

**Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca  
Faculty of Sociology and Social Work**

Summary of The Doctoral Thesis

**Social Dimensions of Practising Physical Activities and  
Sports in the Student Population -With Special Regard  
to the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca**

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**Keywords:** Physical Education, physical activity and sports, student population, free time, motivation, motivational factors.

### **Abstract**

The paper focuses on the research of the social dimensions of practising sports in the student population of the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca and is structured in seven chapters.

The work is part of a extensive research conducted at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca in the period April-June 2012 and is based on theoretical arguments concerning motivation to practice sports, analyzes the factors that lead to university students to practice sports physical activity after this discipline is not anymore mandatory, starting with the second year of study.

### **1. Theoretical Background**

It is an introductory chapter which aims to provide a clarification of the concepts that are important with regard to the theme of the paper and that contributes to the better understanding of the social problem investigated and discussed. These concepts are the following: physical activity, sports and the functions of the sports activities; sports and Physical Education. The chapter concludes with a comparison of the significance of sports activities on the one hand and Physical Education on the other.

### **2. Theories and models of Practising Physical Activities and Sports**

It is a chapter which explains with the help of the most important theories and models why individuals join a physical exercise program and how these behaviors are adopted and also the involvement in physical activities and sports, the motivation to practise these activities and, last but not least, the need to practise a sport. This information can be a way of answering the question: How is it that those who start a physical exercise program fail to keep up with it? (Culos-Reed, Gyurcsik and Brawley, 2001 as cited in Weinberg and Gould, 2003, p 404).

The following theories and models are discussed:

- The theory of motivation based on needs, The theory of the 16 basic desires, The theory of achievement motivation, The theory of self-determination, The social learning theory, The psychological theories of interpersonal differences in behavior adoption, The theory of equity and access.

-The health belief model, The dualistic model of passion, The McClelland-Atkinson model (Achievement motivation), A conceptual model of how people adopt recreation activities, The Sport Commitment model showing the main reasons why young people participate in different sports activities or abandon them and The model of withdrawal from Sport .

### **3. The motivation for involvement in physical activities and sports**

It is a chapter that provides a discussion on the motivations of individuals to practise regularly physical activities and sports and, after discussing de-motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, their direction and intensity, it analyzes the factors that determine behavior and the mechanisms that explain the effects.

To explain how far motivation is the active factor in a person's decision to engage in an activity and to make efforts to sustain it, both the primary factors encouraging participation in sport and physical activity and the motivational factors that discourage participation in these types of exercises are discussed.

To better understand adherence to an exercise program, in the case of young people, students in general and university students in particular, not only the determinants of joining an exercise program are analyzed but also the personal and the environmental factors associated with participation in physical activities and sports, respectively.

### **4. Studies of the Scale of Physical Inactivity**

This chapter discusses previous research relevant to the problem studied, in order to support the development of a quantitative study whose subjects are the students of the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca.

Research conducted in most industrialized countries (Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Institute, 1996; Caspersen, Merritt and Stephens, 1994; King et al., 2000;

Sallis and Owen, 1999; Gauvin, Levesque, and Richard, 2001; Higgins, 2004 as cited in Weinberg and Gould, 2011, p. 415) highlights the consequences of a lifestyle devoid of any regular physical activity or sports such as: physical inactivity among adults, the increasing number of obese people and the growing percentage of such people, the extremely low percentage of young people who regularly practise sports and the decline of physical activity levels with age, etc.

A Europe-wide study on sport and physical activity, based on interviews with nearly 27000 people by the end of 2009 from the 27 EU member states reveals disturbing percentages concerning the practice of physical activities. Almost half of those interviewed said that they never practise sports, almost a quarter rarely practise a sport, and very few regularly practise such activities. (Special Eurobarometer 334/Wave 72.3 - TNS Opinion & Social, Sport and Physical Activity, European Commission, 2010).

A study conducted in 2006 in Scotland confirmed the results of previous studies, namely, that the most common excuse for physical inactivity is the lack of free time and the lack of the desire to include this activity in the daily routine.

Vello Hein, Maret Müür and Andre Koka (2004), studying the relationship between intrinsic motivation and the intention to be physically active of students after they graduate from high school, conducted research involving 400 students aged 14-18 years from different cities on the territory of Estonia.

