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SUMMARY
OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

LIFESTYLE AND SPORTS
AMONG THE YOUNG GENERATION

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***KEY WORDS:** lifestyle; young generation; spare time; values; attitudes and personal development; social development; subjective well being; objective well being; quality of life; mass sports; culture of sports; corporeality an physique; postmodernism and globalisation.*

1. Introductory argument

As there is a large consensuality in the literature from different domains regarding the psychosocial value of sports for the individual as well as for the society, the subject of *making sports a part of lifestyle* imposes itself as one of great relevance for the contemporary society, particularly for the Romanian one. Through our doctoral approach we tried to combine the problems specific to the world of sports (tendencies, phenomena, enhancing factors) with those macro and mesosocial regarding *the presence of physical activity in the lifestyle of young people, especially of the Romanian young people* (statistical data and research), a rather complex combination, as the two domains are apparently non related. But the rich disciplinary intersection that is “the sociology of sports” proved to be adequate to the need for knowledge and finding solutions that initiated our doctoral approach. In this respect, we appealed to *a varied specialized literature* (sociology, psychology, sports science, physiology), showing how tightly interrelated are sports and society, and the series of reciprocal and circular effects which appear in the two domains and between the phenomena related to them. During the elaboration of the thesis, in the theoretical and statistical parts, as well as in the interpretations from the research chapters, we focused on the sociologic perspective.

The present study was born from a double *necessity*: on the one hand there was my particular interest for the domain of sports (as a professional and a teacher), on the other hand there was the natural concern regarding the reduced rate of participation among the youth in sports activities, starting with infancy and up to high school, faculty and the start of their career and family life. It is well known that habitus are formed quite early, together with values, attitudes and the behaviour which exist in the close environment (family, school, friends). Even though, in theory school meets this need, it seems that the formalization, institutionalisation of sports through the curriculum doesn't raise sufficiently the enthusiasm and adherence of the youth. The above concern is not just a normative idealistic one (we should, we ought to...), *it relates realistically to the social space and to all the medical and psychological, socio-economic and demographic evidence and tendencies* (some of these sufficiently pessimistic as a medium and long term prognosis), idea which we tried to express in our doctoral thesis.

The text is structured in *six chapters*, from which three are theoretical and three are research. They reflect the constant tension between the values symbols and frame of mind related to sports, sportification, corporality, and the social and structural space (economic, demographic, socio political and educational).

2. The conceptual and theoretical frame of the study

The first chapter, **“Lifestyle and sports: the relationship with the quality of life, values and personal development”**, the most voluminous of the theoretical chapters, analyses the complex problem of the relationship between the themes stated from the point of view of sports science, sociology, psychology and social psychology. Thus, we showed that the approach of lifestyle is an area with implications in all these disciplinary domains. We employed here a vast specialized bibliography, and also described a few methods of analysis of lifestyle, statistical tendencies and dedicated paradigms. The chapter tackles the following relevant points of interest:

In the sub chapter *1.1 “lifestyle” (short history of the concept, definitions and theories, types and methods of analysis)* we started from the concept of “lifestyle”, which appeared in the same period and has a common nucleus as the process of *socialization* – beginning of XXth century – in the modern human sciences, as a sociologic concept (Max Weber – lifestyle is seen as *an indicator of status*, having the function of integrating the individual) and psychological (Alfred Adler – who defines lifestyle as *an effort of the individual to adapt to the environment*, as an adaptive reaction), thus describing the evolution of the concept. Up to the present, there is an increase in the interest in the subject of lifestyle, which includes new analytical dimensions as opposed to the classic period of the domain, on the background of new psycho social factors and tendencies: the cultural approaches gain more and more terrain, *the cultural dimension* being more and more present in the theorization of the different cultural phenomena; *mass culture* is becoming a source of identity and lifestyle (“consumerist culture”); *lifestyle* becomes a concept of intersection: between public and private, between social and personal, between global culture and local culture, between mass culture and elite culture, (Johansson, 1994, p. 267, apud Chiribucă, 2004). As individual action, the way

of living life is mainly influenced by the societal structure, after that by the social structure and only then by the individual, thus appearing three types of action patterns: forms of life, ways of life and lifestyles, which are interlinked based on the model of the nest: for example, lifestyles can be approached as links between individual determiners (values, interests, preferences, etc) and structural ones (societal and social) (Rosengren, 1994, apud Chiribucă, 2004). There are also other relevant categorizations, like the taxonomy proposed by Grunert et al. (1993, p. 9), which approach lifestyle based on three main components: external constraints (environmental, structural), the cognitive style (mental constructs, mental processes related to perception, goals, values, intentions) and the style of response (actual behaviour). The most important and most frequent *theoretical and applicative perspectives* in the domain are: *the behaviour of the consumer, cognitive psychology, structuralism and post structuralism*. As consecrated methods in the research of the problems of lifestyle are (Cathelat, 1990; Chiribucă, 2004; Comşa şi Chiribucă, 1999; Ferréol, 1998): AIO (Attitudes, Interests, Opinions), created by the CREDOC Institute, based on a mechanistic attitude: lifestyle as the conditions of existence and ways of being; SOCIO-STYLES SYSTEME, created by CAC (Centre of Advanced Communications) from France, lead by B. Cathelat, based on an a socio-economic approach where every item is made up of socio-styles (Cathelat, 1985, apud Ferréol, 1998, p. 206); and VS and VALS (*Value Survey* by M. Rokeach, respectively *Values and Life Styles*), corresponding to the culturalistic approach, are points of reference in the comparative analysis (for example, the *European Surveys* protocols, the results of which are the basis of reference for the realization of mentalistic maps). Another synthetic typology, which compiles the studies regarding lifestyles, classifies them based on the type of rationale behind the construction of the typologies (inductive or deductive) and in relationship with the method of data collection (questionnaire – cognitive method, respectively questionnaire and also observation – manifest mode) (Grunert et al., 1993). Here we also described some research approaches conducted in the national area, regarding various aspects of lifestyles, by Romanian sociologists like C. Zamfir (1989), D. Sandu (1999), B. Voicu and M. Voicu (1999, 2007), D. Chiribucă (2004), M. Comşa (2006), I. Hosu (2002) etc.

Sub chapter **1.2 “Life quality – a domain of reference in the evaluation of lifestyle”** (*definitions, indicators and domains of quality of life, the subjective dimension of quality of life: the state of well being, satisfaction, happiness*) synthetically classifies the typology of the definitions, the conceptual, theoretic and methodological-applicative frame, (by exposing the indices and indicators used in evaluating quality of life by domains) of the area of quality of life, one which is of great interest for the social sciences, for the economic sciences, for psychology, as well as for the domain of the social politics and of the legislative one. We analyse the relationship between quality of life and *life satisfaction, the state of well being (welfare) both objective and subjective* (the perception of quality of life), also including here “happiness”. We also described here a few empiric approaches made in our country in order to evaluate quality of life (the most relevant being under the supervision of the Institute of Research of Life Quality), mentioning the research done by some well known, even if few, Romanian specialists: C. Zamfir, I. Mărginean, S. Bălătescu.

1.3 “Lifestyle: values, attitudes and personal development” (*the sportsman’s lifestyle from a socio-psychological perspective, the importance of social values for lifestyle, personal development and lifestyle, the effects of practising sports as a lifestyle on quality of life, sportsman’s lifestyle among young people*) is based on the double relationship between lifestyle and sports: psychological and social. Thus we develop subjects regarding consumerism and the management of free time, relationship between elites and innovation, the characteristics of the sportsman’s lifestyle. Next, we exposed a series of constitutive and taxonomic elements of values, retaining a classic distinction between the *factual* values (lived by individuals and reflected in attitudes and preferences) and the *normative* ones (which take their value from social groups). The theoretical sequence appeals to the authors consecrated in the study of values and of its relationship with lifestyle, personal development, satisfaction and happiness (G. Hofstede, 1980, 2001; R. Inglehart, 1990, 1995; M. Rokeach, 1979; R. Ryan și E. Deci, 2001; S. Schwartz, 1992; Veenhoven, 1993, 1994, 2004), but also to Romanian authors (P. Andrei, S. Bălătescu, 2003, 2007; M. Comșa, 2006; P. Iluț, 2004, 2009; Voicu, 2007). An important section here is the one which studies the practice of sports by young people, making a connection between physical activity in the society in general and that

of the young people, based on studies and tendencies regarding this phenomenon. A conclusion here would be that in the last three decades mass sports have known a remarkable scale, due to both the increase of free time, as well as to the informing of the public about the statistics which certify the link between regular physical activity and the health of the individuals. This increase is more visible in western countries, in comparison with developing regions (like Central and Eastern Europe), and this makes the discrepancy with the undeveloped countries seem even greater. The main cause of this situation is quality of life, meaning welfare, hence a lesser availability unwinding through sports, and this is not determined only by the low level of quality of life as such, but also by the daily stress of meeting basic needs. We mustn't forget the mentalistic component either (values, attitudes, opinions) when urging people to practice physical activities for health, relaxation, de-stressing etc. In this section we also included a preamble of the theoretical analysis (see section 3 of the present summary – *The analysis frame: tendencies regarding the practice of physical activities as a lifestyle*) from which will start our empiric research.

