

## THE CONTRIBUTION OF SPORT TO A HEALTHY LIFE

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**ABSTRACT.** “Healthy mind in healthy body” has a wide coverage when it comes to personality development as a whole, including self-esteem. Through somatic optimization (better blood circulation, heart rate adjustment, hormonal balance, muscle strengthening, avoiding overweight, etc.), the sport also contributes to a higher self-esteem, through a greater weight of the physical self (perception of one’s body), in the general conception of self. If we make a connection between the quality of the overall life of people and the ways of spending their free time it is not difficult to observe that the high percentages of those who systematically practice physical exercise among the total population is itself an indicator of a society of some degree development. The practice of physical exercises was present in the social life of all the social-economic arrangements from the history of human society. The present paper aims to present some theoretical aspects regarding the complexity of the roles of sport: the reciprocal effects between sport and society, the functions of sport, well-being and quality of life, the effects of standard of living and lifestyle on movement practice, organized physical education, but also a practical study regarding the influence of practicing physical exercises as a lifestyle on quality of life thus highlighting the importance of movement in our life.

**Keywords:** *lifestyle, benefits, life, objectives, sports.*

**REZUMAT. Contribuția sportului la o viață sănătoasă.** Dictonul „minte sănătoasă în corp sănătos” are o acoperire largă atunci când vine vorba despre dezvoltarea personalității în ansamblu, inclusiv despre respectul de sine. Prin optimizare somatică (mai bună circulație a sângelui, ajustarea frecvenței cardiace, echilibrul hormonal, întărirea mușchilor, evitarea excesului de greutate etc.), sportul contribuie, de asemenea, la o stimă de sine mai mare, printr-o pondere mai mare a sinelui fizic (percepția corpului cuiva), în concepția generală despre sine. Dacă facem o legătură între calitatea vieții oamenilor în general și modalitățile de a-și petrece timpul liber, este ușor să observăm că procentele mari ale celor care practică în mod sistematic exercițiul fizic în rândul populației totale este în sine un indicator al gradului de dezvoltare al unei societăți. Practica exercițiilor fizice a fost prezentă în viața socială a tuturor aranjamentelor social-economice din

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istoria societății umane. Lucrarea de față își propune să prezinte câteva aspecte teoretice cu privire la complexitatea rolurilor sportului: efectele reciproce dintre sport și societate, funcțiile sportului, bunăstarea și calitatea vieții, efectele nivelului de viață și ale stilului de viață asupra practicilor de mișcare, educația fizică organizată, dar și un studiu practic referitor la influența practicării exercițiilor fizice ca stil de viață asupra calității vieții, subliniind astfel importanța mișcării în viața noastră.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *stil de viață, beneficii, viață, obiective, sport.*

## **Introduction**

In the last decades, sport has evolved at the level of society, from the way of leisure, to a major industry, having a direct contribution to the increase of social welfare – through the socialization effects they generate, by improving the biological condition of the members of the company and the economic one – through its contribution to consumption, income, tertiary sector, employment and local, regional and national economic development (Atanasiu & Opreșan, 2015).

The practice of physical exercises was present in the social life of all the social-economic arrangements on the book known to human society (Barbu, 2004).

The culture of all peoples, especially the ancient ones, has left us many testimonies depicting the human body developed harmoniously, strong, fast, resistant and skilful, traits that, although some are genetically conditioned, are acquired through the practice of a set of exercises, physical designed specifically (Barbu & Popescu, 2018).

Human society, in its different stages of development, has been constantly concerned about the physical appearance of the members of the communities, the improvement of the physical development and the motor capacity of the people. The actions in this direction were undertaken through two instruments through which she could act: physical education - predominantly formative - and sport - character enhancing the motor skills of people in the form of competition (Baciu, 2009).

## **Literature review**

### ***The connection between sport and society***

Sport is an attractive activity for people and has a positive image. However, the recognized potential of the sports movement to support physical activity meant to improve health is not fully utilized (most of the time), and on the other hand, it must be permanently developed (Balint, 2007).

At no other time in history has sport played a dominant role in everyday life. Due to the prevalence of internet and television, adults and children consume sports at an amazing level (Barbu & Barbu, 2011). When we are not physically involved in sports, we play them through video games or fantasy leagues and watch them on TV. The celebrity status of the top athletes speaks about the importance we attach to sporting events.

