

MOTIVATIONS AND TEMPTATIONS TO PRACTICE THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DURING STUDENTS' FREE TIME

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Abstract: *Motivation and students' orientation towards spending their free time in an active manner embody a feasible alternative in order to change mentalities and behaviors of the young generation.*

The purpose of this study is to identify the negative temptations and especially the motivations of middle school and high school students for practicing outdoor sportive-recreational activities within the independent activity and to correlate them with the physical activity index. On middle school level, the students' motivations to practice physical activities in their spare time are especially extrinsic and in the case of high school students another set of motivations was encountered, especially of intrinsic nature.

Key words: *physical activities, motivations, temptations.*

1. Introduction

The incoherent strategy to promote an active lifestyle places Romania on the first position in Europe for infantile obesity and recent evaluations regarding the motor capacity of students reveal concerning results. Motivating and guiding students to practice systematic physical activities during their spare time becomes essential in order to change mentalities and behaviors of the young generation.

Free time motor activities are integrated into educational actions, the most truthful expression of our continuous formation, as an imperative of modern society [1].

In case of modern life, when motor function is very little used and unable to maintain the body's structure and harmony as fundamental premises of the health

condition, we have to intervene with means that will ensure the optimum of motion [4].

Sportive recreational activities systematically practiced during free time represent basic ways to promote an active life style, while contributing to the awareness of benefits that they produce on the long term.

The purpose of this study is to identify the motivations of middle school and high-school students to practice independent sport based recreation activities as well as the temptations to spend their free time in week-ends along with highlighting the level of physical activity index.

The hypothesis of the research is based on the assumption that significant differences exist between middle school and high-school students regarding the

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physical activity index, as well as between the motivations and temptations to spend their free time in weekends.

2. Methods

The study was carried out in April 2012, in Brasov and Tirgu Mures, on 196 middle school students and 187 high-school students. Two questionnaires were used for this study targeting: the physical activity index and the identification of motivations for independent physical activity and of temptations to spend the free time. The used methods: specialty literature study, questionnaires, statistical and mathematical methods and graphic representations. Statistical indices were: physical activity index (PAI), arithmetic mean (X), percent (%).

The physical activity index (PAI) represents an important indicator of physical exercise level and enables to gather information regarding the aerobic effort capacity. The questionnaire regarding the PAI evaluation has in view the following parameters [3]:

First parameter – INTENSITY (I)

5. Physical activity leading to high acceleration of respiration and relatively abundant perspiration.

4. Effort leading only occasionally (intermittent) to gasping and perspiration.
3. Slightly easy effort, for example the one from recreational sports – cycle-tourism.
2. Moderate efforts - for example volleyball.
1. Light efforts – for example fishing, walking.

Second parameter – DURATION (D)

4. Over 30 minutes
3. 20-30 minutes
2. 10-20 minutes
1. Less than 10 minutes

Third parameter – FREQUENCY (F)

5. Daily or almost daily
4. 3-5 times a week
3. Once or twice a week
2. Many times in a month
1. Less than one time a month

PAI is calculated by multiplying the scores obtained for each of the three parameters: intensity, duration and frequency, by using the formula:

$$IAF = I \times D \times F$$

Depending on the result, the physical condition category is determined and implicitly the effort capacity.

Table no. 1

PAI value is evaluated according to the grid (Dumitru Gh., 1997) [3]

Score	Physical condition category	Characteristics
80-100	Superior	Very active lifestyle
60-80	Very good	Active and healthy person
40-60	Moderate	Acceptable
20-40	Weak	Not active enough/relatively sedentary
1-20	Very weak	Sedentary

The second questionnaire consisted in identifying the motivations and temptations to spend the free time and enclosed a number of two questions, each having 8 units. Every student has to respond with “yes” or “no” to every unit,

depending on their personal motivation and their dominant activity for spending free time during weekends.