1.4 “Critical considerations regarding the approaches of lifestyle and quality of life” reviews the main critics generated mostly by the vastness and the vagueness of the two concepts, which represent descriptions of particular aspects of life. Not having their own theoretical and methodological apparatus, these concepts might not offer a constant and valid image of a global reality, and the records regarding quality of life show *differences from one evaluation to the other*, which makes it difficult to make correlations between subjective and objective evaluations (Ferries, 2004; Wallace și Abbot, 2007). Another problem is represented by the subjective evaluations obtained through surveys (there are problems regarding the actual standards that are considered by people who answer specific questions like: “how satisfied are you?” etc.) or the issue of *social desirability* (for many respondents, declaring that they have a bad emotional state or a low self esteem is difficult, even if they feel like this, which distorts the results – Ilut, 2004). Depending on the *time* and *space* coordinates other problems arise concerning the validity of the results. Another critic stems from the *combination of the indicators, theories and economic, sociologic and psychological interpretations*, which is necessary but leads to dilemmas (the approach of quality of life is by essence of individual nature

(psychological), whereas sociological studies focus in their interpretations on the culturalist and societal dimension, which are often the opposite of the psychological ones). Then, *theoretical generalizations often cannot cover the vast area of causal conditionings* between states, events, situations and actual declarations. From a methodological point of view also appear gaps, because *the studies concerning quality of life and lifestyle are based on singular indicators*, imposing thus the factorial analysis of the data collected through empirically validated questionnaires (Walace și Abbott, 2007; Ferries, 2004). At a practical-action level, we also face *the problem of the ratio between the cost of implementing quality of life optimisation programmes and their actual results*. In spite of all these drawbacks, there is an increasing evolution in the interest for the registration methods and theories, parallel with an integrated connection of these studies with the governmental and global politics.

The second chapter, “The Determination of the Concept of Sport/Sporting Activities” is a linking chapter, which binds the two domains approached in our thesis by demonstrating the close interdependences between them and includes subchapters about the origin and development of sports, the definition of the concept of sport/sporting activity and sports as a cultural phenomenon.

Since the antiquity and up to the present, sports have known a series of changes, but the essence of this human activity has remained intact. As it is shown in *White paper on sport* (2007), sports represent a domain of human activity, which represents a major interest for the citizens of EU, having an enormous potential of bringing them together regardless of their age origin or level of preparation. Besides the fact that sports help the health of the citizens of Europe, they also have an educational side, having several roles at a social, cultural and recreational level. The new aspects of sports as a major social phenomenon in the contemporary societies are analysed mainly from a cultural point of view. The quintessence of this phenomenon are the Olympic Games, a global show which illustrates the importance of art in relationship with sports, performance, universal values concerning sports, therefore its globalisation.

The third chapter, “The Sociology of Sports”, covers the appearance and development of sports, sociological theories from this domain, sports, gender, social integration and the participation of young people in sporting activities. By discussing the

evolution of the sociology of sports, which started to develop first in Great Britain, the USA, Germany and France, we showed that the sociology of sports has evolved as a distinct sub discipline starting with the '60s, which is the period considered one of the most prolific regarding the creation of methods, theories and subjects of study, up to the present.

We noted then the contribution of the *founders of sociology* (Emile Durkheim, Max Weber și Karl Marx), with the *durkheimian paradox*, the *weberian one*, the *marxist theories*, followed by the approaches based on *cultural studies*, the *paradigm of the symbolic interactionism* and the *phenomenological perspective* (G.H. Mead, W.I. Thomas, C.H. Cooley și H. Blumer), the *constructivist theories* (A. Schutz, P. Berger, Th. Luckmann), the *foucaultian perspective* and the *post modernist trend* (in relationship with globalization) initiated by Neugarten (1982) and generously developed by a series of contemporary authors (Giulianotti, 2005; Ritzer, 2007). By synthesizing the ideas of some of the classics in the field like Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu, or Michelle Foucault, we showed that the individual can find social acceptance also through sports, and that whereas modern sports facilitate some views concerning optimal corporal evolution, the risk of accidents and the permanent effort are linked, as a general frame, to the classic models of social inequality. The adherence to the world of sports generates strong emotional ties at an individual and at a collective level, but also has a major contribution to the rationalization and capitalization of space, through reciprocal adjustments to the meaning given to performance in terms of importance given to time and distances, quantified in performance / records (Giulianotti, 2005), as well as the *corporal reporting* (Gavriliuță, 2010; Grünberg, 2010).

The subjects covered in the research specialised in the sociology of sports, based on importance which is given to them, are first of all those dealing with gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, social class, socio-economic status, citizenship, and the interaction among these, and secondly those treating globalisation, post-colonialism, the politics of sports, celebrity, marketing and advertising. Another line of subjects includes fitness, exercise, social views regarding corporality, disability, rehabilitation and health (Harris, 2006).

We also outlined *the relevance of sports for the younger generation*, exploring relevant concepts like “generation”, “socialization”, “individual development”, from the

point of view of various psychological and sociological theories, pointing out, for the subject of the thesis, that besides the actual sportive activities there are a series of practices, knowledge about hygiene, nutrition, workout and regeneration that together form the phrase *physical culture*, extremely important for the education of the younger generation. Here, the access to resources and programmes can be a determinant factor for the participation of the young people in physical activities.

A detailed study of the practice of sports as a component of the lifestyle of the young people is presented in the subchapter 3.4.2. “The Implication of Young People in sportive activities”. Thus, we continued the analytical preamble of the applied part of the thesis, started in the section 1.3.5. Showing that *the relationship between the young, their lifestyle and the role of implication in sports* differs based on *the interpretation of the situation of the young*, presently it is obvious that in the process of development of the teenagers, the motto “I want to live my life” of the modern world is harder and harder to apply. This statement is proved by statistical data that shows a greater and greater incidence of psychosomatic problems (among which the best known affections are depression, anxiety, phobias, anorexia and bulimia), as well as the rate of delinquency and deviance among the young and very young, which proves that many of the teenagers of the modern world have difficulties regarding the adaptation to the psycho-social demands, leading to tensions and discordances in their development. The successful adaptation of the young to their own ability to develop depends greatly on two elements: the trust in their own abilities and competences in various areas; the extent and quality of their personal and social resources for supportive interventions. Thus, we raised the question if *the active participation in sports can contribute to the reduction of the daily pressure and can sustain the development of teenagers and young people* (“*Can sports constitute a help in this respect?*”). The possible answers prove to be dilemmatic, including the perspective of the offers coming from sports clubs. Anyway, this broad interrogation constituted the point of start of the objectives of our research.

3. The analysis framework: tendencies regarding the practice of physical activities as a lifestyle

Throughout our work, we exposed the main tendencies resulting from the statistical selections and from the results of the studies conducted in this field. Below is a synthesis of these:

- Studies unanimously show that, in the lifestyle of young people from the same generations there are differentiating aspects such as gender, ethnicity, socio economic level. Then the level of physical activities is progressively reduced, with the passing from high school to college, and the kinds of activities practised among the students are generally insufficient to improve the health and muscular tonus of the young people. The majority of the studies shows that almost all of them register a decrease of the physical activities immediately after graduation (Brettschneider, 2004; Kilpatrick et al., 2005).
- In the recent period, mainly in the western countries, but also in the developing ones, the number of the participants in *mass sports* has significantly increased, the individuals, based on the studies published in the public mass media, on the spreading of information in the mass media, and on personal experience, reaching the conclusion that the effects of the daily stress caused by the atmosphere at the workplace, the quality of the relationships with the others, can be fought through movement/sport/physical activities. On the other hand, as one can conclude from the answers given by the specialists (the qualitative research presented in Chapter 6), *the participation in professional sports*, especially the classical ones, is decreasing in Europe and in Romania. They don't offer anymore the satisfaction corresponding to the new values which operate in the society. The increase in the adherence to mass sports is more visible in western countries, in comparison with developing countries (such as Central and Eastern Europe), and this makes the discrepancy with the undeveloped ones seem even greater. In our work we focused on this disadvantaging factor, using national and European statistical data (ASR, 2009, 2010; Eurostat, 2009, 2010) which prove that leisure is diminished in a society with a precarious economic situation. Besides, the references to the statistical data are frequent in several sections of the thesis, as they complete the theoretical explanations and the specific research.

