The Role of School Sports in Activating Community Participation

Benammar Achwak

benammar-achwak@univ-eloued.dz

University of Eloued, College of Social and Human Sciences – Algeria

Belaid Mohammed

belaid-mohamme@univ-eloued.dz

University of Eloued, College of Social and Human Sciences – Algeria

Lachheb Abdessalam

lachheb-abdessalam@univ-eloued.dz

University of Eloued, College of Social and Human Sciences – Algeria

Abstract

Sport is a crucial activity in individuals' lives at all levels, seeking to achieve various goals, including the development of physical and motor skills. It is closely associated with health, psychological, social, and mental values that enable an individual to fulfill their duties towards their nation, community, and society. Recognizing its significance, this study aims to explore the impact of school sports in activating community participation as one of the values of citizenship. School sports are considered tools through which society can progress and elevate itself. The study focuses on enhancing the citizens' quality of life socially and economically by encouraging community members to contribute voluntarily to development efforts, whether through opinions, actions, financial support, or other means that lead to societal development and the achievement of its goals. This participation includes activities such as advocating for the right to organize peaceful campaigns, engaging in peaceful protests, exercising the right to strike, participating in elections, and joining social groups and voluntary organizations.

Keywords: Sport, School, School Sports, Citizenship, Community Participation.

Introduction

Physical education has become one of the fields that has significantly expanded on a social level in the modern era, as public awareness of its health, recreational, educational, and developmental

values has increased. It plays effective roles in the holistic upbringing of individuals, encompassing physical, social, psychological, and intellectual aspects, thus contributing to the comprehensive growth of the individual. Sporting activities have intertwined themselves into the collective consciousness of people of all ages, cultures, and social strata, given their significant and vital role in shaping an individual's personality, a process that commences during various stages of education.

Organized school sports contribute to instilling in students the ability to experience, understand, and adjust their behavior towards physical activities. School sports play a crucial role in providing appropriate opportunities for the proper development of the youth in physical, mental, psychological, and social dimensions. They constitute an essential element in the processes of growth and evolution, participating in the preparation for responsible citizenship and aiding individuals in understanding themselves, developing their personalities, comprehending the society they live in, its values, and ethics. This comprehensive and integrated development encompasses mental, physical, and social dimensions.

Hence, the objective of this study is to explore the impact of school sports in activating community participation as a component of citizenship. It is viewed as one of the tools through which society can progress and elevate itself. From this perspective, our study raises the question: ***What is the role of school sports in activating community participation?***

1- Concept of School Sports

1.1- Definition of Sports

The word "sports" is derived from the Arabic term "Riyadh al-Jannah," referring to the lush, green agricultural area that delights observers in paradise, resembling a garden or a farm. Linguistically, the term "sports" signifies the taming and refinement of the soul. In the broader sense, sports encompass health, well-being, safety, protection, immunity, and a shield against premature aging. Scientifically, sports involve movements of body parts and joints built on fundamental, sound principles, resulting from understanding, familiarity, perception, awareness, and experience termed as "sports." It is essential for these activities to commence with warm-up, followed by exercise, leading to the achievement of the goal and concluding with feedback. (Mohammed Abdul Rahman Abdul Nabi, 2017, p. 11).

Additionally, sports are recognized as a human activity with cultural and social dimensions, practiced justly and socially equitably. They aim at community development, strengthening friendships between nations, and contributing to social integration. Moreover, sports offer individuals opportunities to develop cognitive, physical, and psychological aspects, as well as enhance physical and skill capabilities (Naaman, Abdullah Sharaf al-Din, 2010, pp. 11-12).

1.2- Definition of School

In linguistics, a school is a place derived from the terms "lesson," "teaching," "teacher," "student," and "studied." It refers to the location where an individual meets with a teacher to acquire knowledge and experience. The term "school" in French, "École," signifies an institution that provides social education (Safwat Mukhtar, 2003, p. 87). Conceptually, a school is considered an educational institution that collaborates with homes in nurturing a new generation believing in the culture of society. It is the public institution established by society to undertake the upbringing and education, alongside the home, creating a new generation that adheres to the culture of society. Schools, according to Bassamark, manage the future of the country, and according to John Dewey, schools have the power to change society to a certain extent, a task other institutions cannot accomplish (Abdul Hadi, 2009, p. 306). Emile Durkheim defines the school as an expressive term for a society that entrusts it with conveying cultural, moral, and social values considered necessary for shaping a mature individual and integrating them into their environment (Zaeimi, 2006, p. 139).

