



# Social inclusion of athletes with disabilities in regional national teams

UDC 316.4.063.34



PhD, Associate Professor **D.M. Vinokurova**<sup>1</sup>

**E.N. Gotovtseva**<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>M.K. Ammosov North-Eastern Federal University, Yakutsk

Corresponding author: dorofdm1@yandex.ru

Received by the editorial office on 11.08.2024

## Abstract

**Objective of the study** was to pinpoint the elements that contribute to the inclusion of athletes with disabilities in regional national teams.

**Methods and structure of the study.** To gather empirical information, a survey was created for athletes with disabilities (n=36) who are enrolled in the National Research University of the Russian Federation, the «Republican Center for Sports Training of National Teams of the Russian Federation». This center is responsible for developing and supporting sports training in 13 disciplines.

**Results and conclusions.** By comparing their condition before and after participating in sports, participants note not only an improvement in their well-being and vitality, but also an expansion of their social circle and other activities. In the world of sports, the rules, criteria, and standards are clearly defined, providing a legitimate opportunity for recognition, social status, and more. It is evident that regular training of athletes with disabilities at the Sports Training Center for national teams contributes to their integration not only into the sports arena, where they can become renowned and respected sports masters, winners, or medalists in sports competitions of various levels. The recognition of athletes with disabilities underscores the fact that engaging in sports has given them a sense of belonging to a larger sports community.

**Keywords:** *communication, inclusion/exclusion, self-esteem, social functional systems, differentiation, sports competitions.*

**Introduction.** We adhere to the sociological concept of N. Luhmann of systemic differentiation of modern society, which is based not on action, but on communication. According to N. Luhmann, when explaining an action, one has to «limit oneself» to stating the intention, to think out the «implied meaning» of the action, motives, etc. [7, p. 18-19]. Of course, the psychological approach allows us to consider motives [6]. N. Luhmann writes: «The transition to functional differentiation uses the intra-social relevance of the inclusion/exclusion distinction together with the developed differences in the spheres of non-sedentary life... As with any form of differentiation, the regulation of inclusion is transferred to private systems» [7, p.39; 8, p.222]. Thus, society makes inclusion dependent on highly differentiated chances for communication; today, specific individuals must participate in all functional systems, depending on which communication codes they are able to adapt to. At the same time, N. Luhmann suggested that the problem of exclusion «cannot be organized using any single functional system, for example, only education»

[7, p. 47]. Today, researchers analyze the activities of many functional systems for the integration of people with disabilities [1, pp. 77-86]. Modern society is freeing itself from perceiving the other side of the form – exclusion – as a phenomenon of social structure. If earlier they talked about the marginalization of the problem of exclusion, today the problems of exclusion are acquiring a quantitatively different importance, as N. Luhmann believes. This brings, according to N. Luhmann, dramatic changes to the self-understanding of individuals. If earlier the social position of an individual was concretized due to belonging to a class, place of birth, etc., now «existence itself is based on visibility» [7, p. 41]. Moreover, there are social standards, a hierarchy of values, etc. [12]. Therefore, as N. Luhmann believes, «identity» and «self-realization» become a problem, and «social identity» may differ from bodily-psychic existence, the individual must discover whether his own projections are recognized by others. And just for athletes there is a formal indicator – his achievements in competitions of various levels.

Objective of the study was to pinpoint the elements that contribute to the inclusion of athletes with disabilities in regional national teams.

**Methods and structure of the study.** If we talk about the exclusion of people with disabilities, then according to the concept of N. Luhmann, the actual exclusion from any functional system, for example, unemployment, lack of cash income, insufficient medical care, etc., limits what is achievable in other systems, which can subsequently lead to their isolation. [7, p.44-45]. Then they must make every effort to connect to various communications, for example, to find a job [11, p.61-62]. The State Budgetary Institution of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) «Republican Center for Sports Training of National Teams of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)» is engaged in the development and support of 13 sports. The center is attended by people with hearing disabilities (56%) and athletes with musculoskeletal disorders (44%). Paralympic and Deaflympic sports, as well as sports for people with intellectual disabilities, are cultivated here: athletics, football, sitting volleyball, goalball, table tennis, freestyle wrestling, judo, swimming, powerlifting, shooting and archery [10].