The results of this study indicated that the intrinsic motivation to experience physical activity was the strongest predictor of intention to be physically active after high school graduation, besides the intrinsic motivation of achievement.

All these studies have an important role for this paper, which aims to study the way in which students relate to the practice of regular physical activities and sports and, secondly, to study the things that influence them to engage in the practice of such activities, having in view the changes in behaviour during the past decades and the national programs and campaigns that encourage the practice of sport activities regularly.



## **5. Quantitative study on the way in which students enrolled at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca practise physical activities and sports**

### Research Methodology

#### The Aim of the Present Research:

Analysis on the way in which the students enrolled at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca practise physical activities and sports, the reasons that lead to the continuation or to the discontinuation of participation in sports activities when Physical Education and Sport is no longer a compulsory subject, starting with the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of university studies.

#### Hypotheses:

1. Students who do not have in the educational curriculum Physical Education classes and sports practise less sports activities with the increasing years of study;
2. The increasingly lower interest for sports activities is justified by the gradual reduction of the time allotted to leisure activities and the increasing educational requirements;
3. Satisfaction with the conditions in which students can practise sports activities, both within the university and outside it during their leisure time, influences their intentions regarding the frequency with which they propose to do sports in the future;
4. The experience of practising sports activities determines students to practise sports in the future as well;
5. The degree of satisfaction with how the Physical Education classes are organised has a direct influence on the frequency with which they choose to practise sports activities;
6. The opportunity to practise your favorite sports is a decisive factor in the frequency with which students practise such activities today.

#### Objectives:

- to identify how students prefer to spend their free time;
- to determine how the students relate to sports;

- to identify how students appreciate the existence of opportunities for practising sports;
- to determine the frequency with which students practise sports;
- to identify the main reasons that lead students to practising sports activities;
- to identify the possible reasons why students do not practise sports as much as in the past;
- to identify potential reasons why students practise sports to a greater extent than in the past;
- to identify the main things that could motivate students to practise more sports;
- to identify the types of relationships preferred by students in sport activities;
- to determine the degree of satisfaction with the conditions in which students practise sports;
- to analyse the way in which students relate to sports that can be practised at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca;
- to identify the types of sports practised and preferred;

In order to accomplish the aim and achieve the objectives, we have set forth the following key concepts:

- leisure, analyzed by using the following indicators: the extent to which students believe they have enough free time, the weekly amount of free time, the status on the labour market, the ways of spending leisure time;
- how students relate to sport, analyzed by use of the following indicators: the perception regarding the physical and mental benefits, the excess of energy and the pleasant effect obtained, the way how students relate to the competitive side of sports and the feeling triggered by the word sport, the opportunities to practise sports and how students take advantage of them, the interest for practising sports, the degree of involvement of the local authorities to create favorable conditions for practising sports activities;
- the frequency with which students usually practise sports activities currently, analyzed by use of the following indicators: when they did the last time sports outside the Physical Education classes, the frequency with which they practise sports;

- the frequency with which students practised sports in the past and how they motivate their responses analyzed by use of the following indicators:

- the probability that in the past they might have practised sports more rarely, the reasons for which in the past they rarely practised such activities, the reasons for which in the present they practise more sport;

- the probability that in the past they might have practised more sports, the reasons for today's reduced time allocated to these activities, the reasons why they are far too busy to be able to practise sports, the reasons why now they rarely or never practise sports;

- participation in sports in the future, analyzed by using the following indicators: opinion on the idea of participating more often in sports in the future, things that would help them participate more often in such activities;

- practising sport activities in their leisure time, analyzed by using the following indicators: partners with whom they usually practise sports, their experience as a member of a sports team, where they usually practise sports in their leisure time, the degree of satisfaction with the conditions in which they can practise sports activities in their leisure time, the sports activity/activities practised in their leisure time, the activity/activities they would like to practise in their free time;

- sport activities practised during Physical Education classes, analyzed by using the following indicators: their view concerning the number of hours of Physical Education classes in the curriculum of higher education, the degree of satisfaction with the way in which the Physical Education classes in the faculty where they study are taught, the place where they chose to attend their Physical Education classes at the university, the degree of satisfaction with the facilities offered at the location which they chose for their Physical Education classes, how students relate to the sports that can be practised at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca;

- for the independent variables we have established the following indicators: area of residence, family structure, mother's level of education, father's level of education, gender, age, the faculty where they study at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, the year of study.

