

**“BABEȘ-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA
FACULTY OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK**

**Summary
of the Doctoral Thesis**

***LEISURE TIME AND SPORTING ACTIVITIES OF
STUDENTS FROM THE “BABEȘ-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY
OF CLUJ-NAPOCA***

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KEY-WORDS: leisure; students; leisure sports activity; sports; self-esteem and body image; healthism; health status.

INTRODUCTION

Leisure has been marked by the dynamism of its evolution in recent years, showing a rise in the offers to practice physical activities and sports. The cultural metamorphoses of modern society have led to several models of leisure under the influence of the social framework, traditions, moral values, religious values, economic values, etc. All these models reflect individuals' wishes to have their own time organized in an original manner. Leisure and recreation are often regarded as a mood (Hurd, Anderson, 2011, p. 10), during which the individual experiences a transformation marked by freedom of choice and personal enrichment. This can be considered a social institution due to the interest shown by professionals from various fields such as sociology, economics and other scientists in the field of social sciences.

Last century was marked by a technological development that opened up new game and entertainment possibilities to the world for leisure. The invention of radio, television, movies, sound recordings, tape recorders and players, CDs, and similar devices have widely extended leisure life to all categories of the population. Outdoor recreation was marked by technology – the development of sports gear, equipment, and performance facilities, which have revolutionized the practice of season sports. Along with these opportunities, over the recent decades a new type of virtual technology has developed, where video games and other digital entertainment have become a major concern; the Internet offered millions of people the opportunity to explore new hobbies and interests or socialize with other people on chat, Facebook, which provide contact at the right time in a very short time.

All these scientific achievements have many positive influences on human progress but also generated a number of shortcomings. Alarming is that physical movement has lost much to the Internet and, as a consequence, has negatively affected health at all ages, especially children and teenagers.

People's participation in physical activity is a matter of great importance to public health and the benefits of adopting an active lifestyle in terms of physical wellbeing and health have received attention in recent years across Europe and most of the rest of the

world. Physical inactivity is frequently associated with risks of chronic disease and premature mortality and other serious illnesses such as heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, certain cancers, obesity and even psychological disorders. The emergence of such imbalances is seen in younger generations, with serious consequences. Therefore, there is an imminent need to increase public participation in regular physical activity.

The need to practice various exercises or sports has become a primary goal of normality and modernity in the 21st-century society. Moreover, the young generation must be involved in such activities, recognizing the morpho-functional and psychosocial beneficial effects on the body. Opting for an active and healthy lifestyle in work, life, and leisure offers moral and spiritual satisfaction, favors participation in public and political life, determines compliance with conduct standards and rules, forms new skills and reinforces those in personal health by active participation for prophylactic purposes and in health promotion.

The interest in the participation in physical activity across all age groups is growing. Studies on the particularities of young people's participation in leisure-time physical activities have also increased in recent years. Social practice shows a low level of involvement in such activities; according to the 2014 Special Eurobarometer, approximately 60% of the Romanian population is physically inactive. As regards the young population segment that chose to continue their professional development through higher education, i.e. students, there is not enough data on the options for leisure activities, especially those in the sports category. Few studies have sought to highlight the sports that students would like to practice from a wide range of sports, even ideally, starting with those that are very affordable in terms of facilities and financially, to the sports considered to be extreme, adrenaline generators, which require special conditions. Knowing the preferences of young people in different sports could favor the development of new strategies and facilities to include new sports that are less known.

Understanding the factors that influence student participation in leisure-time physical activities is important for providing solutions and developing plans to attract, encourage and increase youth participation.

The questions from which we started in this research are: what students do in their free time and how much of this time is dedicated to physical activities and sports. We also wanted to find out which sports they practice and how aware they are of the importance of movement on health. We explored some of the young people's motivations underlying their involvement in sports. Psychologically, we wanted to see if involvement in sports activities influenced young students' self-esteem and body image.

The importance of the chosen theme results from noting in most of the students a physical training way below the level considered to be optimal for the age of this subgroup, which may be a result of physical inactivity. The level of specific sports knowledge with which they could use to be physically active in their leisure time is not negligible.

We have tried to make a critical analysis by researching through to a broad literature from different fields (sociology, sports sciences, physiology, psychology), which describes the behavior of young people from several perspectives, which we developed in the theoretical chapters. The main bibliography that we used for our theoretical part includes: J. Voss (1967); *The Definition of leisure*; A., R., and D. M. Hurd, Anderson (2011). *The Park and Recreation Professional's Handbook*; K., A. Cordes, (2013); *Applications in Recreation and Leisure, For Today and the Future*; Kirițescu, C., (1964); *Palestrica*; *The history of private life* (P. Aries, and G. Duby, 1995);

The thesis is divided into five chapters: three are theoretical and two are empirical research. The theoretical chapters investigate the concepts of leisure time, time budget, sports/physical activity/exercise, bodily health, "Homo Ludens", self-esteem, self-image, sports in society, institutionalization of sports, sports as a commodity, healthism. The research chapters present the specific means that we used to study the Cluj-Napoca UBB students' leisure-time physical behavior and the influence of socio-demographic variables on such behavior.

Chapter 1. Leisure time

This first chapter presents the concept of leisure time and its interpretations from theoretical perspectives, and the physical dimension of time that can be managed, planned and organized like a financial capital, by eliminating the unnecessary time consuming factors, in order to be invested to generate profit.

