(NON)USE OF THE GROUP METHOD OF ORGANIZATION IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT LESSONS

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ABSTRACT
The research topic of this paper is related to the application of the group organization method in physical education and sport lessons. After an extensive analysis of scientific papers by authors who have devoted their research to the theory and methodology of physical education, we found that none of them have deeply addressed the possibilities and impact of this method of organization on the quality of teaching and the learning process. This significantly discourages teachers from incorporating the method into their lessons. Therefore, to confirm or refute our claim, our primary goal was to determine the extent to which this method is used by teachers in the learning process. To achieve this goal, we used pedagogical observation and a questionnaire survey with teachers. The percentage analysis of the responses to the questionnaire survey questions shows that the group method of organization is not used in the teaching of a large proportion of teachers. In conclusion, we can say that the changes in the curricula, which correspond to the new transformations in education, enable us to provide students, future sports teachers, and current teachers with the opportunity to restructure their annual thematic distributions by incorporating the group method of organization. Such an approach would lead to positive changes in lessons for both teachers and students.

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INTRODUCTION

The learning process in physical education and sports is highly specific and follows established standards. With the help of various resources and different methods, the training enables students to effectively master the curriculum content and requirements. The studied authors, who devoted their research scientific materials to the methods of physical education, define them as the ways or opportunities for mastering the set exercises, as well as the ways to reach a certain level of physical ability of students (Rusev, 2000; et al. Margaritov et al., 2009; Tsonkova, 2014; Elmazi & Koci, 2015; Kostov et al., 2019; Marinov, 2020; Peneva, 2021). In their research papers, they present different classifications and groups of methods.

Authors from neighboring countries, such as Milanovich (2020), identify the following methodological and organizational forms of work in the main phase of the class: beginning, additional exercise, stations, training ground, and circuit training. According to which methodological and organizational form of teaching work the teacher will apply depends on several factors: educational task, character and specifics of the teaching unit, number of students, material working conditions, etc, Aksovic et al. (2021).

To conduct lessons on the subjects of physical education and sport, current and future sports teachers primarily use three groups of methods: training methods, organizational methods, and methods for developing motor abilities. In this scientific article, only one of the three groups of methods will be addressed and analyzed. These are the methods of organization, and more specifically, the application of the group method of organization in the learning process.

The characteristic of organizational methods is that teachers use them to organize students in some form or order to perform the set exercises. The organization itself supports the delivery of learning by preventing chaos and disruptions during performance. Additionally, with proper organization, the teacher can efficiently supervise and direct the performance of exercises, positioning them in a way that maximizes the use of the facilities' conditions and the available sports equipment.

The teacher decides which organizational method to apply based on the educational and pedagogical tasks set for the lesson, and depending on the specifics, location, and availability of sports equipment and tools at the school institution. With their assistance, he/she should provide the best possible conditions for the effective conducting and learning of the educational content. The high demands on the teaching content of physical education and sport, on the one hand, and the limited time available to the teacher for its implementation, require the most rational selection of individual methods for organizing student activities, Marinov (2020). The teacher‘s choice of organizational methods should lead to both increased repetition of the motor task and a high level of physical exercise and lesson density. And all this should happen in a certain short time to avoid prolonging the time for the realization of the task, and therefore the main part and the lesson.

The application of the group organization method would successfully fulfill all the requirements for a normal and effective lesson. Essentially, it involves organizing the class into two, three, or more groups that perform different motor tasks. After a certain amount of time, the groups change places, each one performing their corresponding tasks and movement elements. What makes it a specific method is that, at the same time, the teacher has to observe and control the training, correcting the students when they make technical mistakes in three different motor elements. This kind of „challenge“ on teachers‘ behalf would improve the efficiency of teaching, reduce line-up times and queuing, and therefore increase the motor density of lessons.

The positive impact of the group organization method on the teaching of physical education and sport, to which it is intended to lead, has motivated our research to examine the use of the method in the teaching process and its effectiveness.

The primary aim of the present study was to assess the applicability of this method by teachers in students‘ education.

In addition, in order to achieve the stated aim, it is necessary to solve the following main tasks:

To study and analyze scientific publications related to the theory and methodology of physical education and the application of organizational methods in training.

To prepare a questionnaire with specific questions about the use of the group method of organization in lessons and the possibilities for a more effective learning process.

To analyze the survey results and determine specific practice recommendations.

To observe and analyze how teachers apply the group organization method in a real, practical setting.

METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology

As an object of research, we can define the training in physical education and sport, and as a subject of research, the application and influence of the group method of organization on training.