Methods, techniques and research tools:

In the present research we will use the quantitative research method and the technique of administration of questionnaires through sociological inquiry.

Research tools:

As a research tool the questionnaire will be used for the development of which we adopted and adapted the research instrument used in the study "Sport, Exercise and Physical Activity: Public Participation, barriers and attitudes" Lorraine Murray, Ipsos Mori, Scottish Executive Social Research, October 2006.

The sample investigated:

It consists of 880 students, representing almost 10% of the total number of students enrolled in the 2011-2012 academic year at one of the following faculties of the Technical University of Cluj- Napoca: Architecture and Urbanism; Automation and Computers; Constructions; Electronics, Telecommunications and Information Technology; Materials' Science and Engineering.

Sampling was conducted at these five universities to include in this study both students whose curriculum is very busy and students whose curriculum is less loaded.

Sampling was performed using the nominal lists of catalogs. Random selection was performed by using the 10 step method, choosing every tenth student in the nominal list and following that the proportion of subjects in the sample by gender corresponds to the proportion by gender of the students enrolled in each faculty, specialization, division, year of study.

The Technical University has a 13 faculty structure divided into two university centers: Cluj- Napoca and Baia Mare, plus extensions in the major cities of the region: Alba - Iulia, Bistrita, Satu -Mare and Zalau. However, sampling was conducted only among students attending the faculties in Cluj -Napoca.

Population studied:

It is represented by all the students who attend the day courses at one of the faculties at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, regardless of year of study, age, department, specialization. In the academic year 2011-2012, at The Technical University of Cluj-Napoca there were a number of 8913 students.

### **Conclusions:**

The results of this quantitative study show that students who believe they have more free time are male, attending the Faculty of Constructions and in their first year of study.

The prototype of the student who considers himself/herself very busy is a female student attending the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism and is not in the first year of study. Interestingly, the third year students are more concerned, up to a rate 10 % higher than those in the first year, of their social lives (parties, meetings, going out etc.), even though students in the third year of study consider, also at a rate 10 % higher, that they do not have enough spare time.

On a scale comprising: using the computer, watching TV shows/listening to the radio, listening to music, reading, participating in cultural events (theater, opera, cinema, concerts, etc.), going out with friends, practising sports (others than the Physical Education classes), **sport occupies only the fourth place among the preferences of the first-year students and only the third among the preferences of the students in their third year of study.**

The overloaded program is the main cause why some of the students have reduced the time allocated to sports activities or why nearly 20% of respondents practised more rarely a sport in the past.

The lowering interest for sport activities is indeed justified by the reduction of leisure time and the increasing educational requirements, although the real reasons why students seem to do sports are different.

In support of this hypothesis is the reason why the students said they had again started to do more sport, namely the desire to be fit (80% of the female students and 65% of the male students).

These data show that free time is cited as the main reason for which students practised sports rarely in the past and also currently, but, on the other hand, good physical shape is the reason that makes almost everyone to pay far more attention to these activities at present, regardless of the year of study and gender of the student.

Both now and in the past, female students were less involved in sports activities, considering sports activities more suitable for boys. Male students are those who practise more sport, as highlighted by the logistic regression and association test, and by year of study, the first year said they practise a sport more often, due to the compulsory Physical Education classes that are part of the curriculum.

Although those who believe they have enough free time are often those who practise a sport, still, more than half of those who say they haven't got enough free time and of those who have a job, practise at least once a week sports activities, which demonstrates that not free time, but awareness and experience are decisive factors for the frequency with which those questioned practise sports.

One third of students in the first year and one fourth in the third year of study said that the last time they did sports was the day of the interview or a day before, which means that the frequency with which students practise sports decreases slightly with the years of study.

There are no significant differences between the first and third years of study regarding their willingness to do more sport in their free time than they do now.

The experience of practising sports activities proves to be the most important predictor of the likelihood that the students will practise more often such activities in the future.

Almost half of those who said they are currently doing sports are also those who want to do more sport in the future. At the opposite pole there are those who have never done sports nor intend this in the near future. Also, more than half of those who experienced membership in a sports team are determined and intend to do even more sport in the near future, which proves once again that experience is the most important predictor of the likelihood for students to do more sport in the future. Those the least interested in this are the students who have never been part of a sports team.

