### BABEŞ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY CLUJ-NAPOCA

# FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES DOCTORAL SCHOOL "EDUCATION, REFLECTION, DEVELOPMENT"

**Doctoral thesis-summary** 

Theoretical and applied investigations regarding the process of completing the end-of-high school specialized paper, for the certification exam of the qualification of high school graduates, vocational stream, sports profile

Scientific coordinator,

Prof. univ. dr. habil Stan Nicolae Cristian

PhD student,

Secheli (Toderic) Adriana

Cluj-Napoca

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# Content

### Preamble

### PART I

### **Theoretical foundations**

### Chapter 1

Defining characteristics of the adolescent student I.1. The student's training profile ......9

I.2. General and specific characteristics of the adolescence period
I.2.1. The stages of adolescence period18
I.2.2. Characteristics of functional-morphological and motor development 20
I.2.3. Characteristics of motor skills in adolescence
I.2.4. Characteristics of psychomotor development23
I.2.5. Cognitive development, language, memory25
I.2.6. Dominants of the adolescent's personality27
I.3. Activation, condition of effective learning in adolescence. The competence to learn to
learn

### **Chapter II**

School motivation and school success. Particularities for the teenage years

II.1. The concept of school success from the perspective of motivational involvement40
II.2. Specific trends in approaching school success from the perspective of the sports student,
vocational high school
II.3. The relationship between motivation and school performance, sports-theoretical55

II.4.	Strategies for J	promoting scl	nool mot	ivatio	on through	activatin	g dida	ctic practices	••••	70
II.5.	Motivational	persistence:	general	and	particular	aspects	with	implications	in	school
activ	ity			••••						87

II.6. Theoretical-applicative guidelines of measuring motivational persistence ......91

# **Chapter III**

The theoretical framework of professional skills specific to adolescents in vocational high schools, sports profile

III.1. Competences as purposes of the training process    94
III.2. Competence-based approach to the school curriculum
III.3. Enhancement of skills training in educational activity10.
III.3.1. Stages of the skills training process104
III.3.2. Stages of competence development. The model of learning through conscious
competence

# **Chapter IV**

Formative values of the school subject *Theory of sports* in order to carry out the end-of-high-school specialized paper by students from vocational schools, sports profile

IV.1. Curriculum analysis of the school program in the subject <i>Theory of sports</i> , vocational high school, sports profile, classes IX-XII
IV.2. Analysis of the methodology for organizing and conducting the qualification certification exam
IV.3. Critical analysis of the <i>Theory of sports</i> student books117
IV.4. Theoretical and applied features of the principle of linking theory to practice, adapted to the task of carrying out the end-of-high- school specialized paper, vocational high schools, sports profile
IV.5. Level 4 professional qualification, sports instructor specialization and insertion into the labour field

### PART II

Presentation of the research with the following theme : "The valences of an educational program based on activating didactic practices in ensuring the motivational persistence of twelfth grade students, sports profile, for the completion of the end-of-high- school specialized paper"

### Chapter V

Preliminary research

V.1. The general framework of the preliminary research144
V.2. Purpose and specific objectives of the preliminary research
V.3. Research methods and tools utilized in the preliminary research146
V.4. Presentation of the results of the preliminary research146
V.5. Data regarding the eligibility of students from the Bistrița High School with Sports Program to the certification exam of the qualification of high school graduates, vocational stream, sports profile, in the period 2018-2022
V.6. Application of the questionnaires and analysis of the results163
V.6.1. Guidelines for the application of the questionnaires in the framework of the preliminary research
V.6.2. Data regarding the meaning of school success for sports students from the High School with Sports Program Bistrița
V.6.3. Data regarding students' interest in following an educational program of cognitive and affective activation, to complete end-of-high school specialized paper 

V.6.7. Applying the Academic Motivation Scale needs questionnaire (AMS-HS 28)

V.8. General conclusions regarding the application of the questionnaires ......230

### Chapter VI

Experimental	research –	General	coordinates
--------------	------------	---------	-------------

VI.1. Delimitation of the research problem; research paradigm	233
VI.2. Research design	237
VI.2.1. The purpose of the research	237
VI.2.2. The objectives of the research	238
VI.2.3. Research hypothesis	239
VI.2.4. Research variables	239
VI.2.5. Duration of the research	239
VI.2.6. Research calendar	241
VI.3. Sampling	
VI.3.1. The sample of students	242

VI.3.2. The sample of teaching staff	244
VI.3.3. Sample featured content	245
VI.4. Utilized research methods and tools	246
VI.4.1. Correlation of the research methods – tools – type of research research	U
VI.5. Stages of experimental research	252
VI.5.1. Pre-experimental stage	252
VI.5.2. The experimental stage	
VI.5.3. Post-experimental stage	252

