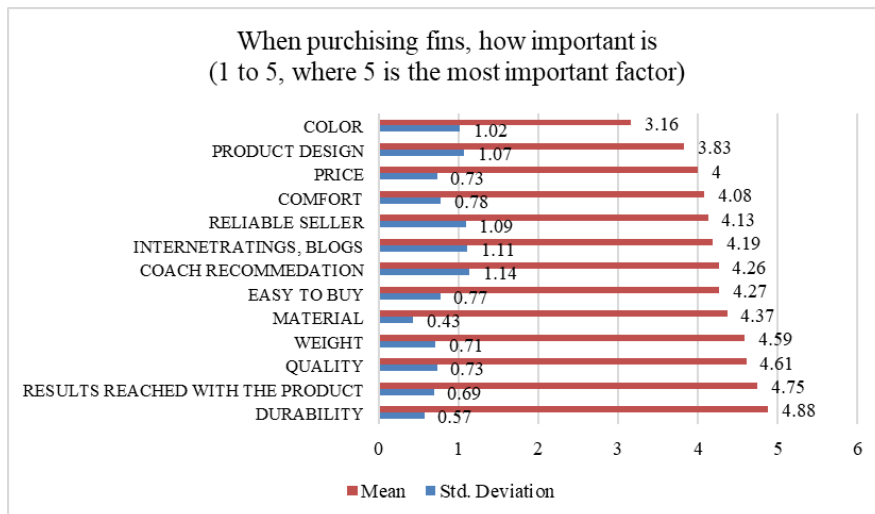


Figure 4. Factors influencing product purchase (2019)
 Source: Own research (2019)

From the collected data, it is remarkable (not surprisingly) that the first three highest rated factors are: durability (4.88), results reached with the product (4.75) and quality (4.61). This supports Torkos' (2009) statement, who reports on the product development strategy of the most successful fitness machine manufacturers, where innovation and durability of products are named as development priorities.

Since we are talking about sports equipment that we use to achieve sporting results, the appearance of the products (color: 3.16; design: 3.83) plays a secondary role. This can also be said about the price of the products (4), since those who want to achieve better results want quality, and durable products are willing to pay for a possibly more expensive, better tool.

In the interest of innovation and product development, we also asked our customers what would they change on/about the products of NAJADE.

Urbanization and civilization can speed up the acceleration of children and young adults (Eiben-Tóth, 2005; Bodzsár-Zsákai, 2015), thus with changing anthropometric factors (even younger athletes have larger foot size they are taller and more advanced, so naturally they need larger fins with different fin-density) the expectations of the athletes' are changing as well.

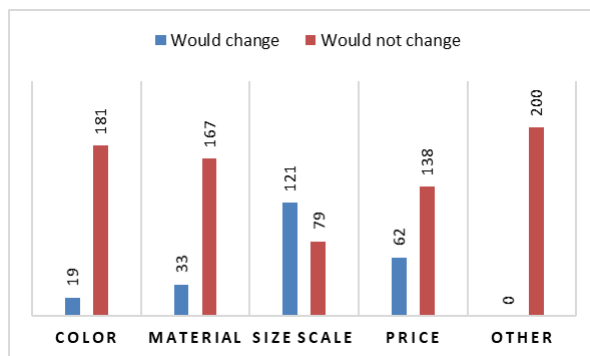


Figure 5. What would you change about NAJADE fins? (2019)

Source: Own research (2019)

Generational change can be demonstrated in body size, which increases the height of the foot and increases the foot size (Frenkl-Mészáros, 2002; Bodzsár-Zsákai, 2002; Bodzsár et al., 2015; 2016). Changes in physical fitness also require the manufacturers of sports products to adapt, as the manufacturers of sportswear and sports equipment must also take this trend into account when designing the scale of the product range due to increasing height and foot size.

Results of correlation tests

Based on the Pearson Chi-square test, the two variables are significant (<0.05). The value of the Chi-square is (χ^2) 84,342, while the degree of freedom (df) is 6. From the results, it can be observed that there are differences in the sport-specific design of the fins. Specially designed for underwater rugby and underwater hockey, IRON, and UW fins show a higher percentage in this category (40, 7%; 34.1%; 31.8%; 28.8%) (table 3).