Lower costs would encourage most of the students to do more sport, while cost is only the fourth issue for almost half of those who rarely or never play sports, and would help most of them to do sports more often if they could include this activity in their daily routines.

Partners with whom they can practise sports activities proved to be important for those who have again started a sport and less important for those who have reduced the frequency of performing such activities. Currently, only about 6% are doing sports with friends and class mates, which means that the network of classmates in the faculty did not respond to these needs.

Also, only about 5% were those who said they practise a sport because they love to socialize.

This shows that, even if with the third year students the reason why they are busier is their social life (parties, meetings, city trips, etc.), playing sports is not a preferred way of socializing for many of the students of the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca.

Almost all students, regardless of their gender and year of study, believe that there are too few hours of Physical Education in the curriculum of higher education. Those students who would like for the number of these hours to increase, are precisely those who intend to do more sports in the future and those who are very satisfied with the way these hours are taught. Therefore, the more satisfied with the Physical Education classes the students are, the more sport they propose to do, which means that the way these hours are taught is an important, perhaps even decisive factor in doing sports and combating sedentarism.

In general, boys are more satisfied with the way these hours are taught, though, more than half of all those surveyed are satisfied.

Those the most dissatisfied with the way in which the Physical Education classes are taught are the students from the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism 30.2%, followed by the Faculty of Automation and Computers, 22.3%.

Most satisfied with the way in which the Physical Education classes are taught are the students from The Faculty of Materials' Science and Engineering 65.3%, followed by the Faculty of Electronics, Telecommunications and Information Technology 64.1%, and those of the Faculty of Constructions 61.1%.

The compliance to regulations and the dedication of teachers were cited as the most satisfying things. The biggest gripes were: too much time spent on organizing, the excessive discipline imposed by some teachers, followed by the problem of too crowded and distant sports centres and no possibility to practise your favorite sports during Physical Education classes.

These are the reasons why, among the suggestions made by the respondents in support of young people in general and students in particular with the purpose of them practising sports activities more frequently, respondents said, first, that these activities must be conducted in a pleasant environment, without any pressure and obligations

and being stimulated only by optimal conditions to be able to practise their favorite sport, a teacher who is open-minded and interested in helping, competitions organized and other small incentives.

Almost all students surveyed said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the facilities offered by the sports centres where they chose to pursue their Physical Education classes, which means that they are able to do the sport as intended during these hours.

Regarding where students chose to practise sports in their free time: Students who play sports often opted for gyms, fitness, aerobics or sports facilities, well-maintained pitches as compared to those who rarely practise sports or physical activities who prefer to do so at home.

Regardless of where they chose to do sports, more than 70% are satisfied with the conditions in which they practise sports in their leisure time.

Regarding the favorite sports that are practised:

The most important aspect is that most students practise and would like to practise sports in the future at least an individual sport and one team sport, and few were those who said they practise team sports or individual sports only. Football is most popular with boys and aerobics with girls while field or table tennis is preferred about equally by both sexes. The equally preferred individual sport by both boys and girls is jogging. Very few were those who would like to practise other sports than those they practise at present, which means that the majority of respondents practise their preferred sport.



## **6. Qualitative study on the Experiences and Social Motivations of Students from the Technical University of Cluj- Napoca in the Regular Practise of Sports**

### **Research Methodology:**

The aim of the research:

The analysis of the way in which students enrolled at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca are influenced in playing sports by: the significance of this activity, the Physical Education classes, by lessons from the past and by possible costs.

Research questions:

- Is the frequency with which students practise sports and their involvement in these activities influenced by what the Physical Education classes mean to them?
- Are the changes required by students regarding how to teach Physical Education classes determined by their past experiences?
- Does the significant experience gained from playing sports affect students' motivation to continue?
- Do external motivational factors have a decisive influence on playing sports?
- Does the desire to socialize lead students to practise some sports?