# **Chapter VII**

Stages of experimental research
VII.1. Pre-experimental stage
VII.1.1. Applying of the SPM12 and GRIT Scale questionnaires253
VII.1.2. Qualitative and quantitative interpretation of the data obtained following the
application of the SPM 12 and GRIT Scale questionnaires
VII.2. The experimental stage
VII.2.1. Description of the general coordinates of the experimental stage254
VII.2.2. Objectives specific to the experimental stage
VII.2.3. Details of the content of the educational program for cognitive and affective
activation, addressed to students from the twelfth grade, vocational high school, sports profile,
to ensure the motivational persistence necessary to complete the end-of-high school specialized

paper	257
VII.3. Post-experimental stage	

VII.3.1. General elements regarding the post-experimental stage
VII.3.2. Comparative analysis of the results obtained
VII.3.3. Presentation of conclusions

#### **Chapter VIII**

Presentation	of ex	xperimental	research	data
--------------	-------	-------------	----------	------

VIII.1. General elements regarding the application of feedback questionnaires
VIII.2. Analysis and interpretation of the obtained results

#### **Chapter IX**

Conclusions and educational implications

IX.1.2. Conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the application of an educational
program of cognitive and affective activation, to maintain at an optimal level the motivational
persistence of students
IX.2. Conclusions regarding the statistical analyzes carried out
IX.3. Limits of experimental research
IX.4. Future research directions
IX.4.1. Theoretical contributions
IX.4.2. Methodological contributions
IX.4.3. Practical contributions
IX.5. Redefining school success from the perspective of sports student from vocational high
schools
Bibliography
Annexes

#### Preamble

Keywords: certification, qualification, professional skills, vocational high school, sports profile

Vocational high schools, sports profile, follow the eight key competencies, but also their adaptation to the specific training of the graduate students, especially because they have the opportunity to participate in the qualification certification exam, which requires specific competencies as well. The responsibility and awareness of a quality educational act are more necessary, as promotions will be able to work in the field of sports, a right obtained through the professional qualification certificate. The practical and theoretical knowledge and skills in the studied subject, that of motor skills, must reflect the ability to apply them in professional conditions, thus wishing to obtain a well-formed acquisition and capabilities fund during the years of study.

The gradual analysis of the students' options regarding the theoretical-sports activities, the conversation with them in the context of specialized school activities, the involvement they show in the performance of theoretical and practical tasks, the interest in participating in the qualification certification exam confirm the students' concern for the professional, qualification exam possibly obtained at the end of the vocational high school cycle, this being considered a means of recognition and social integration, but also a possible financial source.

Given these conditions, the justification of the approach to the subject of this thesis is explained by the desire to support the students in the process of achieving success in the qualification certification exam, especially the theoretical test. We highlight that the preparation of this test is through a long-term process of documentation, conception and completion of the end-of-high- school specialized paper in which, with each passed level of study, the fund of school success from this perspective is thoroughly built. Each element of theoretical and practical content studied and applied to specialized subjects contributes to broadening the horizon of knowledge specific to the profile, according to the specialization. Theoretical information contributes to the explanation and understanding of practical elements, and the theory-practice binomial facilitates the correct and conscious perception of the general sports phenomenon. Students will be able to explain and understand these theoretical elements by developing value judgments, reasoning, formed through a reflective attitude, critical thinking, good analytical and synthesis skills, all acquired through the educational process. They will be able to perform or demonstrate elements specific to the motor domain in an efficient, conscious way.

The professional qualification represents an expected, desired success, obtained with strictness, rigor, through an extensive documentation process, efficiently organized and based on collaboration with the tutor. We consider, in a personal view, that it represents a considerable part of school success from the perspective of the graduate student, vocational high school, sports profile, it represents the conscious engagement in an qualitative educational process of general education along with accepting the challenge of the specific educational field. The promotion of the professional skills certification exam requires a systematic and continuous work of practical-sports training supplemented by theoretical-sports activity.

The students registered for this exam, the graduates, will take two tests, according to the Methodology for organizing and conducting the certification exam for high school graduates, vocational stream, order no. 4,433 of August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014:

1. practical test: which consists in the execution of a number of technical elements and tactical actions from the sports subjects studied, according to the evaluation proposals made at the level of each school unit;

2. the theoretical test: which involves the submission of the end-of-high- school specialized paper with a topic chosen from the theory and practice of the sports field.

Our interests are centered on the process of organization, realization of the end-ofhigh- school specialized paper. It is a large-scale undertaking, in which the support of the tutor is essential. The selection of the topic, the focus on the pursued goal, the fulfillment of the final objectives, depend, mainly, on the two pawns involved as a priority, the coordinating teachercoordinated student. We are concerned with highlighting the motivational implications of supporting the students' actions during the conception of the end-of-high- school specialized paper, considering that any lasting educational process requires motivational persistence for its success.

In the framework of this thesis, we intend to carry out an overall analysis, from a theoretical and practical perspective, on the implications of motivational persistence in the process of carrying out the end-of-high- school specialized paper by 12th grade students from vocational high schools, sports profile. The investigative stages were centered around the question: "Does the implementation of an educational program of cognitive and affective activation for students in the final year of vocational high school, sports profile, ensure an optimal level of motivational persistence that allows the successful completion of the end-of-

high- school specialized paper?" Thus, we structured the content of the thesis in two parts, while ensuring its unitary character:

1. Part I: theoretical foundation;

2. Part II: preliminary research and experimental research.

#### Part I

The part of the theoretical foundation is supported by the four basic chapters and their related subchapters.