Functionally, Said Ismail defines the school as a social organization with a specific function: educating children about various behaviors, perspectives, and values believed by the community. It is an institution that teaches children and raises them on the system believed in by the society in which we live (Haroush, B.S., p. 54). Procedurally, the school is defined as an educational institution where students learn various values and behaviors, making them positive contributors within their community (Zaeimi, 2006, p. 139).

1.3- School Sports:

1.4- Concept of School Sports:
School sports are sporting competitions held within schools and between them, encompassing various team and individual sports designated for such events (Sharfi, Surboot, B.S., p. 111). It involves a combination of pedagogical, scientific, medical, health, and sports approaches. By following these approaches, the body gains health, strength, agility, and overall balance (Mohammed Salama, 1980, p. 129). Procedurally, it comprises sports activities conducted within educational institutions aimed at developing physical and intellectual abilities, enabling individuals to positively contribute to their communities.

1.5- Importance of School Sports:
School sports help improve students' physical performance, acquire basic skills, and enhance their natural physical capabilities. The fundamental experiences gained through sports activities bring enjoyment to students through movements performed in competitions and exercises. These activities, whether collaborative or individual, involve the use of tools or large and small devices, leading to the acquisition of skills that make students aware of the power of movement.

1.6- Objectives of School Sports:
A good sports program should assist students in achieving the following goals:

- Provide them with useful physical skills.

- Improve students' physical growth in a healthy manner ("A sound mind in a sound body").

- Preserve and develop physical fitness.

- Enable them to know movements in various situations.

- Develop the ability to engage in sports exercises.

- Teach various social skills, such as cooperation, tolerance, and sportsmanship.

- Improve and develop innovative capabilities through complex play plans.

- Enhance the ability to perform different movement forms.

- Discover and select sports talents (Fattush, 2004-2005, p. 59).

1.7- Sports Culture: Sports culture is a specific pattern of orientations and attitudes toward sports activities and the political sports system in its various parts. It includes individual attitudes toward oneself in the system and individual attitudes and directions towards sports. Sports culture encompasses emotional and evaluative attitudes. It includes values, attitudes, beliefs related to the sports phenomenon, and patterns of learned behavior for sports enthusiasts or members. Sports culture involves positive or negative feelings toward sports, as well as evaluative judgments about them (Hamoud Khawaila, 2016, p. 215).

Sports culture directs the sector of sports and its operations through a system of beliefs and a way to evaluate these operations, along with a set of expressive symbols. The essence of sports culture is revealed through symbols and meaningful sports movements. Sports culture plays a crucial role, contributing to economic growth, technological advancement, human development, environmental balance, national defense, and fostering understanding and tolerance within societies (Aweis, 2006, pp. 29-30).

1.8- Physical Education: Physical education is considered an integral part of general education aiming to shape a well-rounded citizen physically, mentally, and socially. This is achieved through various physical activities chosen for this purpose. Comprehensive education, as defined, encompasses the individual's physical, psychological, motor, and social aspects. It elevates cognitive and cultural levels through different sports activities and their diversity (Alwadi, 2013, p. 09). This signifies that physical education extends beyond the physical domain to include mental, emotional, psychological, and social aspects of the individual.

1.9- Most Used Teaching Methods in Physical Education: Several teaching methods are employed by physical education teachers in the educational process. However, the most commonly used methods include:

- **Reward and Punishment Teaching Method (Praise and Criticism):** The proper use of praise and criticism is an art that teachers must learn and master. It yields positive results in terms

of its impact on learning and student behavior. Overuse of rewards or reinforcement should be avoided, as it diminishes their value and effectiveness. The same applies to criticism and punishment, as misuse or excessive use can have adverse effects on the learning process.

• **Questioning and Diversified Questioning Teaching Method:** This method involves asking questions that fall within various higher-order thinking skills, such as analytical, critical, logical, creative, metacognitive thinking, and more. It enhances learners' cognitive and practical abilities and can be used with discovery methods, problem-solving, brainstorming, and individual or group activities.