Which Type/Types of NAJADE fins you have?				
	Your sport			
Your Sport	Finswimming person (%)	Underwater Hockey person (%)	Underwater Rugby person (%)	TOTAL person (%)
SPEED	33 (34,0)	8 (13,6)	7 (15,9)	48 (24)
IRON	6 (6,2)	17 (28,8)	14 (31,8)	37 (18,5)
SPRINT	58 (59,8)	10 (16,9)	8 (18,2)	76(38)
UW	0 (0)	24 (40,7)	15 (34,1)	39 (19,5)
Total	97 (100)	59 (100)	44 (100)	200 (100)

Table 3. he correlation between the sport of the respondents and the type of fins they use (2019)

Source: Own research (2019)

SPEED and SPRINT products are also present but only a small amount, as they are suitable for training, conditioning and based on individual preference judges of underwater sports also use these types of fins. This can also be said about the relationship between Finswimming, SPRINT and SPEED products.

As in all areas of commercial products, consumer demands are differentiated by gender (pink / blue shoes, etc.) from a very young age. This also the case with sports products (Nike Women's/ Men's line). In order to be able to serve our customers at the highest possible level of satisfaction, it is important to consider gender preferences.

Identifying the gender characteristics is essential both for satisfying customer needs and for producing the equipment for which the demand is present in the market. To do this, we must first look at the gender distribution in each sport. The results of the survey of the sexes of the respondents and the sport they participate in are presented in table 4.

Your Sport	GENDER		TOTAL person (%)
	FEMALE person (%)	MALE person (%)	
Finswimming	62 (55,9%)	35 (39,3%)	97 (48,5%)
Underwater Hockey	31 (27,9%)	28 (31,5%)	59 (29,5%)
Underwater Rugby	18 (16,2%)	26 (29,2%)	44 (22,0%)
Total	111 (100%)	89 (100%)	200 (100%)

Table 4. Distribution of gender in relation to the three targeted sport (2019)

Source: Own research (2019)

Based on the Pearson Chi-square test, it can be stated that the two variables are significant (<0.05). The value of the Chi-square is (χ^2) 6,785, while the degree of freedom (df) is 2.

From the results, we can conclude that the majority of women (+ 16.6%) prefer finswimming, while the number of them in underwater rugby is much lower (- 13%), which can be taken into consideration when manufacturing gender specified product lines in different type of underwater sports (table 5).

Please mark on a scale of 1-5, if 1 is the least and 5 is the most typical statement when purchasing fins, how important is COLOR	GENDER		
	FEMALE person (%)	MALE person (%)	TOTAL person (%)
2	26 (23,4%)	30 (33,7%)	56 (28,0%)
3	52 (46,8%)	39 (43,8%)	91 (45,5%)
4	16 (14,4%)	3 (3,4%)	19 (9,5%)
5	17 (15,3%)	17 (19,1%)	34 (17,0%)
Total	111 (100%)	89 (100%)	200 (100%)

Table 5. Color scale as an influencing factor in purchasing NAJADE fins (2019)
Source: Own research (2019)

In Finswimming for example, where the study showed more female participants, the manufacturer could extend the line of product especially aimed at women. We have examined the various factors influencing the purchase and gender relations of these purchasing habits. The presence of color as an influencing factor can be considered a significant result.

Based on the Pearson Chi-square test, it can be stated that the two variables are significant (<0.05). The value of the Chi-square is (χ^2) 8,723, while the degree of freedom (df) is 3. It can be said that the color of the fins is the more important aspect for women. Men, however, are more influenced on the size scale and comfort of products (table 6).

This issue can be broken down to Sports and influencing factors as well. The underwater rugby and hockey games are longer. Thus, the athletes participating in these games wear their fins longer. The feel of the IRON and UW products need to be suitable and comfortable for longer use.

Is there anything that you would modify on Najade fins? - Size scale	Gender		
	FEMALE person (%)	MALE person (%)	TOTAL person (%)
Yes	54 (48,6%)	67 (75,3%)	121 (60,5%)
No	57 (51,4%)	22 (24,7%)	79 (39,5%)
Total	111 (100%)	89 (100%)	200 (100%)

Table 6. Size scale as an influencing factor in purchasing NAJADE fins (2019)
Source: Own research (2019)

Based on the Pearson Chi-square test, it can be stated that the two variables are significant (<0.05). The Chi-square value is (2) 14,660, while the degree of freedom (df) is 1.