Section 1.1. *The concept of leisure time (short history of the emergence of leisure, definitions and theories, the distinction between leisure and recreation, leisure as recreational investment)* begins with a brief history of the emergence of leisure and physical activity, and their evolution during the best known periods of mankind, from the ancient period to the modern era. Knowing their evolution in very remote times makes their understanding and current approach more efficient. Since it is a topic that covers a wide range of scientific discussions, all the social sciences have formulated definitions to facilitate their own specific needs (Voss, 1967), some similar, some different, contributing with something to a clearer understanding of the concept. In 1974, *Joffre Dumazedier*, who is considered to be a pioneer of leisure sociology, defines leisure as the activity - in addition to the obligations of work, family and society - when the individual manifests himself deliberately either to relax, have fun, or to widen his knowledge and participate in social life spontaneously, freely exercising his creative abilities. Among the specialists who developed theories that explain the meanings of leisure are Brightbill (1960) and Nash (1969), Neulinger (1974), Henderson et al, (2004). In the framework of leisure time some experts who study the phenomenon talk about recreation as synonymous with it. Kraus (2000) emphasizes that recreation refers to the activity that takes place during discretionary or leisure time of anyone's time and not the time itself. Leisure time as recreational investment refers to the various resources allocated to achieve a generalized wellbeing, being a viable source of solutions for health, recovery, life. Of these resources, the ones mostly invested are time, financial resources and educational resources.

Section 1.2. *The concept of "Time Capital" (time budget, time as a limited resource)* is based on Bourdieu's concept of capital. He argues that it is impossible to take into account the structure and functioning of the social world without reintroducing the capital in all its forms and not only in the form recognized by economic theory. From

here came the idea that time can be managed as a financial capital, it can be planned, organized by eliminating unnecessary time consuming factors, it can be invested to generate profit. *Time as a limited resource* compels us to make a priority list, a ranking of activities according to their importance and necessity, in order to complete them within the time frames. The optimal use also means the increase of the time allocated to leisure, time for needs and relaxation.

Chapter 2. Sports and physical activities

The second chapter (the definition of sports, physical activity, physical exercise, sports and physical education culture, sports as a cultural phenomenon, the human being as "Homo Ludens", psychosocial features of youth) presents sports, physical activity, physical exercise as ways to spend free time, their manifestation forms and functions on the human body; it also presents play as a feature of the human being, recognized by researchers due to its relationship with the intellectual development and emotional well-being (Whitbread et al., 2012). Play is a phenomenon studied by many scientists who over the centuries have formulated several theories explaining its development and role in human society and personal development. Another view shows sports as a cultural phenomenon. Referring to culture and sports, Professor Grant Jarvie (2005) considers that these refer mainly to the values, the ceremonies and the way of life which is characteristic of a particular group, and the place of sports in this way of life. This chapter presents a series of bio-psycho-social features of teenagers, as they represent the target group of research, focusing on the self-esteem and body image psychological components, knowing that adolescence is a transition period in which young people struggle to cope with physical, cognitive and social changes.

Chapter 3. "Sociology of Sports"

Section 3.1. "*The place and role of sports in modern society*" deals with the interest of specialists in the place of sports in modern society. The studies on the sociology of sports highlight sport as a social construct created by people to serve certain purposes. People in society gave it a special meaning related to important ideas and beliefs in many cultures and it is connected to important areas of social life such as family, education, economy, religion, politics and media. It is also used as a tool to lead

society in a certain way and to shape lines conducive to social expectations and of the lifestyles.

Section 3.2. *“The institutionalization of sports: professionalism vs. amateurism”* describes the transformation of sports in institutional activity with formal rules and organizational structures. Athletes have been transformed in paid employees of companies interested in investing in sports, with contracts, giving their name to sports teams and groups, thus establishing the professional sports condition. In this context, sports has been divided and classified into two branches: amateur and professional.

Subsection 3.2.1. *“Transforming sports into a commodity”* shows the trends in commercial sports, the expansion of spectator professional sports and the increase of the general public’s active participation in sports. Increased participation in sports, professionalization of sports, technological innovation and awareness of increasingly sedentary lifestyle of people of all socioeconomic strata have made possible the manufacture of materials and equipment on a large scale, especially for the urban population.

3.3. *The ideology of sports as a branch of sports culture - healthism* is obvious in the 21st century, when it becomes a widespread phenomenon, assimilated by the great mass in forms such as preventive medicine, diet, meditation, sports practiced to maintain a good physical condition. Healthist audience is made up of a spread mass in terms of social status (Nistor, Tîrhaş, 2013). A large part of the phenomena related to the new health awareness in a risk society, by placing responsibility in the sphere of individual choice when talking about health or consumer, can be explained in terms of an ideology of functional consumerism in the new globalized capitalist system (Etzioni, 2002; Robertson and White, 2003, cited by Iluţ, 2013). The spreading of healthist concepts, their massive promotion by the media result in an increasingly obvious concern of the population to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

The analytical and interpretative approach of the research contains two chapters describing the main data collection methods - quantitative and qualitative - combined to obtain strong and valid data, and at the same time to capture complex and deep data.

Chapter 4. Quantitative research: Presentation and analysis of the data.

Chapter 4 is the first stage of our analytical and interpretative approach, conducted through a quantitative data collection method. The main research method was the sociological survey based on a standardized questionnaire focused on how students spend their free time. The sample under study included a total of 465 students, in the first (mostly) and the second year of study, aged between 18- 40 (there were 11 respondents aged 25-40), of the "Babeş-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca. The general structure of the sample comprised 349 girls and 116 boys. The sample was stratified according to the faculty, and at the faculty level a selection of convenience was applied (the questionnaire was applied to students that attended the physical education classes).

The questionnaire was developed by specialists, who intended to study how some people spent their leisure time, to determine their position towards sports and to some social aspects involved in sports, and it was filled with items outlining the aspects pursued in our research. The questionnaire was taken from a credible source SSP Research Group (2009): International Social Survey Programme: Leisure Time and Sports - ISSP 2007. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA4850, which was successfully applied in many countries, but not in Romania. SPSS and Microsoft Excel were used for data processing and statistical analysis.

The general objective of the research was to outline the UBB students' interest in sports activities during their free time and other ways to spend that time (participation in sporting and cultural events, hiking, reading, virtual socialization, computer games, watching TV shows, etc.). *The specific objectives* consisted in nominating students' most favorite sports by gender, both those practiced and those that they would like to practice; the motivations and conditions that influenced students' participation in such activities in their free time; the personal, social and cultural factors that explained those preferences and hierarchies; the influence of the frequency of practicing sports on self-esteem and body image; the nomination of the students' most favorite sports, both those practiced and those that they would like to practice.