The main cause of this situation (the lesser frequencies of activism generally speaking – including the physical one – in the general structure of lifestyle) proves to be *the standard of living / material welfare*, hence a smaller availability towards leisure through sports, and this doesn't appear only due to low standards of living as such, but because of day-to-day stress caused by the necessity to provide for basic needs. The first question that came naturally to us during our research was: *Can young Romanian people afford to spend on leisure, culture and health?* The use of statistics is necessary and useful to be able to make pertinent comments on the standard of living. According to the data gathered by Eurostat in 2010, in most European countries, the expenses for the home constitute the biggest percentage from the total expenses of a family. In Romania, the percentage spent on food surpasses the one spent on the home. It is true that most Romanians own their home, most of these bought cheaply after 1989, which explains the smaller amount spent here (the difference is reflected mainly in the small rate of people paying rent, but not in the quota spent on utilities). Thus, in our country, from the total expenses, 29.1% is spent on food (as opposed to the European average of 12.9%!). In comparison with a neighbouring ex communist country (Hungary), but also with richer countries (Germany or Luxembourg), as well as the EU average, we can see that the standard of living, from which derives the Romanians lifestyle, is in fact very low, which is reflected in the behaviour during their spare time (including the expenses on hotels and restaurants, but also on clothing and shoes – direct indicators of the standard of living). The expense dedicated to culture and spare time (which also includes sports as pastime): books, shows, leisure activities are the most reduced in Romania from all the European countries. From the total of the expenses of a Romanian household, only 4.9% go to this segment, almost half of the European average of 8.9%.

- We mustn't neglect the *mentalist component* either (values, attitudes, opinions) in the practice of physical activity for health, relaxation, the reduction of stress, etc. As Ritzer (2007) and Giulianotti (2005) showed, we can talk about a *culture of physical activity*, present in a smaller or greater measure at a societal level, but it is also greatly propagated institutionally by the mass media. As a *lifestyle*, 40% of Europeans quote 'watching TV' as a means of spending spare time, whereas for the Romanians the

percentage is 50% (men more than women who are more implied in socializing). ‘Activities related to the computer’ (mainly surfing the Internet) are more popular among the young. Statistically, in the management of spare time, ‘the practice of sports’ occupies minor positions in comparison with other daily pastime activities, in Europe as well as in Romania, as the recent HETUS (Harmonised European Time Use Survey, 2010) survey shows. The same European survey that in the case of young people under 25, over 65% use the Internet as the most popular way of spending their free time, this percentage among the Romanian young people is 62%.

- Regarding the ***relationship lifestyle – the young generation in the practice of sports***, I exposed theoretical – analytical strategy that I tried to expand on in several ‘linking’ sub chapters and then verify through my own research. This is based on the following *starting ideas*, constructed around societal tendencies:

A. Firstly it is observable that *actual sportsmen* (professionals or would-be professionals) *seem to have a privileged situation*: their activity is based on a long lasting tradition in the sports system, they can be certain that they can benefit from their public image: for the spectators, mass-media and sponsors, sportsmen are very attractive.

B. Secondly, statistics also offer a different image: especially in the prosperous societies, *less and less young people opt for an actual career in sports*. Hence a paradox arises: although enthusiasm for sports is higher than ever, and although there have never been so many young people registered practicing sports, the professional adherence to these sports by the ones practicing them has become problematic. In many European states, the incidence of total participation in professional sports has decreased considerably, as recent statistics show (Brettschneider, 2004; *Youth in Europe* Report - Eurostat, European Commission, 2009).

In our effort to find out ***why this tendency has appeared and how it can be stopped***, we focused less on professional sports as such (as a system which offers the previously mentioned benefices), but rather on the *socio cultural context* in which the young in the contemporary world live, on their *lifestyle* and on their *image of sports*. From this derives, logically, *a great part of the interest for mass sports, as leisure*

activity. In our analysis we also took into account three distinctive frameworks that we followed in the interpretation of our empirical approach:

- We took into account *the conditions in which European young people live today*, and in this respect, *their lifestyle*, which reflects the phenomena and the changes in the modern societies (4.1. ‘Theoretical background and statistical data regarding the young generation and lifestyle: the sociological framework of the empirical approach’). While the values of the traditional social system have decreased without being replaced with sufficiently strong alternatives, for many the body has become the last bastion which can keep the meaning of the one’s own identity. *It is not only the relationship between the body and the identity that becomes stronger, but also the ties between the body and lifestyle.*

People are becoming more and more concerned by *corporeal management and appearance*, both being considered constituents of the self and of the social symbol (Gavriliuță, 2010; Foucault, 1987; Giulianotti, 2005). But the new acceptance of the body has to take into account *the quality and the strength of the available resources*. So the lifestyles associated with this new existential view must also be considered from *a societal – structural perspective*. This continuous tension between the highly hedonistic expectancies and the unfavourable socio economic realities can have impact on the balance of the individual, reducing the number of potential options available to and desired by the young, to those which are accessible. This is the case of the young people in Romania, and can become a source of frustration, dissatisfaction and even lack of care towards their own balance, including their own health, but also towards social order, predisposing them to anarchism (individual and/or collective). We brought statistical arguments in favour of our concern regarding the effects of the world crisis from the recent years which, together with the demographic imbalance, will affect firstly the young who have to sustain, by paying taxes and social contributions, an aging society marked by the successive world crises, with a risk of becoming chronic (Powell, 2011).

- We tried to realize a permanent *analysis of the sportive culture*, some of the current tendencies and the tight relationship between sports and the lifestyle of the teenagers / the young (3.4.2. ‘The implication of the young in sportive activities’). By borrowing

the results of the studies and theorizations exposed in the sequences from the theoretical chapters, we emphasised the idea that sports represent more than the sum of the institutionalised sports and disciplines. Especially the young, but also grown ups, can feel as ‘sportsman like’ as they wish, even if it is subjective, by turning to different forms of physical activities, among which are notable those reserved exclusively for the young (*the youth-only-zone*): fun sports, extreme sports, those comprising adventure and risk are synonym with the general notion of sport. Still, we mustn’t forget that traditional sportive disciplines like athletics remain the image of authentic sports. And as long as traditional sportive disciplines in Europe are tied to clubs, we must take into account the situation of these clubs and their attractiveness towards the young in general: a) *Sports Clubs*, whose loss of favour among the young was predicted by many, still constitute *youth organizations number 1* in many European countries (*Youth in Europe Report* - Eurostat, European Commission, 2009); b) In Germany, approximately *every second teenager* between 12 and 18 is *a member of a sports organization* (Brettschneider, 2004); c) In Europe, *the level of participation in clubs and sports organizations has stagnated for the last 20 years* at a high level (*Youth in Europe Report* - Eurostat, European Commission, 2009); d) Inside the sports system there have been changes that seem to be rather unfavourable in the end – *the gain of one type of sport means the loss of another one*, thus traditional sports such as athletics, gymnastics and handball have lost much terrain in favour of new sports; e) What the teenagers expect from sports is obvious: *group experience, but also the experience of individual amusement* – the tendency can be described as the rejection of group solidarity and the search for a fun club (“Not a lot of club, but a lot of fun”); f) Teenagers want sports that do not impose a strict discipline, that will allow them space for *self-organisation, spontaneity and creativity* (Youth Lifestyle, European Commission Survey, 2010). This is the reason for the formation of more and more sub cultures, including in sports. But, as it is shown by rigorous analysis regarding motivation and behaviour, detailed in the first chapter of our thesis, the preconception that the young only want fun is not confirmed. For the young generation, sports must be related to the *acquisition of enterprises*, that is why they are not fun; g) At the same time, the activities which are attractive are those that offer

a quick gratification in the form of fun and a sense of being alive. Fun and success that come only after years of practice, deprivation and asceticism are not so attractive. This is the first explanation of the fact that traditional sportive disciplines are losing support, and clubs adapt to this change in demand by offering new types of sports, which correspond to expectations; h) Another change that has appeared in recent years is that the young expect sports not only to be fun, but also to offer *sensations and risks*, and to not be boring. ‘The hunt for excitement in an uninteresting world’ would be the motto of the preferences of these young people; I) Sports represent a case study for *the cult of the body*, as a means to achieve social recognition and prestige at the heart of the key agent of socialisation at this age: the group of friends. In conclusion, summing up the characteristics of the young generation and applying them to their lifestyle, we can say that they are at the crossroads between *the hedonistic view* and that of the *personal development*.