Conclusion

Initially, while NAJADE had a monopoly on the market, the downward price strategy proved to be good, but the emergence of competitors, as well as the increasing price sensitivity of buyers, and the fact that more and more low-cost

African and Asian countries are joining in the underwater sports community prompts the distributor to reconsider its price strategy.

It is clear that 93% of the respondents consider the quality of the equipment important when purchasing the product and 80% of the consumers take into account the previous results achieved with the fins, which is due to the excellent quality of the product. Satisfying customer needs is important for products, as quality is what the customer recognizes. Quality, if a product can meet consumer needs (Parasurman et al., 1985; Giubilato et al., 2013).

During the sponsorship and personal visit of different competitions, there is an opportunity for direct sales, contacts with customers and the completion of questionnaires during such competitions. 23% of the interviewees bought the fins directly from the manufacturer during the competitions. This greatly increases the amount of product sold and the visibility of the product.

Since their launch, NAJADE products have realized a growing turnover, which, with the help innovation, is trying to satisfy consumers' needs as fully as possible. The most important aspect of product development was to incorporate the needs and experiences of top athletes into the development (Senánszky Petra world champion tested and indicated the development needs of a swimmer to achieve the best possible result in that sport). With this market research, we measured the needs of several underwater sports athletes for the product. If we can accommodate these needs, the company can expect even greater demand in the future. Increase in demand could be led by innovation (Drucker, 2003; Pakucs-Papanek, 2006), with which NAJADE targets new markets (new countries, new underwater sports). In the future, such plans will include the use of fins among lifeguards, as many European countries will also compete with NAJADE fins, and will use a suitably designed product for classical swimming, swim-out, teaching, and improving competition. In water polo, the company continues its product launch with fins used in training. Water polo is a TAO sport in Hungary (Sárközy, 2017; Kendelényi – Gulyás, 2018), so its youth base is growing dynamically, which may also mean an increase in demand.

It is also necessary to change the composition of the fin material, which is also a possible form of innovation. Different rubber strengths can be developed in different areas of the fin, and combining them allows us to meet the sport-specific needs of different underwater sports.

The research has also shown that there is a need for different sizes of fins, we need to expand the size range, as there is the typical problem with footwear, that one size is small, but the next one is big, so the need to introduce intermediate sizes has arisen - for example, the introduction of 2.5 to 3.5. The 46-48-foot size is not uncommon among the athletes, so the 5th size should be introduced in manufacturing.

Experience gained in market research will help to further renew fins and possibly open them to new markets, which is also needed to create marketing strategies (Kovács, 2012; Józsa, 2014).

It is noticeable that more and more non-underwater sports countries are starting to develop and compete in underwater sports, such as India, Central African countries, and Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, which gives us more opportunities to open up to

new markets. The athletes in these countries are still very price sensitive, so it is advisable for them to develop a new product line under the NAJADE brand, which results in cheaper technology production. Experience in market research shows that design and color matter more to younger generations and with this development, greater success can be achieved if the new product line comes into the market with vibrant design elements (Mórik – Müller, 2018).

Of course, the range of opportunities is unlimited, but even for NAJADE products, these product innovations require investment, which is coupled with a substantial capital requirement that the manufacturer is trying to satisfy, as innovation is the foundation of competitiveness (Könyves – Müller, 2007).

Acknowledgment

This study was supported by the EFOP-3.6.2-16-2017-00003 project which is financed by the European Union and the European Social Fund.

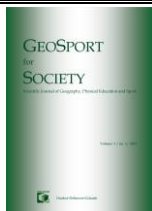
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Web-sites sources:

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GEOSPORT FOR SOCIETY

Scientific Journal founded in 2014 under aegis of University of Oradea (Romania),
University of Debrecen (Hungary), University of Gdansk (Poland)

ISSN 2393-1353

Edited by Oradea University Press
1, University Street, 410087, Oradea, Romania

Journal homepage: <http://geosport.uoradea.ro>



Motivating employees in sports organizations, an important factor in managerial policy

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Citation: Dragoș, F. P., Herman, G. V., Szabo-Alexi, M., Szabo-Alexi, P., Olău, V. M., Buhaș, S. (2019). Motivating employees in sports organizations, an important factor in managerial policy. *Geosport for Society*, 10(1), 39-47. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gss.1004-047>

Article history: Received: 05.004.2019; Revised: 20.05.2019; Accepted: 28.06.2019, Available online: 04.07.2019

Abstract: The present study aims at highlighting methods and means that can be used to increase the efficiency of employees in sports organizations. It started from the hypothesis that work performance in sports organizations depends on how managers manage to identify and meet the needs or expectations of executives. In this respect, using the method of the questionnaire, 178 persons (51 managers and 127 employees) were consulted on the institutional actions (taking place within the sports organization of which they belong) and regarding their expectations and needs.

