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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON THE TIME ALLOCATED TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract. *The complexity of human life in society and the challenges of the contemporary world have as a consequence the rethinking of the role and weight of the factors that contribute to the realization of education throughout life. It is significant and specific that the need for social intervention in individual evolution is aware at the level of society, and its realization is organized, controlled in particular ways, depending on the degree and characteristics of emancipation of each society. The field of leisure is certainly one of the most dynamic areas, having lately an unprecedented rise in the way and the need to practice exercise. Free time occupies an important place in the history of mankind and has become an indispensable condition for the enrichment of human personality, it should not be "filled" with various occasional activities or simply lost the basic curricular fund, in order to ensure the unitary character of the ideas, conceptions, attitudes. Walking, practicing various sports in front of the block, cycling through the park, everything that means movement in general have been gradually replaced by all sorts of gadgets, watching TV and surfing the internet. Such activities stimulate the intellect, but ignore the body, and the long-term implications are not exactly beneficial.*

Keywords: *sports, leisure, health, lifestyle.*

Introduction. The effect of exercise on health has been proven since the Middle Ages. Organized exercise has preventive, therapeutic and repair effects on the whole body or only on certain parts of the body. Exercise can influence the whole body as an entity to achieve the same goal, namely maintaining, improving or restoring integrative functions, respectively health [1].

Sedentary lifestyle is a risk factor that leads to several diseases: cardiovascular disease, metabolic disorders, spinal deviations, constipation, venous stasis, anxiety. Hypodynamics weakens the immune system and metabolism and greatly increases the risk of diabetes, cancer and obesity.

In the current conception, the sports activity in the free time acquires two fundamental aspects: the practical utility and the fight against the fatigue, the indisputable

pleasure of the physical exercises and the outdoor movement of the people [3, 4]. The useful use of exercise should be complemented by enjoyable outdoor leisure activities, games, sports and tourism, as well as more special activities such as cycling.

In the opinion of F. Georgescu, the phenomenon of practicing physical exercises is not a fact, but a social process, a concrete reality in the making, which is gradually constituted in each socio-economic formation. It appears, with its multitude of sides and components, as a product of society throughout its existence [7, p. 20].

Exercise has a clear role in maintaining health, something known, since ancient times. As we all know, both the human body and the mind need movement to maintain their integrity and proper functioning.

Another positive effect that exercise has especially on young people is that it reduces their chances of developing dangerous habits, such as smoking, alcohol, drugs or dropping out of school. A young person educated from a young age in the spirit of sports will understand much more easily that these vices not only decrease athletic performance, but even endanger life [9].

Also, children who play certain sports understand much more easily what it means to win or lose, how to react in these situations and the fact that in order to win you have to work hard with team members. That is why, later in life, they will integrate much easier and will do their best to be the best [4, 6].

Sport develops, in addition to physical, mental abilities, strategic thinking and mathematical thinking [2]. For example, during a basketball game, the child will have to decide in a split second who will pass the ball and where they need to go to get it back and score. Basic math will use it to keep track.

The **aim** of our study is to make people in general aware of the importance of physical activity. The proposal to exercise in my free time is a challenge for all people, as they resist such a request for various reasons. Thus, an individualized approach to "prescribing" exercise is needed to have an impact on behavior change.

The main **research method** we used is to study the literature, a method that allowed us to highlight the scientific and technical revolution of the current period and that profoundly influenced our way of thinking and living. Accelerated technical progress and the growth of economic processes significantly change people's way of life and work.

Following the study, it was found that the time allocated to physical activities differs from one country to another depending on several factors.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), regular and proper physical activity contributes significantly to

improved muscle and cardiorespiratory function, eliminates in most cases the risk of depression, reduces the risk of fractures and is essential for energy balance and weight control of any physical activity performed correctly that is carried out in free time, has a health benefit.

Globally, 1 in 4 adults does not constantly engage in physical activity. People who are physically inactive have a 20% to 30% increased risk of death compared to those who exercise regularly. Over 80% of the world's adolescent population does not exercise.

The latest Commission Eurobarometer survey on sport and physical activity, published in March 2018, shows that 50% of Europeans exercise or train in sports games.

Another study conducted and presented by Eurobarometer in Brussels in 2014 and which reveals large differences between attitude towards sport and physical activity.

The study shows that 41% of EU citizens practice sports at least once a week, and 59% are completely inactive or rarely practice physical activity.

The countries that take sports most seriously are Ireland and the Nordic countries, with 23% of Irish citizens exercising at least 5 times a week, while Sweden (70%), Denmark (68%) and Finland (66%) have the best percentage of "regular" exercise (once a week or more often) followed by other countries with an equally high percentage of the Netherlands. (58%) and Luxembourg (54%). At the bottom of the ranking are countries like Bulgaria, where 78% of people do not practice any physical activity, followed by Malta (75%), Portugal (64%), Romania (60%) and Italy (60%).