Objectives:

- to identify the significance sports and Physical Education classes have for students of the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca;
- to identify the changes desired by students in the way to conduct Physical Education classes in school and at university based on previous experiences;
- to determine how significant experiences have influenced the practise of sport;
- to identify the motivational factors for both students who frequently practise sports and for those who rarely practise such activities;
- to identify the favorite sports activities to be practised in one's leisure time and why they would opt for these sports ;

Items investigated:

- The significance of sports activities;
- The significance of Physical Education classes;

- The way Physical Education classes are taught in school and college;
- How students would like Physical Education classes to be conducted in college;
- Changes in the way students would like Physical Education classes to be conducted;
- The most enjoyable experiences during the practice of sports;
- The most unpleasant experiences during the practice of sports;
- The way in which meaningful experiences have influenced the practise of sport;
- Spare time that should be allocated to the practice of sports activities;
- The amount of money necessary to practise a sport;
- External factors that would motivate students to practise more sport;
- The way in which external factors would help students practise sports more often;
- The favorite sports activities to be practised in one's free time;
- The reason for choosing certain sports;

Methods, techniques and the research tool:

In the present research we used the qualitative research method, the individual semi-structured interview technique, with the interview guide as research tool.

Subjects investigated:

In this qualitative study, 72 students participated enrolled in first and the third years of study at one of the following faculties of the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca: The Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism; The Faculty of Automation and Computer Science; The Faculty of Architecture; The Faculty of Electronics, Telecommunications and Information Technology and The Faculty of Materials' Science and Engineering.

The selection of subjects was done by using the snowball method, step by step. In the selection process of subjects, we succeeded in involving a number of 27 female and 45 male students. This low participation of female students is due to the fact that the student population of the University is in a very high percentage male. In this sense, we can state that the participation rate of female students in this qualitative

study is proportional to the student population of the gender of the University as a whole.

The results may have a theoretical representation of the student population of the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, regardless of year of study, age, type of education, department or specialization.

### **Conclusions:**

The students who talked sincerely about what sports and Physical Education classes mean to them are precisely those who frequently practise a sport. These correlations between responses do not allow us, however, to state that there is a causal connection because these two aspects, because the study subjects were only 42 in number, with no statistical significance in this case.

We can state, however, that the students who frequently practise a sport, give more importance to this, the sport having thus a different meaning to them as compared to those students who rarely practise a sport.

The experiences on how the Physical Education classes are held helped the interviewees describe the changes they would like to do, if they were the PE teachers. All these changes indicated the elimination of the pressures that are exerted upon them to practise a sport, of the obligation to participate in Physical Education classes at university, and especially of the conditioning of the promotion of an academic year. In a positive tone, they also suggested the use of many methods and techniques meant to encourage participation and the assurance of the appropriate conditions for them to practise their favourite sport. Generally speaking, the significant experiences, whether they were positive or negative, were the ones that made interviewees become more involved in doing sports.

Even though many studies on the subject show that injuries are a major cause for which most sports people give up doing sports professionally, when interviewed, the students have not mentioned these experiences as the ones that might make any of them give up practising sports. On the contrary, the injuries made them more careful and more involved.

The answers regarding the financial resources and the time spent practising a sport correlate positively again. More specifically, those who would allocate more money to play sports are those who devote more time to these activities as well.

The importance that socializing can have during practising a sport varies depending on the frequency and how it was experienced.

Socialization through the practice of sports proved to be one which made a positive impact on students whenever Physical Education teachers encouraged and supported this by organizing teams and encouraged a positive attitude towards team sports. Preferences for team sports are an additional argument in support of the idea that sport is the best way of socializing, even though now, among the students surveyed, this way of socializing is not in the top of their preferences.

## **7. General conclusions and suggestions for future research and educational programs**

The results of quantitative research showed that students who practise sports and physical activities do this for fun, because they want to look better physically, they want to have a good physical shape and/or are accustomed to practising such activities, considering that by practising them they can relax, unwind, have fun. They have done sports ever since childhood and they find time for sports at present as well, even though they found a job besides the busy schedule at the faculty and they also have professional obligations.

Also, those who practise more sports believe that this activity is worth the financial investment and is worth more time devoted to it.

Moreover, almost all the students appreciate the benefits of practising sport, agreeing that the practice of sports and physical activities is beneficial to both their physical and mental health, it helps them maintain their body weight within the normal limits and get them physically fit; it gives them more energy and pleasure as well.

Although these benefits are known to students, whether they do sports or not, there are certain barriers that prevent them from practising various sports and other physical activities.

The most important barrier is the lack of free time, which is more pronounced among female students, students in the third year of study and students from the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism.

Regardless of the frequency with which students participate in sports and whether or not they do sports, they said that the inclusion of physical activity in their daily routine would help them most to do sport. This proves that "being too busy" is a

so-called "excuse" and if students were more motivated, they could find time for sport, by its inclusion on their priority list and by organizing their spare time better.