Keywords: managers, employees, motivation, attitudes, actions, expectations, needs

Introduction

At similar global motivational intensities, work behavior will be differentiated according to the share of intrinsic factors in relation to extrinsic factors in determining the overall motivational index (Mamali, 1981).

The motivation and the satisfaction of a person's work are not only conditioned by the productive work carried out in a given job, but also by the activity and extra-professional factors throughout the everyday life of the person. Motivation and work satisfaction should be understood as components of the entire motivational structure and the overall state of personality satisfaction.

Increasing the degree of cohesion within an organization has the effect of positively influencing the motivation of its members. This increase can be made simpler by all employees participating in different joint actions: company-sponsored parties, meals, etc.

Organizations need to discover natural ways of communicating with employees so that they know their needs, abilities, values, professional aspirations, career development goals. And leaders need to learn to pass on to the employees the messages and goals of the organization so they can be understood and assumed. They have to give decision makers and active roles to their employees to stimulate them and use their abilities to make them more responsible and to increase their self-esteem.

The importance of this study is based on the need to motivate and increase the interest of the employees of sports organizations so that they can be considered part of the decision area (Huffman et al., 1991; Johns, 1996). Increasing the involvement in the decision-making process, but also the employee's feeling that his work contributes to the success of the sports organization, represents an important objective of institutional management, but also a way to success (Zlate, 2000). In this context, management finds a way to motivate employees to increase the level of satisfaction (Ziglar and Savage, 1998; Wiley, 1997; Beck, 2004; Gorman, 2004; Sinclair et al., 2006; Dragoş, 2014b). It can be highlighted in various ways: remuneration, certain material benefits, appreciation, better working conditions, etc. (Marcu & Buhas, 2014; Dragoş, 2014a; Buhas, 2015a).

A series of studies highlighted the importance of employee motivation, so that the degree of satisfaction is directed towards ensuring an emotional balance, a well-being, the enjoyment of the job attendance, so as to increase the productivity of work and thus achieve the performance parameters (Dragoş, 2015; Buhas, 2015b; Buhas 2015c). The human resource has evolved lately on the organizational priority scale. Thus, there has been a translation from the simple notion of capital to that of psychological capital that is necessary to be motivated to manifest itself positively (Deci & Ryan, 2008, McAdam, 2008).

Research Methodology

This study is based on the results of the study of the literature and the use of the sociological questionnaire survey (Babbie, 2010; Bar et al., 2016; Herman et al., 2016; Ilieş et al., 2015; Tătar, 2013, 2018; Wendt et al., 2019). From a structural point of view, the applied questionnaire covered two major aspects: institutional actions

(taking place within the sports organization of the respondents), respectively, their expectations and needs. Within the framework of the institutional actions, four major issues of concern were addressed: organizing meetings to celebrate the success of some employees; organizing awarding actions for quantifiable results, special initiatives, perseverance, etc.; celebrating a date as the day of the company in which all employees are involved and celebrating those who reach the retirement age. Information on the expectations and needs of the respondents came out through the expression of availability (to work hard, to work in a team, to execute orders without engagement, to enter into conflict, to take responsibility) and needs (the need for socialization and recognition of merits). The geo-socio-demographic data, like the city of origin, the size of the organization they belong to, their position in the organization, the level of education, age and gender were also captured in the questionnaire. The questionnaires were applied directly to the subject.

Considering the representativeness of the sample group, this study was carried out on 200 people from 34 sports organizations in the country, including 60 managers, 140 employees in execution structures. Due to the reticence of some of the respondents and the mistakes raised in completing the questionnaires, the information from 178 questionnaires (51 questionnaires filled in by managers and 127 questionnaires filled in by employees) was used.