Since the sample is not representative of the student population of the "Babeş-Bolyai" University, the results cannot be generalized to this population. But the sample is theoretically representative in that the student selection criteria allow the testing of the stated hypotheses. The sample includes a sub-sample of girls and a sub-sample of boys,

sub-samples for science, humanities and sports, and it is heterogeneous in terms of students' social background.

The research has revealed some leisure guidelines through a factor analysis and explanatory socio-demographic variables of students, the declared aims of practicing sports and physical activities also through a factor analysis and explanatory socio-demographic variables, and the relationship between the frequency of practicing sports and physical activities and self-esteem, body image, leisure options and self-assessed health.

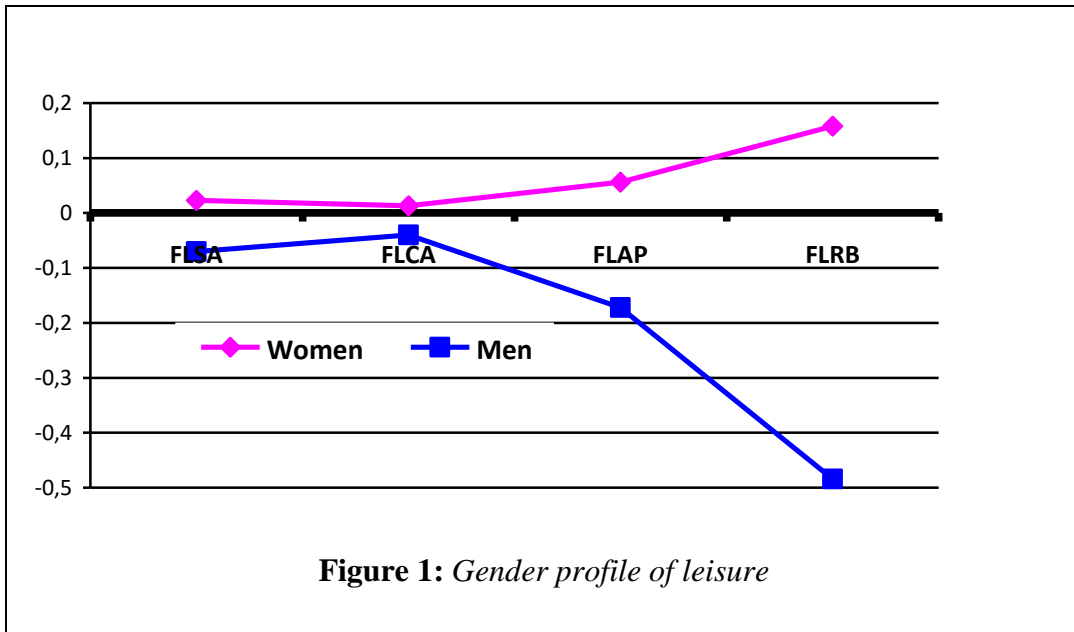
A. Leisure Guidelines: factor analysis and explanatory socio-demographic variables.

Based on the statistics of own values, we have found that the five factor model has a higher explanatory power for each item referring to the leisure time of the respondents in Section B of the questionnaire, and the items linked to sports correlate well with a factor and this factor correlates well only with sports-related items. The first factor is called *factor leisure - multimedia (FLMM)*, the second is called *factor leisure - sporting activities (FLSA)*, the third *factor leisure - cultural activities (FLCA)*, the fourth *factor leisure - activities of pleasure (FLAP)*, and the fifth *factor leisure - reading books (FLRB)*. The factors have a zero mean (M) and a standard deviation (SD) equal to 1, and the positive values of factors mean a higher frequency of a certain way to spend leisure time.

The relationship between leisure-time factors and socio-demographic items

In this section, we test empirically several hypotheses regarding the influence of socio-demographic variables on students' leisure options.

Hypothesis 1. *There is a significant difference between genders in terms of leisure options.* This hypothesis was tested using the factors above. The results show that women go shopping for pleasure and watch TV more often than men. Therefore, this hypothesis is only partially supported by empirical data.



***Hypothesis 2.** The option for sports and physical activity is more common in those from advantaged social backgrounds (parents' social status and urban residence). To verify this hypothesis, we grouped leisure-time activities referred to in item 1 of Section B into four categories of factors: factor leisure sports activities (FLSA), factor leisure cultural activities (FLCA), factor leisure activities for pleasure (FLAP), and factor leisure reading books (FLRB), which will be compared against the students' background.*

