

MANAGING INNOVATION IN GYMNASTICS – INTRODUCING THREE NEW DISCIPLINES (TEAMGYM, GYMNASTICS FOR ALL AND PARKOUR) IN AZERBAIJAN

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Nəşr tarixi

Qəbul edilib: 11 yanvar 2021

Dərc olunub: 5 mart 2021

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Annotation: It is really difficult for new sports disciplines to become popular and recognized nationally and internationally. The first stage in the development of any sports discipline requires many professional enthusiasts with inspiration, clear ambition and enthusiasm to promote sports innovation.

The new gymnastics disciplines TeamGym, gymnastics for all (GfA) and Parkour also face this difficult situation as they were recently incorporated into the activities of the Azerbaijan Gymnastics Federation (AGF).

Keywords: *Innovation, new gymnastics disciplines, TeamGym, Gymnastics for All (GfA) and Parkour.*

Becoming popular and recognized on national and international level is really challenging for new sport disciplines. A lot of professional enthusiasts with inspiration, exact ambition and passion to work on promotion of sport innovation are needed in the first stage of any sport disciplines` development.

The new gymnastics disciplines TeamGym, Gymnastics for All (GfA) and Parkour also face this challenging situation as they have been included to the activity of the Azerbaijan Gymnastics Federation (AGF) recently. Gymnastics for All (GfA) can be identified as the foundation for all sports, as it promotes coordination, teamwork and versatility. It involves recreational activities for all age groups in particular in the fields of gymnastics, dance, gymnastics equipment and team sports. These

practices take into account also the different national and cultural characteristics. There are two major events held by the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG): the World Gymnaestrada and the World Gym for Life Challenge [6]. Also it should be mentioned that Technical Committee of the European Gymnastics also holds three Gymnastics for all Festivals-EUROGYM, European Gym for Life Challenge and Golden Age Gym Festival (European Gymnastics, Gymnastics for All. This sport which is a competitive gymnastics discipline was founded in Azerbaijan in 2015 with the participation of the Azerbaijani gymnasts in the 15th World Gymnaestrada organized in the City of Helsinki, Finland in 2015 [1].

TeamGym is a team sport that takes place in three disciplines: Floor, Tumble and Trampet. All three disciplines require good coordination and an outstanding technique with difficult acrobatic and gymnastic skills [7]. The inclusion of this gymnastics discipline - TeamGym into the developmental activities of AGF was decided in the beginning of 2018 [1]. It should be noted that TeamGym was only recognized by European Gymnastics, this means only Europeans represent this gymnastics discipline.

As for Parkour, this gymnastics discipline can be summed up as the art of moving from one stage to another by respecting one main principle: efficiency and fluidity. There are two categories, Speed and Freestyle. In the Speed race, competitors must clear obstacles as quickly as possible in order to cross the finish line as quickly as possible. At the Freestyle event, competitors use the obstacles to demonstrate their style and imagination while

their technical success is judged [3]. Parkour, the works on this gymnastics discipline has been carried out by Azerbaijan Gymnastics Federation since May of 2019 [3].

Taking into account that the three new disciplines in gymnastics are new to Azerbaijan and thus considered sporting innovations in the national context, it is needed to define sports innovations first. I define sport innovation as any form of change, new idea or novelty in a sports context. Viewing sport innovation from this viewpoint means taking a multi-faceted and interdisciplinary approach to highlighting how innovation is produced and made usable in the sense of sport. These include but are not limited to, topics such as product and service innovation, process innovation, organizational innovation, structural innovation, policy innovation and social innovation.

In the introduction phase of the new gymnastics disciplines there are only a few coaches and gymnasts engaged, there is a lack of national/international events [4]. The challenge is how to promote those new gymnastics disciplines to a broader audience in Azerbaijan. Also, bringing new sport and promoting it into new country is economically demanding. The upcoming research will be dedicated to how to develop new sports and which actors are important and beneficial in this process will be able to be involved. In addition, this research will find out which stakeholders might have an interest in fostering sporting innovation like governing bodies, equipment manufacturers in these gymnastics disciplines who wish to sell their equipment and gymnasts wanting to level up from amateurs or semi-professionals to professionals, clubs wanting to develop professionally and sponsors aiming to reach out to a broader market by help of the new sporting disciplines. To facilitate this research, a comparison between Azerbaijan and other countries where the above-mentioned gymnastics disciplines are successfully developed, will be made. This will help to extract strategies and managerial actions by national federations used to make the new gymnastic disciplines popular. It also would shed light on

the challenges those national federations faced in the process.

