

# THE INDEPENDENT AND REGULAR PRACTISE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES- A NECESSITY OF THE MODERN AGE

Oana Maria GANCIU<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *The purpose of independent physical activities regards the passing of free time in an enjoyable and useful manner, aiming at the maintenance of body health. The surveyed population carries on sportive activities, in their free time and for relaxation or recreation, for socializing/social integration, physical improvement or personal fulfilment. The presence of physical education classes in the academic curriculum is absolutely necessary to stimulate the practise of physical activity among the youth and for the development of the capacity to practise physical exercise independently, during an entire lifetime.*

**Key words:** *independent physical activity, permanent education, students.*

## 1. Introduction

In a society that relies heavily on high technology, specialists view physical activity as a necessity of our age. Regular and continual physical activity has an important role in reducing the negative effects of sedentariness and stress, and represents an important factor in promoting health and in improving the quality of life.

The foundations of the ability to exercise independently are laid in the physical education acquired in a formal environment and then built in the physical education that has a non-formal or/and an informal character.

## 2. The Addressed Topic

Limiting the practice of physical exercise only to academic duty would be a serious

mistake on the part of young people. Independent physical activities are meant to ensure that free time is spent in an enjoyable and useful manner, with an aim to maintaining good health. At the core of these activities lies personal initiative, and they are carried out not only within the educational institution, but also at the students' residence, on sports grounds or outdoors, taking advantage of natural and acquired skills in terms of exercise, as well as of the knowledge obtained both during school and university years.

Due to its accessibility, physical education is practiced in a multitude of ways, ensuring a healthy, balanced lifestyle. Physical education possesses the strategies, as well as the methods and means needed to improve the quality of life in the case of each age category. Consequently, we believe that it is very important to become aware of these

---

<sup>1</sup> Assistant lecturer PhD, University of Bucharest, Department of Physical Education and Sport, Bucharest.

aspects in order to develop a healthy attitude and behaviour starting from an early age.

### 3. Research

#### 3.1. The Aim of the Research

The study is part of a broader research which aims to implement programs of independent physical activity in order to forge a balanced lifestyle, in which regular physical activities and sports are an integral part.

Once we gain knowledge of certain aspects relating to the students' behavior and attitude towards physical activities, we can alter their willingness to participate in sports by using specially designed programs.

Our goal is to expand on the studies provided by published literature in order to develop additional opinions, based on personal experience, along with experiments proved valid in practice.

#### 3.2. The Study Aims

- to determine the level of motivation the students of the University of Bucharest have regarding physical activities
- to determine how frequently they engage in physical activities in their leisure time
- to identify ways in which the students might be stimulated to engage consciously in physical activities and in sports
- to determine why students take part in sports activities
- to establish why students are unwilling to participate in physical activities

#### 3.3. The Research Method

The following research methods were used:

- a) Research was conducted using expert literature

- b) Research was conducted by means of a self-administrative and collective survey among the students regarding the level of interest they have in independent and regular physical activities
- c) Information was gathered and organized in charts
- d) The results were processed and interpreted
- e) Graphic representation

#### 3.4. Hypothesis

The opportunity to participate in their favorite sports is a decisive factor in determining the frequency with which students engage in such activities now and in encouraging them to keep these habits in the future.

#### 3.5. Setting up the Research

With this research we aim to convince the diligent students of the University of Bucharest to wholeheartedly practice accessible sportive activities, such as working out independently, in a systematical and continuous manner.

The population sample for this study consisted of 240 people. Most of them were first year students at the University of Bucharest, aged between 18-20. The survey, which consists of 10 questions, was given to female students who attend the physical education course that includes aerobics swimming and ballroom dancing.

### 4. Interpreting and Analysing the Research Data

The results of the conducted survey are:

The surveyed group practices physical activities in their free time to stay in shape, to relax, to socialize with other people or to develop physically and spiritually.

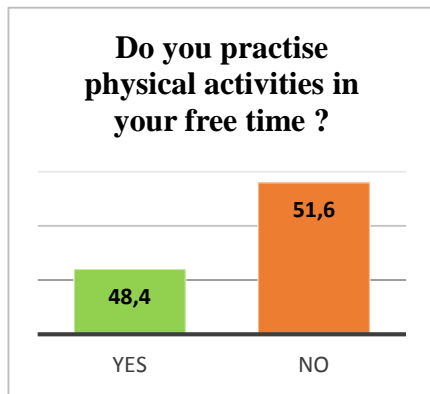


Fig. 1. *Practicing physical activities in free time*

You can notice that the percentage of those who practice sports and those who do not, that is 48.4 % and 51,6% respectively, are quite similar. The physical activities in which people engage in their free time are: fitness, aerobics, and ballroom dancing, followed by sports activities, such as swimming, tennis, jogging, winter games and others.

