

LEISURE SPORT ACTIVITIES AND THEIR IMPORTANCE IN LIVING A HEALTHY PHYSICAL AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL LIFESTYLE

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ABSTRACT

Leisure sport activities have an important role in maintaining health and physical fitness at adults, but also being more and more used for different other reasons like socialization, communication, making new friends and relationships, self-image, challenge etc.

Our study focused on finding the main necessities of adults regarding leisure sport activities, discovering the real reasons of practicing sport activities in their free time. So, using the questionnaire method, we asked 204 adults of their real necessities regarding leisure sport activities and why they practice specific sports in their free time.

The results showed that different sports are practiced for different necessities, so the practitioners of volleyball game highlighted the necessities of socialization and communication, the football practitioners had chosen movement and competition necessities as main reasons for practicing sport, basketball players elected affiliation and maintain health necessities as primordial, fitness or gym practitioners affirmed that main reasons for practicing sport activities are self-image and satisfaction necessities.

The conclusions of the study were that indifferent of the sport that is practiced, leisure sport activities contributes in fulfilling the adult necessities and is an important way of maintain physical, social and psychological progress.

KEYWORDS:

Leisure time, sport activities, healthy lifestyle.

1. Introduction

Exercise contributes to the prevention of degradation and biological degeneration and increases the body's ability to counteract

some tensions. The influence of exercise on the body can be felt not only for the organs and functions currently required for effort. Cumulatively, through repetition, it helps

the body achieve morphogenetic and physiological gains, with tonic effects on vigor and health. In contrast to this, body immobilization leads to atrophy, with the body being trapped in a “vicious circle” of inactivity (Dinca, 2006).

An important aim of Physical Education and Sports is to contribute to individual personality development. Team sports games represent a means of operational achievement of the objectives of Physical Education and Sports. Thus, sports games in a systemic vision represent “*a hyper system composed of elements or subordinated subsystems which act synergistically towards the achievement of a well-defined purpose*” (Colibaba et al., 1998).

The regular practice of physical activities and generally of any form of physical exercise (walking, running, aerobics, stretching etc.), sustained by a healthy diet and by the absence of behaviors that are potentially detrimental to human health (addiction to alcohol, smoking etc.), has an important role in the prevention of chronic diseases (Bocu, 2011).

One of the main motivations for sport, analyzed and discovered by specialists, is to create a healthy lifestyle through practicing physical exercises. According to experts, a healthy lifestyle is an active process that takes place during ontogenesis especially during maturity, the genetic inheritance being important and environment norms and values in which individuals live (Sopa et al., 2016).

In the process of their development, human beings tend to improve their physical, intellectual and moral characteristics in order to become a socially useful person. Therefore, they are always concerned about their health, their capacity to work, and in this context they understand the need to get more exercise and practice sports on a regular basis (Bota, 2006).

The dynamics of modern society requires special skills from individuals, both psychological (ability to adapt to constant changes, high stress resistance, etc.)

and biological (functional and motor potential). In that context, lifelong education becomes imperative (Tudor et al., 2014).

Specialists found a growing interest of young people for sports activities, and also underlined the consequences of lack of physical activity with adverse effects on human life (obesity, body mass index increased, deformation of the spine, heart problems etc.) also practicing motor activities can improve socialization, communication and intergroup relationships (Sopa et al., 2016).

The influence of exercise on the locomotor, respiratory, cardiovascular and other systems and its influence on digestion, nutrition, excretion, but especially on the nervous system and on mental activity is stimulating, exercise being essential for life and for balance and harmony in human life (Gulap, 2014).

The competition, the meeting of physical training and the sport leisure activities, are each a means of fostering the social relations of modelling personality and strengthening its characteristics, but also a repression of mental stress accumulated. (Negulescu et al., 2014).

It is a “*way of professional development of energy resources and psycho-physical power, being at the same time a school of social relationships in which cooperation and rivalry harmonize within immediate direct effects*” (Tüdös, 2000).

Building up and maintaining a healthy lifestyle is an objective that is particularly important in our day-to-day existence. Family and school play an important part in raising awareness among young people (pupils, students) about the need to practice physical activities as a prerequisite for achieving that objective (Macovei et al., 2014).

Appropriately developed exercise programs can help people under stress use up excess energy, release frustration, they can contribute to reducing anxiety, depression, distrust, loneliness, and the lack of interest in everything around (Grigore, 2007).

2. Method

The methods used in our research were: the study of the specialized literature, the sociological questionnaire, the statistic method, the mathematical method and the graphical method.

2.1. Purpose

The purpose of the study was to highlight the positive influence of physical activities and sport over the psycho-social and health development of adults that practice sport as a leisure time activity.