- At the end of the analysis, based on the data obtained through our own research, we *formulated a few synthetic conclusions regarding the possibilities of recruiting and integrating the young generation in the domain of sports, be it that of professional sports or mass sports*. Statistical data as well as specialised studies, as well as our own results, show that a major role in the quality of life and in a healthy lifestyle is held by societal and material welfare. These are translated not only through individual resources, but also through public facilities, which encourage, develop and maintain the interest for an active lifestyle, including the practice of sports. We also referred several times to professional sports, it being the hard core, the catalyst of the interest for physical activity, or even for the desire for performance with children and the young people. We tackled sports from a wide perspective, analysing both forms (professional, respectively mass / leisure), and the items included in the research focus on the practice of physical exercises of any kind, in the management of the spare time of the youth from Cluj-Napoca.

4. Empirical Approach

Beginning with **the forth chapter**, we started the empiric part of the research in our work, considering that it is necessary here to realise a sub chapter as a theoretic background and statistical data regarding the young generation and lifestyle (*the sociologic framework of the research itself*) followed by *sub chapters that describe that methodology, the design and the limits of the research*. All these sections form the analytical and interpretive ‘thread’ of ***the research part***, exposed in **Chapter 5 ‘The quantitative research: The lifestyle of the young, the reason for hope or a risk factor in the quality of life’** and **Chapter 6 ‘The qualitative research: sports and lifestyle seen by the young and the experts’**.

We supplemented the *quantitative research* (survey based on questionnaires) with a qualitative approach (a focus group made of students, respectively individual interviews with specialists in the sports sciences, but also activating in other sport domains). The goal of this *combinatory methodological strategy* was connecting the information obtained through different levels of thorough study in order to find an explanatory, analytical and interpretive framework in *the identification of possible solutions for the increase of the interest towards sportive activities in general among the young, as a vision, a strategy and a project necessary for the adoption of a healthy lifestyle, for the increase of the quality of life* (physical and psychical welfare, active aging, the increase of life expectancy, etc.), *a source of societal prosperity in the short, medium, and long term*.

The **main results of our own research** are:

I. Quantitative research:

The questionnaire was realised by combining the instruments used in the analysis of lifestyle and leisure (ISSP 2007 – *Leisure Time and Sports Questionnaire* and FRESH 2006 – *Lifestyle, education, fitness*). The processing and statistical analysis of the data was realised through the programmes SPSS and Microsoft Excel – frequency and factorial / inferential analysis.

The general objective of the research was to decrypt the tendencies regarding the attitude and the preferences towards physical and sportive activities, the way they like to spend their free time, (reading, participating in cultural events, trips/hiking, watching TV

programmes or playing on the computer, etc.). *The specific objectives* were to determine the sports practiced and liked (preferred), the place where the activities take place, how often, for how long, etc., as well as if there is a positive link between the adoption of an active lifestyle (by frequently practicing physical and sportive activities) and the health of the individuals, but also between the practice of physical activities and the perceived / declared state of happiness. *The question* from the questionnaire were developed having in mind these objectives. We looked for differences of opinion based on socio demographic variables: socio educational category, age and gender.

The survey was conducted on a group of 300 young people from Cluj-Napoca, and finally 280 questionnaires were validated. *The sample* of young people covered the wide socio educational structure of the category (pupils, students, graduates), aiming for a theoretical sampling, the representativeness of which covers in our opinion the objectives of the research. The configuration of the sample was as follows:

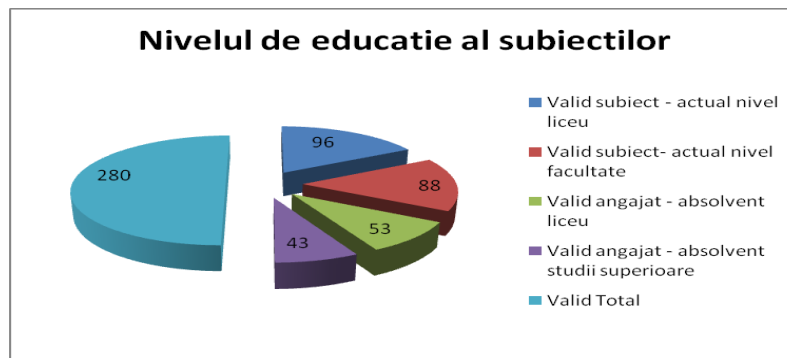


Figure 1: The structure of the sample according to the *socio educational category – level of education* of the respondents

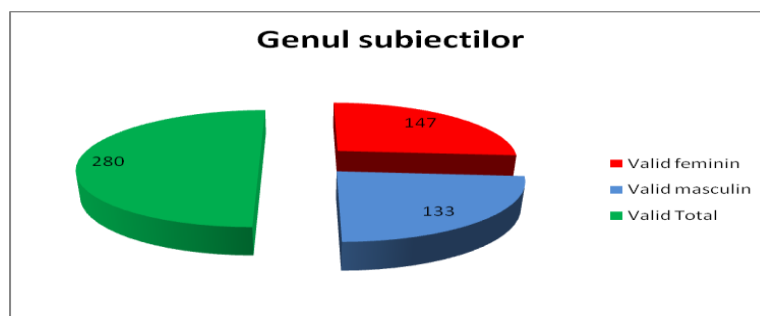


Figure 2: The structure of the sample according to *the gender* of the respondents

Following the investigation, we point out a few **results**, extracting some *tendencies with a higher degree of generality and openness*, and comparing them, in the interpretation and the analysis, to the wider social situation:

- From the data of our research resulted that 75% of the young respondents declared that they have a rather active lifestyle (64.6% of the women, as opposed to 82.0% of the men – a significative statistical difference, according to gender):

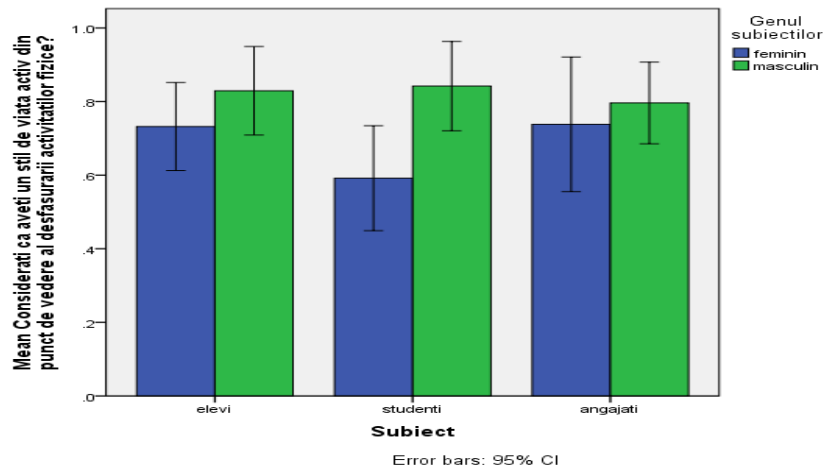


Figure 3: The average of the scores regarding the perception of their own lifestyle according to the socio educational category and gender

But from another question it results that almost 20% of them doesn't do any specific physical activity, approximately a quarter prefer relaxation and rest in their spare time, and approx. a third the development of other aptitudes. At the same time, the frequency as well as the average duration of the weekly physical activities, prove to be insufficient for a good health:

Chart 1: Frequency of the weekly physical activities

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	never	15	5.4	5.4	5.4
	once	72	25.7	25.7	31.1
	twice	75	26.8	26.8	57.9
	3 times	54	19.3	19.3	77.1
	4 times	26	9.3	9.3	86.4
	4+	38	13.6	13.6	100.0
	Total	280	100.0	100.0	

Chart 2: Time allocated to physical activities

<i>How many minutes do you allocate to each session of physical activity?</i>					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	none	1	.4	.4	.4
	<30 minutes	107	38.2	38.2	38.6
	30-60 minutes	106	37.9	37.9	76.4
	>60 minutes	66	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	280	100.0	100.0	