To achieve the research goals and objectives, we employed the following methods:

Theoretical analysis and synthesis of scientific and methodological-applied sport-pedagogical literature.

The survey questionnaire includes five questions directly related to our research objectives in the research report. The survey was administered electronically in 2024 using the Microsoft Forms platform.

Percentage analysis of the obtained results.

Pedagogical observation conducted in a practical setting at schools in the town of Blagoevgrad. More than 100 lessons in physical education and sports were observed. All parents of the students involved were given an informed consent form, which they approved.

RESULTS

The questionnaire was completed by 52 teachers: qualified pedagogical specialists in physical education and sport, along with primary school teachers who teach the subject. Of these, 32 were men and 20 women, working at different education levels and in various types of schools across the Republic of Bulgaria. The average age of the surveyed teachers was 49.4 years, and their average teaching experience was 22.6 years. For some questions, more than one answer could be provided, causing the response rate to exceed 100%.

Table 1 shows the results of the first question about the most common methods teachers use to organize the main part of the lesson. Naturally and logically, the game method has the highest percentage, since nearly every sports-themed lesson involves implementing a learning game using this approach. It is followed by the flow method, with 45.7%. Its frequency is lower because students pass one after another, and sometimes a lot of time is wasted waiting, but it’s unavoidable due to the specific motor elements in sports. Very often, one of the methods used during the main part is the shift. This was supported by 37.2% of

respondents, as it allows the teacher to monitor students' performance of motor skills and correct them if needed.
In fourth place, with 16%, the surveyed teachers indicated the circular method of organization. It is characterized by serving only for the complex development of motor abilities. In this method, the class is divided into groups, and students perform different exercises that directly affect their physical abilities. This organization consistently results in high density due to the simultaneous involvement of all students in specific motor activities. With 14%, the frontal method of organization ranks next, which is more difficult to apply during the main part of the lesson. Its primary use is in the preparatory and concluding parts.
Finally, with 5.4%, teachers reported using the group method of organization. In his research paper, Marinov notes that this method is common for structuring gymnastic lessons because of the limited gymnastic equipment available (Marinov, 2020). The reasoning makes sense, but we believe that the group organization method can also be used in lessons covering topics from the other two mandatory areas, since exercising does not always require many devices or tools.

Table 1. *Methods of organization used in the learning process.*

What are the most common methods of organization you use in the main part of the lesson?	%
Flow	45.7
Alternate	37.2
Frontal	14.2
Group	5.4
Game	56.3
Circular	16.0

The next question concerns the level of workload in the lesson, specifically in relation to the methods of organization used. Regarding whether there is a high workload in the main part, 20.4% answered „yes" (see Table 2). The response „rather yes" was given by 52.8% of teachers, who showed some hesitation and were not entirely definitive, but believed that the methods of organization they used contributed to a high workload in the main part. The answer „rather no" was given by 24.3%, indicating skepticism about the workload associated with some of the organizational methods they employ. A definitive „no" was given by 2.5%. Although this is a small percentage, teachers who responded this way may need to seriously reconsider how they are organizing their lessons to better manage the main tasks. This also prompts us to examine which methods lead to higher workloads and whether the group organization method is among them.

Table 2. *Lesson workload through the methods of organization.*

Do you achieve a high workload through the organization methods you use in the main part of the lesson?	%
No	2.5
Rather no	24.3
Rather yes	52.8
Yes	20.4

Table 3 shows the results of the question about using the group organization method in school. 67.5% answered clearly no. These teachers do not use the method in their teaching style or organization. The answer „rather no" was given by 18.1%, and by adding both negative responses, it appears that 85.6% ignore the use of this method, unlike the remaining teachers. Based on the answers to the first question, most teachers mainly focused on using the flow, shift, and game methods of organization. 9.6% responded positively, and 4.8% strongly agreed by saying „rather yes." They clearly use the group method as a type of organization in their lessons. What is concerning here is that some of the teachers surveyed are not aware of the specifics of group method organization and often confuse it with the circular method. Others believe that since the class is divided into groups, the organization method is a group method. These theoretical gaps among some teachers suggest that when a teacher feels uncertain about something, they tend not to include it in their teaching style and how they organize students to complete basic tasks.

Table 3. *Application of the group organization method.*

Do you apply the group organization method in your lessons?	%
No	67.5
Rather no	18.1
Rather yes	9.6
Yes	4.8

Table 4 shows the results of the most common challenges in applying the group organization method in lessons. According to the surveyed teachers, they find it most difficult to observe more than one motor element simultaneously. This is inherent to the method, which involves dividing the class into several groups to perform different motor elements at the same time, but it clearly presents a challenge for teachers. Typically, teachers are accustomed to having students focus on a single motor element or go through several in sequence, with direct control over the lesson. 45.2% believe that the lack of proper equipment and tools is a significant barrier to using this method in lessons. In our opinion, the excuse of insufficient equipment and supplies is not justified, as each school and student receives funding from the Ministry of Education and Science through appropriate decrees for purchasing such equipment. Good financial management and a willingness to utilize these funds in future educational activities are essential.