• **Feedback-Based Teaching Method:** This method requires the teacher to have sufficient expertise in using various types of feedback and knowing when to use them. Feedback informs the learner of their performance, highlighting strengths and weaknesses (critical thinking). It aims to correct weaknesses for better performance. There are internal and external feedback types, including immediate and delayed, verbal and non-verbal, individual and group, positive and negative, among others.

• **Enthusiastic Teaching Method:** A teacher following this enthusiastic method leaves a significant positive impact on students' learning and active participation in the educational process. This method keeps learners attentive, focused, and engaged during teaching.

• **Presentation and Explanation Teaching Method:** Presenting and explaining educational material in a suitable manner, considering the nature of the skill and the students' levels and abilities, contributes to achieving desired goals and outcomes. This method allows learners, especially those with weaker abilities, to learn better, comprehend the educational material, and effectively use feedback provided by the teacher.

• **Individual Competitive Teaching Method:** The competitive nature and the desire to win are important qualities in each learner's personality. Using these correctly in the educational process leaves significant impacts on students' skill learning, placing them in conditions similar to real competition scenarios.

• **Utilizing Learners' Ideas Teaching Method:** In this method, the teacher introduces the skill and opens the field for learners to express and add new ideas (beyond knowledge thinking or idea generation). The teacher employs higher-order thinking processes such as analysis, connection, analogy, deduction, and comparison to add new elements (Alhayek, 2017, pp. 71-73).

1-10- Objectives of Sports: Sports aim to prepare individuals from childhood in an educational, physical, social, and psychological manner, enhancing their cognitive abilities through engaging in purposeful sports activities. These activities are essential for human life due to the biological connection between sports, growth, and personality development. The objectives can be summarized as follows:

- Physical objective: Sports develop endurance, strength, reaction speed, agility, flexibility, and speed.

- Educational objective: Sports instill virtues such as self-discipline and control, restraining negative tendencies, by respecting the rules of the games and the rights of others.

- Social objective: Sports enhance cooperation within a team, with each member taking responsibility for achieving victory and self-denial during individual competitions.

- Recreational objective: Sports bring joy and pleasure to the players, providing a form of relaxation.

- Health objective: Sports stimulate players' circulatory systems, providing physical, mental, and psychological health benefits. (Al-Wadi, previous reference, p. 13)

2- Community Participation as a Component of Citizenship

2-1- Concept of Citizenship: Citizenship, in the Arabic language, is attributed to the homeland where an individual resides. The term "homeland" refers to the place where one lives and claims as their own. In sociological terms, citizenship is defined as a social relationship between an individual and a political community (state), where the individual pledges loyalty, and the state provides protection through legal means. (Ghaith, 1995, p. 56; Al-Bohe, 2014, p. 118)

2-2- Components of Citizenship: Citizenship comprises essential components that must be fulfilled for it to be realized:

- Belonging: The internal feeling that drives citizens to work enthusiastically and sincerely to elevate and defend their homeland.

- Rights: All citizens enjoy rights that are simultaneously duties towards the state and society, including freedom of belief, preservation of private rights, the right to education, access to healthcare, political services, a decent life, justice, personal freedom, and more.

- Duties: Obligations shared by the majority of citizens, including respecting the system, combating misleading rumors that affect stability, avoiding betrayal of the homeland, promoting good conduct, preventing wrongdoing, defending the country in times of crisis, contributing to its development, preserving public and private property, and collaborating with other members of society.

- Community Participation: Citizens should actively participate in community activities, especially through voluntary work, contributing to the nation's service and strengthening social bonds. (Sahrawi, 2005, pp. 281-282)

2-3- Concept of Community Participation: Community participation is the process in which individuals share in performing a specific task. It involves contributing initiatives and resources,

either materially or non-materially, as well as the responsibility to mobilize underutilized human resources for the common good. Practically, it involves individuals contributing to various aspects of their society, positively influencing and developing it. (Sikik, 2012, p. 30; Qanawi, 2018, p. 40)

2-4- Methods and Forms of Community Participation: The methods of community participation vary depending on the forms of contribution individuals make. Community participation can occur through direct or indirect methods, such as:

• Direct Participation: Involves different segments of the population or organized groups targeted by government authorities for involvement in developmental processes. It includes consultations, decentralization, administrative decentralization, local community development programs, voluntary organizations, and media involvement.

