

<https://doi.org/10.52449/1857-4114.2022.39-1.02>

CZU: 615.825+005:796

## THE IMPACT OF THE PILATES METHOD ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SPORTS CENTERS

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**Abstract.** Sports activities are increasingly occupying a leading place in the concerns of modern man given the effects of a sedentary lifestyle on the body, an aspect accentuated in recent years by the coronavirus pandemic. In this context, sports centers aim to meet the requirements of people who opt for a healthy lifestyle that includes maintaining fitness, adapting the range of services. The success and viability of the business at a sports center are largely conditioned by the implementation of managerial concepts. Thus, the sports manager has the opportunity to adapt the range of services to meet customer requirements, introducing new disciplines, with notable results and that can attract more customers. At the same time, it is very important for sports centers to identify sports disciplines that are adaptable to any target group, that can be practiced both individually and in groups and that can be a differentiating element from the offers of competing centers. One such discipline that is complex in number of exercises and adaptable in terms of the number of participants and the intensity of training is the Pilates method. The present study aims to analyse how Pilates influences the management of sports centers, especially the effects on income, profitability and the number of clients. The study includes the analysis of the economic evolution and the impact generated by the Pilates discipline on a sports center in Iași, Romania, in the period 2017-2020. At the end of the article are presented the results of the study carried out on the annual financial statements and on the receipts made on each discipline from the service offer of the sports center. The study confirms that the Pilates discipline contributes remarkably to the achievement of the turnover and to the retention of the clients, generating considerable income to the center and being considered a differentiating element from the competition.

**Keywords:** management, sports management, Pilates, sports centers, sports organizations.

**Introduction.** Sports activities have acquired a special importance in the context generated by the sedentary lifestyle, accentuated by the coronavirus pandemic. We are currently going through a period of static lifestyle, with a reduced number of daily physical activities due to the automation and mechanization of work. In this sense, people are aware of the importance of sports centers and sports as a way to compensate for lost physical activity. As a result, the sports industry is growing rapidly around the globe. Sports service providers have placed greater emphasis on service quality and efficiency due to rising customer expectations, and service competition. Sports centers aim at the viability and success of the business, a goal achievable

by implementing managerial concepts. The management of a sports center refers to the relationships that are established between the elements that contribute to its composition [1, 6].

The proper functioning of a sports center currently involves a number of elements related to innovations in this field of activity, as well as competitive offers of sports services. The design and management of a sports center involves a wide range of different activities and interdisciplinary professional skills [9, 10]. The sports manager must show continuous concern for the development and efficiency of the sports activities present in the offer of the sports center so as to fully capitalize on the

resources of the organization and attract new customers [1, 6].

The manager of the sports center must periodically analyse the offer of sports services and adapt it to the daily needs, market requirements and material possibilities of the organization. Thus, the manager identifies the disciplines that have the potential to generate profit and customers for the sports center and includes them in the service offer. Sports centers aim to identify sports disciplines that are adaptable to any target group of clients, that can be practiced both individually and in groups and that can be a differentiating element from the offers of competing centers. One such discipline that is complex in number of exercises and adaptable in terms of the number of participants and the intensity of training is the Pilates method. According to the literature, Pilates exercises have visible benefits for the physical condition of practitioners and can take the form of individual or group training. [2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8].

If the benefits of the Pilates method on the physical condition of practitioners is a documented aspect of the scientific literature, we wonder if this discipline can contribute to the development of a sports center by increasing its income and profitability. For this purpose, we intend to present, based on the analysis of the financial statements, the impact that Pilates sports activity has on the income, expenses and profitability of a sports center in Iași, Romania. The analysis aimed to identify the contribution of Pilates to the management of the sports club (attracting new customers, retaining existing customers, increasing revenue and profitability). We mention that the

sports center under analysis started its activity in 2009, having as object of activity the practice of sports activities. During the time period proposed to be analysed in the study, the sports center became an economically stable company, with a consolidated turnover, enjoying notoriety locally.

### **Empirical study on the economic evolution of the sports center in the period 2017-2020 and the impact of the Pilates method on the business**

The following is a case study on the economic evolution of the sports center in 2017-2020 and the impact of the Pilates method on business, by directly reporting to the evolution of all disciplines in the sports center offering detailing income, expenses and business profitability. The data collected and then interpreted were represented graphically creating a synthetic image of the main aspects that caused fluctuations in the economic activity of the sports center but also the added value brought by the Pilates activity.