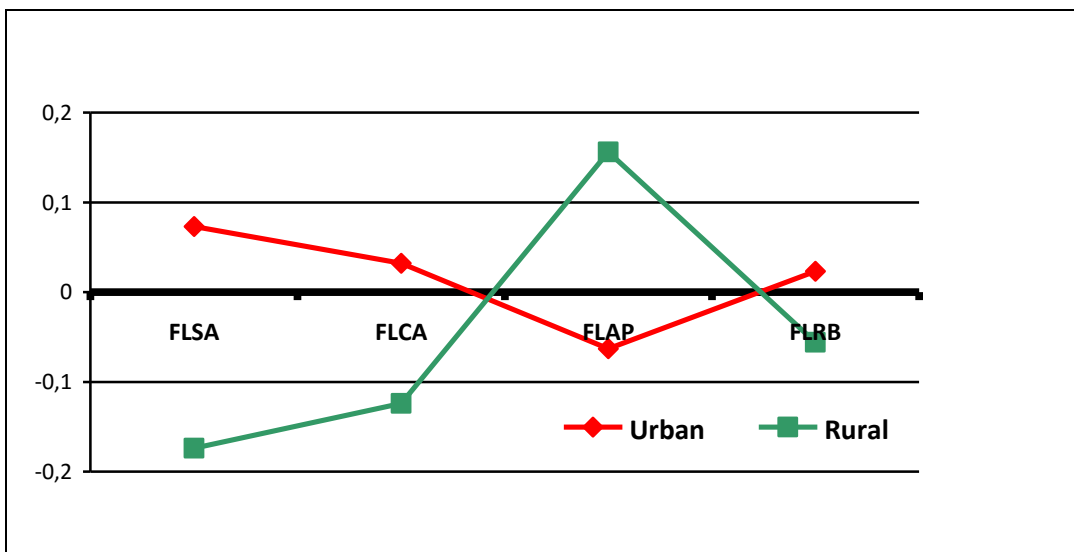


Figure 2: Background profile of leisure

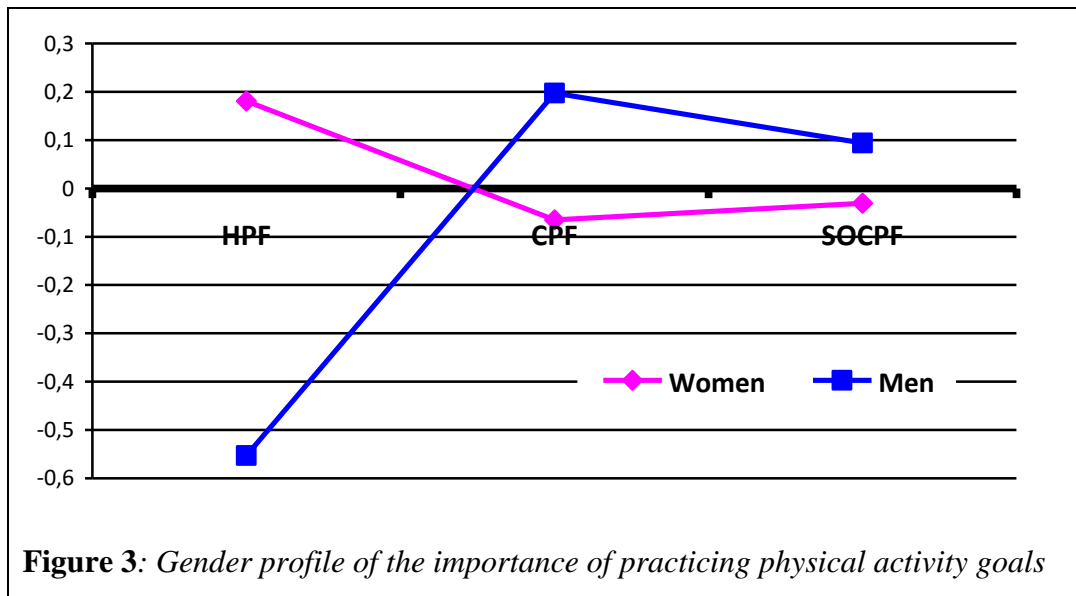
The results show that students from urban areas are more involved in sports activities, cultural activities and reading books, while students from rural areas go more often in commercial areas or watch DVD movies or TV. Moreover, the mother's education level significantly influences the participation in sports and physical activities. Therefore, we conclude that this hypothesis is supported by statistical data.

B. Declared aims of practicing sports and physical activity: factor analysis and explanatory socio-demographic variables

We chose the three-factor model because it explains nearly half of the items' variance and their grouping has theoretical relevance in the light of the previous studies. The first factor can be called *health purpose factor (HPF)*, the second *end competition purpose factor (CPF)*, and the third *social purpose factor (SOCPF)*.

Gender differences in the emphasis on certain goals of practicing physical activities.

Hypothesis 3. There are gender differences in the emphasis on some purposes of practicing physical activities. More specifically, we expect body care to matter more for girls and competitiveness and socializing through sports to matter more for boys.



The statistical data shows that health is the main purpose for girls, which is in line with our expectations, and the goals of achieving performance and participating in

competitions prevail in boys. Based on these results, we can say that the playful spirit is more manifest in boys than in girls. The third purpose, the social one, is slightly more important for boys than girls, but the difference is not significant. Finally, we can conclude that this hypothesis is supported by empirical data.

Differences in valuing certain aspects of practicing sport, according to the faculty where students study.

Hypothesis 4. There are differences in valuing certain aspects of sports according to the faculty where students study. Figure 4 shows that physical education and sports students consider practicing sports as important for all three factors: *health, competition, social*. Students from other faculties are of the following opinions: social sciences and humanities students chose the health and social factors; theology students chose the health and social factors; and sciences students chose competition as the most important factor. The statistical analysis shows that this hypothesis is supported.

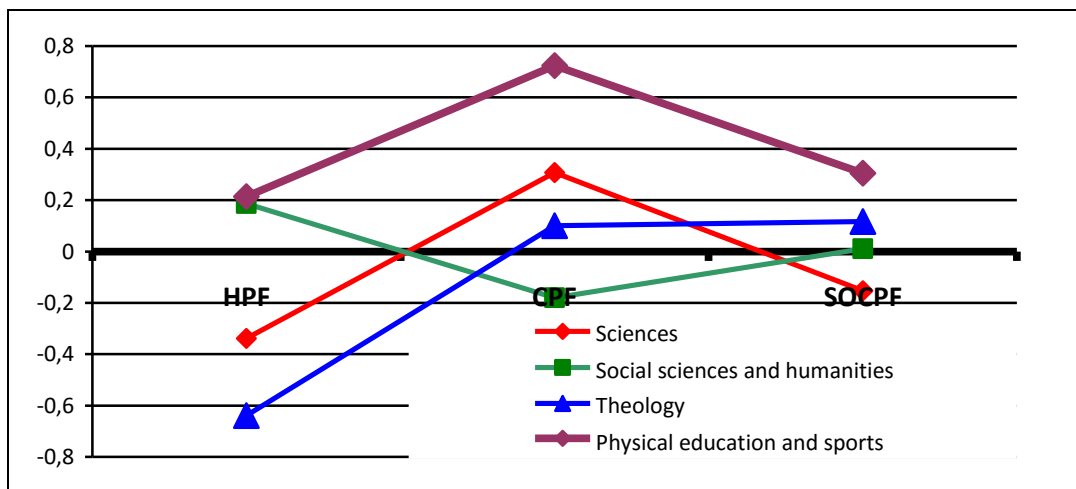


Figure 4: *Involvement in practicing physical activity goal profile by type of faculty*

C. The relationship between the frequency of practicing sports and physical activities and self-esteem, body image, leisure options and self-assessed health

The relationship of association between the frequency of practicing sports and physical activities and self-esteem.