In **Chapter I** we present references to the defining features of the adolescent student. We pursued the in-depth knowledge of the mental and physical characteristics specific to the age stage of the subjects included in the experimental and control sample, considering that this fact brings efficiency and accuracy in the experimental approaches. In this sense, we ensured the adaptation of these approaches to the specificity of the reference age of the subjects, considered part of the research actions.

We studied and theoretically presented the training profile of the student, with particular references to the sports student, from vocational high schools. At the same time, we considered useful the analysis of the staging of adolescence, the functional-morphological, motor and psychomotor features, the characteristics of thinking, imagination, language, memory, the dominant aspects of the adolescent's personality, for outlining a complete picture of the defining elements, specific to the research subjects.

Considering the activation as one of the basic concepts of this thesis, we paid special attention to its explanation in the suite of sub-chapters of chapter I, harmoniously relating these theoretical aspects described with the notions of **effective learning** and the **competence of learning to learn.** The concepts of **active training** and interactive training, activism and interactive methods were clarified starting from the theories and explanations of some representative authors of the specialized literature, such as M. D. Bocoş, C. Petrovici, T. Stanciu.

In **chapter II**, we presented the issue of school motivation in relation to school success, the particularities making direct references to the age of adolescence.

We included extensive theoretical clarifications regarding school success from the perspective of motivational involvement. The inclusion of this subchapter is justified by

highlighting the role of the implications of motivational factors on school success. Taking as a benchmark to follow the sports students from vocational high schools who are at the age of adolescence, we focused on highlighting the specific trends in approaching school success from the perspective of this category of subjects, analyzing it according to the following benchmarks: success in the baccalaureate exam, success in the professional qualification certification exam and success in sports activity.

We highlighted the fact that school success can be appreciated in terms of progress and evolution, summing up more than a grade or qualification. This progress aims at the individual perspective, the perspective of the proposed objectives, the social perspective. We also highlighted the role of setting targeted objectives for the completion of an activity, making analogies with the long process of the completion of the end-of-high- school specialized paper by sports students.

We considered of real interest for the overall ensemble of this thesis the processed information regarding the strategies for promoting school motivation through activating didactic practices. We presented models for supporting school motivation on the basis of highlighting the effectiveness of their applicability in educational contexts: the continuous time model, the class model, the TARGET model, the ARCS model. All these represented foundations for the entire organization and application of the experimental intervention.

We included, in the second chapter, a series of conclusive strategies for promoting school motivation through activating didactic practices. Following the analysis directions of this concept according to the pedagogical profile literature, we selected valuable information for the specificity of our thesis, accepting the vision of some authors, such as L. R. Gherasim, S. Butnaru, P. R. Pintrich, V. Mih, I. Jude, etc.

We agree with the explanation presented in the Dictionary of Pedagogy (M. D. Bocoş et al., 2021) regarding educational strategies according to which they represent the totality of decisions on which the development of educational efforts depends, and oriented towards a certain finality. In this context, we considered it necessary to present a complex spectrum of these strategies, with references to the activating implications, which facilitate the active and conscious participation of students in the process of carrying out their own end-of-high- school specialized papers, against the background of ensuring an optimal motivational persistence, for successful participation at the certification exam of the professional qualification of high school graduates, vocational stream, sports profile.

The central concept around which we unified the entire content of this thesis is that of **motivational persistence**. Its implications in the school activity, for students from vocational high schools, are a necessary condition especially in the case of long-term activities, such as the completion of the end-of-high- school specialized paper. We considered indispensable the information regarding the method of measuring the students' motivational persistence, eloquent for the selection of the strategies used in the cognitive and affective activation program applied to them to maintain the motivational persistence, for the completion of the end-of-high- school specialized paper.

**Chapter III** of the thesis includes valuable references regarding the **professional competencies** developed for students from vocational high schools, sports profile, based on the study of theoretical and practical specialist subjects in particular. We presented the concept of competence as the finality of the training process, as a complex set of capacities, skills and knowledge that allow the optimal performance of an activity.

We developed the idea that, at the basis of the completion of the end-of-high- school specialized paper by the sports students, stay the skills formed within the theoretical and sports educational activities, which remain at the level of long-term acquisitions, even outside the school context. We consider the fact that the value of the sports instructor qualification, level 4, is represented by this set of general, specific and professional skills. Through the activities carried out within **the cognitive and affective activation program** applied to 12th grade students, we aimed, in addition, to ensuring optimal motivational support, and the training and development of skills, such as: time management skills, communication skills, collaboration skills, IT skills, documentation skills. All this was practiced and perfected along with the creative process of creating the end-of-high- school specialized paper.

We considered that the analysis of school skills cannot be complete without a clear presentation of the main milestones of their introduction into the school curriculum. Following a consistent documentation, we synthesized the aspects relevant to the general theme of this thesis, such as the particularities of the training based on key competencies and the particularities of the training based on professional skills in the process of training students.