Men in the EU are the ones who most often engage in physical activity or play a certain sport against women. 45% of men exercise at least once a week compared to women who are 37%; meanwhile, 37% of men have never exercised, and 47% of women have never exercised.

The largest difference between men and women is found in the age group 15–24 years-old 74% in favor of males and 55% of women. The study also found a correlation between socioeconomic status and physical activity. 68% of people who drop out of school by the age of 15 say they never practice sports, while this indicator is 27% for those who drop out of school after the age of 20, those who practice physical activity are 64%. The difference decreases to 46% for people aged 25-39, 39% for those aged 40-54 and 30% for people over 55. The proportion of those who have never practiced physical activity varies from 19% for the segment aged 15-24 years-old, to 58% for people over 55 years-old.

Relevant is the fact that some people in certain professional categories also allow time

for physical exercise: 59% of managers practice physical activity at least once a week, compared to 44% of those who work in the office but are not managers, 45 % of those who are self-employed practice physical activity. Most of the people who do not have any professional activity or who do not work are also the ones who practice the least physical exercises: 75% of the housewives and retirees, 63% of the unemployed.

In Romania there is a continuous trend of increasing the percentage of people who say they never practice sports or physical activities, from 49% in 2010 to 60% in 2014 and 63% in 2018. Increasing physical activity involves the whole society, as well as a cultural approach and therefore requires a collective effort in different sectors and disciplines.

Table 1. Responses to the frequency of physical activity (%)

(source: SPECIAL EUROBAROMETER 412 “Sport and physical activity” [8])

QD1 How often do you exercise or play sport?					
	Regularly	With some regularity	Seldom	Never	Don't know
EU28	8%	33%	17%	42%	0%
Gender					
Man	9%	36%	18%	37%	0%
Woman	7%	30%	16%	47%	0%
Age					
15-24	11%	53%	17%	19%	0%
25-39	8%	38%	21%	33%	0%
40-54	8%	31%	20%	41%	0%
55 +	8%	22%	12%	58%	0%
Education (End of)					
15-	8%	15%	9%	68%	0%
16-19	7%	28%	19%	45%	1%
20+	9%	43%	20%	27%	1%
Still studying	12%	61%	14%	13%	0%
Household composition					
1	9%	27%	13%	51%	0%
2	9%	30%	17%	44%	0%
3	8%	34%	18%	40%	0%
4+	7%	39%	19%	35%	0%
Socio-professional category					
Self-employed	7%	38%	17%	37%	1%
Managers	8%	51%	23%	18%	0%
Other white collars	6%	38%	24%	32%	0%
Manual workers	9%	30%	19%	42%	0%
House persons	8%	19%	13%	59%	1%
Unemployed	9%	28%	18%	45%	0%
Retired	8%	20%	11%	61%	0%
Students	12%	61%	14%	13%	0%
Difficulties paying bills					
Most of the time	7%	21%	14%	57%	1%
From time to time	7%	29%	17%	47%	0%
Almost never/ Never	9%	36%	18%	37%	0%
Gender and Age					
Man 15-24	15%	59%	13%	13%	0%
Man 25-39	9%	42%	23%	26%	0%
Man 40-54	8%	32%	22%	38%	0%
Man 55+	8%	22%	14%	56%	0%
Woman 15-24	8%	47%	20%	24%	1%
Woman 25-39	6%	35%	19%	39%	1%
Woman 40-54	7%	29%	19%	44%	1%
Woman 55+	8%	21%	10%	61%	0%

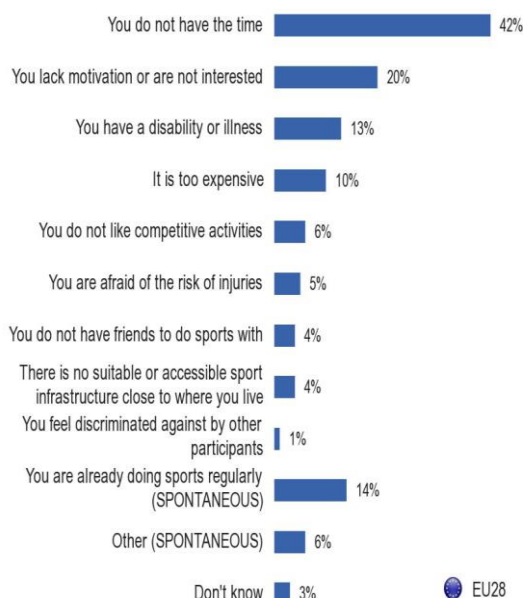
All respondents were questioned about the reasons that prevent them from engaging in physical activity. The lack of free time being the most common answer, approximately 42%, of the factor is the lack of motivation 20%, the impossibility to perform physical activities due to a disability or illness 13%, for financial reasons 10%.

