

DEVELOPING THE PRACTICAL LEARNING SKILLS OF THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION FACULTY MA STUDENTS WITHIN THE MANAGERIAL PRACTICE INTERNSHIP

Amelicichin Ecaterina ¹, Cireş Victoria ², Jardan Corina ³

^{1,2} *State University of Physical Education and Sport, 22 Andrei Doga Street, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova*

³ *Theoretical High School "Mihail Sadoveanu", 5 Aerodromului Street, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova*

Abstract

Learning through practice is a method of training students in order to form the skills needed to become valuable employees or responsible entrepreneurs. Thus, within the managerial practice, the students apply the studied notions interdisciplinary and realize their deepening in a functional system, university or specialized department and at the same time the didactic approach is created by the practice head, to approach and apply new concepts, useful in organizing and leading a business in the field of sports. Internships are a mandatory part of the educational process and are carried out in order to deepen the theoretical knowledge gained by students during the years of study and skills training established by the National Qualifications Framework. Being a main element of the educational process and of the professional activity, the internship ensures the formation of professional competencies and the accumulation of experience regarding the organization and realization of the activities in the professional field. The success of graduates in the labor market will depend, to a large extent, on the degree to which they will know the specifics of their professional activity. As a result of the internship, the student - the future specialist can determine the perspectives of professional achievement in the chosen system of specialization, and the results of the practice justify the assignment of the graduate professional qualification.

Key words: *learning, managerial practice, skills, marketing research.*

Introduction

According to Vermunt J.D., teaching and learning are interdependent processes that can adjust to each other by adapting the teaching strategies used by the teacher to the way students use and regulate their learning activities [10]. Teaching thus involves guiding students in the process of choosing learning strategies that allow the building, modification and use of knowledge. Such teaching is oriented towards learning processes and implicitly towards the student because it focuses on the processes through which knowledge is built and then applied in practice. Most frequently, studies that have addressed this issue have found an increase in understanding, metacognition, and self-regulation [8, 9]. Moreover, studies show that meaning-oriented learning is positively associated with the indicators of study effectiveness, even in the case of scores on exams containing factual questions. Reproductive learning has shown negative correlations with outcome measurement systems. Non-directed learning has shown for the most part strong negative relationships with exam performance, while in

most cases; application-oriented learning has shown a lack of a relationship with academic success. In addition, the regular examinations of the first years of higher education hardly manage to capitalize on students' ability to use critical, analytical and concrete processing strategies [4, 10].

The objective of the research is to determine the level of practical skills development to MA students, in objective way of evaluating the efficiency of interdisciplinary learning activities focused on the study of marketing research, conducted through various technologies. The evaluation at the level of the cycle II, the specialization “Education, management and marketing in sports” within the development of managerial practice, also provides the necessary information for the adoption, on a scientific basis, of measures to establish continuity in the education and training of students.

The aim of this research is to analyze the extent to which a managerial practice program completed by master's students in the specialty "Education, management and marketing in sports" can contribute to learning efficiency and lead to changes in students' opinions and conceptions about learning in a constructive way.

Another objective derived from this is to verify the impact of such a program on the development and improvement of students' learning strategies and learning styles aimed at understanding and self-regulated learning. It is known that the evaluation aims at the efficiency of education and training in terms of the ratio between the projected objectives and the results obtained by the students through their activities. The evaluation follows the consequences of the action taken by the teacher in the process of forming the general and specific competencies of the students [2, 4]. Thus, three directions of evaluation can be expected through appropriate teaching strategies, concluding with assessments on the internal functioning of the educational-instructional action, namely: evaluation of attitudes, knowledge and skills held by students in Cycle II.

Results

Through the formative experiment and starting from **the general hypothesis** according to which: the integrated design and implementation of an optional educational program within the managerial practice, with emphasis on the individual activity of the masters in marketing research, will determine the development of practical skills, written and oral communication, attitudes to enhance the act of learning, by capitalizing on complex interactions within managerial practice.

The objectives monitored by us during the internship were mainly pedagogical ones focused on development:

- personal skills, respectively: efficiency at work, flexibility, results orientation, seriousness, appropriate behavior, desire to learn continuously, time management in order to streamline the activity at the organizational level;

- social skills (interpersonal communication, teamwork, problem solving, leadership) for the development of professional activity.