We dedicated a sub-chapter to the exposition of the stages of skills training, understanding that by knowing them we can appropriately intervene in their training. Based on the consultation of various documentary sources that deal with this issue, we made a synthesis of the stages of competences, according to the model of learning through **conscious**  **competence**, which involves four stages: unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, unconscious competence. We considered it necessary to describe these stages in direct relation to their progress by the students, emphasizing the existence of some general, but also particular factors that influence them, generated by the uniqueness of the individual.

**In chapter IV**, we presented curricular and methodological interpretations specific to the Theory of Sports discipline, starting from the critical analysis of school programs for grades IX-XII. We focused on highlighting the place and role of this study discipline specific to vocational high schools, sports profile, in the entire curriculum, aiming at the skills that students form and develop.

We presented the correlation between general skills and dominant contents, included in the curriculum for the lower cycle of the high school (2006), Theory of Sports, classes IX-XII, vocational stream, sports profile, all specializations, approved by ministerial order No. 3432/15.03, marking its flexible character. We looked for the following as elements of analysis of the school curriculum: relevance, pertinence, coherence, applicability, feasibility, according to the document entitled Analysis of alternative school programs and textbooks, National Center for Evaluation and Examination (2012), which we interpreted in a critical manner.

The vertical structure of the program is highlighted by harmonizing, in a logical form, the presentation notes, general competences, values and attitudes, specific competences and contents, as well as methodological suggestions.

Considering the fact that, of interest for the general set of the thesis is the certification exam of the qualification of high school graduates, vocational stream, sports profile, we paid attention to the presentation of the methodology of organization and conduct of the exam, highlighting those ideas that include references regarding the way of achievement of the end-of-high- school specialized paper as well as the manner of its presentation, according to the following document: *Methodology for the organization and conduct of the certification exam for high school graduates, vocational stream, published in the Official Gazette no.* 683 of *September 18, 2014.* 

We undertook an extensive critical-reflexive analysis of the contents and presentation of the Theory of Sports student-books. For each textbook, according to the four levels of study, from the 9th grade to the 12th grade, we highlighted their formative-educational character and the contribution they bring to the development of skills which are specific to the sports field. We aimed to present the fact that the entire information set included in the textbooks can represent a genuine source of inspiration for students, in order to select the topic to be developed in the end-of-high- school specialized paper.

In this chapter, we also considered it necessary to present the principle of linking theory with practice, related to the approach of carrying out the end-of-high- school specialized paper for sports students. The two types of didactic activities, practical and theoretical, work together to offer the subjects of education a complex and complete perspective on the sports phenomenon, necessary all the more as they obtain the specialization of sports instructor, level 4 qualification, after passing the exam of qualification certification. In this context, we included clarifications regarding the **European Qualifications Framework, the National Qualifications Framework, the National Qualifications System**, targeting, in particular, the aspects regarding the pre-university education, vocational training, sports profile.

We dedicated the last part of this chapter included in the theoretical foundation to the analysis of the implications of the professional qualification for sports students in vocational high schools. Thus, we considered it useful to include in the thesis the SWOT analysis regarding this issue, evoking the strong points and weak points of an early qualification, but also the existing opportunities, which motivate the active and proactive involvement of students in order to pass the qualification certification exam by the sport student. As the structure for carrying out such an analysis states, the presentation of potential threats is justified by the attempt to create an elucidating, complex picture of the analyzed subject.

#### Part II

We dedicated the second part of this thesis to the research with the following theme: "The values of an educational program based on activating practices in ensuring the motivational persistence of 12th grade students, sports profile, for the completion of the endof-high- school specialized paper ".

As a continuation of the first part of this thesis, **chapter V** aims at an extensive preliminary research, carried out in the period 2019-2022, by engaging into documentation and information activities regarding edifying aspects for the theme of the thesis, taken from the specialized literature: the identification and understanding the legislative documents specific to vocational high schools, sports profile, investigating the opinion of sports students regarding

the meaning of school success, highlighting the students' interest in completing an educational program of cognitive and affective activation that will provide them with support for maintaining motivational persistence, identifying the possible theoretical knowledge that they own about the content and structure of the end-of-high- school specialized paper, establishing the interest in obtaining the professional qualification.

At the same time, through the method of researching school documents, we carried out the analysis of the school registers from the period 2018-2022, from the Sports High School Bistrița, aiming at the annual averages of the students in the discipline of Theory of Sports, in a cycle of four school years, the analysis of the registers of at the qualification certification exam, from the same time period. Secondly, we focused on the school's managerial policy documents, legislative documents, decisions, ministerial orders, relevant to the theme of the thesis.

Applying **the method of analyzing the products of the school activity**, end-of-high school specialized papers were investigated, aiming to highlight the theme, but also their structure, within the same temporal unit, 2018-2022. Following the investigative actions undertaken, we found that the students preferred topics from the theory and methodology of sports which they practiced in high school, according to the specialization.