The sampling was mixed (random and directed) with regard to sports organizations of different sizes and different statutes; the investigated subjects were selected primarily because of the willingness to respond to the questionnaires.

The analysis of the respondent target group highlights the following defining characteristics:

The analysis of the respondent target group highlights the following defining characteristics:

- place (in case of managers 23% are from Oradea, 21% from Cluj Napoca, 20% from Timisoara and Bistrita, 8% from Arad. In case of employees 26% are from from Oradea, from Bistrita 21%, from Timisoara 20%, Cluj Napoca 18% and from Arad 15%);

- the size of the organization (12% of respondents, both managers and employees work in small sports organizations, 27% of managers and 20% of employees belong to medium-sized sports organizations and 61% of managers and 68% of employees are from large sports organizations);

- the position within organisation (29% of the managers were directors, 23% were vice-presidents, 12% were president, 12% deputy directors, also, 12% councilors, 6% financial responsible and also, 6% other sector responsible. In the case of employees or executives, the functions they occupy are quite varied. Most of them there were coaches (38%) or just trainer (24%), 8% of them were competition organizers and 5% were heads of the departments and 4% were referents. There is another category of 8% occupied by other positions (drivers, etc.)

- the level of education (53% of the managers have higher education (bachelor degree), 29% postgraduate studies and 18% with a doctoral degree. For the majority of employees (52%) have higher education, 23% have postgraduate studies and only 27 % are based only on high school degree);

- age (managers aged 46-55 are 47%, and those between 36-45 years and 56-65 years are in relatively equal proportions, ie 24% and 29% respectively for the second 31% of employees are up to 35 years and between 46-55 years, 22% are between 36 and 45 years and the rest 16% are over 56 years old);
- gender (88% of managers and 80% of employees are men).

Institutional Actions

Organizing meetings to celebrate the success of some employees

Meetings initiated by management to celebrate the success of employees can be an important motivating factor as it reflects on the needs of merit recognition personnel. Those who understand the importance of recognizing employees' merits only gain. They know that recognition is not just a symbolic thing on their part, but a real motivation tool for employees. It is an enhanced form of communication: you confirm that it is on the right track and motivate it to repeat those actions.

In sportive organizations surveyed, 53% of respondents (57% of managers and 52% of employees) declare that meetings are held in the sports organizations of which they are part to celebrate the success of employees (table 1).

Table 1. Centralized table with results from respondents

No.	Questions	Manager		Employee		Total	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
1	INSTITUTIONAL ACTIONS						
1.1	Do you have meetings to celebrate the success of employees in your sports organization?	22 43%	29 57%	61 48%	66 52%	83 47%	95 53%
1.2	In the sports organization where you are active, awards are organized for quantifiable results, special initiatives, perseverance, etc.?	6 12%	45 88%	76 60%	51 40%	82 46%	96 54%
1.3	In the sports organization where you activate, is a date celebrated as the day of the company in which all employees are involved?	18 35%	33 65%	60 47%	67 53%	78 44%	100 56%
1.4	In the sports organization where you are activating, do you celebrate people who reach retirement age?	21 41%	30 59%	69 54%	58 46%	90 51%	88 49%
2	EXPECTATIONS AND EMPLOYEES 'NEEDS						
2.1	I like to work hard	36 71%	15 29%	83 65%	44 35%	119 67%	59 33%
2.2	I like to have friends	24 47%	27 53%	69 54%	58 46%	93 52%	85 48%
2.3	I like to take responsibility	18 35%	33 65%	83 65%	44 35%	101 57%	77 43%
2.4	I like to work alone	33 65%	18 35%	88 69%	39 31%	121 68%	57 32%
2.5	I'm in conflict with those who do not do the things I want	48 94%	3 6%	121 95%	6 5%	169 95%	9 5%
2.6	I feel satisfied when my merits are recognized	27 53%	24 47%	116 91%	11 9%	143 80%	35 20%

Organizing award actions for quantifiable results, special initiatives, etc.

Positive feedback is a simple, handy and very effective way of motivation. A satisfied and motivated employee care about the work they are doing and does not do things just to be done, but does as much as possible. In this sense, the award is another very important motivating factor in the life of a sports organization. The opinion of the questioned managers emphasizes this idea, with 88% of them saying that this type of action is organized regularly in the organizations where they operate. This is not the case with the employees, with only 40% saying that the award is part of the motivation policy existing in the sports organizations under investigation (table1).