1. The benefits of practicing sport-based recreation activities in weekends:
 - a. an active and healthy lifestyle

- b. social integration (group affiliation)
 - c. pleasure for movement
 - d. self improvement and self esteem
 - e. physical aspect
 - f. success
 - g. attraction towards sport-based recreation activities
 - h. other reasons
2. Temptations to spend free time during weekends:
- a. sports
 - b. watching TV and listening to music
- c. attending cultural programs, going to museums, cinema, exhibitions
 - d. reading
 - e. computer games or internet navigation
 - f. spending time with friends/family
 - g. taking trips, walks
 - h. other ways to spend free time

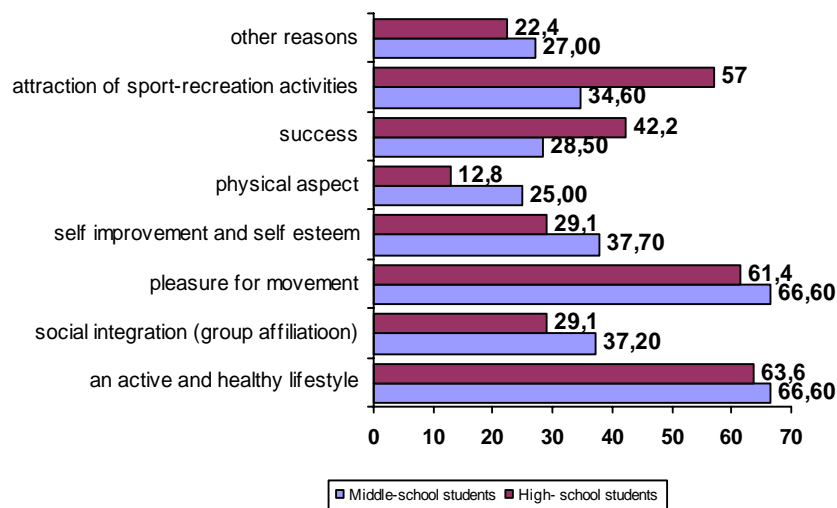
2. Results

Table no. 2

Summary regarding the benefits of practicing sportive recreational activities during weekends

Groups Units	Middle school students	High-school students
	No of "yes" options	No of "yes" options
a. an active and healthy lifestyle	130	119
b. social integration (group affiliation)	73	55
c. pleasure for movement	130	115
d. self improvement and self esteem	74	55
e. physical aspect	49	24
f. success	56	79
g. attraction towards sport-based recreation activiti	68	108
h. other reasons	53	42

Benefits of practicing sportive-recreational activities during weekends (%)



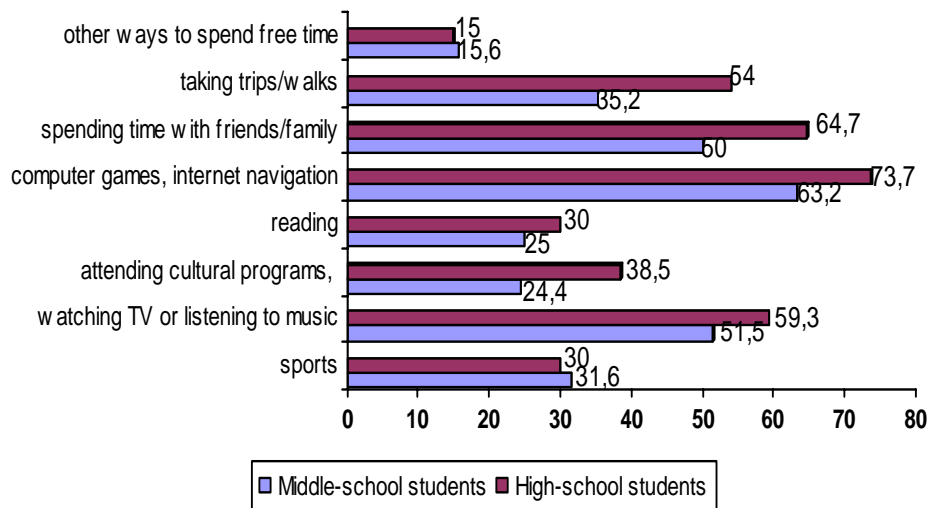
Graph 1. *Values regarding students' motivations for sportive recreational activities during weekends*

Table no. 3

Summary regarding temptations to spend free time during weekends

Groups Units	Middle school students	High-school students
	No of “yes” options	No of “yes” options
a. sports	62	56
b. watching TV or listening to music	101	111
c. attending cultural programs, going to museums, cinema, exhibitions	48	72
d. reading	49	56
e. computer games, internet navigation	124	138
f. spending time with friends/family	98	121
g. taking trips/walks	69	47
h. other ways to spend free time	31	28