The main legislative documents that guided the research findings are represented by:

• National Education Law, Law No. 1/2011 of January 5, 2011, with amended acts of 2020, 2021, 2022;

• Pre-university Education Law no. 975 of July 5, 2023;

• ROFUIP – Framework Regulation For The Organization And Operation Of Pre-University Education Units; Order no. 3352/10.03.2022, for the modification of ROFUIP, approved by Ministerial Order no. 5447/31.08.2020;

• Regulation On The Organization And Operation Of Educational Units With An Integrated Sports Program from 07/10/2011.

We present in this extensive fifth chapter, written, tabular and graphic data on:

• percentage of passing the certification exam of the qualification of high school graduates, vocational stream, sports profile, of students from the Sports High School Bistrița;

• the meaning of school success for sports students from the Sports High School Bistrița;

• the students' interest in completing the end-of-high- school specialized paper, vocational high school, sports profile, by going through an educational program of cognitive and affective activation, based on activating didactic practices;

• the initial level of students' knowledge regarding the content and organization of the end-of-high- school specialized paper;

• the importance of professional qualification, level 4, at the end of studies, vocational high school, sports profile;

• the interest of the teachers from the practical sports training departments for the application of the proposed didactic material, within the cognitive and affective activation program, in order to maintain motivational persistence, for the efficiency of the approach to the realization of the end-of-high- school specialized paper.

We applied the Academic Motivation Scale questionnaire (AMS-HS 28) to students from the twelfth grades, Sports High School Bistrița, during September - October of the 2022-2023 school year. It was aimed to highlight the level of students' motivation for school activities, specifically the completion of the end-of-high school specialized paper.

		Frequency	Percentages	Valid	Cumulative
				percentages	percentages
	very low level	2	1.7	1.7	1.7
	low level	34	29.1	29.1	30.8
Valid	medium level	57	48.7	48.7	79.5
v and	high level	24	20.5	20.5	100.0
	Total	117	100.0	100.0	

Table no. 1: Motivation level of the experimental group of students, Sports High School Bistrița

We conclude, based on the recorded results, that a number of 91 subjects, out of the total number of participants, present a medium and low motivational level.

All these categories of data are based on the application of the survey method, formulating, in a personal conception, questionnaires faithful to the thematic particularity studied, with effects at the research level as a whole. We included closed, open and mixed question variants in these questionnaires, considering both the advantages and disadvantages of using them.

At the same time, we involved teachers from specialized sports disciplines, who, by voluntarily participating in the feedback collection stage, made a real contribution to highlighting the importance of using didactic material based on stimulus contents, in an organized process according to the educational program applied, in order to maintain the motivational persistence necessary to carry out the end-of-high- school specialized paper. From the qualitative and quantitative interpretations made according to the opinion expressed by them, the need for intervention at the motivational level, with specificity at the level of motivational persistence, was confirmed for the sports students enrolled in the qualification certification exam, for the success of the end-of-high- school specialized paper.

This finding led us to undertake experimental steps in the sense of testing the hypothesis: the involvement of students from the 12th grades, vocational high schools, sports profile, in the educational program of cognitive and affective activation carried out within the discipline the Theory of sports will determine the optimization of the level of motivational persistence, for the completion of the end-of-high- school specialized paper.

Thus, in **chapter VI**, we focused on the general and particular coordinates of the experimental research, outlining the research paradigm, highlighting the fact that the application of an educational program of cognitive and affective activation to sports students in the final grades allows maintaining an optimal level of motivational persistence, necessary in a long-term process, such as that of the realization of the specialized work. The basis of this program was the didactic material, specially designed, containing stimulating contents in order to facilitate the active and proactive behavior of the students, involving interactive methods. The application of this didactic material was carried out gradually, respecting the structure of the school year. Thus, in the 2021-2022 school year, we presented the teaching material used, in a proforma version, to the 11th grades, followed by adjustments and additions made according to the needs of the teachers. In the 2022-2023 school year, we applied this material within the intervention program described, pursuing the general and didactic purpose of the research, as well as its objectives.

Clearly stating the independent variable, meaning the educational program for cognitive and affective activation, based on activating didactic practices, we formulated the following dependent variables: the level of motivational persistence in the students of the XII grade for the completion of the end-of-high- school specialized paper and the level of perseverance in the students of the grade XII for the realization of the end-of-high- school specialized paper. We configured a calendar of research efforts, correlating, in a tabular form, the structure of the school year in which we undertook the investigative actions, the calendar period, the type of research, the research stages and their related content. We paid a lot of attention to the sample of subjects, organized into two categories: student sample, subdivided into a sample of students specific to the preliminary research stage, and a sample of students specific to the experimental research stage, as well as a sample of teaching staff. We specify that, for the accuracy and relevance of the experimental approaches, the sample of student subjects was formed from the control group, including 90 students from the Sports High School Cluj-Napoca, twelfth grade, and the experimental group, 117 students from the twelfth grade, from the Sports High School Bistrița.