Celebrate a date as the day of the company where all employees are involved

Celebrating a date as the day of the company can be an optimal opportunity for both the organization and its employees to get to know each other better. In the sports organizations surveyed, managers say 65% of the total of those questioned have such actions, the employees being only 53% in agreement with this variant (table 1).

Celebration of people reaching the retirement age

The attitude in an organization towards retired people shows the degree of appreciation the organization's leadership has in the first place towards the employees. Even more so, for retired people, it can be a recognition of merit and an appreciation of what they have done throughout their careers. It is important for an employee to see that his merits are recognized even if this recognition does not imply financial reward. This is because appreciation has a positive effect on employees: they trust themselves and are more motivated, which is essential in any organization. The dissatisfaction of the person who finds that his or her contribution has not been rewarded with due appreciation leads him to reconsider his attitude towards work and to start saving effort. In sport organizations included in the research, the actions for celebration of the persons reaching the retirement age take place, in terms of managers, in 59% of the cases. From the perspective of employees, only 46% of them consider that this type of activity is organized in the places where they operate (table 1).

Expectations and Employees 'Needs

The availability of managers and employees for work, the need for friends and group affiliation that can increase team cohesion, the ability of the individual to take responsibility, preferences for group or individual work, engagement in executing orders, need for appreciation and recognition of merits, s.a.m. are primary elements that must be known to managers to meet them. If we do not really know our employees and their needs, we cannot motivate them to work on true capacity.

Of all kinds of activities, work occupies the most important place in human life. The choice of the profession and the adaptation to its requirements presuppose the continuation of a personality development direction that allows the development of skills and aptitudes, the expression of values and attitudes, the assimilation of agreeable roles, the professional success being ultimately, a result of the interaction between the personality structure and the occupational environment. The personality

and self-identity of the adult are closely related to his/her main activity-work. Developing personality as a continuous process depends on a number of factors that can be grouped into three categories: life cycles, the choices we make more or less by chance, and self modelation. These choices, including that of profession have an important role: a highly demanding position in terms of intellectual trait influence not only on the development of skills and abilities, but also on interests, motivation, aspirations, manifestations of the ego.

Availability for intensive work

The work-related opinion of surveyed people reveals that 29% of managers and 35% of employees are willing and willing to work hard. The remaining 71% managers and 65% employees do not like this effort (table 1).

The need for socialization

The concept of human relations occupies a privileged place in social psychology. From the very definition of this discipline it follows that its main concern is the interaction between the social actors, the relations between personalities in a social field (group, organization). The relationship or bond is the very way of expressing the human individual, placed in a context. Interaction develops, human intelligence, competencies are valued, influences are exercised, or human socialization is achieved. Relationship with others, whether parents, brothers, groups of friends, institutions, and organizations, employs each individual on a network of connections, inserts it, asks him, and stimulates him to develop his skills. We need another to confirm our identity or critically evaluate our attitudes and behaviors. By another we come to know ourselves better; another is our mirror image, an Alter-Ego. At the same time, another is a support for each of us: it influences our aspirations and enriches us through its knowledge and culture through its intellectual behaviors and attitudes; helps us overcome critical situations, imposes ideas through his authority or opposition to some of our inappropriate attitudes and gestures.

The need or the pleasure of having many friends for interviewees reveals that 53% of managers and 46% of employees would like or would like to have as many friends as 47% of managers and 54% of the employees did not express this need.

Taking responsibility

Some of the most effective ways to motivate employees are: to offer rewards, recognition, positive feedback, and last but not least to bring to the attention of others in the organization who were responsible for the activity worthy of praise and/or effort. Too often, employees are led through "mismanagement" where most feedback is corrective or punitive. If employees feel that their decisions are supported, and when they are guided to the right direction, they will be more positive, confident and ready to take responsibility for making decisions.

In sports organizations included in the research, assuming responsibility is characteristic of 65% of the interviewed executives and only 35% of the employees. The remaining 35% managers and 65% employees prefer not to take on major responsibilities (table 1).