Also, the economic objectives that can be achieved through the activities of students that can lead to the acquisition of skills in order to anticipate the needs of customers by promoting an appropriate offer in tourism were monitored; their ability to develop marketing strategies tailored to specific market segments; the ability to properly manage the human resources of a sports or tourism entity.

According to the university curriculum of the managerial practice within the Physical Culture Management Chair (the specialized chair of the State University of Physical Education and Sports responsible for organizing and carrying out the respective internship) its objectives are concretely established as follows:

The internships of managerial practice aim achieving the following objectives:

❖ Familiarizing students with different leadership and management structures in the field of physical education and sports such as:

- associations and sports clubs;
- sports schools of different ranks;
- sports federations.

❖ Consolidation and deepening of leadership and management skills, as well as their transformation into managerial skills and abilities.

❖ Training the ethical and leadership qualities of the manager according to contemporary requirements.

❖ Strengthen the experience of directing and organizing future managers in the current links.

❖ Strengthening the professional interest, as well as stimulating the interest for independent and creative activity.

❖ Development of managerial skills and the ability to apply the acquired knowledge in various conditions.

❖ Accelerate the process of enrolling students in the respective position and subdivision.

❖ Deepening the practical knowledge through the profile activity.

❖ The study by the coordinator and the leader of the internship of the capacities and aptitudes of the students in order to frame them efficiently in the field of specialization of the chosen profession.

Starting from the *hypothesis* study, supplemented by the fact that a managerial practice program completed by MA students in the specialty "Education, management and marketing" can contribute to streamlining learning and increasing the use of learning strategies focused on practical activities and the application of knowledge accumulated in the course "Marketing Research" we conducted research in order to identify the skills that can be acquired by students at the end of the internship with reference to the study discipline "Marketing Research".

From a functional point of view, the general hypothesis can be broken down into two specific *hypotheses*:

Specific hypothesis 1: The implementation of an educational program addressed to MA students from the specialty "Education, management and marketing" in managerial practice with reference to marketing research, determines the structuring of a coherent set of knowledge and skills of individual study, through active and creative involvement in learning.

Specific Hypothesis 2: The use of the interactive methodology for the development of critical thinking within an interdisciplinary program focused on the acquisition of specific marketing research skills, which will also contribute to the development of oral and written communication skills of the monitored Cycle II students.

Thus, the groups of master students, practitioners were tested the ability to apply the theoretical knowledge accumulated in the discipline "Marketing Research" in various practical, concrete activities of direct marketing research, according to a series of criteria, reflected in Table 1 and the realization of direct marketing research reflected in Table 2.

Table 1. Main marketing research activities in the field of sports entity promotion carried out by MA students during the managerial internship

Marketing research activities carried out by MA students	Share of research application on sports entities	Marketing research activities in the field of product buying behavior	Share of research application on sports entities
Studies on motivation	23	Preference towards sports program	51
Studies on advertising and its effectiveness	54	Satisfaction provided by product	39
Studies on public image	65	Purchasing behaviour	61
Studies on media	26	Purchasing intentions	47
Studies on the sale labor	34	Segmentation studies	37

The MA students conducted marketing research on their own, based on the requirements established by the manager of management practice, based on discussions with friends, employees of monitored entities and their customers. The MA students also mentioned that this would be the only way to truly understand the wishes of active sports participants or supporters / clients. Moreover, they believe that the success of communication depends on this understanding. Therefore, the method of observation, although it does not allow obtaining complex information as in the case of the survey, has the advantage of reproducing the natural, effective behavior of sports consumers, without training the bearer of information. Recourse to observation involves the direct involvement of the MA

student, in his possible capacity as marketer or manager - practitioner, respectively their attendance of playgrounds, gyms, grandstands, ticket sale points at sporting events, souvenir shops sports and all places from which information on consumers and products can be collected. Given the system's membership in the system and their predominantly athletic training, this helps them to obtain useful information, such as personal addresses and other data that cannot be obtained by observation, but by resorting to direct investigation [1, 5].

