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<b>Title:</b>	<i>THE ACTIVITIES OF YOUTH IN THEIR FREE TIME. ARE THESE ACTIVITIES ADEQUATE TO SUPPORT THE ABILITY TO PRACTICE INDEPENDENT PHYSICAL EXERCISES TO MAINTAIN A BALANCE OF QUALITY OF LIFE?</i>
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**THE ACTIVITIES OF YOUTH IN THEIR FREE TIME. ARE THESE ACTIVITIES ADEQUATE TO SUPPORT THE ABILITY TO PRACTICE INDEPENDENT PHYSICAL EXERCISES TO MAINTAIN A BALANCE OF QUALITY OF LIFE?**

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**ABSTRACT:**

*THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THIS STUDY IS TO MAKE YOU AWARE OF THE WAY THE YOUTH SPEND THEIR FREE TIME AND WHAT PHYSICAL EXERCISES THEY LIKE TO CARRY OUT. WE TRIED TO EMPHASIZE THE WAY IN WHICH, UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE SOCIETY REGARDING ATTRACTING THEM IN DIFFERENT PLACES, THE INFLUENTIAL BODIES MANAGE THEIR ACCESS TO INFORMATION CONTINUOUSLY, THE WAY THEY SPEND THEIR FREE TIME AND THE DEGREE OF AWARENESS OF THE FEEDBACK. RESULTS: 97.6% OF THE YOUTH WITH AGES BETWEEN 17-22 YEARS AND ABOVE WATCH TELEVISION IN DIFFERENT MOMENTS OF THE DAY. CIVIC AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES CONSUME 18 MINUTES DAILY; WOMEN ARE MORE INVOLVED IN THIS TYPE OF ACTIVITY THAN MEN ARE (13.9% COMPARATIVELY TO 8.5%). CONCLUSIONS: FREE ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND THE POSSIBILITY TO ACCESS ON A MOBILE SOURCE OF AN OVERWHELMING VARIETY IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS, GENERATE AN IMMENSE CHALLENGE FOR THE YOUTH IN SUCCEEDING TO SPEND THEIR FREE TIME IN A BALANCED MANNER AND GENERATE AN INCREASE OF THE ABILITY TO PRACTICING PHYSICAL EXERCISES DUE TO SPENDING LESS TIME IN FRONT OF THE SCREENS.*

**KEY WORDS:** PHYSICAL EXERCISES; LIFE STANDARD; COMMUNICATION AND NETWORKING

**INTRODUCTION**

Resorting to interdisciplinary activities, communication and networking, generates a permanent contribution of the novelty, a fact found today in all top-level areas showing

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excellence through edification. The possibility of transmitting correctly practical and theoretical information depends on... the interest, professionalism, teaching ability and intuition of those who perform the training, so the result finally complies the initial projection, namely the right to acquire the necessary technical mechanisms [1].

The main objective of this study is to discuss upon the way the youth spend their free time and whether they prefer sporting activities instead class hours. Related to free time, new terms and interpretations always appear.

The researchers in our country, who have studied this problem considered free time as that part of the time left available after finishing the professional activity, that is used for study, for improving qualification, for public activity, cultural events, sport events, entertainment and relaxation [2]. There are also some attempts to divide man's time into budget, work time, rest time (sleep), time for socio-cultural and household needs.

Free time (FT) represents the amount of time a person has available after fulfilling his personal, social and family obligations and the biological rest. The free time also defines taking into account:

- ✓ the relative value of the lack of obligations as a criterion of its delimitation;
- ✓ the need for a conception on its role in the development of personality;
- ✓ integration of free time in the category of living standards indicators in various economic and historical stages of society;
- ✓ the need to consider free time not as a component part of the 24 hours of the day but as an integral part of life;
- ✓ the dependence of free time in relation to the nature of work.

The free time activities (FTA) are very important for our body because they keep health, sometimes producing new skills, modifying the structure or movement details due to new information are reflected in their actions and influenced by the type of temperament that condition the rhythm and accuracy of the final executions [3].

Irrespective of the type, the youth need the physical exercises (PE) done in free time for their physical and mental health, for spending the less time possible in front of the screens. Recent studies have shown that daily screen time should be limited to < 2 h in line with current recommendations and timing of exposures to light, meals, sleep and PA were not strongly associated with body mass index in this sample [4], screening time may displace active pursuits out of school but is also associated with lower PA during school [5]. More studies have certain implications for health-related PA promotion efforts giving additional reinforcement to the importance of organized and non-organized sports/PA during leisure time for overall levels of PA in adolescents [6].

In Romania, the gender gap identifies the differences between men and women in terms of more dimensions: access to political life, access to the paid labor market, human well-being in a broad sense and integrity by point of view on health [7,8,9,10].