Temptations to spend free time during weekends

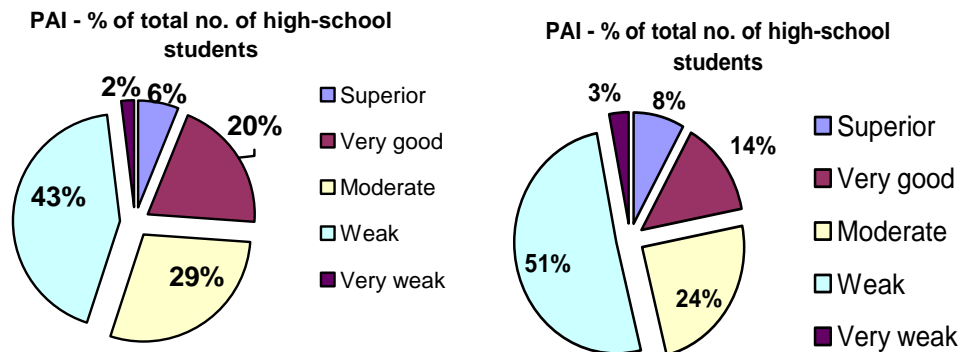


Graph 2. *Percent values regarding students' temptations in weekends*

Results from the PAI questionnaire

Table no. 4

Groups PAI level	Middle school students		High-school students	
	No of subjects	X PAI	No of subjects	XPAI
10-20	4	14	6	12.5
20-40	84	28.6	95	32.6
40-60	57	52.4	44	51
60-80	39	68,8	26	72.5
80-100	12	90	16	86



Graph 3. PAI -% of total no. of middle school students

Graph 4. PAI -% of total no. of high-school students

3. Discussions

In what the percentage differences among middle-school and high-school students are concerned, with regard to motivations for sportive-recreational activities practice during weekends (Table no. 2), high-school students registered superior percentage values as opposed to middle-school students, in the case of the following benefits: 3% for promoting an active lifestyle, 8.1% for integration and social affiliation, 5.2% for pleasure of movement, 8.6% for personal improvement and self-esteem development and 12.2% for physical aspect. Middle

school students as compared to high-school students registered superior values in what success and appeal for movement are concerned, namely 13.7% and 23.10%.

With regard to temptations (Table no.3), except for physical activities practice where the results of the two test samples had very small differences of only 1.6%, all other researched aspects had superior values in the case of middle school students as opposed to high-school students. The most attractive temptations for middle school students were: computer games, internet navigation, spending free time with friends and family, social and cultural programs.

The decreased values of IPA (Table no.4) show that 101 of high-school students have a decreased or much decreased IPA index as compared to 88 of middle school students. The difference between middle school and high-school students with acceptable IPA level was of 13 students. Good and superior IPA values were registered mainly at middle school level, the difference being of 4%.

The results reveal an insufficient preoccupation for physical activity practice to the detriment of increased interest for modern life's temptations.

4. Conclusion

The study results contributed to the confirmation of the hypothesis. They show that middle school students have a superior physical activity index as compared to high-school students, but both echelons include students with satisfactory level of activity or relatively sedentary and only one small percent of them lead a very active lifestyle.

Comparing the research carried out in 2007 [2] aiming the IPA on the same categories of subjects, with the results of the current research, we notice the fact that IPA suffered concerning modifications as follows: the difference between the two researches regarding subjects with a very active lifestyle diminished with 30% for middle school level and with 38% for high-school level, while the sedentary level increased with 16% for middle school students and with 22% for high-school students. These values reveal the lack of an educational and counseling background for promoting an active lifestyle at this age.

For middle school students the motivations are of extrinsic nature and educational, promoted by teachers and media encouraging an active and healthy lifestyle. For high-school students the motivations are intrinsic: social integration, self esteem, motion satisfaction, success, alluring character of activities, etc.

The temptations to spend free time are various and the students' options for sport-based recreation activities during weekends are found on the 4th place in what middle school students are concerned and on the 7th place in the case of high-school students.

The study results illustrate that education on practicing sportive recreational activities in the free time along with promotion of an active and healthy lifestyle are insufficient for students in middle school and particularly high-school, whereas temptations are, unfortunately, countless and alluring.

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