Table 2. Direct research conducted by MA students

Criteria	Types of research
The way to retrieve the information from its carrier	Observation and survey
The way to carry out in time	Permanent and occasional research
Place of carrying out the research	Researches carried out at the place of sporting events Researches carried out at the sports entity office Street research
Type of information to be obtained	Quantitative research Qualitative research

The master's student also resorted to market research, such as: launch a new sporting event or product; studies on the revision of the price structure on the stadium or in the sports arena; price revaluation studies for certain sports services; studies to re-evaluate the price differences between different products or between different seats in the stands.

Moreover, the most common interrogation techniques based on structured interview, used by practicing master's as a research tool was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was done together with the manager of the managerial practice, being decisive in achieving the purpose of the research and the established objectives. The master's student had to first establish the information needed and then include only the questions he or she needs answered, anticipating, as far as possible, the types of answers he or she expects to receive and how he or she will use them. The structure and content of the questionnaire followed a logical scheme, starting with general questions and continuing with the specific ones and vice versa. Each question was evaluated from the point of view of its understanding by the respondent, of the probability of obtaining an answer; simple, objective questions usually get clearer answers than questions grouped by topic.

The master's understood that the use of the questionnaire in the selective field surveys allows three types of possible applications in sports [2, 6, 7]:

- ✓ the selective field survey sends the questionnaire by mail or email. This method is less expensive and may be a better way to reach a larger sample of respondents;

International Scientific Conference

„Actualities and Perspectives of Physical Education and Sport Sciences”, 2022

✓ selective field survey conducted by telephone - which has the advantage of allowing the study of consumers by market segments, directing the questionnaire to specific types of respondents, either individuals or organizations;

✓ public audit - the most commonly used method of research in sports which consists in using a questionnaire to be distributed to participants or supporters at a sporting event.

The master's also resorted to exploratory interrogation techniques in sports, materialized mainly by conducting personal interviews, research that involved organizing expert groups (groups used in evaluating certain promotional campaigns, forecasting sales or assessing affiliation trends with certain clubs) and specialized groups (based on a sample of supporters, a select group of sports consumers or sports journalists) [7, 8].

Table 3 reflects a series of applications of marketing research conducted by MA students during the management internship with reference to the communication policy of sports organizations.

Below we present the results obtained by the MA students at the end of the internship on research groups. The comparison was made between the control group (who did not go through the optional educational program previously established by the internship in terms of the actual achievements regarding the marketing research) and the experiment group (who went through this program). The groups were homogeneous, consisting of 11-12 MA students each. The proposed investigation, achievable in intra, inter and trans-disciplinary conditions is located at the intersection between fundamental and applied, normative and operational research, philosophical and action research, prospective and retrospective research [4].

Table 3. Applications of marketing research conducted by MA students during the management internship with reference to the communication policy of sports organizations

<p>Qualitative research on the consumer 2 groups Age: 22-47 years-old With affinities on certain sports Carried out during the practice</p>	<p>Qualitative research on consumer 4 groups 256 respondents Age: 23-54 years-old Who know certain important sporting events that took place at national or international level Carried out in a predetermined period</p>
<p>Interviews with members of the national team on a certain sporting event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Sports Federations on sporting events identified - National Olympic and Sports Committee - Athletes - Coaches of the national team 	<p>Interviews with sponsors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sponsors - Other Organizations than sports ones - Written media - Televisions involved in the media coverage of sports events - Opinion leaders

As a special type of scientific research, pedagogical research tends towards an explanation and a normative understanding of the education activity. It aims to define and argue the laws and principles that govern the design and implementation of education at the system and process level. This perspective, situated at the limit of philosophical research, highlights the need to research the aims of education that determine the value education directions, achievable in different historical and social contexts.

Pedagogical research requires, at the same time, the concentration of efforts on the descriptive analysis of the main factors and "actors" of education. As Gilbert De Landsheere observes, before knowing the laws of education, it is important to describe objectively the course of the training process and to analyze the procedures for its implementation. Another necessary direction at the level of pedagogical research aims at the study of the historical process of evolution of the thinking about education and of the specialized school institutions in its effective realization in concrete conditions that prove "the irreducible originality of the phenomenon".

Finally, the modern trends of pedagogical research highlight the importance of investigations aimed especially in the direction of university education, continuing education, and adult education. These investigations capitalize on the issue of education theory at the level of operational models applicable in the field of lifelong learning, possible and necessary in the context of intra, inter and trans-disciplinary approaches, open to the permanent (self) improvement of the subject and object of education.