There are other answers: 6% are not attracted to physical activities, 5% are afraid of injuries, 4% have no friends with whom to practice such activities, 4% claim the lack of adequate or accessible sports infrastructure close to home, approximately one in seven respondents (14%) say they already practice sports regularly.

Table 2. Responses on the reasons for physical activities

(source: SPECIAL EUROBAROMETER 412 "Sport and physical activity" [8])

QD9. What are the main reasons currently preventing you from practising sport more regularly?



QD9 What are the main reasons currently preventing you from practising sport more regularly?

	You do not have the time	You lack motivation or are not interested	You have a disability or illness	It is too expensive	You do not like competitive activities	You are afraid of the risk of injuries	There is no suitable or accessible sport infrastructure close to where you live	You do not have friends to do sports with	You feel discriminated against by other participants	You are already doing sports regularly (SPONTANEOUS)
EU28	42%	20%	13%	10%	6%	5%	4%	4%	1%	14%
BE	39%	19%	15%	10%	8%	6%	3%	4%	1%	14%
BG	39%	26%	12%	9%	6%	6%	7%	4%	0%	8%
CZ	52%	23%	16%	14%	6%	9%	7%	7%	1%	9%
DK	48%	29%	20%	8%	5%	7%	3%	3%	0%	8%
DE	38%	23%	13%	7%	6%	4%	3%	4%	0%	23%
EE	42%	15%	17%	13%	5%	3%	6%	3%	0%	11%
IE	44%	11%	11%	7%	6%	7%	2%	2%	0%	17%
EL	46%	27%	9%	12%	5%	4%	6%	5%	0%	13%
ES	45%	24%	9%	9%	4%	5%	1%	1%	1%	14%
FR	42%	24%	15%	10%	9%	6%	3%	4%	0%	11%
HR	44%	22%	13%	14%	3%	8%	8%	4%	1%	9%
IT	40%	18%	4%	15%	13%	3%	4%	3%	1%	12%
CY	49%	20%	11%	18%	2%	4%	5%	2%	0%	15%
LV	47%	19%	12%	11%	6%	2%	6%	3%	0%	13%
LT	42%	20%	13%	17%	3%	2%	9%	4%	1%	5%
LU	50%	23%	14%	5%	4%	4%	3%	4%	1%	12%
HU	43%	18%	17%	13%	10%	7%	6%	5%	1%	8%
MT	56%	28%	9%	1%	12%	8%	2%	2%	0%	10%
AT	31%	26%	10%	9%	8%	8%	3%	5%	1%	32%
NL	29%	15%	13%	8%	5%	4%	1%	1%	0%	33%
PL	46%	19%	14%	10%	2%	7%	5%	4%	1%	8%
PT	33%	26%	11%	19%	7%	4%	4%	4%	1%	15%
RO	53%	13%	10%	9%	4%	1%	10%	2%	1%	7%
SI	45%	14%	14%	14%	4%	0%	4%	3%	0%	13%
SK	48%	23%	12%	12%	6%	10%	8%	7%	1%	11%
FI	32%	17%	24%	6%	7%	6%	5%	6%	1%	17%
SE	50%	27%	18%	6%	5%	5%	6%	3%	0%	11%
UK	42%	14%	21%	11%	3%	5%	4%	3%	0%	11%

Highest percentage per country

Lowest percentage per country

Highest percentage per item

Lowest percentage per item

Conclusions

Despite the growing importance of promoting physical activity in EU Member States, the previous Eurobarometer survey identified "alarmingly high" rates of physical inactivity in the EU and found that the vast majority of Europeans (60%) had never been active physical. All the data collected show an alarming increase in people who, for various reasons, do not engage in any sporting activity from 39% to 42%. Another statistic shows that

13% of respondents did not walk even 10 minutes that week.

Such statistics should sound the alarm and the message about the importance of practicing sports activities should be much stronger to reach all categories of people. The survey also indicates demographic changes. For example, women (especially the youngest) are much less active than their male counterparts, suggesting that women may need more encouragement and support to be more physically active.

By practicing sports activities, a multitude of benefits are obtained that contribute to the improvement of the quality of life in terms of physical and mental health. Thus, it increases the work capacity, the self-confidence, the quality of the professional and social relations as well as the improvement of the relationship in a restricted environment - family, friends, etc.

Creating the habit of practicing physical activity independently in the younger generation is one of the basic elements of the children's education system, this aspect

contributing to the preparation of a capable, healthy and strong youth to integrate into modern society.

Physical activity, seen as a way of life, improves the physical condition of a nation, which becomes more able to express itself, to explore and to develop in a balanced relationship with the environment in which it lives. Physical education addresses, simultaneously, the body and the psyche, because the individual moves, thinks, feels, expresses himself. It is, in fact, a movement education.

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