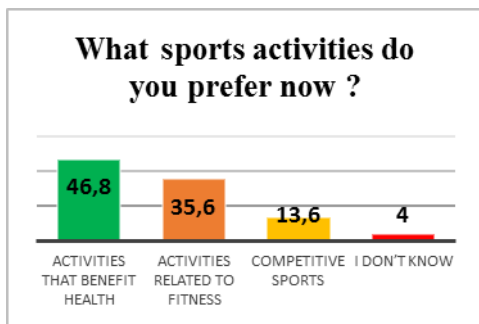


Fig. 2. *Favourite sport activities*

Regarding this question, most people opted for the physical activities that improve their health, an answer with a percentage of 46,8%, followed by the activities that help you them in shape, with a percentage of 35,6%. With only 13,6 % are the competitive physical activities, which means that students are more concerned with their health than they are

with their achievements in sports competitions.

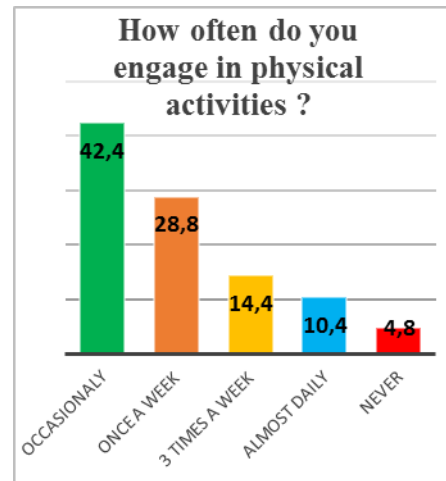


Fig. 3. *Frequency at physical activities*

It is noticeable that the percentage of those who engage in physical activities daily or 2 to 3 times a week, that is 10,4 % and 14,4% respectively, is smaller than the one of those who practice sports occasionally.

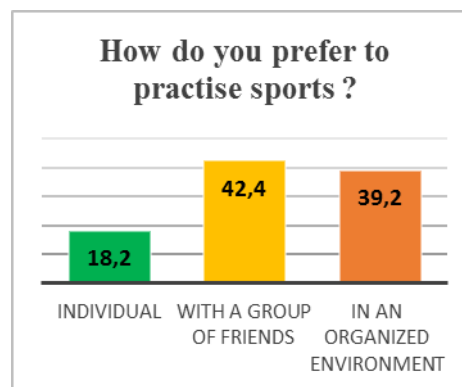


Fig. 4. *Preference for practicing sport*

42,9% of the respondents prefer to practice sports „with a group of friends”, while 39,2% prefer to do so in an organized manner. Only 18,2 % opted for individual sports practice.

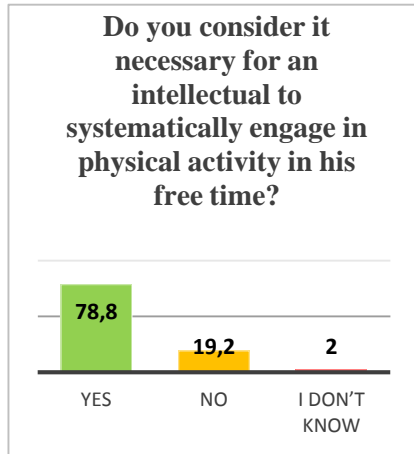


Fig. 5. *Necessary for regular exercise*

Since 78,8% of the respondents stated that they believe it is necessary for an intellectual to engage in regular exercise, it is clear that they are aware of the important role that sport plays in the life of a person with a sedentary job (which is likely to create health problems). Unfortunately, 19,2% of the respondents do not agree.