In the postmodern perspective, the pedagogical research represents an activity of managerial management of the system and of the educational process designed and realized especially for the regulation-self-regulation of the educational action, respectively of the teaching act. It allows the notification of new pedagogical relations, relevant within the educational / teaching action, constituting the basis of the optimal solutions for solving the problems that appear at the system level and the educational process (Education Management).

Thus, we conducted an investigation of the development levels of written and oral communication skills, conducting an implicit assessment of learning outcomes, through the observation grid of Cycle II students, in managerial practice.

In this experiment we designed and implemented an optional educational program for students in the experimental sample. In this program we used an interactive methodology that we present below. Concerning the educational act from this perspective, we can understand marketing research, communication and communication in sports, as essential actions for the development of critical thinking. and an appropriate approach, suitable to current requirements. Promoting a different learning style, the methods focused on:

- stimulating curiosity and forming an original opinion;
- problem solving;

- argumentative debate of ideas;
- democratic acceptance of everyone's ideas;
- active involvement in the learning process;
- valuing teamwork, which leads to the development of each one.

In this context, the methods submitted to the masters' attention have the role of making them focus on the theoretical and practical values of knowledge and to make them aware of how they can help themselves in their own development.

The methodology of pedagogical research involved the use of a set of techniques, procedures and means, integrated at the level of the following categories of methods aimed at scientific investigation of educational reality:

- systematic observation;
- written survey (observation grid);
- analysis of results in managerial practice;
- study of bibliographic documents accessible at academic level.
- portfolio analysis.

The method of analyzing the portfolios, the products of the subjects' activity consisted in analysis, in terms of product, but also of process, from the perspective of certain parameters established in accordance with the purpose and objectives of the research, of the data provided by the component materials of the portfolio. We analyzed the portfolios made by students within the managerial practice, considering their information, documentation, collection and processing of information, the composition of the portfolio. We also analyzed the final product and its presentation by Cycle II students.

We started the experiment with the idea of verifying the hypotheses in carrying out each activity by inserting sequences aimed at marketing and communication research skills.

The control group continued its usual teaching activity, using the classic teaching-learning-assessment strategies, while the experiment group had an optional educational program to work in managerial practice, especially since they have benefited from the study of the “Marketing Research” discipline with a new curricular content focused on practical and less theoretical aspects. During the advancement within the learning unit, we provided the guidance and control of learning and we practiced various forms of periodic evaluation (tests, questionnaires) and final (portfolios, tests).

The grades we will discuss below reflect the students' practical knowledge after completing the optional educational program in managerial practice. The grades given refer to 1 - insufficient, 3 - sufficient, 5 - good, 7 - very good. Thus, for the items regarding the oral communication ability, 30% of the students from the control group obtain the insufficient grade, 24% the sufficient grade, 20% good and 26% obtain the very good grade. The students in the experiment group in a percentage of 7% obtained the grade of insufficient, 12% sufficient, 44% good, and 37% obtain the grade very well, as can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. The grades obtained for students' oral communication skills in managerial practice using marketing research-specific terminology

<i>Standard Minimum 1 Maximum 7</i>	<i>Items</i>							
	<i>Control group</i>				<i>Experiment group</i>			
	<i>Insufficient</i>	<i>Sufficient</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Insufficient</i>	<i>Sufficient</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very good</i>
	30%	24%	20%	26%	7%	12%	44 %	37%

In Table 5 are reflected the items regarding the written communication ability. Thus, 10% of the students in the control group obtain a good grade, 8% obtain a sufficient grade and 30% obtain a very good grade, as shown in Table 4.

Table 5. Qualifications obtained for students' oral communication skills in managerial practice using the terminology specific to marketing research

<i>Standard Minimum 1 Maximum 7</i>	<i>Items</i>							
	<i>Control group</i>				<i>Experiment group</i>			
	<i>Insufficient</i>	<i>Sufficient</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Insufficient</i>	<i>Sufficient</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very good</i>
	35%	27%	15%	23 %	18%	23%	29%	30%

In Table 6 we present the comparative values of research skills in marketing specific to the experiment group, following their evaluation by the group of experts based on the individual activities of the MA students performed within the managerial practice and reflected in the practice documentation and the prepared portfolio.