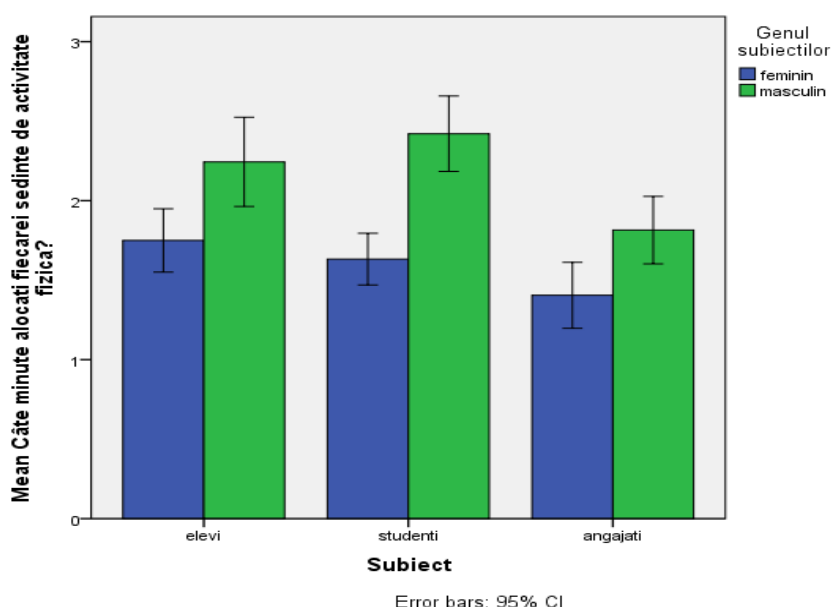


Figure 4: The average of the results at the question regarding the allocated time for physical activity according to the socio educational category and gender

Women seem to prefer more leisure physical activities (walking, trips) than men, who tend towards the sportive ones (football, basketball, cycling, etc.).

An integrative conclusion to these questions is that, in the management of free time, sports occupy an important role for less than a third of the young people from the sample.

- Various types of hobbies are a rather masculine manner of spending free time, which is also available globally. In our sample, women opt less for the development of aptitudes, active socialising, sports, etc. as opposed to men. They practice less than men organised sports or group activities which imply moving, preferring individual sports, aerobic or mixed ones, or rest and relaxation, etc.

Chart 3: The distribution of the answers regarding the predominant types of effort – sample total

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	aerobic	102	36.4	36.7	36.7
	anaerobic	36	12.9	12.9	49.6
	mixed	140	50.0	50.4	100.0
	Total	278	99.3	100.0	
missing	99	2	.7		
Total		280	100.0		

According to the socio demographic categories we studied, the results can be grouped as follows:

Chart 4: The predominant type of effort, according to the gender variable

			What predominant type of effort do you practice during physical activities?			
			aerobic	anaerobic	Mixed	Total
Gender of the subjects	female	Count	78	16	51	145
		% Gender of the subjects	53.8%	11.0%	35.2%	100.0%
		% predominant type of effort	76.5%	44.4%	36.4%	52.2%
		% of Total	28.1%	5.8%	18.3%	52.2%
	male	Count	24	20	89	133
		% Gender of the subjects	18.0%	15.0%	66.9%	100.0%
		% predominant type of effort	23.5%	55.6%	63.6%	47.8%
		% of Total	8.6%	7.2%	32.0%	47.8%
Total	Count	102	36	140	278	
	% Gender of the subjects	36.7%	12.9%	50.4%	100.0%	
	% predominant type of effort	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	36.7%	12.9%	50.4%	100.0%	

We can see the strong link between the more intense socialising behaviour of men through physical activities, as opposed to women, the mixed variants pointing to a series of team sports, preferred especially by the representatives of the male gender. Women, on the other hand, choose individual sports, which are more based on movement, preferably in open air, in order to keep muscular tonus or simply to relax.

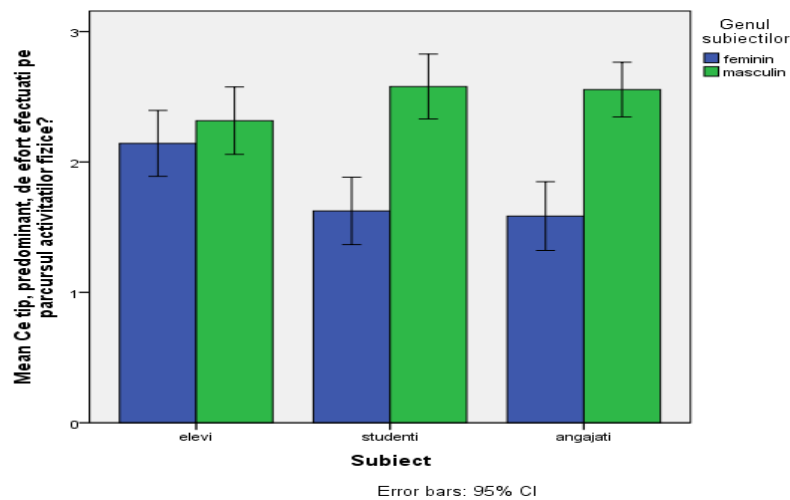


Figure 5: The average of the answers regarding a certain type of effort according to socio educational category and gender

It results that, even though the differences between the genders are noted all over the world, in our studies, as well as in the national statistical data there is a significantly larger gap between the genders concerning physical activities and the practice of sports.

- The data that we obtained shows that the young show *a tendency not only to do less physical activities, but also qualitatively weak ones, lacking professional support*. We interpreted the situation by adopting the explanations of the theory of social learning and those of the generational reproduction of values, attitudes and behaviour, which have an impact on lifestyle. What's more, there is also the issue of the sub culture of the postmodern young people, where a part of the values are not concentrated mainly on health, but on 'feeling good', 'having a good time', 'living your life', refusing control, discipline, sustained effort that are implied by institutionalised sports. These results might also reflect the respective mentalistic environment that has spread among the young in our country. Below are the preferred types of physical activities (result which is not equivalent to the effective number of people currently practicing):

Chart 5: The distribution of the answers regarding the place of the workouts

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	In a fitness club	93	33.2	33.5	33.5
	At home	53	18.9	19.1	52.5
	In open air	132	47.1	47.5	100.0
	Total	278	99.3	100.0	
Missing	99	2	.7		
Total		280	100.0		

Less than a quarter of the respondents turn to specialists:

Chart 6: The distribution of the answers regarding the use of specialists during the practise of physical/sportive activities

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Organized sportive activity	68	24.3	24.3	24.3
	Sportive activity practised according to individual programmes	212	75.7	75.7	100.0
	Total	280	100.0	100.0	

Our own results sustain the statistical data on the subject of sedentary lifestyle: if the middle aged Romanians, but also the young, were to choose between relaxing in front of the TV or the Internet and active and healthy forms of relaxation, the majority would opt for the first formula.

The conclusion is that to this situation contribute a combination of motives, among which the most important are mentality and the lack of resources.

- The most important goals associated with the practise of physical activities/sports (as a given score), according to professional category, which is a relevant variable in our analysis (categories of youth and implicitly of stages of young age) are presented in Figure 6. What is more remarkable here is the fact that, especially *working people*, give more importance to aspects concerning health (muscular tonus, weight, cardio vascular capacity), whereas *high school students* focus more, besides tonus and increase in mobility, on weight control.