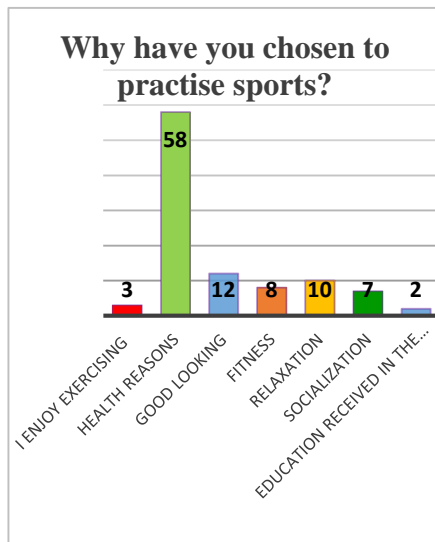


Fig. 6. *Why to practice sports*

Health is one of the main reasons for which our respondents chose to practice physical activities and it occupies the first

place with a percentage of 58%. Education fulfilled its purpose as more than half of those who took the survey acknowledged the benefits of regularly practicing physical activities. With a percentage of 12%, desiring a pleasant physical aspect occupies the second place of our poll. The third place belongs to those 10% who practice sports for relaxation. Other reasons for practicing sports hold a small percentage between 2-8%.

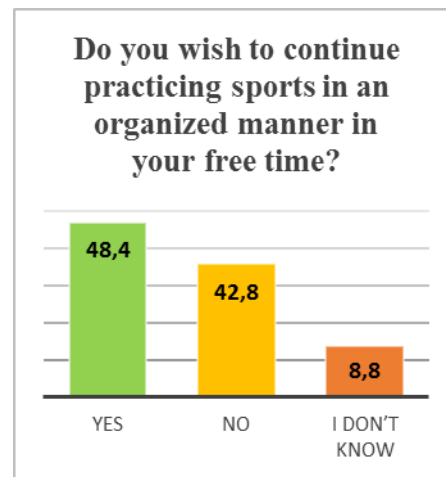


Fig. 7. *Continue practicing sports in an organized manner*

We analyzed our respondents' opinions and 48,4% of them said that they would continue practicing sports in an organized manner. Of course, there are some who wouldn't like to continue, that is 42,8 % of them. 8,8% chose not to answer.

By analysing our respondents' answers we understand that the main reason for which students don't engage in physical activities is the lack of free time, with a percentage of 50,4%, followed by laziness, with a percentage of 20,3%. 15,2% said that they have „other concerns”. Personal reasons stop 11% of our subjects to practice sport, while 3,1% of them say that they lack „appropriate equipment” and are unsatisfied with the state of gymnasiums.

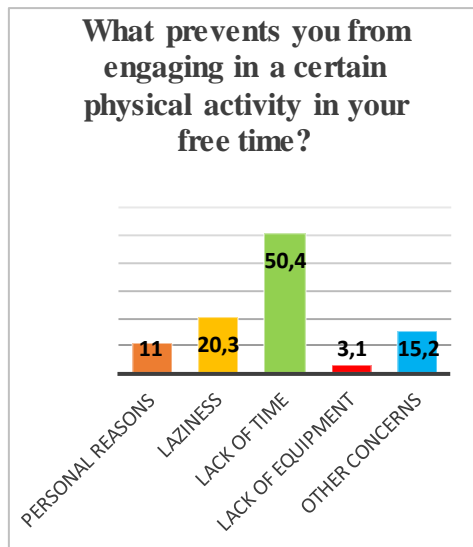


Fig. 8. *Don't engage in physical activities in their free time*

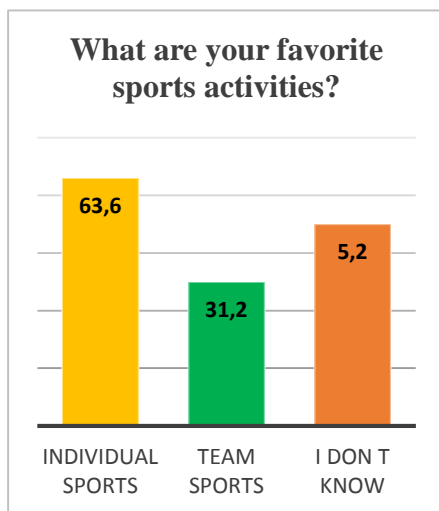


Fig. 9. *Favorite sports activities*

63,6%, an important percentage, said that they prefer „individual sports”, while 31,2% said that they are more fond of „team sports”. 5,2% chose not to answer.

38,4% answered that a better equipped sports center or gymnasium would motivate them to engage in physical activities more often, while 29,2% said that they would like more attractive gym programs. 17,3% want

„a greater variety of offers” and 1% said that they have other reasons.