In 2021-2023, the State Budgetary Institution of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) «RCSPSK Sakha (Yakutia)» sent athletes with disabilities to republican, Russian and international competitions. The data in Table 1 shows that the number of athletes with disabilities decreased by 3 people. As part of the study, a survey was conducted among athletes with disabilities from January to May 2024 to collect empirical data. The sample (n=36) included 22 men (61%) and 14 women (39%). The distribution of respondents by age and gender is shown in figure 1.

**Results of the study and discussion.** Below are the results of the survey on a five-point scale of self-assessment of respondents before and after coming

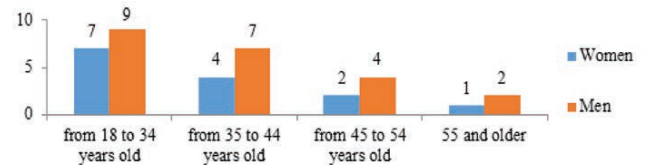


Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by age and gender, people

to sports (see figure 2, 3). From the data in figure 2, it follows that respondents equally rated both the increase in self-confidence and the readiness to make decisions independently.

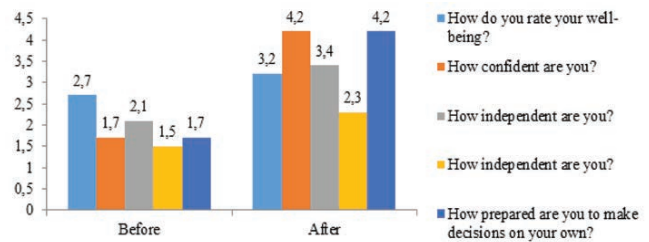


Figure 2. Self-assessment of personal emotional and psychological components, average score

According to respondents, their ability to regulate their behavior increased by 2,5 times after systematic exercise (figure 3), i.e., their regulatory personal qualities [3, pp. 33-35].

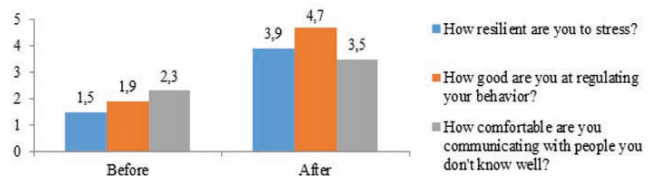


Figure 3. Self-assessment of stress resistance when interacting with others, average score

The next self-assessment indicator showed that interest in other types of activity increased 3,4 times. This means that it can be assumed that the surveyed ath-

Table 1. Dynamics of the number of competition participants among athletes with disabilities in the period 2021-2023

Indicator	Values by year, people		Changes 2023 to 2021		
	2021 r.	2022 r.	2023 r.	Abs. meas. (+/-)	Rate of increase, %
Freestyle wrestling (surdo)	21	16	17	-4	-19,0
Powerlifting (poda)	9	9	-	-9	-100,0
Judo (surdo)	2	2	2	0	0,0
Sitting volleyball	1	1	1	0	0,0
Powerlifting (poda)	-	10	10	10	=
Swimming (poda)	1	1	1	0	0,0
Archery (poda)	5	8	5	0	0,0
Shooting (surdo)	9	-	10	1	11,1
Track and field (poda)	1	-	-	-1	-100,0
Total	49	47	46	-3	-6,1



letes with disabilities have expanded their circle of communication, established some connections, etc. [9].

Thus, from the self-assessment data on a five-point scale of the surveyed athletes with disabilities, it is clear that playing sports helped to strengthen self-confidence and make decisions independently (4,2 points), regulate their behavior (4,7 points), expand contacts, which helps to increase activity in other areas (4,8 points), i.e. sports help them increase their resilience [2, p. 40].