• Indirect Participation: Involves specific individuals appointed by certain entities or individuals motivated by personal reasons, such as neighborhood committees in municipalities. (Sikik, same reference, pp. 34-35)

2-5- Importance of Community Participation: Abdul Hadi Al-Juhani emphasizes the role of community participation in achieving the following:

• It is a fundamental principle of community development. Genuine and successful development cannot occur without popular participation.

• Through participation, citizens learn how to solve their problems.

• Citizen involvement in development processes supports, cares for, and reinforces these processes, making them more stable and beneficial.

• Local community members are usually more sensitive to what is good for their community. With numerous social issues, it becomes challenging to discover and address them solely through professional workers.

• Popular participation provides real support for government spending.

• The government cannot handle all tasks and services alone. Popular participation plays a complementary role, essential for achieving the plan.

• Community participation increases social awareness, as those involved must continuously explain services and projects to gather funds and encourage other citizens to participate and contribute.

• Community participation can act as a monitoring and control mechanism, helping the government identify weaknesses and sometimes preventing errors by the responsible executives, serving as a safety valve against deviations.

• Citizen participation instills a sense of responsibility for public funds, a problem faced by many developing countries.

• Full citizen participation makes individuals more aware of the problems in their society and the available resources to solve them.

• Complete citizen participation opens the door to constructive collaboration between citizens and government institutions, fostering proper communication channels between them. (Training Program, 2008, p.8)

2-6- Principles and Requirements of Community Participation: Community participation requires a set of principles and requirements, including:

• Community participation is not limited to the horizontal dimension but includes the vertical dimension, involving people, organizations, institutions, and entities at various administrative levels.

• Decision-making and priority setting in community participation should involve various popular entities to avoid directing development in a way that serves specific interests.

• Planning and development operations should reflect the needs and desires of local populations and target groups. Operations should be realistic, relevant, and adapted to prevailing economic, social, political, and cultural conditions.

• Support and development of a sense of responsibility and encouragement of leaders to bear responsibility.

• Effective utilization of government and private efforts to meet community needs.

• Development of suitable mechanisms for citizen participation through government and private entities.

• Provision of trained personnel skilled in participating in community development operations. (Zyadia, 2011-2012, pp.19-20)

2-7- Factors Influencing Community Participation: The most important factors influencing community participation include:

• Freedom of opinion, expression, and thinking in all areas, especially those related to development issues.

• The belief and interest of authorities in the importance of participation feedback in the planning and development process.

• Provision of open communication channels between benefiting populations and responsible authorities.

•   The spread of cultural, social, and political awareness among society members. The higher the awareness percentage and its extension to various areas, the more effective the importance of participation becomes.

•   The social and economic development policy pursued in society. The more the developmental policy focuses on the needs of society, the greater the community participation in planning and development issues.

•   The principle of incentives, where the nature, direction, and content of participation are affected, not only by volume but also by form, nature, direction, and content. (Zyadia, 2011-2012, pp.19-20)

2-8- The Role of Schools in Stimulating Community Participation: Schools are among the most important reference groups for children and youth, given their educational, pedagogical, and guidance tasks that enable them to learn and acquire skills. The school also plays a significant role in promoting a culture of participation among students through teaching methods and values instilled among students. The school must avoid using teaching methods based on rote learning, which is an instructional method that relies on memorization. Rote learning limits the learner's role to listening and diminishes interaction opportunities between the learner and the teacher on one hand and the subject matter on the other. This method is prevalent in developing societies and is a significant obstacle to development.

Teachers can create a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom, allowing students to ask anything without restrictions. Teachers should correct their mistakes without diminishing their status or using derogatory language. When students grow up in such an environment, they will be more inclined to participate in any community activity without fear or indifference to what is happening around them. Moreover, social life and responsibility cannot be learned by students through lectures alone but through practice and group activities. Adopting discussion methods and working on analyzing information, drawing conclusions, and critical thinking are crucial aspects that students can practically learn in school.