Also to reflect the positive effects of recreational group sports activities in adult life style.

2.2. Sample and procedure

Our study was conducted over a sample of 204 subjects, adults with age between 18 and 40 years old that practice leisure sports activities as volleyball, basketball, and football and fitness gym. The sample of subjects was divided as follows:

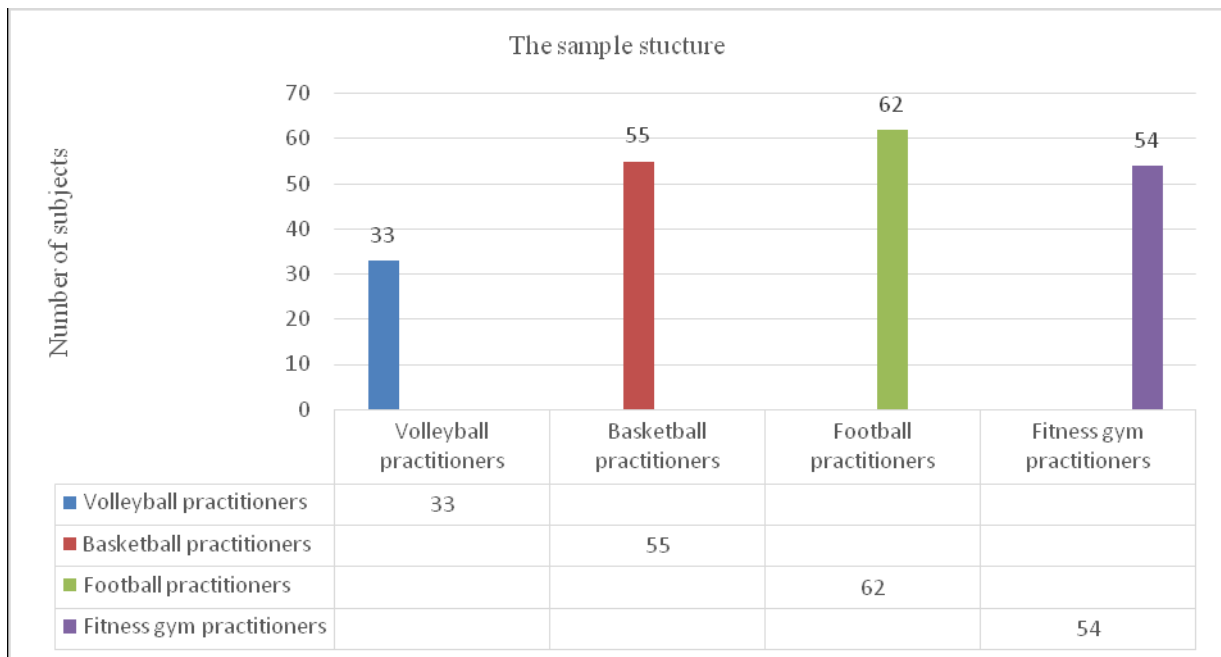


Figure no. 1 The sample structure

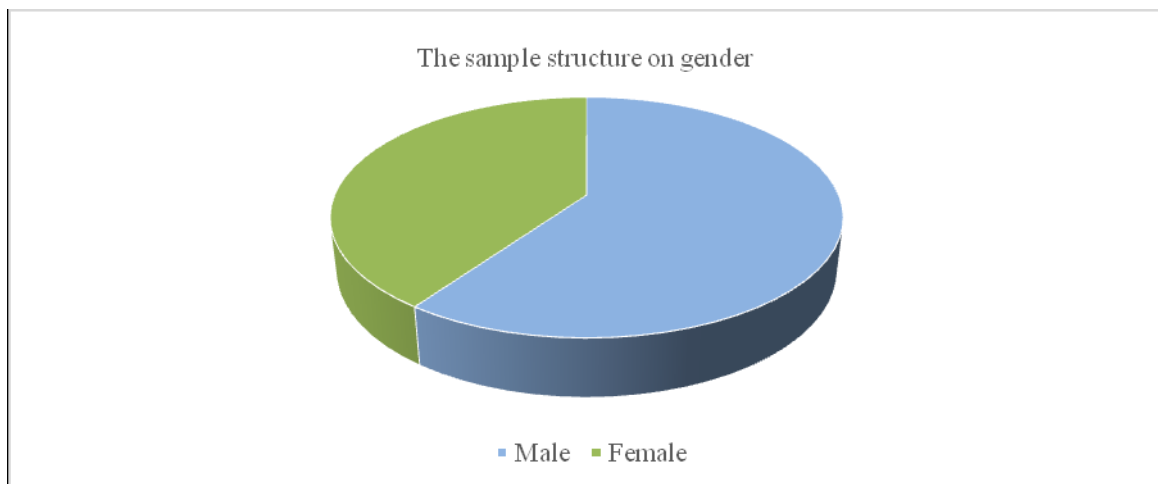


Figure no. 2 The sample structure on gender

The questionnaire applied on the sample group had as purpose the investigation of the importance given by the people to leisure sport activities and their belief on development of body parameters, maintaining health and also on raising the level of self-confidence, socialization and communication skills.