The literature review will cover (1) innovation theories and their relevance to the sporting environment (2) the notion of value-capturing through innovation by means of attracting stakeholders, (3) characteristics of national sporting systems, strategies and managerial actions for the purpose of facilitating international comparison.

There will be searched case studies in various sport disciplines in which innovations were fostered. According to that strategies in innovation, it will be discussed during the interviews with professionals involved in the three new gymnastics disciplines – Gymnastics for All (GfA), TeamGym and Parkour whether the considered innovation strategies can be applied to the mentioned gymnastics disciplines or not.

Also research aims to search value capturing in these three gymnastics fields. For understanding the process of value capturing and how it works, the author will use the example of the network of value capturers in football club management developed [5]. According to that chain of value capturers, there will be distinguished which of value capturers will be applicable in Gymnastics for All (GfA), TeamGym as well as Parkour. Value capturers may include teams, sporting competitions, club, gymnasts, event arena & facilities, merchandising, supporters, club members, media, sponsors, local communities. As a result of a lot of interviews, there will be exact answer which of these value capturers are available and can be involved in the development of the three new gymnastics disciplines.

As it was mentioned before that the author has opportunity to take interview from managers who can inform us what strategy have been chosen and what lacks within this strategy as well as which challenges they are facing in the development of the Gymnastics for All (GfA), Teamgym and Parkour.

As Gymnastics for All (GfA), TeamGym and Parkour are a young gymnastics discipline and very little information is available in written sources in Azerbaijan, most of the valuable

information within this research will be received from interviews with managers from AGF, promoters of the sport, clubs, coaches who are promoting the new disciplines. The interviews will be organized face to face and recorded and translated to English as some interviewees will use their native language.

The research on the three new gymnastics disciplines – Gymnastics for All (GfA), TeamGym and Parkour will utilize a qualitative approach. As the author of the research is working in Azerbaijan Gymnastics Federation (AGF), it needs to be noted that there is an opportunity to make the interviews with professionals like coaches, sport managers, individuals from marketing who are involved within these gymnastics disciplines. Also, there will be access to the Statistics about how many gymnasts practice these gymnastics disciplines, how many coaches are working and statistic for comparison the development level of Gymnastics for All, TeamGym and Parkour in Azerbaijan and other countries. Besides, the information will be searched on the internet as well.

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УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ИННОВАЦИЯМИ В ГИМНАСТИКЕ - ВНЕДРЕНИЕ ТРЕХ НОВЫХ ДИСЦИПЛИН (“ТЕАМГУМ”, ГИМНАСТИКА ДЛЯ ВСЕХ И ПАРКУР) В АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНЕ

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Аннотация: Статья популярным и признанным на национальном и международном уровне действительно сложно для новых спортивных дисциплин. На первом этапе развития любых спортивных дисциплин необходимо много профессиональных энтузиастов, обладающих вдохновением, четкими амбициями и страстью для работы по продвижению спортивных инноваций.

Новые дисциплины гимнастики TeamGym, Гимнастика Для Всех (GfA) и Parkour также сталкиваются с этой сложной ситуацией, поскольку недавно были включены в деятельность Федерации гимнастики Азербайджана (AGF).

Ключевые слова: *Инновации, новые дисциплины гимнастики, “TeamGym”, Гимнастика Для Всех (GfA) и Паркур.*

GİMNASTİKADA İNOVASİYANIN İDARƏ OLUNMASI – AZƏRBAYCANDA ÜÇ YENİ GİMNASTİKA NÖVLƏRİNİ (TEAMGYM, GİMNASTİKA HAMI ÜÇÜN, PARKUR) TƏQDİM ETMƏK

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Annotation: Milli və beynəlxalq səviyyədə məşhur olmaq və tanınmaq yeni idman sahələri üçün həqiqətən çətindir. Hər hansı bir idman intizamının inkişafının ilk mərhələsində idman yeniliyinin təşviqi üzərində işləmək üçün ilham, dəqiq ehtirasa sahib bir çox peşəkar həvəskara ehtiyac var. “TeamGym”, Gimnastika hamı üçün (GfA) və Parkur adlı

yeni gimnastika fənləri də bu yaxınlarda Azərbaycan Gimnastika Federasiyasının (AGF) fəaliyyətinə daxil olduqları üçün bu çətin vəziyyətlə qarşılaşırlar.

Keywords: *Innovasiya, yeni gimnastika növləri, “TeamGym”, Gimnastika hamı üçün (GfA) və Parkur.*