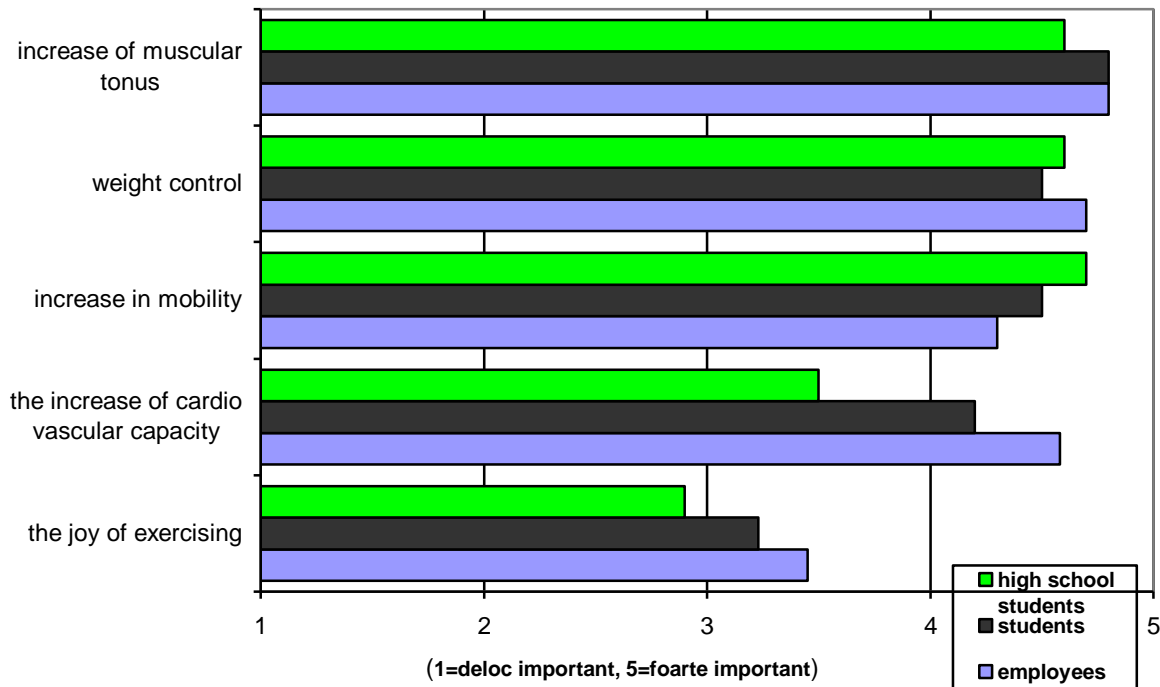


Figure 6: Significance of physical activity, according to socio educational category

In conclusion, *between health and corporeality (physical aspect) there is an inclination the more accentuated the younger the respondent, towards the latter.* At the same time, *‘the joy of exercising’ is somewhat more important among employees, decreasing in value, insidiously, the more the age of the respondents decreases.*

Due to the low statistical significance, we must note that this data doesn’t have a statistical significance per se, it is more of a guide line for the interpretation and analysis.

- It is not an accident that, *as the most frequently practised sports*, are mentioned those that *imply less cost*, such as:

Chart 7: Most frequent type of sport/physical activity

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	football	53	18.9	19.1	91
	doesn’t do any sports	49	17.5	17.6	17.6
	jogging	35	12.5	12.6	38.1
	basketball	23	8.2	8.3	71.9
	aerobic/ aerobic step /tae-bo	22	7.9	7.9	25.5

	fitness	13	4.6	4.7	52.5
	swimming	13	4.6	4.7	58.6
	cycling	12	4.3	4.3	44.6
	Ballroom dancing (Latin, hip-hop, jazz-dance, ballet)	11	3.9	4	99.3
	body-building	9	3.2	3.2	47.8
	handball	5	1.8	1.8	92.8
	rugby	5	1.8	1.8	95.3
	martial arts/karate	4	1.4	1.4	39.6
	Table tennis	4	1.4	1.4	63.7
	Weight lifting	2	0.7	0.7	54
	Roller skating	2	0.7	0.7	60.1
	tennis	2	0.7	0.7	62.2
	fishing	2	0.7	0.7	100
	athletics	1	0.4	0.4	39.9
	billiards	1	0.4	0.4	40.3
	artistic/sportive gymnastics	1	0.4	0.4	52.9
	rhythmic gymnastics	1	0.4	0.4	53.2
	judo	1	0.4	0.4	59
	skydiving	1	0.4	0.4	59.4
	ski	1	0.4	0.4	60.4
	skateboarding	1	0.4	0.4	60.8
	motor sports	1	0.4	0.4	61.2
	badminton	1	0.4	0.4	61.5
	hockey	1	0.4	0.4	93.2
	polo	1	0.4	0.4	93.5
	Total	278	99.3	100.0	
Lipsă	99	2	.7		
Total		280	100.0		

According to *gender*, the options are distributed as it follows:

Chart 8: Sports practised, according to gender (simple frequencies)

Gender/ sport practised	<i>Doesn't practise</i>	<i>Aerobic etc.</i>	<i>Jogging</i>	<i>Fitness</i>	<i>Rhythmic Gymnastics</i>	<i>Swim ming</i>	<i>Basket ball</i>	<i>Football</i>	<i>Dancing</i>	Total
Women	34	20	27	12	1	9	5	2	9	147
Men	15	2	8	1	0	4	18	51	2	131
Total	49	22	35	13	1	13	23	53	11	278

By joining the preferences for certain sports with the significance of sports / physical activities but also with the *mentioned impediments* block their practice, we identified two essential discouraging motives that the investigated young people mentioned: ***the lack of***

sufficient facilities for mass sports and the lack of money. The latter also imposes the search for a job among the very young, which *reduces their spare time.*

In the figure below, we have the distribution of the impediments, according to two groups of young age, corresponding in theory to different stages in life (and implying different lifestyles and responsibilities):

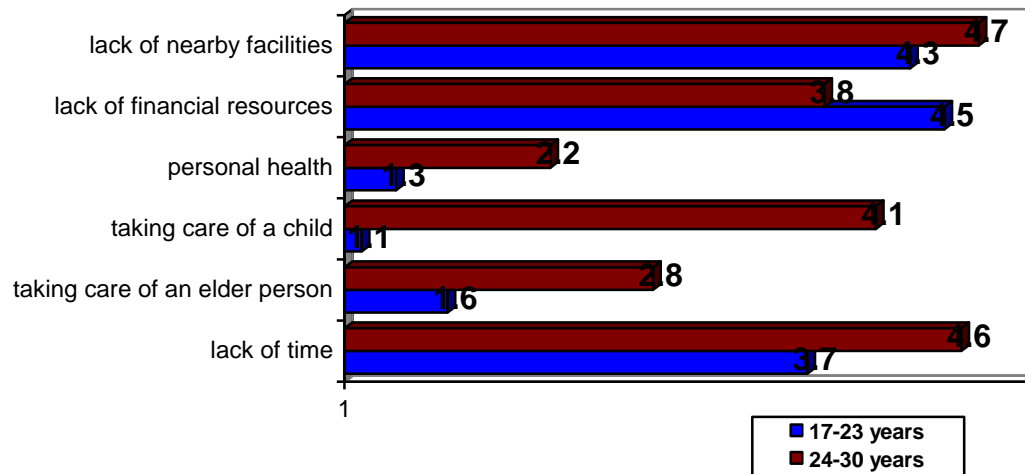


Figure 7: The average scores registered when impediments were mentioned, according to two age groups

- These results are also reinforced by those from the question *how much money are they ready to allocate*. It resulted that the young people that we questioned are not willing to invest too much money in order to practise sports systematically, under supervision (organized forms), which is also the most complex and correct form of maintaining health. The majority of the subjects (54,5%) declared that they would spend between 50 and 80 lei a month for a subscription, and 21.8% between 80 and 100 lei a month. Even though you can exercise without material costs, the literature and the studies in this domain emphasize that ***there is a direct positive association between small income and the practice of physical activities*** (generally a healthy lifestyle). This relationship of conditioning was also verified by our study.
- The items from the questionnaire regarding *the degree of happiness and the opinion regarding the state of health* offered predictable results: regarding the *declared degree of happiness*, there are no significant differences between socio educational

categories or between men and women. Over 60% of the subjects declare themselves ‘quite happy’, and 30% ‘very happy’, which is a good score in comparison with the national and international statistical data (Eurostat, 2010). We mustn’t omit the fact that we are dealing with young people, whose main characteristics specific to the age are optimism and the lack of major worries; the self evaluation of *their own state of health* outlines the almost equal tendency of the respondents to declare that they are in a good and very good health (which cumulates about three quarters of the sample). Given the fact that we are talking of young people, this is an expected result. Aiming to highlight if there are any *positive correlations (through inferential analysis)* between *the results of the declared state of happiness and those of the declared state of health among the subjects of the research, and other issues related to a lifestyle that includes physical exercise*, we found that: *there is no proven positive correlation, which is statistically significant, between ‘active/sportive lifestyle’ and ‘declared happiness’*; we note a *positive, though weak correlation between the declared state of health and the implication in physical activities, including sports*; between *the importance given physical exercise and the state of health there is also a positive correlation*; there is a significant tendency to *positively associate active lifestyle with a good state of health*; we remark a certain tendency of the respondents to declare that *they reach a higher level of happiness if they adhere to an active lifestyle*, even if there is no statistically significant positive correlation; there is *a positive correlation between the time allocated to sports and the state of health*; we also confirmed through correlation the hypothesis that *the higher the frequency of physical activities, the better the state of health*. There is a series of overlapping variables and conditioning relationships, such as the fact that the orientation towards pro sport goals is linked, directly or immediately, with the state of health, or that it is very probable that those who are healthy already have a healthy lifestyle, ‘the opening towards sports’ being realized previously, etc. But ***the positive determinations between young age, happiness and health, a sportive lifestyle and health, happiness and an active lifestyle, etc. are anyway bi directional***. Our research has reconfirmed these realities regarding the characteristics related to age and lifestyle.