Participation and involvement in an educational process creates the premises of a correct, professional approach, supported by capitalizing and highlighting the results obtained in the medium and long term. Individual evolution occurs only when the individual accumulates new information, stores it and then applies it in different contexts, determining new valences and structuring verbal and physical (motoric) behavior [11] all of this grow up the life quality (LQ). "Based on a positive youth development perspective, in-depth interviews with urban youth were conducted and analyzed to gain an understanding of the influences on behavior change. Specific family support, ability to detach from harmful peer relationships, and school connectedness and vocational support emerged as important to those youths who made a positive behavioral transition" [12]. Unfortunately, FT becomes more and

more a luxury for most of us. This happens because the rhythm is much more alert in our days, we work overtime most of the times, we have strict deadlines to meet not taking into account our free time. We may distinguish between the different classes of using time considered to be fundamentally different and can be divided into four categories: paid work, unpaid work, personal care and FT [13,14,15,16].

In this sense, there are different social effects, including some negative ones that youth interact with daily, counteracting them means creating a balance between the daily effort (verbal, intellectual, physical) and the correct management of their activity in order to form sustainable skills and applicable throughout life. Thus, physical education and sport, practiced at school age, should support the allocation by youth of a greater accumulation of hours of physical exercise carried out during their FT. Educating youth in this sense will be able to achieve lasting effects in support of various occasional or permanent physical efforts, influencing in the long term the maintenance of an optimal state of health.

Spending FT through activities that involve physical exercise is increasingly becoming a big challenge for youth because the permanent and real-time access to virtual information accessed through the contribution of portable technologies affects their socialization and health status, thus diminishing allocating a time interval for constant physical exercise.

The content of FT represents the activities that man has in his free time and varies according to several factors, such as the social condition of the person, the nature of the work which he exercises, the cultural and educational level, the family condition, society's degree of preoccupation for free time and entertainment, living standards and LQ. Concerning the content of FT, we can talk about that devoted to a higher quality activity, rest periods, dedicated to the artistic education, devoted to scientific education, carrying out certain functions and social relations.

The daily activities cause an exhaustion of the human body, whether the individual does not possess the necessary information to achieve a balance among rest, entertainment, and personal development.

Rest, involves the activities of removing fatigue, causing relaxation, found as active resting, passive rest and rehabilitation after work. The active resting involves compensatory activities, which inhibit the processes required in professional work by requesting other resources: sports, trips, gardening, small animal care, and the construction of technical appliances, intellectual and artistic activities (reading, listening to music, drawing, sculpture, and knitting).

The passive rest involves inactivity. It favors fatigue by disturbing states and psychological effects (lack of occupation and boredom). The lack of occupation implies the slowing of mental processes, the fading of will by eliminating effort, decreasing of muscle tone, of superior nerve activity resulting in boredom. Persons in this situation do not exploit free time, which becomes a reason for accentuating boredom. The philosophical meaning of the term rests in the sense of fun as a purely qualitative concept [9,17].

In their presentations, we meet, for the first time, the differentiation between the term FT understood as the time available to the individual after the necessary work or other activities and obligations met. It must be consumed at the will of each and the term resting time in the sense of relaxation understood as that part of the time meant for recreational activities, which through recreational processes and cheerful activities, may or may not be achieved [13,18].

The entertainment like fun outside the house with friends, fulfilling of free time with fun, resulting in fatigue or of the interests and passions (hobby), collecting activities, scientific, cultural activities, literature, music, imitative arts.

The development of personality represents the educational function that aims at the development of general culture that consists in acquiring knowledge: reading, opera, theatre performances, exhibitions, museums, foreign language learning, and professional skills.

FT may be under different forms as sports activity (swimming, lawn tennis, riding, golf, karting, rafting, fitness, and dance), tourism, and relaxation by therapy and complementary therapy etc.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The subjects investigated and monitored in a 12-month period, had ages between 17 and 22 years old. They spoke about the way they spend their free time, choosing from the given variants, watching TV, meeting friends, saying at home resting, reading, going to the restaurant, dancing (club), cinema, theatre, listening to the radio, religious activities, crochet, weaving, physical exercises of different sports and another way of spending the free time.

The present study aims at emphasizing the connection between the existential condition of the individual, as life standard and the attention given to spending the free time as well as rendering the rest of daily activities more efficient through physical exercises specific to different sports.

In order to accomplish this goal, we want that through the experiment to determine the young people to choose for spending FT as many cultural-educational activities as possible thus contributing to the development of their intelligence, PA in order to inspire their team spirit, competition and fair play.