Sport is considered a real institution with problems, specific rules and internal operating mechanisms. In the view of some sociologists, sport has positive valences, if we talk about sports/motor activities for recreational purposes, or used as therapeutic means (Boroş-Balint, 2012).

A special place in the discussion about the functions of sport is reserved for socializing and education. Very important in the contemporary social gear are also the economic ones or the sport as a show.

Another major function of sport in society and its effects on the individual is the influence of sport on physical and mental health. The relationship between sports (physical activity) and body health is primarily concerned with medicine and physiology. Psychology is interested in this topic to the extent that physical health is a prerequisite for mental balance and positive thinking, as mental and emotional health can ensure a rational attitude to health and physical illness.

The functions of physical education and sport are as follows (Fillis & Mackay, 2013):

*1. The function of perfecting the harmonious physical development of humans*

The increase of the work capacity of the people is conditioned by their physical state, by the harmonious development of the body, by the maintenance of its biological characteristics. The efficiency in work is dependent on the physical state of the citizens, on the psychological balance.

The role of physical school education is unanimously acknowledged by specialists in the fields of education and health (Monea et al., 2015). Harmonious indices of physical development are formed from childhood and must be maintained until old age (Stoica & Barbu, 2013). That is why an adequate number of physical education hours must be allocated in the school curriculum. Sport exerts a favourable influence on the morphological and physiological indices of physical development in the young generation, contributing to their specialization.

*2. The function of developing people's motor capacity*

The availability of movement of people, manifested by the number of skills and motor skills they possess, but also by their degree of manifestation with increased indices of motor qualities, is also an important condition in achieving a well-being. Healthy lifestyle influences this condition, contributing to increased work efficiency, reducing risk factors for health (Jacobson, 2003).

### *3. Hygienic (health-preserving) or sanogenetic function*

The role of this function has been emphasized since ancient times. The sages of these times have advocated for a healthy life, physical exercises being unrelenting to daily activities. The functions of the devices and systems of the human body are improved as a result of practicing physical exercises. They will ensure the physical and psychological balance that people need so much.

### *4. The educational function*

Physical education is a side of education, the development of people's personality being greatly influenced by the practice of physical exercises in all forms. It also exerts influence on the other sides of education, complementing and enhancing their effect. The connections of physical education with intellectual education, with aesthetic education, with professional and moral education are unanimously recognized, a complete education imposing the presence of physical exercises in the educational system of a country (Hansen & Gauthier, 1989).

### *5. Recreational function*

A balanced lifestyle implies the presence of recreational activities in all categories of population. The free time of the people must include leisure activities, especially after an intense work day, and among these activities must be found physical activities. Their presence required the appearance in the field of physical education and sport of some professions directly related to recreation (Bauer et al, 2008).

### *6. The emulation function*

Due to their specific nature, physical education and sport offer the possibility of competition, competition. Physical exercises have always been a challenge, both for self-defense and for defeating an opponent. Emulation, specific to the game, is found in all forms of physical exercise.

This function contributes to the development of the competitive spirit, to the increase of the desire to overtake and to defeat the opponent, but respecting the limits of the regulations, in the spirit of fairness, of fair-play.

## ***The effects of sport***

Sports are sources of recreation. They offer relief and a relaxed feeling in a life of monotony, routine marked by misery, hardships and obstacles.

They infuse a sporting spirit to take on the heavy burden of life in a lighter vein and not think of life as a tragedy or a comedy, but as an ordinary business of life.

It is very important to maintain physical health and fitness. Encourages the growth of team spirit. Sports and games bring different methods of fun.

The practice of sport, as shown by studies, statistics and data of opinion barometers targeting lifestyle, apparently seems to be a marginal component of quality of life, although numerous studies have shown that there are strong positive correlations between standard of living, quality of life and standard of living. In agreement with these studies, we consider that the share of professional and amateur sports is an indirect but real indicator of quality of life (Popescu, 2010).

As a corollary of the relationship between the quality of life and physical exercise in modern societies, we can say that with the generalization of the idea of sport as a source of health, a whole “physical activity industry” has developed to serve those who value health, beauty or simply have the pleasure of playing sports (Sabău, 2010). Perhaps due to the growing importance of this industry, correlated with the fact that all schools have included physical education in the curriculum, new trends are emerging to promote the role of physical activities in acquiring a good health and maintaining it.