To carry out the empirical research, we used a complex set of research methods, harmoniously combined, according to the needs of each research stage:

• data collection methods: observation, self-observation, questionnaire-based investigation method, school activity product study method, document research method, focus group, interview;

- statistical-mathematical methods of organization, processing and graphic presentation
  - Tools used: SPSS Statistics 20, Excel and Word.

Among the research tools, the questionnaire proved to be the most effective for the investigative steps carried out, giving us the possibility of extracting a large set of data both for the part of the ascertainment research and for the experimental research. In this case, from the multitude of such tools made available by specialized literature, we selected the following:

- Grit Scales. Duckworth, A.L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M.D., & Kelly, D.R. (2007).
   Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 9, 1087-1101; (initial/final questionnaire);
- Questionnaire addressed to students for the evaluation of motivational persistence, SPM 12-standardized test for evaluating motivational persistence SPM Questionnaire (T. Constantin et al. 2011, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University in Iasi, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Department of Psychology); (initial/final questionnaire).

The organization of the experimental approaches followed the stages provided by the scientific research methodology, as follows:

- the pre-experimental stage;
- the experimental stage;
- the post-experimental stage.

During the first stage of the research, we applied the following questionnaires, both to the experimental group and to the control group.

1. GRIT Scales. Duckworth, A.L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M.D., & Kelly, D.R. (2007). GRIT: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 9, 1087-1101;

The term GRIT calls for perseverance. The questionnaire includes a number of 12 items. Each item has 5 answer options: it suits me very well, it suits me in most situations, it suits me to some extent, it doesn't suit me much, it doesn't suit me at all.

2. Questionnaire addressed to students for the evaluation of motivational persistence, SPM 12 - standardized test for evaluating motivational persistence - Questionnaire SPM 12 (T. Constantin et al. 2011, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iasi Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences Department of Psychology).

The questionnaire consists of 12 items aimed at motivational persistence for pursuing long-term goals, for daily tasks and recalling unachieved goals.

Dependent variable	Group	Ν	Average	Standard Deviation	Comparison
Motivational Persistence (SPM 12-	Experimental	117	50.65	5.384	t=1.784
pretest)	Control	90	49.10	7.114	p>0,05

• The t test for independent samples, pretest;

Table no. 2: Experimental group-control group comparisons in the pretest for the dependent variable, motivational persistence

The average for the level of motivational persistence of the students in the experimental group, evaluated in the pretest (Average=50.65, AS=5.38), does not differ significantly (t=1.784, two-tailed p>0.05) from the mean for the level of motivational persistence of students in the control group, evaluated in the pretest (Average=49.10, SD=7.11).

Dependent variable	Group	Ν	Average	Standard Deviation	Comparison
Perseverance (GRIT-pretest)	Experimental	117	39.50	6.899	t=-1.530
	Control	90	40.80	4.807	p>0,05

Table no. 3.: Experimental group-control group comparisons in the pretest for the dependent variable, perseverance (GRIT)

The average for the level of perseverance (GRIT) of the students in the experimental group, evaluated in the pretest (Average=39.50, AS=6.89), does not differ significantly (t=-1.530, two-tailed p>0.05) from the mean for the level of perseverance of students in the control group, evaluated in the pretest (Average=40.80, AS=4.80).

Regarding the description of the general coordinates of the stage of the psychopedagogical experiment, specific to the actual experimental stage, we specify that it took place between February 2023 and May 2023 with the involvement of students from the twelfth grade, Sports High School Bistrița. We pursued a central objective, that of testing the effectiveness of the educational program of cognitive and affective activation started to ensure the motivational persistence of students from the 12th grades in the process of carrying out the end-of-highschool specialized paper. The details of the content of the applied program refer in particular to the didactic material based on stimulus content, through the application of which we sought to facilitate the active involvement of students in the activities of carrying out the end-of-highschool specialized paper, on the basis of which we ensured a good level of motivational persistence.

In the post-experimental stage, our efforts were directed towards the reapplying of the SPM 12 and 12-Item GRIT Scale questionnaires to the two groups of subjects, during the May-June period of the 2022-2023 school year. The main purpose of this approach consisted in obtaining clarifying data, relevant for the experimental activity, at the end of it. Thus, by applying the comparison method for the two categories of data obtained in the stage of initial testing and final testing of the questionnaires, it was possible to highlight the results of the investigative efforts.

We took into consideration:

- The t-test for paired samples, posttest;
- a) Experimental group

	Ν	Variable	Pretest	Posttest	Comparisons
Experimental	117	Motivational	Average=	Average=	t= -9,711
group		persistence	50,65	55,09	p<0,01
		(SPM 12)	AS=5,38	AS=6,05	
				,	

 Table no. 4.: Results of the experimental group for the dependent variable

 motivational persistence

The average of the level of **motivational persistence** (SPM 12) evaluated on the students of the experimental group in the posttest (Mean=55.09, AS=6.05) **differs significantly** (t= -9.711, p<0.01) compared to the average in the pretest (Mean =50.65, AS=5.38).