We used as main method the social based questionnaire. The questionnaire had 10 items related to social skills, adult education, personality and the positive influence of sport on body and mind. The subjects from our sample were asked to choose a grade that correspond to the importance they give to some leisure sport activities aspects, the grades were from 1 to 5

on the Likert rating scale as follows: 1 – no impact; 2 – minimum impact; 3 – medium impact; 4 – high impact; 5 – maximum impact.

3. Results of the research

The first step in our investigation was to administrate a set of questions and to discover the necessities of every leisure sport activity practitioners regarding the motor activities. After analyzing the statistical interpretation of the responses given by the sportsman we could synthetize the information and give ranks to the leisure sports activities according to the practitioner's necessities in Table no. 1.

Table no. 1

The rankings of sports activities according to the practitioner necessities

No.	The necessities	Volleyball practitioners average influence	Basketball practitioners average influence	Football practitioners average influence	Fitness gym practitioners average influence
1	Maintain health necessities	4.21	4.16	4.02	4.30
2	Socialization necessities	4.34	4.10	3.80	3.55
3	Movement necessities	4.02	4.11	4.32	3.44
4	Self-image improvement necessities	3.80	3.85	4.02	4.45
5	Challenge necessities	4.20	4.15	4.05	4.00
6	Competition necessities	4.10	4.15	4.25	4.30
7	Affiliation necessities	4.15	4.24	3.87	3.56
8	Communication necessities	4.29	4.10	4.05	3.60
9	Satisfaction necessities	4.02	3.90	3.85	4.40
10	Disconnection necessities	4.20	4.18	4.15	4.10

As we can see in Table no. 1 we identified 10 necessities that we consider important and write them on the first column. Those necessities were:

1. Maintain health,
2. Socialization,
3. Movement,
4. Self-improvement,
5. Challenge,
6. Competition,
7. Affiliation,
8. Communication,

9. Satisfaction and

10. Disconnection necessities.

In the following columns we had 4 categories of sport practitioners: volleyball, basketball, football and fitness gym.

As can be observable in the columns 3 to 6 the sport practitioners expressed their appreciations regarding the influence score of every necessity giving a grade from 1 to 5 in accordance with the importance of every necessity presented.