Regarding the ways of spending their leisure time, practising physical activities and sports ranks fourth among first year students' and third in the fourth year students' preferences at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca.

Physical activity is an important part of a healthy lifestyle that contributes to the prevention of many chronic diseases. However, the survey results show that over 70% of students of the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca do not comply with the World Health Organization recommendations on physical activity, namely they do not do at least 30 minutes of physical activity at least 3-5 times a week.

Similar to other studies in other countries, our study shows that the practice of sports and physical activities decreases with age. Frequency depends on years of study, so the first year students said they often practise a sport, which is due to the compulsory Physical Education curriculum.

This reduction in practising sports and physical activities is present among both boys and girls, but the percentage of those who practise sports and physical activity at least 3-5 times a week is higher among boys.

The results of the study indicate a positive correlation between the frequency and duration of involvement in physical activities. On the other hand, students who do more sport are those who intend to do more sport than they do now in the future as well.

The distribution by gender revealed that male students are more active as far as the practise of sports is concerned and are those who go easier beyond their discontent and agree to play sports on a regular basis, even if the conditions in which they can do this is not the most satisfactory. Both now and in the past, female students were less involved in sport activities, considering sport activities more suitable for boys. Male students are those who practise more sport, as highlighted by the logistic regression and association test.

The opportunity to practise a sport with partners encourages them positively to do so, even though the type of partners that can exercise with them has no significant influence, and also this activity is not considered a way of spending their leisure time for most students, although with increasing years of study they say they are increasingly concerned about their social lives (parties, trips, going out with friends/colleagues).

The positive involvement of Physical Education teachers in organizing sports teams had a positive effect in stimulating students to socialize in this way. Thus, the team sports proved to be the preferred means of practising sports during Physical Education classes and socializing in this way, even though their practice is not in the top of ways of socializing and spending their leisure time.

The sports and physical activities most often practised by female students are: jogging, aerobics, fitness and swimming, and among male students: football, jogging, table tennis and swimming. The number of students practising team sports is extremely low, especially among girls. The team sport practised by the greatest number of female students is volleyball, followed by basketball. Among the male students the most practised team sport is football, followed by basketball. The small number of students who practise team sports, also affects the teams representing the university, the selection basis being very limited. Tennis and swimming are on the first places, both with male and female students, being in the top of the sports that they would like to practise.

In other European countries, university sport is based on the selection of sports and physical activities that students want to attend voluntarily, for fun, and the offer regarding these activities is very diverse. Unfortunately, at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca this offer is quite limited. The diversification of the offer and a more flexible timetable will increase the attractiveness of Physical Education classes. Also, the Physical Education curriculum can be adapted to the favorite sports and physical activities of students. According to the students, the offer of extracurricular sports activities is not really attractive. The overloaded curriculum, the insufficient number of Physical Education classes, the limited access to sports centres actually puts off the youth from practising sports.

Both the quantitative and the qualitative study showed that the degree of satisfaction with how Physical Education classes are held has a decisive role in the frequency with which students will practise a sport in the future. So those who are dissatisfied with Physical Education classes in school or at university will be less and less involved in such activities. The degree of satisfaction with the conditions in which they can practise sports during Physical Education classes and in their free time will also have a decisive role in the frequency.

What also proved to be crucial was the possibility to practise physical activities and sports in a more relaxed environment, without pressure and conditioning, encouraged only by good conditions in which to practise a sport and stimulated only by the good advice of well-prepared teachers or coaches, competitions and rewards.

The presence of Physical Education classes and sports in higher education reflects the importance that must be given to health and the harmonious physical development of the young generation, who are more and more interested in digital technology, at the expense of sports and outdoor activities. Regarding the number of hours of Physical Education included in the higher education programs, almost all students, regardless of their gender and year of study, believe that their number is insufficient. The students who are most interested in the number of these hours to increase are those who are very satisfied with the way in which these hours are held. Therefore, the more students are satisfied with the Physical Education classes, the more sports they intend to do, which means that the way in which these hours are held has an important role perhaps even a decisive one in practising sports and in combating sedentary behaviour.