	Ν	Variabile	Pretest	Posttest	Comparisons
Experimental					
group					
	117	Perseverance	Average=	Average=	t= -15,304
		(GRIT)	39,50	45,34	p<0,01
			AS=6,89	AS=5,20	

Table no. 5.: The results of the pretest-posttest experimental group for the dependent variable perseverance

The average of the level of perseverance (GRIT) evaluated in the students of the experimental group in the posttest (Average=45.34, AS=5.20) differs significantly (t= -15.304, p<0.01) compared to the average in the pretest (Average=39, 50, AS=6.89).

### b) Control group

	Ν	Variabile	Pretest	Posttest	Comparisons
Control	90	Motivational	Average=	Average=	t= -7,336
group		Persistence	49.10	52.47	p<0,01
		(SPM 12)	AS=7.114	AS=7.407	

Table no. 6.: The results of the pretest-posttest control group for the dependent variable motivational persistence

The average of the level of motivational persistence (SPM 12) evaluated in the students of the control group in the posttest (Average=52.47, AS=7.40) differs significantly (t= -7.336, p<0.01) from the average in the pretest (Average=49.10, SD=7.11).

	Ν	Variabile	Pretest	Posttest	Comparisons
Control					
group	90	Perseverance	Average=	Average=	t= -8.666
		(GRIT)	40.80	43.80	p<0,01
			AS=4.807	AS=5.077	

Table no. 7.: Results of the pretest-posttest control group for the dependent variable perseverance (GRIT)

The average level of perseverance (GRIT) evaluated in the students of the control group in the posttest (Average=43.80, AS=5.07) differs significantly (t=-8.666, p<0.01) from the average in the pretest (Average=40.80, AS=4.80)

Dependent variable	Group	N	Average	Standard Deviation	Comparison
Motivational Persistence	Experimental	117	55.09	6.053	t=-2.808
(SPM 12-posttest)	Control	90	52.47	7.407	p>0,01

• T-test for independent samples, posttest.

Table no. 8.: Experimental group-control group comparisons in the posttest

The average for the level of motivational persistence of students in the experimental group, evaluated in the posttest (Average=55.09, AS=6.05), differs significantly (t=-2.808, two-tailed p<0.01) from the average for the level of motivational persistence of students in the group control, evaluated in the posttest (Average=52.47, SD=7.40).

Dependent variable	Group	Ν	Average	Standard Deviation	Comparison
Perseverance	Experimental	117	45.34	5.201	t=-2.136
(GRIT-posttest)	Control	90	43.80	5.077	p<0,05

Table no. 9: Experimental group-control group comparisons in the posttest for the dependent variable perseverance (GRIT)

The average for the level of perseverance (GRIT) of the students in the experimental group, evaluated in the posttest (Average=45.34, AS=5.201), does not differ significantly (t=2.136, two-tailed p<0.05) compared to the average for the level of perseverance (GRIT) of students from the control group, evaluated in the posttest (Average=43.80, AS=5.077).

Based on the statistically interpreted results, emphasizing the fact that the average for the level of motivational persistence of the students in the experimental group, evaluated in the posttest differs significantly from the average for the level of motivational persistence of the students in the control group, evaluated in the posttest, we can state that the hypothesis is valid.

Through all the experimental steps carried out, we aimed to offer sports students support in the complex activity of carrying out the end-of-high- school specialized paper, to involve them actively and consciously, to offer them activating learning situations, which would provoke their desire to complete the paper, which would determine an optimal level of motivational persistence in this whole endeavor. We state that the completion of the cognitive and affective activation educational program confirms its effectiveness, as evidenced by the recorded and statistically interpreted data.

**Chapter VIII** of the thesis is intended to present the data of the experimental research, based on the results of the undertaken investigative measures and, at the same time, the quantitative and qualitative analyzes carried out according to the responses of the subjects to the feedback questionnaires, as follows:

- the questionnaire for recording feedback following the use of the supporting didactic material in the educational program of cognitive and affective activation; MF1 (own design);
- the PANAS questionnaire (D. Watson, L.A. Clark & A. Tellegen, 1988);
- the questionnaire for recording the feedback following the completion of the end-of-the high school specialized paper by the students; MF2 (own design);

The analysis of the data according to the answers provided by the student subjects allows us to conclude that they appreciate the didactic material used in the educational program as effective for insuring motivational support, by providing theoretical and practical stimulating content, with an emphasis on the application of interactive methods. At the same time, we specify that, of the nine modules included in this material, the students appreciated the most, module five, *Choosing the theme*, module three, *Motivational persistence, techniques for*  maintaining optimal motivation and module four, Basic elements of effective collaboration student teacher

Through the interpretation and objective analysis of the recorded answers, we concluded that the subjects participating in the experimental program appreciated the processed educational material as pleasant, effective and stimulating, determining their conscious-participative involvement in solving the tasks.

The choice of the topic of the specialized paper is a crucial moment in the preparation of the theoretical test of the qualification certification exam. This fact was signaled by the students at the end of the successful experience of completing the end-of-high- school specialized paper, through involvement in the ongoing experimental program.