The analysis was performed at a sports center in Iasi County, Romania in which four sports are available: aerobics, pilates, fitness and martial arts. The Pilates activity was introduced in the centre's offer at the beginning of 2017 in order to differentiate the services from other competing gyms. In 2016, the annual revenues of the center were 196,720 lei, the contribution brought by Pilates to the turnover being a significant one, of minimum 10% in the first year and up to minimum 20% in the fourth year, as it is observed in the following analysis.

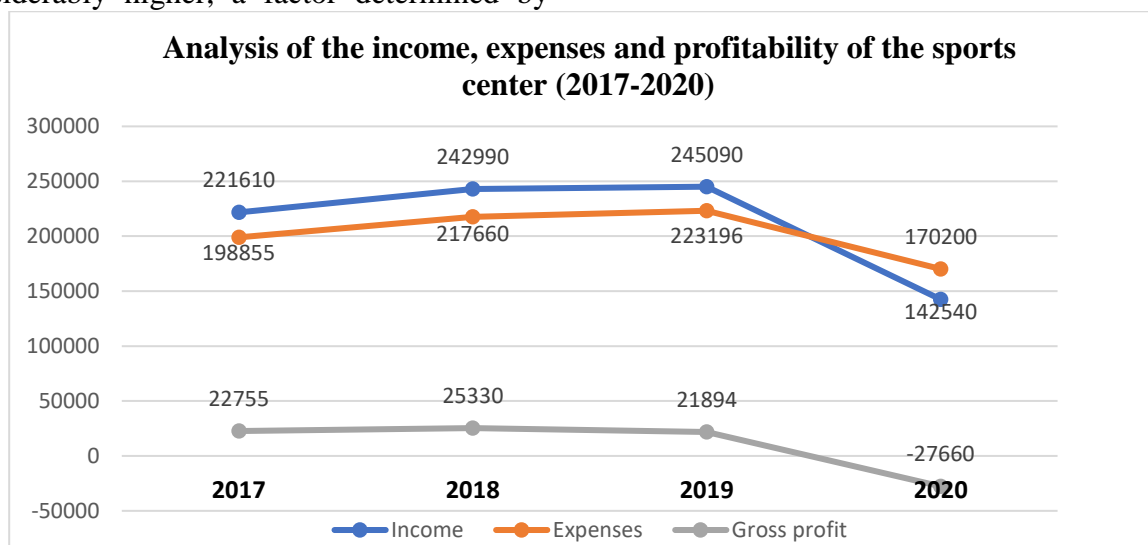
**Table 1. Analysis of the profitability of sports activities within the center in the period 2017-2020, in all disciplines (RON)**

SPORT CENTRE	2017	2018	2019	2020
INCOME (RON)	221.610	242.990	245.090	142.540
EXPENSES* (RON)	198.855	217.660	223.196	170.200**
GROSS PROFIT (RON)	+22.755	+25.330	+21.894	-27.660

\* The expenses of the sports club include, but are not limited to: the cost of staff salaries (2 instructors, 1 cleaning employee, 1 receptionist, 1 sports center manager), maintenance and service of sports equipment, sanitary equipment, cost of utilities (electricity, water, natural gas and internet).

\*\* Expenditures generated in 2020 were considerably higher, a factor determined by

the sanitary measures imposed by the authorities to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) consisting of masks for staff, hands sanitizer for clients, disinfection of fitness equipment, materials necessary for control epidemiological at the entrance to the sports center.



**Fig. 1. Graphic representation of the economic situation (income, expenses, profit) of the sports center in the period 2017-2020**

Figure 1 shows the upward evolution of the sports centre's revenues, correlated with the directly proportional increase of expenses in the period 2017-2019. The year 2020 determines a reversal of the favourable evolution, the sports center having a major decrease in revenues and implicitly profitability, fact generated by the appearance of the coronavirus pandemic that determined the closure of the center for 4 months, reduced number of customers and an unplanned increase of the sanitary material expenses. As the financial involution of 2020 is determined

by an external factor (pandemic), we expect it to be recovered in the coming years, given the importance that sports activity has acquired for the state of health and the measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus adopted internationally.