The final conclusion of the quantitative research is that *the lifestyle of the young people involved in the research reflects rather some risk factors in relation to physical activity, and implicitly with health and a harmonious development, drawing the attention upon some serious medium and long term effects on the quality of life and on the personal bio psychosocial well being.*

II. The results of the qualitative investigations

A. The first qualitative investigation (*focus-group* based on a semi structured interview template), was realised with the participation of 10 students from the first and second year of study in the psychology and kinetotherapy specialisations from Babes-Bolyai University, in December 2011. the questions were mainly centred around the same subjects as those treated in our quantitative investigation: the most *frequent way of spending free time* among the young in our days, in general; adjacently – the interest towards *reading; the preferred way of spending spare time* of the subjects (effective behaviour); the *type of practise* of physical activities during their spare time (regularly, occasionally, non practicing), *the presently preferred type of effort* (aerobic, anaerobic, mixed); adjacently, *the preferred/wished sports*, regardless of the fact that they practise it at the moment or not; *the goal/the personal reason* for practising this sport; *the factors that discourage the practise of sports* (impediments); the existence and dominance of *the positive link between the practice of physical activities and elements of well-being*; the state of health, relaxation/the state of well-being, personal development, self esteem, etc.; *the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the physical education included in the school curriculum* and discussions about the *possibilities of social and individual optimisation* so that the physical education class in school/high school becomes more attractive or to inspire the students a balanced and healthy lifestyle; *identified solutions for the increase of the interest* for physical exercise among the young and the adults.

The conclusions of the focused discussions are:

Regarding *the most frequent pastime, generally speaking, among the young today*, we found that: the majority of the participants generally spend their spare time on *the computer / on socialising networks*; followed by other ways of having fun and

relaxing, other than sports, where *going out in clubs/bars/discos* with their friends dominates; on the third place there are *team sports* practised frequently in their spare time; reading doesn't seem to be among the preferences of the young, in the perception of the subjects the reason being 'the lack of time' but also the 'uselessness of reading'.

The effective ways of spending free time among the subjects from the focus group are: on the first place there is *relaxation through means which are rather passive from a physical point of view*, and the *benefices* mentioned for leisure activities cover mainly *psychological needs, social satisfactions (friends, the development of abilities, fun) rather than of physical order*; on the second place there is *the development of certain abilities, hobbies*; sport is also mentioned as a leisure activity, the perceived *benefices* being *health keeping in shape*), respectively *active relaxation*. A discussion here included the importance of school education in a wider sense (starting with primary school, gymnasium and high school and continuing with college), where the *role of the extra curricular activities* are specifically mentioned, in high school, but also in college, having notable effects on the *sense of belonging to a group* and on *self esteem*. Thus, sportsmen, amateur actors, artists from the high school obtain extra curricular visibility, whereas those who practise sports out of pleasure or activate as volunteers are not so appreciated. On the other hand they reach a state of satisfaction and appreciation among a smaller group of acquaintances, so they have similar *benefices* to those who are 'popular'. What is more, *the self esteem of those who take part in extra curricular activities* also stems from the fact that they have some privileges and control over space, and also from the fact that this way they can demonstrate their leading abilities or other competences, *ensuring their personal physical and psychological development and ensuring thus a good self esteem* (Dumitriu 2008; Gavriluță, 2010; Giulianotti, 2005; Telama et al., 2005).

Regarding ***the frequency of the participation in physical activities, the preferred type of effort and the reasons behind this option***, the major tendencies are: the majority of the subjects are placed somewhere *between those who practise regularly sports/physical activities and those who only do so occasionally*, and concerning the type of effort, the most frequent is *the aerobic one, followed by mixed effort and then the anaerobic one*; there are some *differences according to gender regarding the type of*

sport practised regularly; the organized form is preferred, under the supervision of a specialist, the advantages being the control of the physical evolution and of the skills, but also the relationship with the team members and the sports organization (institution, club); as *preferred sports*, other than those practised at the moment, we highlight swimming, as a complex sport that combines the physical and psychical advantages with the social ones, followed by lawn tennis and football; *the motives* combine the desire to relax with spending their time in a pleasant and healthy manner, challenge with the development of skills; the general idea of the discussions lead to the conclusion that *in order to be attractive, a sport has to offer a combination of activities*; the main motivations focus on aspects related to socialisation, but corporeal appearance is also mentioned, as well as fitness/muscle tonus, health and psychological well being. Finally the idea resulted that *the relationship between body and self*, as well as *the bond between physique and lifestyle* has become stronger.

As a result we draw the conclusion that *the young are more and more preoccupied by corporeal management and appearance*, both being part of the self and of the social symbol, but also a source of capital (economic, social, cultural), the body having a quota of value that can be converted in the other forms of capital that we mentioned (Brettschneider, 2004; Foucault, 1987; Gavriluță, 2010; Giulianotti, 2005). The promotion of the status of the *corporeal capital* with young people seems to be directly related to the increase of the importance of sports and physical activities practised in the cultures of the youth (mainly team sports, but also swimming – which ensures a harmonious body). This speaks for itself about the major role played by sports in the daily life of young people, the explanations finding their source from the theory of *social learning* (Bandura, 1987, apud Iluț, 2001).

The main reasons why students participate in sportive activities can be synthesized thus: *the maintaining of the good health and appearance of the body*, followed by *stress management (psycho physiological benefices)*, after that *socializing (social benefices)*. Race, competition and appreciation in sports don't seem to weigh much. By comparing the various arguments from the discussion, when we explicitly tackled the problem of the general advantages of sports we found that *the benefices mentioned seem to be rather grouped around socialising, corporeal appearance and*

psychological well being, whereas when talking about their own case, *respondents give importance to health and tonus, adjacently to corporeal appearance, and socialising appear lower in the hierarchy*. The classic responses to the question ‘in general’ result from the classic vision of the positive link between sports and health, balancing the result through *the effect of social desirability*. We also find implicitly *the advantages of long term physical activities* (family, career, social life as an adult) the way the literature in this field shows (Havighurst, 1972, apud Telama et al., 2005; Weiss, 2001).

The general impediments in the practise of physical activities mentioned by the participants are: *mentality or the lack of education regarding the importance of practising sportive activities; the lack of sufficient time; the infrastructure/sports facilities* (insufficient, old or unattractive). *The lack of a culture of physical exercise at a societal level* is the main conclusion of this subject, which is tightly related to *the degree of socioeconomic development*.

The prioritary positive relationship between physical exercise and its physical and psychosocial advantages are structured in the following way: the advantages concerning *health* (directly offered by the practise of sports) are the most strongly linked to *those of a psychological order* (self esteem, relaxation, well being). The degree of health estimated by the respondents is influenced by the duration and frequency of the physical exercise/sportive sessions; another frequent combination is between *benefices of a physical order* in general (health, physical aspect/tonus) and those of *personal development*, as well as, *the high self esteem and good health represent the basis of well being*; *personal development* is also mentioned, though more rarely, as *a direct advantage of practising sports*. Again, by comparing *what is beneficial in general through physical activity* with *what is perceived as effective for the person himself*, we can see that the focus is changed on the corporeal appearance, the state of psychological well being and socialising. Even though health remains the main advantage of practising the mentioned sport, we noticed the orientation of the young subjects towards individualistic and post modern values.

By comparing the results (the predominant types of relationships) obtained with the six ‘western’ lifestyles among young people (Brettschneider, 2004), we can identify among our subjects, those from the quantitative research as well as those from the

qualitative one, two dominant types that can be related to the categories: ‘No to sports’ and ‘Young, active and self confident’, respectively two other types that appear frequently: ‘Looking good and feeling great’ and ‘Only for the fun’. On the other hand, we don’t have the two types centred only around the physical aspect and the practise of sports /exercise only with the purpose of personal image (‘Mister Muscle’ and ‘The body as an object of desire’). We considered thus that the students are at *the crossroads between the hedonistic view and that of the personal development*, even though they don’t give up the classic values and attitudes towards sport either (Brettschneider, 2004; Erickson, 2008; Sleaf et al., 2006; Telama et al., 2005). As in any globalized society, young Romanians too, especially students, have the characteristics of the Y Generation (Tulgan și Martin, 2001).