### ***Experimental procedure***

Firstly, we analyzed the way of spending FT irrespective from the gender of the individual, by doing an overview of the main researches in the field. We describe the data used in the analysis, with particular emphasis on the time-use surveys, established in a standardized international data acquisition and time necessary to the analysis. The analysis carried out reveals the use of free time in Romania, both as regards its size, but also on activities structure. The research methods used are the applied of questionnaire, the observation and case study experiment and statistic interpretation.

Most of the boys, i.e. more than 80% prefer to spend FT with friends, in front of the computer or going to the club at weekends.

As far as the favorite sport is concerned, we can notice that football prevails 90% because it is a male sport and has brought many performances and rewards at school, city and national levels. The second favorite sport would be basketball whereas practicing it leads to a harmonious development of the body as well as to a height increase, which is what most boys wish at this age. The fact should not be overlooked that part of the boys wishes and even go to a bodybuilding gym for shaping their body and muscles, which shows that physical appearance is very important for boys at this beautiful age of adolescence.

In the second part of the study, we have seen the opinions who prefer to spend their free time reading a book, watching a movie, listening to music or helping with household chores. As regards the preferred sport, handball and volleyball are predominant, the motivation being that they are used to PA and sports classes, but also because they are more popular among girls, and thus declared at school level more as female sports. On the other hand, different PA such as swimming role and swimming action on maintaining the health of children, and not only of its actions on body weight and intake beneficial to the whole body are well known to specialists and efforts are therefore needed to promote and inform children and parents about the benefits [19].

In Romania, the studies, which relate primarily to the use of FT, are few. It is important to mention that time-use analyses carried out in the university research centers of Timisoara according to the studies of Professor Boghaty Zoltan A psychological study on the use of working time, but also in Iasi, we mention the researches on time-use by students, carried out by Mrs. Prof. Elisabeta Jaba [20,18]). Researchers from the Institute for Life Quality Research, such as Laureana Urse - Free Time Activities of Romanians and International Comparisons, Life Quality Magazine 1-4, 2002, also studies this issue.

At an international level, the particular interest in analyzing the use of time has highlighted ever since the Eurostat meeting in Luxembourg (1997), with the completion of European employment strategies, but also at the Lisbon and Barcelona Summits in 2000 and 2001. In the context described above, the Time-Use Survey (TUS) is part of the general coordinates of a comprehensive program, launched by the European Union Statistics Office (EUROSTAT) in 1990.

The Time Use Survey (TUS) in Romania provides the information necessary for analyzing the ways of using time by the population aged between 17 and 22 years. The various activities include, personal care, economic activity (main and secondary), education and training, family management as well as care activities, relationship of mutual assistance, cultural - recreational and sports activities, social relations and associative activities, etc.

**Results**

Structuring the activities in three large groups (personal care, work, free time) with 22 subgroups provides the premises for a thorough analysis of the daily time distribution by the country's population. Highlighting youth as regards FT allocation we observed on several different levels. We analyze the existence of differences in spend the evening in which the main FTA carry out and the importance of FT in the economy of daily time average resources.

More than half of the daily time is allocated by men to personal care activities (12.2 hours), 29% used for economic activities, here are included work, educational activities and transport - travels - and 20% respectively 4.8 hours, is allocated to FT. In the following we take into consideration the main FTA studied in TUS 2000, noting the existence of significant differences in time allocation according to gender.

Watching television shows remains the main way of spending FT, satisfying both the need for relaxation and/or entertainment, as well as informative and personality development concerns. More than half of the free time is spent by both men and women watching TV. This percentage places Romania at one of the first places, in the context where Norwegians watch television 28% of their free time, Swedish 34%, Belgians 45% and Greeks 44% (tables 1 and 2). Men spend 24 minutes more on this activity than women.

The share of people who watch television on free time, resulting from the research performed varies depending on the sample on which the research was conducted; of the total population aged between 17 and 22 years, 93% watch TV, of which 75% on a daily basis. (Source: ACOVI Survey, INS); 75% of households had color television in the year when the research was conducted, endowment with significant differences between different types of households in Romania.

**Table 1.** The values of time on the ways of spending the FT by young people. The various activities.

How to spend the evening/FT	Romanians %	Norwegians %	Swedish %	Belgians %	Greeks %
Watching TV	50	28	34	45	55

Meet with friends	10	20	18	13	26
Rest	3	9	4	4	3
Read	2	6	5	2	2
Restaurant	2	5	5	6	2
Dance (club)	1	1	1	1	1
Cinema, theater	1	4	2	3	1
Using smart wearable devices	12	7	5	4	11
Religious activities	1	1	1	1	3
Sport activities	2	6	8	9	4
Another answer	3	4	10	2	2

**Table 2.** The values on the ways of spending younger FT about WTV, CT, SA

<b>How to spend the evening</b>	<b>Romanians %</b>	<b>Norwegians %</b>	<b>Swedish %</b>	<b>Belgians %</b>	<b>Greeks %</b>
Watching TV	50	28	34	45	55
Cinema, theater	1	4	2	3	1
Sport activities	2	6	8	9	4

## DISCUSSION

In the countries of the European Union, watching television shows it is more extensive, given that the endowment with television sets is higher, comparatively to Romania: 97.6% of the population between 17 and 22 years old is watching television; 99% have at least one TV in the house, of which 44.4% have one TV and 35.3% have two TVs;

The most watched shows are the news and business information (88.9%), movies (84.3%), documentaries (61.6%) and sports (50.3%). (Source: Eurobarometer).