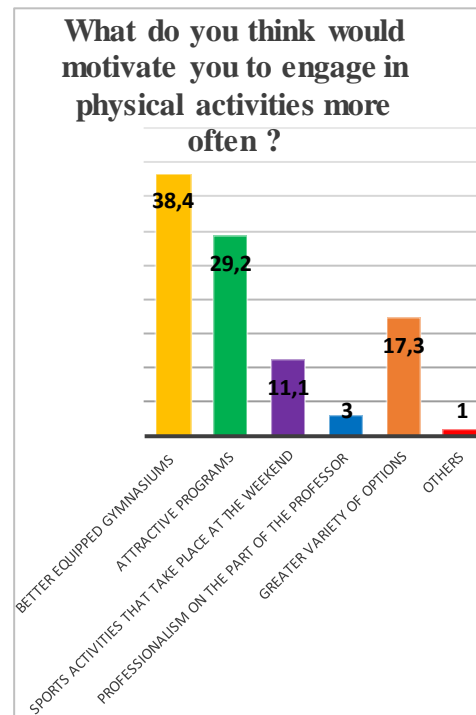


Fig. 10. *Motivation to engage in physical activities*

## 5. The Results of the Study

The results of our research make us understand that the youth really cares about a healthy lifestyle, a pleasant physical aspect and mental relaxation.

Approximatively half of those who stated that they participate in physical activities now are the ones who also wish to practice more sport in the future. At the other end of the spectrum there are the subjects who neither engage in sports in their leisure time, nor do they wish to do so in the near future.

Complaints were made especially regarding the gymnasiums- few and over-crowded- and the sporting equipment, as well as the inability to engage in certain favorite sports during physical education classes.

As far as the sports themselves are concerned, aerobics was the number one choice, followed by ballroom dancing, fitness and swimming; only a few stated that they preferred team sports. With respect to the reasons why it is good to participate in physical education classes in their leisure time, respondents listed several choices: physical and mental health, enjoyment and satisfaction, having a harmonious body, fitness, the possibility of getting to know their colleagues and interacting with them.

Asked to rank the reasons why they engage in physical activities in an independent and regular manner, female students listed the imperative of health as the top choice.

The respondents to the survey carry out sports activities in their free time and as a means of relaxation or entertainment, of socializing/integrating, of fitness improvement or personal fulfilment.

## 6. Conclusions

The study analyzed the factors which determine the students of the University of Bucharest to practice sports since physical education has remained an obligatory part of the curriculum in only 4 out of the 18 colleges in the university.

The physical education department attracts its students by means of diversifying the services it offers, of improving the performance of professors, and of a policy to promote sport in an appealing manner. The programs implemented by the University of Bucharest encourage students to make time for physical activity in their everyday life, thus creating a healthy lifestyle that includes regular exercise. The presence of physical education classes in the academic curriculum is absolutely necessary in order to stimulate the practice of physical activity among young people and to develop a life-long ability to engage in independent physical exercise.

In order to accustom students to engaging in physical activity in their spare time, it is necessary to implement certain policies that focus on long-term objectives. These policies will have to include an increased amount of time dedicated to physical activity by all social categories, so that the younger generation will display an obvious interest in fitness and in the ability to exercise, shown in their willingness to participate in different types of sports.

The data collected during our research has been compared to the results of similar studies and the obvious conclusion is that the needs and the reasons that determine students to engage in physical activities fall within the knowledge provided by expert literature.

## References

1. Badea, E.: *Motivație și timp liber (Motivation and free time)*. In: Revista de Pedagogie nr. 7-8, 1991, Bucureşti.
2. Bota, A.: *Exerciții fizice pentru viață activă – Activități motrice de timp liber (Exercise for active life-time)*. Bucureşti. Ed. Cartea Universitară, 2006.
3. Cârstea, G.: *Educația Fizică-bazele teoriei și metodicii (Physical education-basics of theory and method)*. Bucureşti. ANEFS, 1997.
4. Dragnea, A. et col.: *Teoria și Metodica Educației Fizice și Sportului (Theory and methodology of physical education and sport)*. Bucureşti. Ed. Fest, 2002.
5. Netolitzchi, M.: *Educația fizică și sportul în U.P.B. (Physical education and sport in U.P.B.)*. Bucureşti. Ed. Printech, 2002.
6. Popescu, M.: *Educația fizică și sportul în pregătirea studenților (Physical education and sport in preparing students)*. Bucureşti. Ed. Didactică și Pedagogică, 1995.
7. Văideanu, G.: *Educația la frontiera dintre milenii (The education of the millennia)*. Bucureşti. Editura Politică, 1998.