Hypothesis 5. *There is a relation of association between the frequency of practicing sports and physical activities and self-esteem.*

Statistically there is a difference between the mean scores of self-esteem depending on frequent or rare practicing of physical activities and sports. Divided by gender, although the data suggests the same trend, the difference was not statistically significant. Instead, there is a difference by gender in terms of the relationship between self-esteem and the frequency of practicing sports. In girls, higher values of self-esteem correspond to a higher frequency of practicing sports, while for boys there is no difference between those who practice sports rarely and those who practice monthly, but self-esteem is much higher for those practicing several times a week or daily. This hypothesis should be verified in the future on a larger sample, where the statistical significance of the difference can be tested.

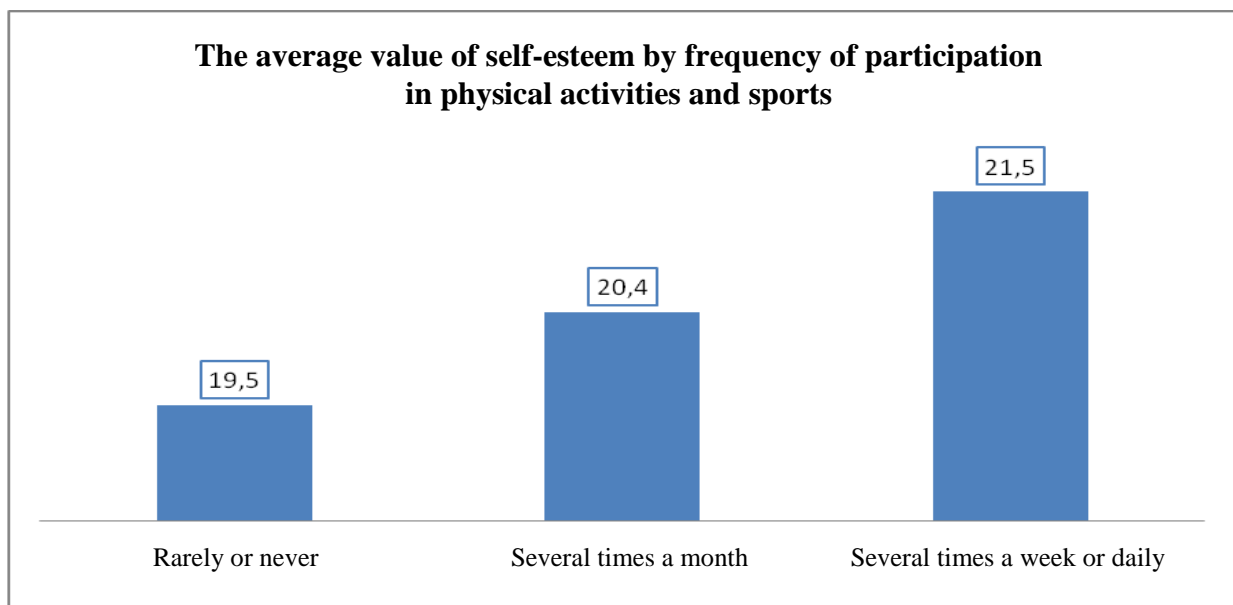


Figure 5. *The average value of self-esteem by frequency of participation in physical activities and sports*

The relationship between the frequency of practicing sports and physical activities and body image

Hypothesis 6 argues that *there is a relationship of association between the frequency of practicing sports and physical activities and body image in students.*

For the quantification of body image we used the modified Offer scale, keeping the first 4 items. The Chronbach Alpha coefficient value for the 4-item scale showed that the resulting additive scale is suitable.

According to Figure 6, the more frequently sports are practiced, the more positive the body image is. In the case of our sample divided by girls and boys, the data in Figure 6 suggests that the female students who practice physical activity several times a month have a better own body image than those who practice physical activities more frequently (weekly or daily). In contrast, boys who exercise several times a week or daily have a much better body image than those who make physical exercise a few times a month, rarely or never. Therefore, the hypothesis in this section is statistically supported.

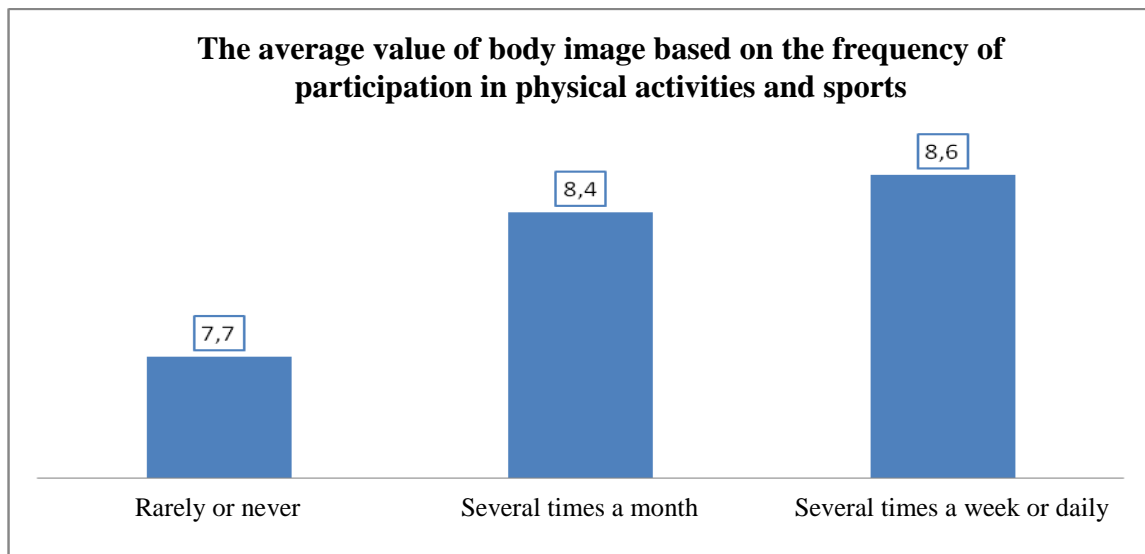


Figure 6: *The average value of body image based on the frequency of participation in physical activities and sports*