These approaches will stimulate their awareness and produce effective citizens capable of participating in society. Community participation is contingent on a constructive and cultural context that supports and disseminates it. It requires creating an environment in schools that encourages participation. (Abdul Hussein Abdul Sada, p.31)

3- School Sports and Community Participation:

3-1- Sports and Citizenship:

There is a connection between sports and citizenship, as the concepts of citizenship intersect with many sports concepts, sharing specific human values such as loyalty, belonging, trustworthiness, leadership, loyalty, sacrifice, dedication, community integration, and working for it. If we aim for

a national culture, we must promote citizenship values in our sports and youth reality because sports is one of the successful and principal means relied upon by civilized societies to help youth develop and establish citizenship.

Sports play a significant and progressive role in raising awareness of national values, noble human concepts, internal unity, rooting the concepts of citizenship and the singular nation in terms of understanding, behavior, and practical application. It educates citizens about the rights and duties expected from them towards their homeland, working to enhance citizens' sense of belonging to the community and establishing the foundations of security and stability by spreading principles of goodness, cooperation, tolerance, law respect, rejection of violence, justice, and equality—all contributing to solidifying the concept of citizenship.

Sports are an effective tool and an integrated system in nation-building and solidifying national constants among citizens. In modern civil states, sports and youth activities may be one of the main pillars alongside politics, economy, and media. Sports have proven to be an effective and flexible tool for promoting citizenship values by encouraging tolerance, respect, empowering women, youth, individuals, and social integration. Sports have also contributed to peace and bringing people together through supporting initiatives to harness sports for peace purposes. Sports provide fertile ground for individuals to learn core citizenship values, including teamwork, fair play, rule adherence, respect for others, cooperation, discipline, tolerance, and promoting social cohesion within local and wider communities. Additionally, in its simplest forms, sports encourage balanced participation and have the ability to promote gender equality. (Almulla, Sports and Citizenship, source)

3-2- The Relationship Between Sports and Society:

Sports are a significant social system, a tangible reality in our lives where all patterns of behavior that occur in ordinary life take place. Sports are a miniature image of the larger society, and therefore, they are influenced by the philosophy, values, habits, traditions, and social, economic, and political conditions prevailing in this society.

Physical education is nothing but a programmed educational material in teaching, with its content and teachers playing a crucial and effective role in imparting desired values. Physical education is one of the subjects that help learners understand themselves, the society they live in, its values, and higher ideals. Physical education, with its various activities, addresses social life, moral values, aesthetic aspects, while also caring for the learners' health and developing their physical and motor skills.

Society, with its philosophy and culture, influences sports and physical education. When players or students train, they do so in light of the standards set by society. Therefore, we can say that there is a mutually influential relationship between sports and society, and this relationship varies from one society to another based on the prevailing philosophies in those societies. Moreover,

physical education encompasses all social elements of life, such as social interaction among individuals, laws, values, clothing systems, language, social mobility, and more. (Qasidi, 2013, pp. 48-49)

Conclusion:

School sports play a significant role in developing individual citizenship values and enhancing community participation. This is achieved through providing a platform for learning discipline, self-confidence, leadership spirit, and conveying essential principles necessary for democracy, such as tolerance, cooperation, and respect. School sports also teach individuals the core values of accepting defeat and victory, while reinforcing individual capabilities, general knowledge, and principles of loyalty, belonging, trustworthiness, leadership, loyalty, sacrifice, dedication, community integration, and working for it.

Recommendations:

There are several recommendations, among the most important are:

1.   Education on citizenship and community participation should emphasize instilling values and social competencies, such as commitment to duties towards others, the nation, and the environment. It should also solidify a culture of tolerance and solidarity through school activities, especially sports activities.

2.   Implement a continuous training strategy for physical education teachers, focusing on the educational dimensions of school sports as a mediator for citizenship education, particularly community participation within society.

3.   Increase the allocated time for physical education and school sports, considering that citizenship spaces require sufficient effort and time dedication.

4.   Establish a body or school administration for education on community participation, responsible for developing programs, activating citizenship education activities, and evaluating them within schools.

5.   Promote traditional games to highlight cultural uniqueness and strengthen national or local identity.

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