Answering the next question, the majority of respondents chose the option «social integration through sports formed a more positive attitude towards themselves and society as a whole» (76%), – received support from coaches and teammates (59%). Also, the majority of respondents noted that they «consider themselves full members of the sports team (68%) and after regular sports activities they «experience difficulties in being included in the team» 2,7 times less than before. When asked what else could be done for the most complete social integration, every fourth respondent answered: «creation of programs for including athletes with disabilities in training groups with healthy athletes»; «organization of meetings and events aimed at developing tolerance and mutual understanding among all participants of the sports community» (22%); «development of sports infrastructure for athletes with disabilities» (19%); «accessibility of sports facilities for people with disabilities» and «development and implementation of specialized programs and training adapted to the individual characteristics of athletes with disabilities» (14% each) [4, 5]; «specialized trainings and seminars for coaches and other specialists working with athletes with disabilities» (6%), which is what researchers are working on today.

**Conclusions.** Of course, regular training of athletes with disabilities at the Center for Sports Training of National Teams contributes to their integration into the sports sphere, where they can become recognizable and recognized masters of sports, winners or prize winners of sports competitions of various levels. In addition, according to the recognition of athletes with disabilities, it is clear that playing sports has given them a sense of being part of a large sports community.

### References

1. Agrafenina Yu.A., Lyulevich I.Yu. Sotsialnaya integratsiya lyudey s ogranichennymi vozmozhnostyami zdorovya posredstvom sportivnykh i dosugovykh proyektov. Vestnik MGPU. Seriya «Estestvennyye nauki». 2021. No. 1 (41). pp. 77-89.
2. Bayer E.A., Gonchar O.A. Zhiznestoykost kak bazovoye kachestvo formirovaniya sportsmenov (na primere Uchilishcha olimpiyskogo rezerva). Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoy kultury. 2023. No. 8. pp. 40-41.
3. Belozerova L.A., Bragina E.A., Nikolaeva I.A. Motivatsiya dostizheniya i preodoleniya stressovykh situatsiy studentami-sportsmenami. Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoy kultury. 2023. No. 3. pp. 33-35.
4. Vlasov D.Yu. Rol adaptivnoy fizkultury v sotsialnoy integratsii lits s ogranichennymi vozmozhnostyami. Mezhdunarodnyy zhurnal gumanitarnykh i yestestvennykh nauk. 2023. No. 3-1 (78). pp. 94-96.
5. Golovinova I.Yu., Avetisyan A.R. Razvitiye adaptivnoy fizicheskoy kultury, kak pomoshch v sotsializatsii lyudey s ogranichennymi vozmozhnostyami. Nauka-2020, publ. 2021. No. 9 (54). pp. 194-199.
6. Loseva S.N., Sadygov G.I. Psikhologicheskiye osobennosti motivatsii sportsmenov v aspekte teoreticheskogo analiza. Teoriya i praktika fizicheskoy kultury. 2024. No. 3. pp. 44-46.
7. Luman N. Differentsiatsiya. B. Skuratov [transl.]. Moscow: Logos publ., 2006. 320 p.
8. Luman N. Samoopisaniya. A. Antonovskiy, B. Skuratov, K. Timofeeva [transl.]. Moscow: Logos, ITDGG «Gnozis» publ., 2009. 320 p.
9. Nepomnyashchikh P.A. Osobennosti zanyatiy fizicheskoy kulturoy dlya lits s ogranichennymi vozmozhnostyami. Vestnik nauki. 2023. No. 6 (63). pp. 287-292.
10. Petrova V.A., Kolodeznikov K.S. Dinamika razvitiya adaptivnogo sporta v Respublike Sakha (Yakutiya). Pedagogiko-psikhologicheskiye i mediko-biologicheskiye problemy fizicheskoy kultury i sporta. 2023. Vol. 18. No. 3. pp. 126-131.
11. Shapovalova M.E. Issledovaniye problem sotsialnoy integratsii invalidov v rossiyskom obshchestve. Gumanitarnyy nauchnyy zhurnal. 2023. No. 4-1. pp. 57-64.
12. Shevchenko A.I. Sotsialnaya integratsiya lyudey s ogranichennymi vozmozhnostyami kak obyekt sotsialno-filosofskogo analiza. Obshchestvo i pravo. 2011. No. 5 (37). pp. 285-289.