The quantitative research has shown that as far as practising sports and physical activity is concerned most important are the experience, the intention and consistency, which are either strengthened or weakened by other reasons to practise or not to practise sports activities: free time, sports facilities and accessibility to them, the entourage and the influence that it has. Previous participation in various physical activities and sport has proven to be the most important predictor of the likelihood for students to practise more often such activities in the future.

Both studies showed that, in general, there are two types of students in terms of their relationship with sport and two courses of action that have been taken according to the collected answers.

The non-motivated, inactive student justifies his/her disinterest in sport and Physical Education by the lack of the necessary conditions to practise sports, by the absence of an entourage to motivate and encourage him permanently, by the lack of informed advice, of a coach, by financial problems, by lack of free time, etc. He/she will always find excuses and justifications for not practising sports activities in his/her

leisure time and/or admits he/she doesn't like sports and does not intend to do sports. For him/her, sports and Physical Education classes are not a way of relaxation or the opportunity to do something outside of courses, laboratories, etc. He/She participates in Physical Education classes motivated and conditioned by the curriculum and the passing of the academic year rather than pleasure.

The motivated student is physically active, interested to take up different sports, willing to spend more money to do sports in appropriate conditions and has a good management of his/her leisure time. He/she will always declare that he/she has time for sport or will make time for these activities, even during the period of examinations and assessment, or even if he has already found a job and has other professional obligations outside the university. They are those who know better the benefits of practising sport. For them, sport and Physical Education classes mean a lot, reportedly bringing considerable benefits to health, to a very good mental condition, to a more pleasant physical appearance, being also an excellent way to socialize, etc.

Thus, we can say that the curriculum and methodology of each educational level are much lower than those specific to an efficient one, precisely because, as demonstrated by this research, the training and education objectives are not met alongside the learning ones.

Therefore, there are no principles that should guide the young people through a stage of their development and by which they can self-regulate their behaviour, which is why young people are tempted to follow certain trends, and why they finally get to turn to sports clubs and fitness clubs, if, in the most optimistic scenario, they will continue to practise with some regularity sport after the first year of study.

It is difficult to understand why, in our country, besides health education, there are no other programs to promote wellness, meaning regular exercise combined with good nutrition, a principle that has developed increasingly in other countries in recent decades and still enjoys promoting by so many personalities from politics (the campaign backed by President Barack Obama's wife), and numerous celebrities from the world of showbiz.

We must support children and young people to acquire and implement the abilities and the skills necessary for practising sports throughout their lives. From the early years up to their graduation, all those involved in the education of younger



generations (parents, educators, teachers, coaches) must be concerned to form and develop their skills of independent practice of various forms of physical activity and sports in their leisure time.

Future research in this field should provide an answer to the following questions:

Do the students claiming that the lack of free time is the primary reason for which they get involved little or at all in physical activity and practising sports, preferring to devote primarily to school activities, later perform better in terms of professional development?

Why do students, most of whom come from other places and have a greater need in the early years to socialize and build new groups of friends, not use sports activities as a method of socialising?

Proposal for the optimizing of Physical Education and sports activities in the student population of the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca:

- increasing the number of Physical Education and sports classes is essential to stimulating physical exercise among students;

- the introduction of the discipline of Physical Education and Sports as a compulsory subject in the second year of study as well;

- to increase students' interest towards Physical Education , I believe that it is necessary to generalize the marking as a form of assessment at all the faculties of the University; currently out of the 9 faculties of the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, only The Faculty of Materials' Science and Engineering introduced this evaluation system;

- increasing the number of credits allocated to PE as a discipline;

- I would like to attract the attention of decision makers in the university to the necessity of finding effective ways for engaging students in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years of study, who do not have Physical Education in their curriculum, in practising sports and physical activities (free access or access for a reasonable price to the facilities and centres of the university, the rental of sports equipment, etc.);

- increasing the level of facilities for Physical Education and sports at the faculties and student hostels (now the allotted area per student being insufficient);

- increased collaboration with other universities in the Cluj-Napoca University Center and with other universities in the country, as well as student organizations in order to increase the number of sporting events organized locally and nationally.

Also, future programs in this field should provide solutions to the following problems:

- Sport activities should become favorite ways of spending free time among high school students, university students and youth in general.

- Finding ways and specialists to assist young people to practise sport in a more relaxing way.

- Public - private partnership to provide solutions for access to spaces destined to sports and leisure activities in order to increase opportunities for young people to practise the sports activities that they prefer.

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