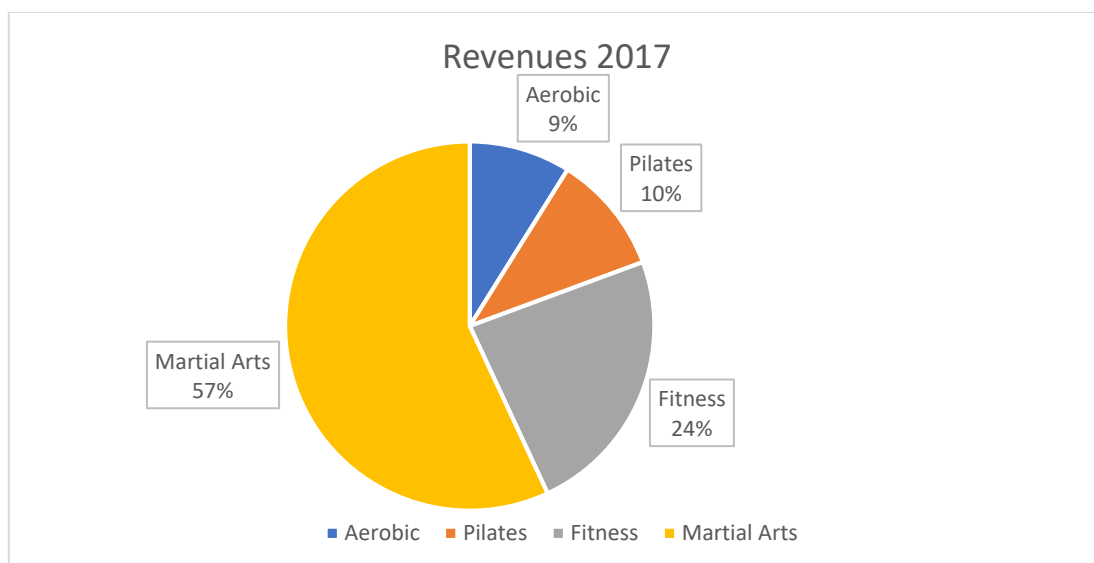
For a better understanding of the income analysis of the sports center but also of the positive impact generated by the addition and promotion of the Pilates method among clients, we present below the **Detailed Analysis of income generating disciplines within the sports center in 2017-2020.**

**Table 2. Revenues obtained in 2017**

Year 2017	Aerobic	Pilates	Fitness	Martial Arts
Revenue (RON)	19.720	23.190	52.520	126.180

Revenues are calculated by direct reporting to the cost of services for 2017, respectively: 8-session subscription - 60 RON,

12-session subscription - 80 RON, unlimited subscription - 90 RON, martial arts subscription - 90 RON.



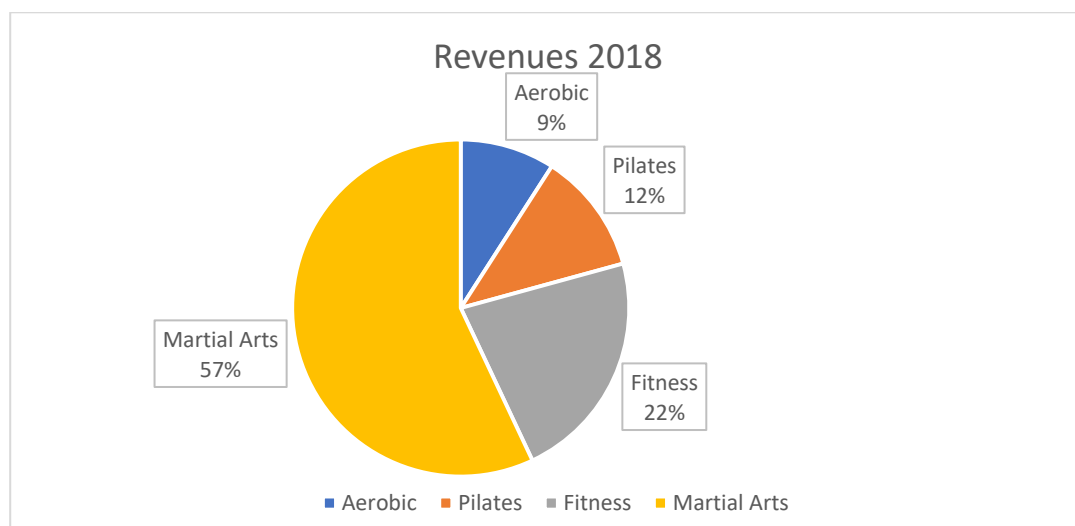
*Fig. 2. Share of revenues in 2017, for each discipline*

**Table 3. Revenues obtained in 2018**

Year 2018	Aerobic	Pilates	Fitness	Martial Arts
Revenue (RON)	22.100	28.310	54.080	138.500

Revenues are calculated by direct reporting to the cost of services for 2018, respectively: 8-session subscription - 70 RON, 12-session subscription - 90 RON, unlimited subscription - 100 RON, martial arts

subscription - 100 RON. Compared to 2017, revenues in 2018 were higher, being influenced both by the increase in subscription rates and by the increase in the number of customers.