Regarding *the quality/quantity ratio of the physical education classes and the identification of solutions*, we reached the following conclusions: it is considered that *the number of physical education classes is insufficient, the quality of teachers and of the institutional framework* is generally seen as satisfactory, and there are suggestions regarding the degree of implication of the students (the feed-back from the classes), for the better preparation and implication of the teachers; for *the increase in the efficiency and attractiveness of the physical education and sport classes*, people insist especially on the changes at an *institutional/organizational* level (the supplementation of the physical education and sport classes, the elaboration of accessible and at the same time attractive curricula, the improvement of the infrastructure, the decent remuneration of the teaching personnel, the involvement of the universities and schools in the preparation of the teachers), some opinions point out the importance *of the implication of the community* in the development of the infrastructure, the promotion of inter scholar sportive competition/s, as well as *the role of the family* in the promotion of the importance of physical education and sports; *the optimization of the physical education and sport classes* requires the following measures: the introduction of a wider pallet of options regarding the sportive branches approached during the classes, the improvement of the teacher/student communication, the contents of the physical education and sports class should be dominated by dynamic/sportive activities, the teacher should be as creative as

possible, because usually the sports class is boring/unattractive, the necessity of promoting sportive competition/emulation among classes, etc.

The possibilities of the increase in interest towards sports and physical exercise in general offered by the participants in the focus group are: *the importance of mass media* for the promotion of the values of sports at all levels, the making available of a *more attractive infrastructure*, *the facilitation of the access to infrastructure* by decreasing the price of subscription and equipment, *the creation of spaces* for jogging, bicycle/roller tracks with free access, *the support of the community for the sportive movement* through the increase of the spaces appropriate for leisure physical exercise, with free or cheap access, *the facilitation of the creation of sports associations*.

B. The greatest part of the upper mentioned ideas are also sustained by **the intervention of the three experts**, the main results of the **second qualitative investigation** (collected through *semi structured interviews*). The interviews were taken between December 2011 – January 2012, and their analysis was done in February – March 2012. The three interviewees can be considered as *key-informants*, as they are teaching personnel at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports at the ‘Babes-Bolyai’ University. We considered that they have at least 4 sources of information and competence: the years of activity with their own students, the information originating from the school teachers from the professional development activities (examinations for didactical levels, posts, etc.); from their coaching activity, the organization, arbitration and jurying of competitions, that is direct and intensive involvement in general in professional and amateur sports; and from research activities in the area of physical education and sports.

The main ideas that took form after the discussions are synthesized below:

- After the analysis of the opinion of the specialists we find that, even though it is not mentioned as a purpose in itself for the practise of physical activities and sports by the young, *the contribution of sports to the process of the development and socialisation of the young* is implicit. On the other hand, the experts explicitly emphasize *the health related benefices*. If health is mentioned more rarely by the

students in the focus group, it appears every time as an argument for the specialists, warning about the medium and long term risks of sedentariness (see, in this respect, also Wollgam, 2008; Zaidi and Zolyomi, 2012).

- From the analysis of the conversations, as the conclusions of the focus group also show, results the complex association, on several levels, between *the culture of physical exercise at a societal level* and *the degree of socioeconomic development*, relationship that we emphasized throughout our thesis.
- Regarding *culture and mentality*, there is mentioned the tendency of the young to neglect physical exercise among the leisure activities, where dominate relaxation activities in front of the computer, going out in clubs, etc., so we regret the lack of orientation towards physical exercise. We remark here that, just like in other domains of activity, *the factors of structural order are tightly linked to the mentalistic ones*, and school education and family are also extremely important. The background conclusion to this subject is that in our country *there is no solid culture of practising sports*.
- The most functional solutions mentioned by the experts that we interviewed regarding the dissemination of the importance of physical exercise and the increase of the participation of the young in physical activities are: the focus is primarily on *pro sport education* of a continuous type, but there are also *macro-structural solutions* that concern the legislation and the involvement of the local and national institutions. An idea that meets the approval of all three experts is *the cheap or free access* to areas created for sports and leisure physical activities, as a method to encourage *mass sports*. There are some ideas related to *the education process itself* (solutions coming ‘from the inside’): the increase in the number of classes for the institutionalised sportive disciplines from the school curriculum, but also the modernisation, flexibilisation and the improvement of the quality of the educational sportive activities, idea which meets the expectations of the students participating in the focus groups.

5. The General Conclusions of the Thesis

Finally, we synthesized a few *general ideas*, based on our personal analysis and associated with the theories and studies dedicated to the subject:

a. *The decrease in interest of the teenagers and young people towards institutionalised sports*, towards classic sports is a phenomenon that appears especially in prosperous societies, according to the latest statistical tendencies. The paradox is that, even though there have never been so many young people practising sports, in many European countries the cases of total participation in performance sports (through professionalization) has decreased considerably (*Youth in Europe Report* - Eurostat, European Commission, 2009). An explanation here would be that in ‘the society of risk’, the extremely diverse lifestyle of the young generation is very accentuated by globalization, which propagates the values of postmodernism and brings a lack of coherence and motivation in this respect.

b. Even so, according to specialists in this field, *the determinant role of physical activity and sports in the process of development and socialisation of the young remains effective*, completing the formal and informal education through: the creation and extension of the social relations; the adequate adoption of the gender roles; the acceptance and appreciation of their own body; the acquisition of an emotional independence towards parents and adults; the formation of a distinctive identity and personality inside a group of sportsmen and friends with whom they practise physical activities in their free time; the preparation for marriage and family life; anticipatory socialisation through work, through becoming responsible, efforts and the achievement of the desired objectives; the development of a realistic perception, of an integrated ideology of the world; the adoption of a responsible social behaviour, through the implicit rules of the group; the harmonious personal development, not only the physical one.

c. In comparison with the traditional social environments where homogenous relationships and mentalities dominated, with clearly distributed roles today, especially for the young ones, it is not only *the relationship between the body and the identity* that becomes stronger, but also *the relationship between the physique and lifestyle*. The idea

is also sustained by the literature in this domain, based on studies that show that the corporeal management and appearance are constituents of the self and of the social symbol, but also sources of capital (economic, social, cultural). Thus, the body has a quota of value that can be converted in the other forms of capital mentioned, according to the specialists' theories (Foucault, 1987; Gavriluță, 2010; Giulianotti, 2005).

d. The mention of 'mentality' by the young students but also by the specialists interviewed, as a major factor with a role in the lack of interest towards sports of the young Romanians in general brings in front, as an interpretation, the theory of social learning, but also the theory of cultural reproduction. We can speak of a weak manifestation of *the culture of sports and physical exercise* at a societal level in Romania, though it is propagated at an institutional level and through mass-media all over the world, due to globalization (Ritzer, 2007; Giulianotti, 2005). The fact that in our country the culture of sports is not sufficiently shared by average individuals, reinforces the results shown by national and European statistical data: in general leisure is the less represented in the budget of a household the more precarious the economy in the society is (ASR, 2009, 2010; Eurostat, 2009, 2010). So a *low standard of living* leads to a lesser willingness towards leisure through sports, and this is not only because of a reduced material welfare, but also because of daily stress, the struggle to provide for the necessities of life (basic needs). The three interviewed experts also insisted on this last aspect. Secondly, a less developed country does not have sufficient funds to offer to its citizens satisfactory sportive services, in terms of quality and quantity, and this makes the statements of the young participants in the focus group and of the experts concerning the insufficiency of the facilities pertinent and realistic.

e. *The solutions regarding the dissemination of the importance of physical exercise and the increase of the participation of the young in physical activities* that we identified during the elaboration of our thesis greatly correspond with those discussed during the qualitative research, but are also based on the studies in the field:

- The adoption of an agenda in our social and educational policy that will focus on a *pro sports education* of a continuous type;

- *The involvement of mass-media* in the propagation of the values concerning the benefices of sports towards health and the increase of the quality of life, with the purpose of *promoting the culture of sports among the population*;
- *The creation of sports bases green areas, infrastructure*, to stimulate the participation of the citizens in mass physical activities – the central concept here being ‘sports for all’;
- *Solutions concerning the increase of the access at sports for everybody*, which have to do at the same time with macro-structural efforts, but also with those regarding the community and the micro-structure (organisations, associations, clubs), and thus *the facilitation of cheap or free access* to areas meant for sports and leisure physical activities, as a method of encouragement of *mass sports*.

Finally, I consider as a relevant of the thesis the fact that *an integrated, holistic approach of education towards and through sports is the best way to cover the lack of information, of activism, of facilities, etc with the purpose of the adoption and keeping of a healthy lifestyle, especially in the case of the young*. This background idea is in fact the basis of our hypotheses.

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