Thus, there is a real explosion of interest for the profession of trainer or teacher of physical education, as well as in other related fields that deal with body maintenance: aerobics, massage, physiotherapy (Abele & Brehm, 1993).

The need for sport is felt to be so great in life that there is ample justification for it to be introduced into compulsory schools. Sports and games give a sense of discipline, awareness and solidarity. They learn the value of time and how important it is to notice how a minute, a fraction of a minute decides the fate of a young sportsman in the field of competition. With proper training in sports and games, students become active, athletic, daring, daring and adventurous able to face future challenges. Sports and games are the right ways to channel students' energy and vitality and make their leisure time worthwhile. The spirit of competition is rooted in most sports and games (Scarlat & Scarlat, 2002).

The greatest educational value of sports and games is to stimulate study and hard work. Thus, through this theme is presented a statistical survey conducted in order to highlight the increasing importance that is given to the movement today. Heart disease, cancer and digestive tract problems are the main causes of mortality in Romania (Statistical Center of the Ministry of Health).

The causes of these results are, sedentarism and lack of education, chaotic nutrition, poverty and marginalization of some segments of the population.

Mortality rates have risen at alarming rates in recent years, surpassing the birth rate, so there is a continuous natural demographic deficit and an aging population (Romanian StatisticYearbook, 2019):

- In 2018, Romania ranks third in Europe in terms of obesity;
- Romania ranks 1st in Europe in the mortality rate due to liver cirrhosis, based on the excessive consumption of alcohol. Over 70% of the subjects are from the rural area. About 10% of deaths are caused by excessive alcohol consumption with implications in all forms (work and road accidents, domestic violence, various diseases, especially liver cirrhosis);

- Only 6 out of 100 people perform physical exercises constantly (daily or at least 2-3 times weekly) in the urban environment;
- Only 1 person in 100 performs scheduled physical exercises in a calendar month in rural areas;

Lack of physical activity leads to overweight, favours the occurrence of obesity and chronic conditions such as cardiovascular diseases and diabetes, which affect the quality of life, endanger people's lives and create problems for the state's economy and the budget allocated to health (Trial & James, 2001).

If we make a connection between the quality of people's overall life and the ways of spending their free time, it is not difficult to observe that the high percentages of those who systematically practice physical exercise among the total population is itself an indicator of a society of some degree development.

Awareness of the fact that lifestyle (having the component of physical and recreational activities through sports) has a major - if not overwhelming - impact on health and prolonging life expectancy is one of the factors that lead to this situation in advanced states (Șchiopu, 2008).

### **Findings and discussions**

Regarding the practical part of this work, we used a survey in order to gather information and to draw conclusions, being carried out a complex analysis regarding the effects of physical activities on the quality of life that has increased significantly in the last decades and the clearer delimitation of the medium and long term effects of the physical movement on the quality of life.

In order to carry out this study, we conducted a research among the Romanian population, between 20.10.2019-10.12.2019, through a questionnaire on Google Form, which was completed by the respondents.

Due to insufficient in-depth examinations in this area, our paper must be a starting point and a prelude to future investigations that can be based on the existing study.

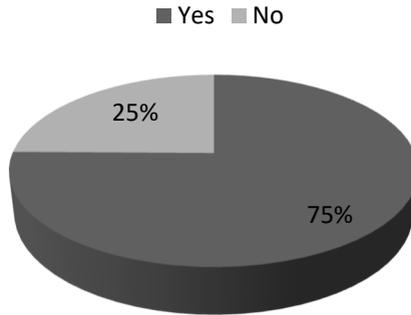
The participation was performed on a voluntary basis and the verbal agreement of the participants was requested. The participants were assured about the confidentiality of the results but also about the possibility to request the results personally from the researcher. All people participated in the research under the conditions of informed consent.

Analysing the data on respondents we see that 74% are male and 26% are female.