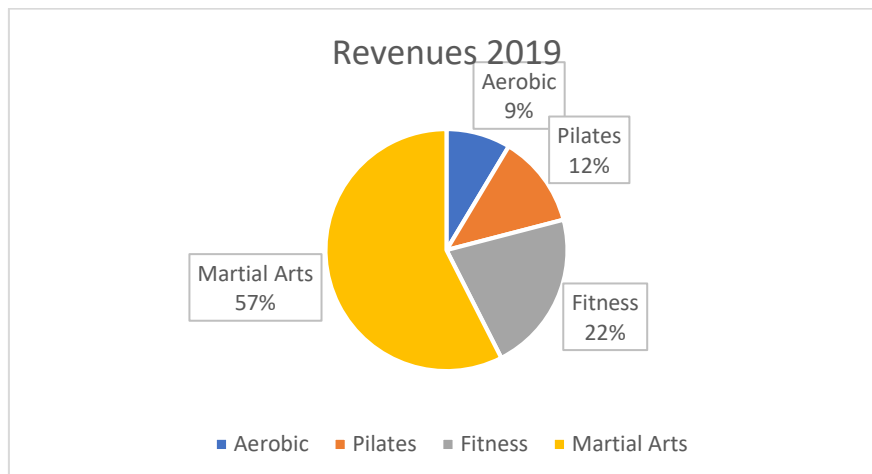
*Fig. 3. The share of revenues in 2018, for each discipline*

**Table 4. Revenues obtained in 2019**

Year 2019	Aerobic	Pilates	Fitness	Martial Arts
Revenue (RON)	21.090	30.270	52.830	140.900

Revenues are calculated by direct reporting to the cost of services for 2019, respectively: 8-session subscription - 70 RON, 12-session subscription - 90 RON, unlimited subscription - 100 RON, martial arts subscription - 100 RON. We notice a slight

increase in the income of the sports center determined by attracting a larger number of customers, the rates charged for sports season tickets remaining the same as the previous year.



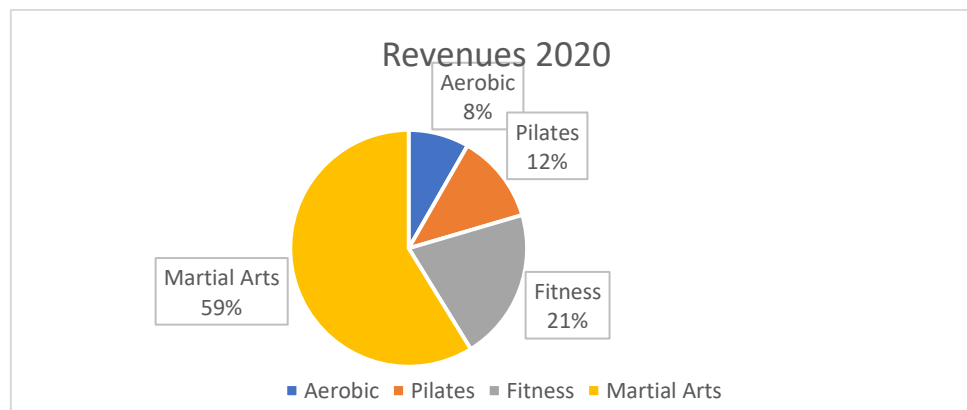
*Fig. 4. The share of revenues in 2019, for each discipline*

**Table 5. Revenues obtained in 2020**

Year 2020	Aerobic	Pilates	Fitness	Martial Arts
Revenue (RON)	11.810	17.350	29.580	83.800

Revenues are calculated by direct reporting to the cost of services for 2020, respectively: 8-session subscription - 80 RON, 12-session subscription - 90 RON, unlimited subscription - 100 RON, martial arts subscription - 100 RON. Revenues in 2020 have been significantly reduced by the onset of the coronavirus pandemic and the restrictive

measures imposed by the authorities, namely the closure of gyms for 4 months and a ban on group sports activities. Following the reopening of sports centers, customers expressed fear and reluctance to participate in group sports activities, further generating a negative effect on revenue.