The responsibility of such a decision, the choice of the theme, has consequences on the entire creative path of the student. If the chosen topic arouses interest and is accessible to them, it will arouse their interest, even developing passion for the theoretical subject in question, which implies perseverance, on the basis of which the chances of success are much higher. This fact has a motivational influence on the students, especially at the level of persistence, the attempts to abandon the activity being greatly reduced. We recommend paying significant attention to this moment, giving students enough time to select the most desired one from the variety of theoretical subjects which are specific to the sports field, encouraging a prior documentation.

By applying the PANAS questionnaire, we highlight that, since the proposed activation program was based on interactive practices, which would determine an active and proactive participation, the students felt interested in the activities of the program, a fact that favored positive effects at the level of motivational persistence. Thus, the participants wanted to get involved, to discover solutions to solve the challenges of completing the end-of-high-school specialized paper, by going through the step by step suggested program. Enthusiasm and determination were quantified in positive values by the percentage recorded for these items of the questionnaire. Interactive methods, used with the clear aim of fostering active and proactive student involvement, facilitated student activation. Among the negative affects included among the items, such as, angry, scared, ashamed, scared, guilty, nervous, bitter, none registered considerable values, which could primarily define the state of the participants. We mention, however, that some of them reported a certain state of stress felt during the intervention program, we believe, due to the involvement in a new activity, which required less practiced skills until the moment of involvement in this process of carrying out the end-of-high school specialized paper.

In chapter IX we formulate the conclusions, focusing on two main directions:

- Conclusions regarding the conducted experimental research;
  - ✓ Conclusions regarding the importance of ensuring motivational persistence in order to complete the end-of-high-school specialized paper by students from vocational high schools, sports profile;
  - ✓ Conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the application of an educational program of cognitive and affective activation, to maintain at an optimal level the motivational persistence of students.
- Conclusions related to the statistical analyzes carried out.

We concluded that the educational activities carried out based on the application of interactive methods represent a real motivational support for students, the organization of activities according to a pre-established calendar and compliance with the proposed deadlines determined the engagement of students in completing the tasks, the clear, achievable goals, established in the medium term, dynamized energetically the students. In this context, we managed to make the students in the experimental group aware of the need for their own involvement in the process of documentation and selection of information, we explained clearly and concisely to the students, from the very beginning of the experimental approaches, the role of involving the motivational mechanisms that compete to ensure the expected success, especially **motivational persistence**. Through the entire set of actions taken by running the experimental program, we managed to create a **favorable educational climate** for the students, which ensured their informational and affective comfort. We focused on highlighting the progress made by students, focusing on positive aspects, encouragement, constructive remarks, considering the channeling of students' cognitive efforts in a productive direction and the elimination of the so-called intellectual and affective energy waste, which exhausts the subject prematurely to the accomplishment of the tasks. The students' motivation for the proposed activities was maintained by assigning an optimal degree of difficulty to the tasks to be completed.

We noticed the need to ensure an optimal **balance between the volume of information** processed with the students and included in the didactic material and **the volume of the applied exercises**. We conclude that the student's affective background, developed for a certain task to be performed, has a connection with motivational implications.

In the final part of this chapter, we described the limits of the research we had carried out, stating that we cannot consider the research representative at the national level, not being extended to a significantly larger number of subjects. We consider as a real limiting factor the lack of brevity, clarity and logic in providing some answers and at the same time, the positive or negative affective state of the subjects at the time of questioning influences the given answer. An important limiting factor is the probability of respondents' subjectivity. We accept the phenomenon of reactivity which denotes behavioral, artificial changes of the participating subjects at the moment of awareness of the fact that they are being observed for experimental purposes.

We also consider potential new directions of involvement as follows:

• Generalization of the application of the activation program proposed for the efficiency of the guidance of sports students in their final year, for the completion of the end-of-high- school specialized paper, vocational high schools, sports profile, in the country.

• New contributions, suggestions made for a possible completion of the proposed didactic material.

• Possible extension of the application period of the educational program for cognitive and affective activation and its organization in the form of an Optional curricula.

In conclusion, we refer to the theoretical, methodological and practical contributions presented by this thesis. Thus, the general assembly of the thesis, the theoretical and conceptual elements, harmonized with the results of the experimental approaches, bring an important contribution to the enrichment of the specialized literature of the sports field. The implications are specifically oriented towards the sphere of pre-university education, high school level, sports profile. We believe that we make a real contribution in this sense by designing the educational activation program, based on the didactic material with proposed stimulus contents. Thus, we anticipate a positive intervention at the level of students' motivational support, through interactive methods, techniques and methodical procedures included in the activation program. The success of student involvement in the suggested activities allows us to dare to propose the generalization of the applied work methodology. The analysis and selection of activation strategies used in the experimental program is the result of our involvement in the creation of a didactic product focused on the motivational support needs of students.

We highlight a deep practicality of the completed thesis, concluding that by running the intervention program, focused on the application of the stimulus contents, the students have an active/proactive involvement in their own training and education process, managing to complete the end-of-high school specialized paper for the qualification certification exam, in a participatory, pleasant and efficient manner.

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