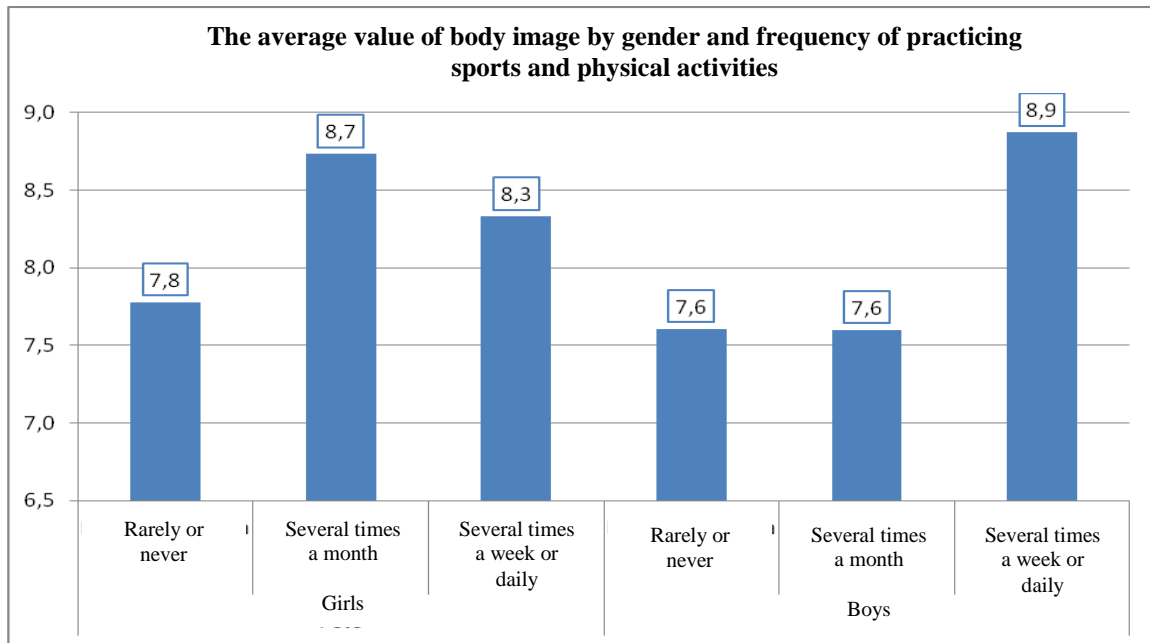


Figure 7: *The average value of body image by gender and frequency of practicing sport and physical activities*

The relationship between the frequency of practicing sports and physical activities and the assessment of other leisure options

Hypothesis 7 argues that *students who practice sports and physical activities often have more dynamic (non-sedentary) leisure options than those who practice rarely.*

As expected, the figure below shows that those who practice physical activities more often report in average a lower pleasure of reading books than those who rarely practice sports. Instead, there is a positive relationship between the degree of practicing sports and enjoyment of physical activity; thus, those who practice sports more often have on average greater pleasure to be involved in physical activities. Our hypothesis on the existence of a relationship between the frequency of practicing physical activities and different leisure options is thus supported.

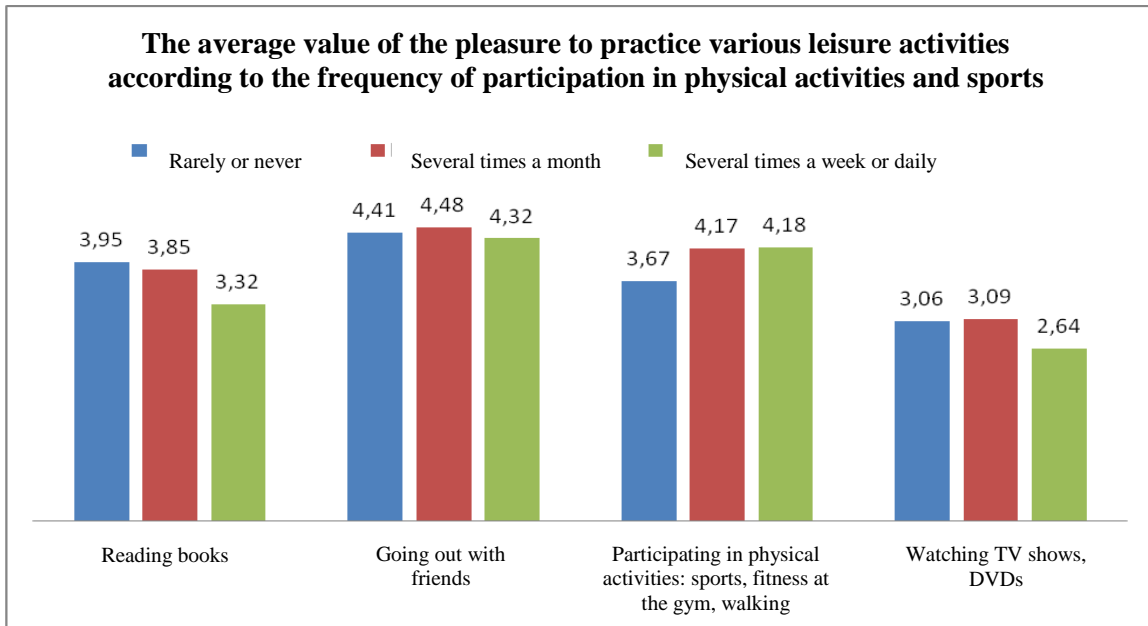


Figure 8: *The average value of the pleasure to practice various leisure activities according to the frequency of participation in physical activities and sports*

The relationship between the frequency of practicing sports and physical activities and the importance given to different aspects of sports activities

Hypothesis 8. *There is a relationship of association between the frequency of practicing sports and physical activities and the importance given to different aspects of practicing them.*

The values obtained from statistical analysis demonstrate that there are significant links between the frequency of practicing sports and physical activities and the motivation to practice them, showing the respondents' awareness of the positive effects for the body (health purpose factor - HPF). Those who practice sports weekly or daily have significantly higher scores than the average for the HPF factor values. Regarding the "competition" factor (CPF), we note in the motivation for sports that those who practice daily have significantly higher scores than the average, but those who practice several times a week also have scores significantly higher than the average. Therefore, this factor is also associated with the frequency of practicing sports. Finally, the "social" factor (SOCPF) does not vary significantly according to the practicing frequency; however, we can see that those who practice daily (most of them Sports students) give lower values to

this factor than the average. This result is consistent with that obtained in Subsection 4.2.3. Similarly, those who practice almost never have lower scores than the average, which is consistent with the expectation (based on previous studies) that the lack of involvement in sports activities is associated with disregard for the social and recreational role of sports. The hypothesis is thus statistically supported.