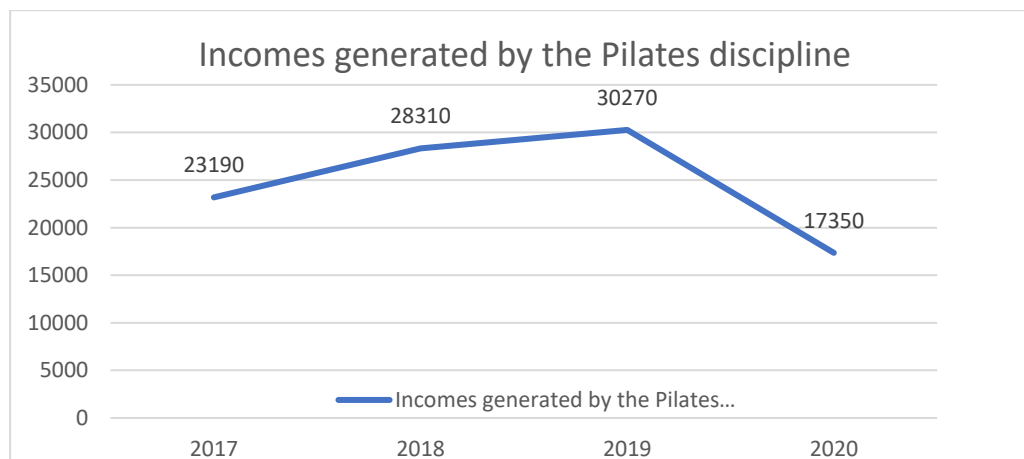
*Fig. 5. The share of revenues in 2020, on each discipline*

**The impact of the Pilates method on the income of the sports center.** In order to observe the impact that the Pilates method can have on the economic aspects of the sports

center, those generated by the Pilates activity were extracted from the total income and were analyzed comparatively, over four years (2017-2020).

**Table 6. Revenues obtained in the period 2017-2020 from Pilates activity (RON)**

PILATES	2017	2018	2019	2020
Revenues (RON)	23.190	28.310	30.270	17.350



**Fig. 6. Graphic representation of the income statement generated by the Pilates discipline**

Figure 6 aims to highlight the income generated by Pilates during the four years of activity in the sports center, analysed in the study.

It is worth mentioning that the introduction of the Pilates discipline in the offer of services of the analysed sports center determined the maintenance of the turnover in the context in which new gyms were set up nearby, a fact that determined their greater competitiveness and dispersion of clientele. Pilates was an advantage for the business, the discipline not being present in the new sports centers established in the neighbourhood, which determined the retention of the clientele and the maintenance of profitability.

The results of the study conducted for the period 2017-2020 are confirmed by another study on the impact of the Pilates method on the business activities of a sports center for the period 2011-2014, developed and published in 2019 [6].

Following the analysis of the sports center, we conclude by stating that Pilates is

an activity that generates considerable revenue (approximately 20-25% of turnover) and can be considered a differentiating element from the competition.

### Conclusions

The results of the study conducted for the period 2017-2020 on the annual financial statements and on the revenues made on each discipline from the service offer of the sports center reveal that the Pilates discipline contributes considerably to the achievement of turnover and customer retention. The fact that the center under review is the only one within a radius of about 1 km that offers Pilates activities is a competitive advantage over the rest of the sports service providers.

Following the analysis of the sports center, we conclude by stating that Pilates is an activity that generates considerable revenue (approximately 20-25% of turnover) and can be considered a differentiating element from the competition.

As the figures show, it can be seen that the interest given to clients attending this



discipline has paid off, as well as the diversification of the training methods applied, the tools and equipment used, and last but not least the choice of a qualified and specialized Pilates instructor, were defining elements in the growth of the popularity of this discipline and implicitly of the revenues for the sports center. With the diversification of the ways of practicing this discipline, people's interest has increased considerably, thus becoming aware of the many benefits of this practice.

Although, in the first phase, Pilates can leave the impression of an activity devoid of

vitality and dynamism, in depth, the exercises require joint mobility and muscle elasticity as well as static and dynamic balance. The multitude of accessories used in the method have positively influenced the popularity and visibility of the sports center.

The need for sports centers to include Pilates in their service offerings stems from the fact that it has become an extremely attractive sports activity among young people, but especially among the elderly, the benefits presented in this research being the basis for increasing notoriety. its.

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