Social life is the second important activity of spending FT. This includes visits, conversations, socialization within the family, phone calls, etc. The time spent on social life is of 30 minutes daily, higher for men than for women.

Reading is the third activity of spending FT in most European countries, even if there are significant differences as regards the amount of daily time spent on this activity.

The reading of books, as a free time activity, has decreased in Romania after 1989. According to the latest data, reading books is an activity for 21% of the population between 17 and 22 old.

The computer and the Internet generate activities about both working time and free time and for Romania, the phenomenon has a certain novelty, as they begun to appear after 1990.

Watching/listening to shows and attending cinemas are free time activities with a attendance in the case of Romanians 50%, go to cinemas and theatre 1%, smart wearable devices using 12%, and for Greeks 55% (watching/listening TV), 1% (go to cinemas and theatre), and 11% (using smart wearable devices). The main free time activity during the evening is for both men and women watching TV. The afternoon mainly allocated for social activities, when women's participation rates are higher.

Religious, civic and political activities consume 18 minutes daily. Women are more involved in this type of activity than men (13.9% compared to 8.5%). Religious concerns (including church attendance) considered in the methodologies specific to time use surveys as being free time concerns. At the same time, through the religious holidays (at national level,

for some communions and for certain segments of the population that strictly respect religious holidays), religion is producing free time.

The sport activities occur mainly in the morning, more preferred by men than by women. Men are still the most involved in practicing hobbies, although participation rates are quite low for both genders. The key feature of the model is its elaborate construction, which, however appropriate and elaborate would be, approximates linguistic reality, being but one of its assumptions of organization and functioning. According to this feature, the idea of continuous improvement and concomitant models of the same type of model [18] appears justified. In fact, we understand through gestures the kind of non-verbal communication and body language. Gestures in their hypostasis as metalanguage, coming to support (or refute) an idea [21].

The population interacts in different way, that differences tend to increase rather than diminish. For women, differences occur in the groups, as married women are close as regards their behavior to the women unmarried officially, and at the extremes are the unmarried and separated women. The hierarchical group also indicates heterogeneous behaviors, with major differences between married and unmarried men, widowed and divorced men; the daily rhythms registered were similar for men and women, while participation rates are higher for men - except for religious and civic activities, where women have slightly higher participation rates than men.

The manifestation of the youngest and the good results obtained show that holding competitions represents the major testing ground for newly acquired abilities and for perfecting motor behaviors. Also, experience at small scale competitions is extremely important for large scale competitions [22,7], the environment having an important role in carrying on physical exercises this being the origin has a major role in the installation of unable to move putting on the imprint on recovering [23,1] in the situation that the methods remain unknown.

Clearly, there are differences in the allocation of free time between genders. While the boys prefer to go have fun with their friends or to a bodybuilding gym, girls prefer to watch a good movie or read a something on the mobile phone. The duration of the allocated free time is higher for boys in comparison with girls, because the latter also help with the household chores in their free time. The length of free time for boys is 3 - 4 hours per day, instead for girls is 2 hours and a half - 3 hours per day.

Obviously, these highlighted aspects signal an inappropriate attitude of youths in terms of spending free time. In the long term, the negative effects of not performing physical exercises in a consistent way and supporting physical effort in an incorrect way [24], will affect the sustainability of the social environment and not only that, implicitly generating the acquisition of conditions that will affect the quality of life. Countering these unwanted effects will require a redesign of how youths can be made to understand the importance of physical exercise in its various forms and under various conditions.

## CONCLUSIONS

The society evolution has a determinant role in the access to information, in training and informing the youths on the effects and benefits on the options of spending their free time. Inevitably a difference will occur among the youths of different societies regarding choosing the physical exercise in the free time, difference generated by the enumerated factors in the beginning of our paper.

Achieving an educational behavior is in a direct and permanent connection with the possibilities the society offers through the varied forms made available for the youths of the



necessary infrastructure of varied possibilities concerning the practice of physical exercises in their free time.

Enhancing the rate of the youths initiated, irrespective of the source, to practice physical exercises in their free time, to the detriment of the time spent in front of the screens, affect the sustainability of the bio-psych-motor balance of the individuals.

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