The relationship between the frequency of practicing sports and physical activities and self-assessed health

Hypothesis 9. *There is a relationship of association between the frequency of practicing sports and physical activities and self-assessed health.*

The association test results show that practicing sports and physical activities significantly influences the assessment of the whole sample's health: $\Phi = 0.240$ and $p = 0.001$. In the case of the sample divided by gender, the data reveals that the association remains statistically significant for both girls and boys. Thus, $\Phi = 0.218$ and $p = 0.038$ for girls and $\Phi = 0.310$ and $p = 0.090$ for boys. Due to the relatively small number of boys, no convincing comparison can be made between the values of the association coefficients. We can conclude that the hypothesis is supported statistically.

The relationship between the frequency of practicing sports and physical activities and the use of leisure time for recovery or development

Hypothesis 10. *There is a relationship of association between the frequency of practicing physical activities and the use of leisure time for recovery or development.*

The association test results show that the frequency of using leisure time for relaxation and recovery does not significantly influence the level of participation in sports and physical activities (Φ coefficient = 0.132 and $p = 0.230$). It can be noted that students who use their free time for relaxation and recovery often and very often practice sports less. Thus, 81.4% of the respondents who relax and rest in their spare time never or rarely participate in sports activities.

As regards the use of spare time to try to study and develop other skills, student who practice sports often and very often are more likely to learn to develop their skills and these differences are significant $\Phi = 0.155$, $p = 0.084$. This hypothesis is only partially supported.

Chapter 5. Qualitative research on the practice of leisure-time physical activities in students

The qualitative research was designed to collect data from two sources: students and professionals.

A. Interview with students

In the first part of the qualitative research we conducted two focus groups (based on a semi-structured interview guide), with first-year and second-year students from the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work within the "Babeş-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca, in May and June 2013. The first focus group was composed of a total of 10 students, and the second of 7 students. The selection of subjects was based on two criteria: the homogeneity criterion (first- and second-year students, boys and girls, from different departments: sociology, social work, human resources and anthropology) for focus, simplification and reduction purposes; and the suitability criterion, for time and money saving purposes. The questions were mainly about the same topics dealt with in the quantitative research: the amount of students' spare time; in addition, what they do throughout a working day and in weekends; their interest in leisure-time sports activities; students' preferences for certain sports, which sports they practice; in addition, which sports they would like to practice; awareness of the influence of physical activity on health and self-esteem.

The conclusions of the discussions focused on *the amount of students' free time* are that they have little free time, about 3-5 hours, after classes and personal care duties. Both groups estimate that on weekends they have 6-8 hours of free time which some of them (few) use to practice sports, while other just rest. The main activities during the free time that students have in one day are: listening to music, watching movies, meeting with friends. The influence of the Internet can also be seen in the young students of the "Babeş-Bolyai" University, who admit to a certain dependence and especially the interest in what happens in the virtual world. The practice of various forms of sports lies in the background and only if they have any energy left.

The conclusions about *the interest in leisure-time sports activities* are that few participants from both groups practice physical activities regularly, while others practice sporadically or never. The discussions have revealed that students feel that they lack the

time to be physically active. The form of exercise indicated by all students who reported being physically active is running at the end of the day, or various maintenance exercises throughout the week. A small part of them use their free time on weekends to exercise. Boys seem to be more active than girls and are particularly interested in physical appearance.

In *students' preferences for certain sports* practiced and which they would like to practice, swimming is the most appreciated one by students, regardless of gender, equally by those who know the swimming techniques and those who cannot swim. Next are basketball, tennis, dancing and aerobics. Although it is an expensive sport, both girls and boys would like to learn to play tennis. A very small number of students participating in the interview were interested in extreme sports.

Regarding *the awareness of the influence of physical activity on health and self-esteem*, the findings show that the participants were aware of the beneficial effects of exercise and sports on health. The opinions did not differ by gender or group. They argued these aspects from the perspective of their own experience, comparing physical and mental states experienced during periods in which they participated in physical activities against periods in which they were physically inactive, more or less justified. Other reasons for which students appreciate exercise are: maintain body weight at optimal values, lose weight, and maintain physical fitness required for a high level of energy needed for daily activities and wellbeing.

B. Interview with experts

In the second part of the qualitative research, the interviews were conducted (through semi-structured interviews) with four professors from the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports within the “Babeş-Bolyai” University, specialists in the field with 10-16 years of experience and seniority in physical education for students from other faculties of this University. The interviews were conducted in November-December 2015, and their analysis was conducted in January and February. Because the views expressed by the four respondents had a high degree of convergence, the saturation of ideas was reached and there was no need to continue interviewing other people.

The individual discussions have led to a large numbers of views and perceptions from experts regarding UBB students' attitude towards practicing physical activities in

general and during leisure time in particular. After analyzing the data and information from the interviews, we have identified the following general ideas:

1. Physical training and knowledge of students who come to physical education classes

The experts consider that students' physical training and knowledge, and motor skills are poor. They come from high school with a poor general physical training and the physical education classes in the first year at the university cannot have an optimal level of intensity and volume. At the same level of deficiency is also the students' knowledge for practicing independently minimal body maintenance programs. The opinions are that boys are more dynamic and physically active (approximately 75%) than girls (25%), and both genders aim mainly at body modeling.