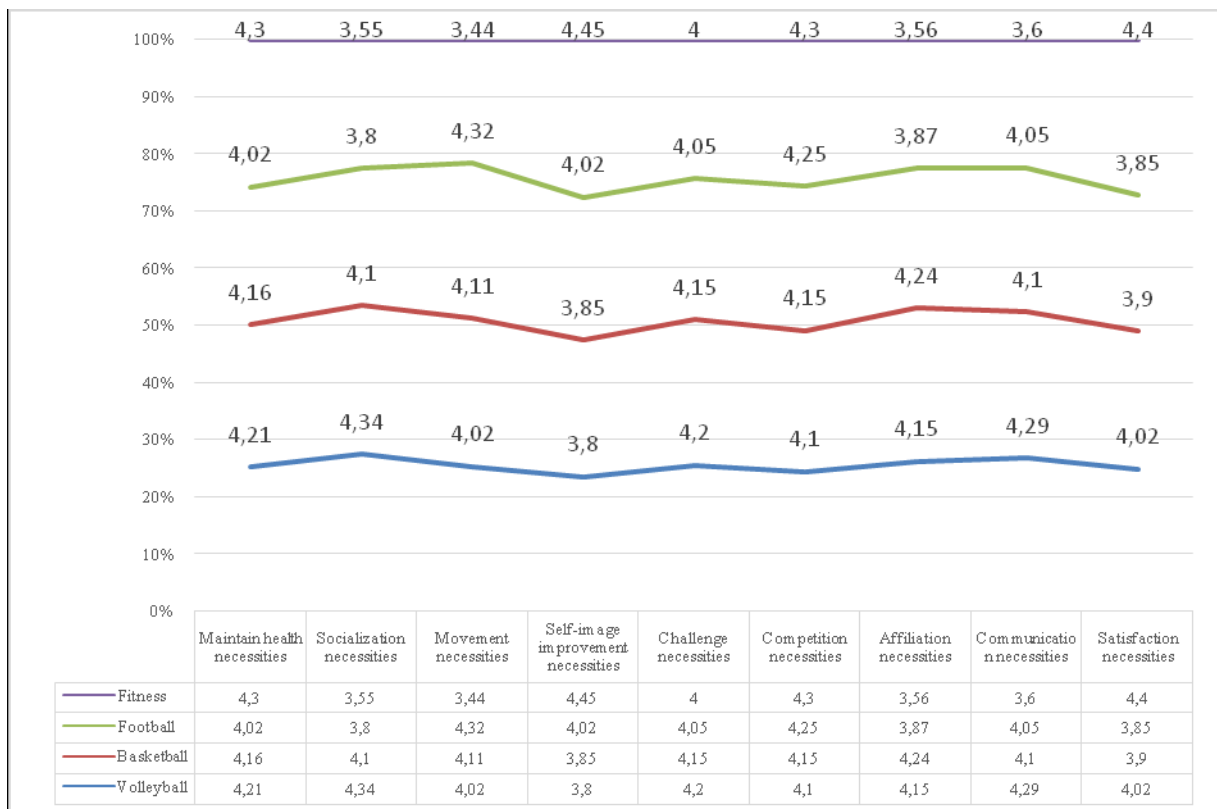


Figure no. 3 Influence score for every necessity in accordance with their importance given by the sports practitioner

4. Discussions

The results of the research as we can observe in Figure no. 3 were as follows:

a. Regarding the volleyball practitioners as we can see on first place, with a general score, the necessity of socialization has the main priority with an average score of 4.34, we can conclude that most of the participants practice this kind of sport for socialization, communication and

making friends. On second position we can observe that the necessity for communication is present with an average mean of answers of 4.29 consolidating the previous conclusion. Maintain health and challenge necessities are on third and fourth position with 4.21 and 4.20 score points. Also important necessities considered by the volleyball practitioners were affiliation and competition necessities, the sportsman need to compete

one another and to be part of a team or group. Not so important necessities for the volleyball practitioners were movement and satisfaction necessities, showing that communication and socialization necessities are more important for them. On the last position was situated self-image improvement, so volleyball practitioners don't give big importance to self-image improvement when practicing volleyball activities.

b. At the basketball sportsman we observed that the most important necessity was the affiliation necessity, with a general score of 4.24 points, concluding that basketball practitioners consider that being part of a team or a group is the most important. On second place we find the necessity of maintain health, challenge and competition necessities with an average score of 4.16 and 4.15. Not so important necessities for the basketball practitioners was socialization, communication and movement necessities with an average score of 4.1. The least important necessity of the basketball practitioner was self-image improvement and satisfaction necessities, with an average score of 3.9 and 3.85.

c. Regarding the football practitioners we observed that the most important necessity for those sportsman was movement necessity, 4.32 points, and competition and disconnection necessities, with 4.25 and 4.15 points. On second positions we find the following necessities expressed: maintain health and self-image with 4.02 points and challenge and communication necessities with 4.05 points. Affiliation necessity, satisfaction necessity and socialization necessity were on the last position with 3.87, 3.85 and 3.80 points.

d. At fitness or gym practitioners we found that the main necessities were self-image, satisfaction and maintain health

necessities with 4.45, 4.40 and 4.35 points. At second place we found out that competition and challenge necessities are important with 4.3 and 4.0 points.

On last positions on the necessities rank we found socialization necessities, with 3.55 points, affiliation necessities, with 3.60, and movement necessities with 3.44 points.

5. Conclusions

The conclusions of the study were that indifferent of the sport that is practiced, leisure sport activities contributes in fulfilling the adult necessities and is an important way of maintain physical, social and psychological progress.

Other reserches findings conclude that the practice of group leisure sports activities meets a wide range of needs related to the multilateral development of the personality and to the improvement of skills, with a direct effect on increasing the quality of life (Tudor et al., 2014).

A recent study coordinated by Marginean and Precupețu (2010) shows the growing importance of leisure sports in people's free time options (15 % in 1993, 26 % in 2010), although sedentary tendencies still prevail (95 % watching TV) (Mărginean & Precupețu, 2010, p. 71).

Different sports are practiced for different necessities, so the practitioners of volleyball game highlighted the necessities of socialization and communication, the football practitioners had chosen movement and competition necessities as main reasons for practicing sport, basketball players elected affiliation and maintain health necessities as primordial, fitness or gym practitioners affirmed that main reasons for practicing sport activities are self-image and satisfaction necessities.

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