According to 43.1%, the lack of autonomy and activity in students, as well as the lack of control over the learning process, appear as the main difficulties for implementing the group organization method. The extent to which students have formed motor habits and developed independence in execution and initiative to lead part of the class in a given motor task is entirely up to us, the teachers.

24.8% admitted they did not feel sufficiently prepared to implement this type of organization in their lessons. Apparently, they see the need for explanations or training about the specifics of this method, including its advantages and disadvantages.

Generally, these challenges are quite manageable if the teacher is willing to vary and adapt their style of work and class organization, especially during the main part of the educational tasks. Everything comes down to choice, and we should always focus on promoting more effective and independent student learning throughout the process.

Table 4. *Challenges in applying the group method.*

What makes it difficult for you to apply the group organization method in your lessons?	%
Lack of appropriate equipment and supplies	45.2
My unpreparedness to implement such a method of organization	24.8
Students‘ lack of independence, activity, and control over the learning process	43.1
Simultaneous observation of more than one motor element	62.6

Regarding the question, „Would the density of the lesson increase if the group organization method were applied?“ 56.2% (see Table 5) of the surveyed teachers answered „rather yes.“ A definite positive response was given by 25%. Combining these two positive answers, the percentage rises to 81.2%, which is relatively high. Teachers recognize that this method supports learning, improves organization, and leads to higher motor density performance. It is important to note that group work should be organized in a way that minimizes waiting time during exercises. Eighteen point eight percent of teachers responded negatively, believing that its use would not significantly improve lesson density. As students progress through the school years, their awareness, activity, and motivation change. It is never too late for teachers to adapt their teaching styles and lesson organization. Sometimes, these very changes can motivate students to actively participate in systematic sports even after their formal education ends.

Table 5. *Lesson density using the group method.*

Would the density of the lesson increase with the application of the group organization method?	%
No	7.3
Rather no	11.5
rather yes	56.2
Yes	25.0

Table 6 shows the results of the pedagogical observation. A total of 119 lessons were observed: 36 with an athletics theme, 18 with a gymnastics theme, and 65 focused on various sports games. The results clearly indicate that teachers rarely use the group method of organization in their teaching and classroom setup. The percentages for the different stages are all below 10%. These low application rates suggest that most teachers have developed their own teaching style that does not include group organization or the implementation of educational tasks.

Table 6. *Pedagogical observation of physical education and sports lessons.*

Lesson topics	Compulsory field athletics	Compulsory field gymnastics	Compulsory field sports games	% of the application of the group organization method
Number of primary lessons	23	14	16	4.3
Number of lower secondary lessons	8	3	22	9.6
Number of upper secondary lessons	5	1	27	8.2
Total number of lessons	36	18	65	119 lessons

DISCUSSION

As mentioned earlier, when examining Bulgarian authors who have researched the scientific issue we are studying, none of them has specifically focused on applying the group organization method and its effectiveness in education. This opens the door to future discussions and possibly new studies directly related to the implementation and success of certain organizational methods in education. In this scientific context, the results from this study cannot currently be compared with transitional or similar studies by Bulgarian authors, as none exist. The use of the group organization method in education is a vast area for future research and exploration.

Referring to the responses obtained from the conducted and analyzed survey, we used pedagogical observation to confirm or reject our thesis regarding the (non-)use of the group method of organization in lessons. The observation took place during the 2024/25 school year in schools in the town of Blagoevgrad. More than 100 lessons were observed, covering topics from the three required areas and across the three stages of education.

We do not claim that the lack of using the group organization method negatively impacts the learning process, such as motor habits not being formed or a lack of independence and activity among students. However, we confidently state that applying this method would positively change the effectiveness of the learning process, reduce interruptions during the main part, increase lesson density, and boost students‘ activity and independence.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results obtained, we present several key conclusions:

A large proportion of the teachers surveyed do not prefer or use the group method of organization in their lessons as a way to organize the class and support the implementation of the set educational tasks.

The most commonly used methods of organization in the learning process by teachers are game-based, shift-based, flow-based, and, for certain exercises, frontal.

A significant percentage of teachers surveyed indicate that using the group method of organization will make lessons more engaging.

Using the group method of organization would increase students’ active participation in sports and also promote their independence after finishing secondary school.

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