2. Findings on the interest and involvement of students in physical activities

Here opinions are unanimous and express the low interest of students in physical activities. They note young people's orientation to the fun offered by modern technology, through increasingly sophisticated gadgets and the Internet, where sitting and stagnating in front of the computer reduces muscle strain. Young people's lack of involvement in physical activities is deemed to be due to the lack of actual free time because of the high amount of homework from an early age, which reduces the time that they could dedicate to more active forms of entertainment.

3. Ways to spend free time, sports and physical activities preferred by UBB students.

Students' free time is considered to be quantitatively less also by professors, due to their school obligations; the available free time is largely dedicated to socialization with peers, friends, on social networks such as Facebook, Twiter and in clubs. The experts' opinion on students' orientation towards certain sports and types of effort is based on their experience throughout their teaching career. Thus, the most popular sports are games such as soccer, basketball, handball and volleyball, and fitness as a form of individual sports. Boys are more likely to choose soccer or basketball, while girls choose maintenance workouts, as they are concerned with their physical appearance, and prefer volleyball as form of game. These choices reflect boys' orientation towards more dynamic movement with intense effort, while girls choose more static activity with lower

intensity, conducted in small space. Swimming is the most required sports for physical education classes, both by those who are familiar with the swimming strokes and by those who cannot swim.

4. The cause of students' low participation in sports and physical activities during their free time

In addition to the lack of free time, the four experts are also of the opinion that other causes include lack of motivation to perform physical activities, as students are oriented towards less physically demanding activities which are at hand, plus poor knowledge of techniques and regulations of various sports. The lack of facilities near their homes or college can be considered a relevant cause which counts in students' time saving and financial budget, plus the fee of access to a sports base, for example.

5. The influence of socioeconomic status in youth participation in physical activities.

The socioeconomic status matters in guiding students towards physical activities. The specialists consider that the culture and financial support of parents, of family are particularly important in youth education. An education in which sports, movement have a special place as part of family life, which encourages participation in various forms of physical activity, certainly marks the active behavior of children throughout their lives. The living standard of parents enables the purchase of membership to gyms and sports facilities, and payment of rental fees of fields/courts for various sports games.

6. Sports facilities offered to students by the Babes-Bolyai University and the Cluj-Napoca city, for leisure time.

Three of the specialists find that both the sports facilities offered by UBB and the opportunities in the Cluj university center and surroundings are enough to practice physical exercise in free time. As regards diversification, some of the experts believe that those facilities are not sufficiently diversified and they even provide financially pertinent suggestions for the adding of areas where maybe ping pong tables could be installed, as ping pong is an accessible sports in terms of technique and equipment. There is also the view that the intramural spaces of the university are not sufficient for such a large number of students, plus the lack sufficient space for lockers.

7. *Performance sports in UBB students. Registration of students with university sports clubs.*

University performance sports among UBB students outside the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports is very poorly represented. There are only isolated cases of students who are at a high level performance and are registered with clubs that do not belong to the University. Since UBB has among its faculties a Sports Faculty, it seems that those students who achieve performance try to build a career in the field and opt for a sports specialization, attending the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports.

8. *Attractiveness of sports show for students, both as live spectator and TV spectator.*

Students' interest in sports can be also assessed in terms of interest in sports show which, according to professors, is weak. Televised sporting events seem to arouse students' interest more than the live ones. Participation in national games or professional league games is just the pleasure the young people who have practiced such sports at a certain time in their childhood or adolescence. This very low participation can be due to the lack of interest in sports in general, as pointed out above, or to the lack of regulation knowledge that makes a sports branch or event difficult to understand.

9. Involvement of students from the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports in specialized guiding of their peers from non-sports faculties of UBB, on weekdays or even weekends, through "*The Sports Movement Association of Transylvanian Students*".

The idea had a positive feedback from all four professors, considering that the students who are members of this Student Association come from all years of study and have sufficient technical and methodological knowledge for a qualified guidance at this level. This collaboration would enable students to spend free time in a pleasant and useful way, avoiding any temptations that are harmful for health.

General conclusions of the thesis

The theme and content of this paper are part of the broader study on leisure behaviour, oriented towards participation in physical and sporting activities. The technological development and the domination of the Internet in the first quarter of the 21st century have brought radical changes in people's lives in terms of movement. People's participation in physical activity is a matter of great importance to public health

and the physical wellbeing and health benefits of adopting an active lifestyle have gained attention across Europe and most of the rest of the world.

The level of education and health play a major role in a society's quality and the productivity of a nation. Young people who specialize in universities are a very important part of this equation. The education at the faculty level is the last level of formal education of individuals pursuing professional development and the last structured opportunity to develop a favorable behavior for a healthy lifestyle before entering the world of work. The importance of forming and developing people's habits of leisure and recreation when they are young is widely recognized, for such an attitude will follow them throughout their life.

The results of the two studies of our research show that the students studying in Cluj are aware of the importance of practicing regular physical activity and sports, indicating the spheres of movement's influence such as health, competition and social sphere. But all these results also reveal that the percentage of young people who exercise regularly is far below the ideal one. Justification for poor participation is largely attributed to lack of time. The differences in the choice of leisure activities depend on the spending power for personal recreation, namely on the socio-economic factors that largely determine the ways of recreation, the willingness to engage in activities, the interest in oneself.

The experts' opinion on the younger student generation is that this generation is not particularly interested in an active lifestyle in terms of physical exercise and sports. The low level of general physical training noted by experts in their students during physical education classes in college can be considered a real barometer for physical assessment. Even accepting the influence of coercive factors which limit participation, there are many more reasons that should determine them to practice motor activities, along with a greater willingness to choose physical involvement.

The offer of effective leisure and recreation programs is the alternative to solve problems such as poor physical training, depression, suicide, drug abuse, aggression among the younger generation. Consequently, the programs for leisure and recreational activities in university campuses should receive more attention throughout all years of higher education. Physical activity and sports, due to their characteristics, involve some

of the best leisure activities for students, fulfilling all the functions of leisure in all areas:
physical, mental and social.

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