Availability for teamwork

In theory, ideal teamwork is great: Teamwork involves the ability to work together to achieve a common vision. Ability to direct individual achievements to meet organizational goals. Fuel that allows normal people to achieve outstanding results (Katzenbach and Smith, 2015; Kouzes and Posner, 2006). In reality, relationships are not so complex and the competitive spirit is integrated: Most teams are not teams, but only collections of individual subordinate relationships. Each individual fighting with others for power, prestige and position (Yukl, 1998; Eisenhardt, 1989).

Each person has a result on work done individually and another in a team. He also prefers to be accountable and to control how they work, their decisions and their results. If team members have individual responsibilities, their work will be more effective. Lack of individual responsibilities will allow the guilty to be thrown over to the other team members.

The preference of individuals questioned about individual work reveals a rather low preference towards this form, only 35% of managers and 31% of employees being in agreement with this possibility. Most of them, namely 65% of managers and 69% of employees, prefer teamwork.

Availability to execute orders

Participatory leadership is good when people already have experience and often come up with very good solutions. The decision is also taken by the manager but following consultation with the employees. The chance of a better final decision is much greater in this situation because the solution found by the manager can be "fined" in a positive sense by other solutions coming from experienced and not only people. The condition for achieving this style is that the manager is open to receiving solutions (Wagner and Harter, 2009). Participation increases the motivation of subordinates to contribute to goal setting and decision-making and can lead to easier decisions by subordinates. Also, the motivation of employees to carry out tasks would increase.

Analyzing employees' willingness to execute orders without engagement reveals that both managers and employees claim to be involved in executing orders, while only 6% of the first category and 5% of the second, respectively, execute the orders without is involved.

Availability of conflict

Workplace conflicts are based on interactions between employees at work, so we can speak of interpersonal conflicts. This conflict can arise between colleagues inside departments, between different departments or within the management team. Conflicts are based on negative behaviors. Emotional attitudes, manipulations of any kind, conflicts of interest, lack of tolerance, selfish behavior towards managers or employees' colleagues easily develop conflicts, generating feelings of frustration, rage, verbal violence. The stubbornness, the impressions of some people that they are right or wrong, the fact that employees do not always perform tasks as managers like, generates multiple conflicts at work with different intensities.

In this research, the managers' opinions are different from those of the employees, which is somehow normal, because their position gives them the right to be upset or to conflict with those who do not do the things as they would like. The analysis of the answers received shows that 53% of the surveyed managers are in conflict with those who do not do the job as they wish, while among the employees only 9%. In contrast, there are 47% managers and 91% employees (table 1).

Recognition of merit

Efficient managers understand the strength and importance of recognizing employee outcomes. They know that recognizing employees' merits is not only a good way to strengthen interpersonal relationships but a communication tool that strengthens the very foundation of the business: people and their relationship with the organization. A good manager is the one who leads the team to achieve the proposed results with as few resources as possible in the shortest possible time. A leader will make all people want to reach those goals, making them feel important and appreciated. The leader must find opportunities for an employee to be rewarded and recognized. A good leader must ensure that the environment in which his team works provides the prerequisites for each member to feel important and appreciated. Also, even managers feel the need for appreciation and recognition of merits by both subordinates and potential managers at higher levels.

Thus, the results of the analysis carried out that managers and especially employees, need to be appreciated when the results are recommended, 82% of surveyed managers and 91% of employees stating that they are satisfied when their merits are acknowledged (table 1).

Conclusions

The analysis of the data obtained from interviewees (51 managers, 127 employees) involved in the functional management of sports organizations from the North-West part of Romania (Timișoara, Arad, Cluj Napoca, Oradea and Bistrița) highlighted several relevant aspects. Thus, in sports organizations, from the perspective of motivation at the workplace, the rewarding (and not necessarily material) rewarding action for the merits of the employees for the results obtained over time is of great importance, both the managers (57%) and employees (52%) express same opinions.

It is therefore necessary to organize meetings aimed at celebrating the retired persons, those who achieve great results through their work, but also to establish and maintain a favorable climate in the workplace.

Also, another important element in employee motivation confirmed by data analysis is communication, with management feedback being able to avoid conflicting situations and misunderstandings due to lack of information.

From the point of view of the study, there is also the fact that there are people who are more efficient and implicitly more motivated by teamwork, others who prefer to work alone and some who accept the situation as it is. The duty of managers is to identify the needs and aspirations of each and to find ways to involve them in the activities appropriate to each character type.

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