The number of respondents aged 20-30 years was 94 persons, the equivalent of 37.6%, 101 respondents were aged 30-40 years, respectively 40.4%, 36 respondents the equivalent of 14.4% were aged 40- 50 years, and 19 respondents

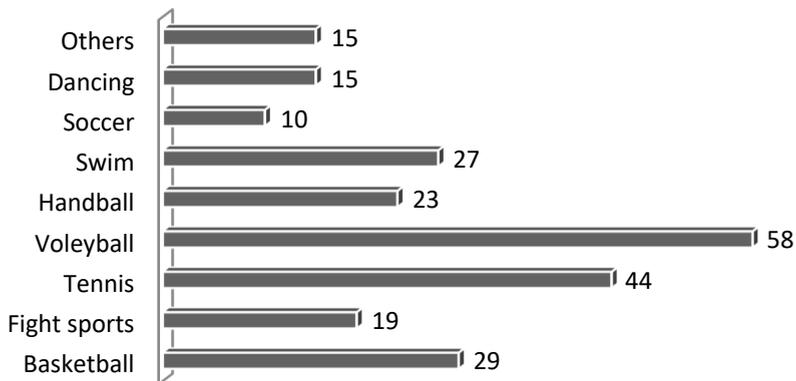
the equivalent of 7.6% are over 50 years old. The hierarchy of the respondents after the last absolute studies highlighted the fact that 97 respondents (38.8%) have higher education and 67 respondents (26.8%) have post-university studies.

Regarding the number of respondents who practice sports, the majority of 75% make physical movement, as opposed to 62 people who rarely or very rarely make a move.



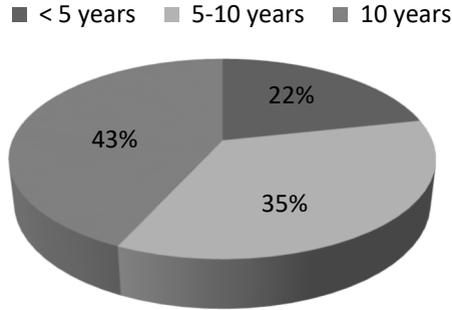
**Fig. 1.** Distribution by number of respondents practicing sports

At the question What sport do you practice, in the top of the preferences of the questioned people is volleyball, with a percentage of 23%, followed by tennis representing 17.6%, basketball with 11.6%, and on other sports with 6% each.



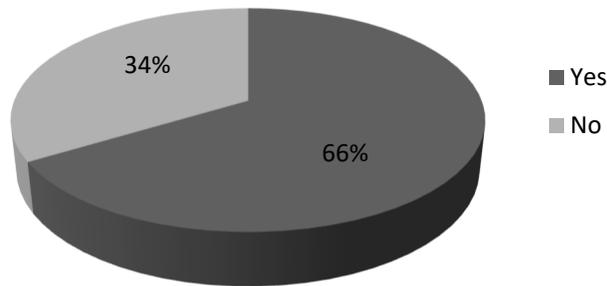
**Fig. 2.** Sample structure according to the sports practiced

Regarding the time period of practicing the physical exercises, the people participating in this survey are dedicated to movement, 22% do sports for less than 5 years, 35% between 5-10 years and 43% more than 10 years.



**Fig. 3.** The structure of the sample after the time period of practicing the physical exercises

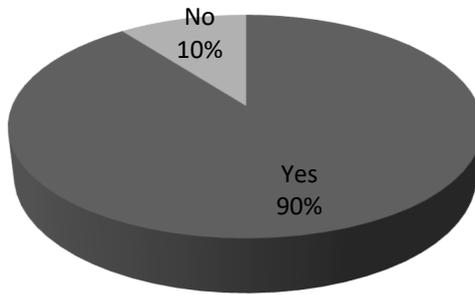
To the question Have you practiced performance sports in the past, 66% of the respondents answered positively, representing 166 people, as opposed to 84 respondents who answered negative, 34%.



**Fig. 4.** Structure of the sample according to the frequency of practicing performance sports in the past

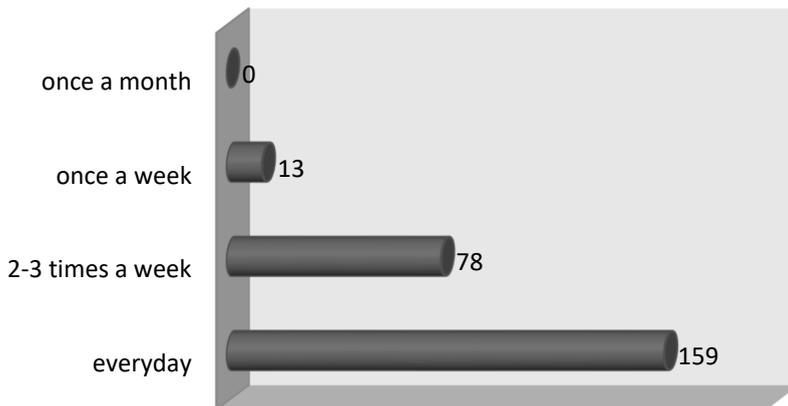
To the question Do you regularly do a physical exercise program, the vast majority of the people who are part of this research have responded positively in a proportion of 90%, which indicates that they have become more aware of the importance of sport.