Table 6. Comparative values of the marketing research skills of the experiment group evaluated within the managerial practice

<i>No. crt.</i>	<i>Tested values</i>	<i>Initial testing (without the optional program)</i>	<i>Final testing (with the optional program)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
		$\bar{x} \pm m$	$\bar{x} \pm m$		
1	The way of retrieving information	1.78 ± 0.17	2.34 ± 0.31	5.544	<0.001
2	Studies on advertising and its efficiency	1.69 ± 0.27	± 0.24	5.543	<0.001
3	Studies on the public image	1.84 ± 0.29	2.53 ± 0.21	5.746	<0.001
4	Studies on motivation	2.23 ± 0.24	3.12 ± 0.22	7.723	<0.001
5	Studies on sports consumers	1.81 ± 0.25	2.6 ± 0.20	5.392	<0.01

6	Studies on communication (interviews with members of the national team on a certain sporting event, interviews with sponsors, interviews with customers of sports entities)	1.80 ± 0.23	2.5 ± 0.19	5.384	<0.01
----------	---	-------------	------------	-------	-------

From Table 6 we can see that the way of retrieving and processing information at the initial test was less than 1.78 compared to 2.34 at the final test, t being 5,544 and P less than 0.001. Also, in the studies regarding the advertising and its importance for the sports entities, the MA students reached the values at the initial test of 1.69 compared to 2.38 at the final one, with t equal to 5.543 and P with a value lower than 0.001. Regarding the values recorded in the studies on sports consumers, the MA students recorded more significant values with $P < 0.01$, t 5,392, and the items from the initial testing being 1.82 compared to those from the final testing of 2.6. We can also find significant values in studies on written and oral communication, where items 1.8 were recorded in the initial test, 2.5 in the final test, with a value of the student coefficient of 5.384 and a $P < 0.01$.

Conclusions

Concluding, we can say that during the managerial practice the students get acquainted with the experience of those who work in the respective institutions, manage to master the pragmatic aspects of the future profession, the ways of applying theoretical knowledge to solve problems that constitute the content of activities. Students learn to operate with the means (tools, sports equipment, documents, registers, etc.) with the help of which the activity specific to the training field is actually carried out. Also, modern learning involves capitalizing on all aspects and dimensions of the human personality. More and more attention is being paid to multiple intelligences, critical thinking and educational alternatives, without which the learning process is complete and inefficient, in the hope that the student will be prepared to learn throughout life. Today's education must focus on participation and the development of cognitive functions, fostering "the development of thinking, the faculties of acquiring and using knowledge, the creation of knowledge at all ages [...] and the development of abilities to cope with new learning situations or of the life" [3, 4].

Bibliography

1. Budevici A., Armanov S. (2007). *Management și marketing în sistemul educației fizice și sportului*. Chișinău: Valinex, p. 251.
2. Constantinescu M., Căescu St. (2006). The characteristics of sport services – element of differentiation in sport marketing. În: *Marketing și dezvoltare: 1971 – 2006: 35 de ani de marketing în România: Materialele Conferinței Internaționale*. București, ASE.
3. Cerghit I. (2006). *Metode de învățământ*. Iași: Polirom.

4. Landsheere G. de. (1995). *Istoria universala a pedagogiei experimentale*. Bucuresti: Editura Didactică si Pedagogică, 1995.
5. Mitnițaia L., Budevici-Puiu L. (2008). *Marketing general și sportiv*. Curs universitar. Chișinău: Valinex SA. 220 p.
6. Oprișan V., Pop N.Al. (2001). *Politica de comunicare în marketingul sportiv*. București: A.S.E.
7. Oprișan V. (2002). *Marketing și comunicare în sport*. București: Uranus, 2002. 431 p.
8. Prutianu Ș., Anastasiei B., Jijie T. (2001). *Cercetarea de marketing*. Iași: Editura Polirom.
9. Vermunt J.D., Minnaert A. (2003). Dissonance in student learning patterns: when to revise theory? In: *Studies in Higher Education*, no 28, p. 49-61.
10. Vermunt J.D. (2003). The power of learning environments and the quality of student learning. In: E. de Corte, L. Verschaffel, N. Entwistle & J. van Merriënboer (Eds), *Powerful learning environments: Unravelling basic components and dimensions Advances in Learning and Instruction Series*. Oxford: Pergamon, p. 109-124.