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**Fig. 5.** Structure of the sample after the regularity of the exercise program

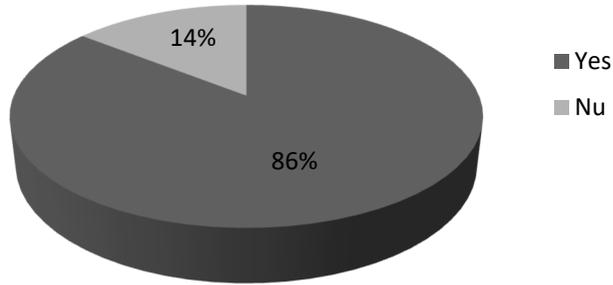
It seems that 64% respondents have a daily exercise program that they always respect, 31% follow this program 2-3 times a week, and 0.52% have this routine only once a week.



**Fig. 6.** Structure of the sample according to the frequency of the exercise program

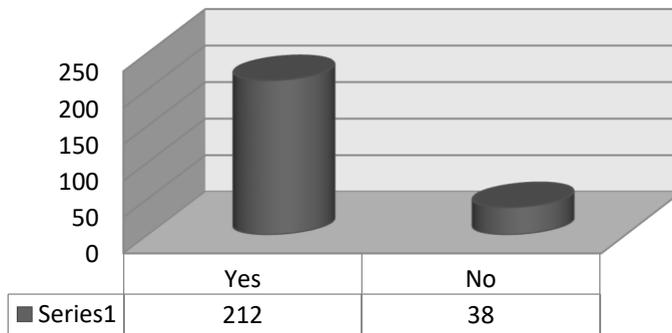
Apparently 90% of the people participating in this study, besides other hobbies, say that sport is part of this category, becoming an important part of their lives.

To the question Does sport represent a way of life for you? In a percentage of 86% the people questioned answered yes, understanding its importance and its effects on multiple planes as opposed to 14% who answered negative.



**Fig. 7.** Distribution of the sample according to the importance of the sport

Among the multiple effects of sport, respondents agree in a proportion of 85% that it also influences health positively, while 15% consider that it has not had major effects on their health.



**Fig. 8.** Sample distribution after the effects of sport

## Conclusions

The paper “The contribution of sport to a healthy life” aims to present some theoretical aspects regarding the complexity of the roles of sport: the reciprocal effects between sport and society, the functions of sport, sport, well-being and quality of life, the effects of standard of living and lifestyle on movement practice and organized physics, but also a practical study conducted among a sample of 250 respondents regarding the influence of practicing physical exercises as a lifestyle on quality of life thus highlighting the importance of movement in our life.

Sport improves the brain's functions because it helps the transport of the necessary substances and thus, the nervous connections are healthier, therefore, the intellectual performances increase. Therefore, sport not only helps us ensure a beautiful figure or keep us fit, it also helps us intellectually, especially since we are in a period when our brain is often overloaded.

You may not have heard of the ability to concentrate or the increased IQ with the help of sport. This is true. A study of young people found that those who were in better physical shape were much more cognitively efficient than those who were sedentary. In order not to be like the latter, sport should be on our list of priorities.

The importance of physical effort cannot be described in a few words. It's a fairly broad topic that needs a lot of attention from us. In today's society that is moving towards a more sedentary lifestyle, there is a greater need for increasing the daily level of activity to maintain both cardiovascular capacity and body weight.

Staying active means maintaining your body's functioning at a high level. Regular exercise will maintain your lung and heart performance to burn the most efficient calories and keep weight under control. Introducing movement into our daily, if not weekly, routine will also improve muscles, increase joint flexibility, and improve endurance.

### **Acknowledgment**

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