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**ADULT MOTIVATION FOR PRACTICING PHYSICAL
ACTIVITIES IN ACADEMIA**

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Abstract

The existence of specific factors which influence practice of physical activities in adults, and improvement of working places and conditions, after controlling for age and other characteristics. The awareness of the importance of specialized guidance in the field of physical education and kinetherapy, that can help adults improve their knowledge of it. Organized exercise should result in increased quality of life and professional performance. Research design was cross-sectional, results were based on classical methods of investigation: scientific documentation, questionnaire-based survey, and graphical interpretation. The survey was carried out in 2015 based on a questionnaire designed by the authors, with 20 questions chosen so that the answers were as objective as possible, leading to a high rate of accuracy. There were 42 subjects (59.52% men and 40.47% women), aged between 28 and 59 years which are teaching staff, researchers and auxiliary staff at the University of Bucharest. The study showed that physical maintenance activities elicit most interest from 80.95% of participants, followed by sport activities 26.19%, and therapeutic activities 19.04%. The age distribution is: 45-50 years old 28.57%, 40-45 years old 19.04%, 25-30 years old 16.66%, 35-40 years old 11.90%, 30-35 years old and 50-55 years old both with 9.52% , with 55-60 years old having only 4.7%. Results confirm assumptions, identifying motivational factors of practicing physical exercise in an organized setting, showing the psychological and social reasons that determine adults to do sport.

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1. Introduction

People's health is the most important asset of every country, and is worsened by many factors. Unfortunately, when it comes to fighting against factors of aggression and health disruption, people and health institutions do not have enough resources to meet three conditions: accessibility, true efficiency and lack of adverse effects (Dumitru, 2007).

In time, enough scientific arguments were presented about the loss of lean body mass and continuous growth of fat deposits in the human body. This transformation is proved to be accelerated by diet and sedentary behavior, causing major decreases of physical activities (Ettinger et al., 2006). In Romania, Epuran paid attention to this problem and defined the psychomotricity as "the expression of maturation and integration of motor and physical skills at the level pretended by the good integration of individuals" (Albu et al., 2006, p. 9).

Physical activity is not only a means to maintaining good health, but also an essential condition that allows our body to function efficiently (Bogdan and Bogdan, 2009).

During his evolution, the modern man interfered decisively with respect to using his own physical energy. The best example is frequent use of cars. Increases in life comfort led to clear decreases in physical effort and the creation of "health consuming" modern man (Pehoiu, 2003).

2. Basis

There are factors known to have a negative influence on human health, among which the most dangerous are drugs, alcohol, smoking, food excess, and also a sedentary lifestyle, doubled by stress. We notice that men are far from understanding the positive influence of practicing physical exercises for the body and this healthy lifestyle should be promoted through social policies starting with children and finishing with the seniors.

Respiratory problems, hearth diseases, osteoporosis and diabetes which now affect younger people, are the effect of weak or missing relevant public policy measures. For example, WHO estimates that every year, the effect of physical inactivity is the reason for 1.9 million premature deaths worldwide and almost 1/3 of them are in the 53 countries of the European region. Several years ago, the European Heart Network (EHN), with British Heart Foundation (BHF) published European statistics of cardiovascular diseases, showing that these generate almost 49% of deaths, of which 42% were located in the European Union. Incidence of cardiovascular diseases and their death toll are decreasing in Northern and Western European countries, while in the Eastern European countries they are either decreasing very slowly, or even increasing.

Most specialists point out the fact that mental and physical health represents an endless process. Motivation for the physical activity is complex, through a larger range of outcomes, self-respect, personal perception, auto-control, discipline, responsibility, body image, physical state, communication, bonding, general happiness, success at work, and a better health state (Demeter, 1991).

3. Assumption

Participation in some institutional non-formal programs organized and assisted by specialists, where maintenance physical activities are carried out, can represent the basis of a balanced lifestyle.

4. The subjects

This research was carried out on 42 subjects, 59.52 % men and 40.47 % women, aged between 28 and 59 years. Our research took place in the Centre of Psychomotor Counselling and Quality of Life Increase for academic staff and support employees. It was created in 2011, with the decision of the Senate of the University of Bucharest, with the aim that academic community benefits from the services of this center for free, under the supervision of 5 specialists with extensive professional experience in the fields of physical education, sports and kinesiotherapy.

The Center of Psychomotor Counselling has 6 specialty rooms and a gym, where the following disciplines are practiced: aerobic gymnastics, maintenance gymnastics, tae-bo, cardio activities, ballroom dance, Latin dance, fitness, bodybuilding, table tennis, physiotherapy, kinesiotherapy.

The sample consisted of educated adults, and we tried to determine the factors that can influence motivation within the academic staff for the systematic practice of physical activities.

5. Methods

Our research was cross-sectional, based on the use of classical research methods: scientific documentation, collecting data, research, data processing, graphical representation and interpretation. The research was completed in 2015 and consisted in administering a questionnaire. We mention that according to the Helsinki Declaration, Amsterdam Protocol and Directive 86/609/EEC, the approval of the Ethics Commission of the University of Bucharest regarding research on human subjects was obtained and also, the subjects' consent for their personal participation in the research.

6. Research

The questionnaire, presented in the Appendix, has 20 items, which targeted 8 main issues: professional status within the institution (teaching staff, researcher, auxiliary staff), work location and favorite physical activities; time preferences and days dedicated to physical activities, type of guidance and the approach based on proficiency levels of attendees; importance of the social factor, intensity of effort; accomplished goals, benefits of regular exercise under professional guidance; proposals for the upgrading and diversification of the available equipment.

7. Results

Preliminary results showed that the interest in participating in physical and sports activities depends on the job and educational level. There is a strong interest in physical movement from those whose activity implies intense physical effort.

The socio-professional structure of the subjects is: academic staff 50.0%, auxiliary teacher 40.47%, researchers 9,52 % (Figure no 1), 59.52 % are men and 40.47 % women, aged between 28 and 59 years (Figure no. 1).

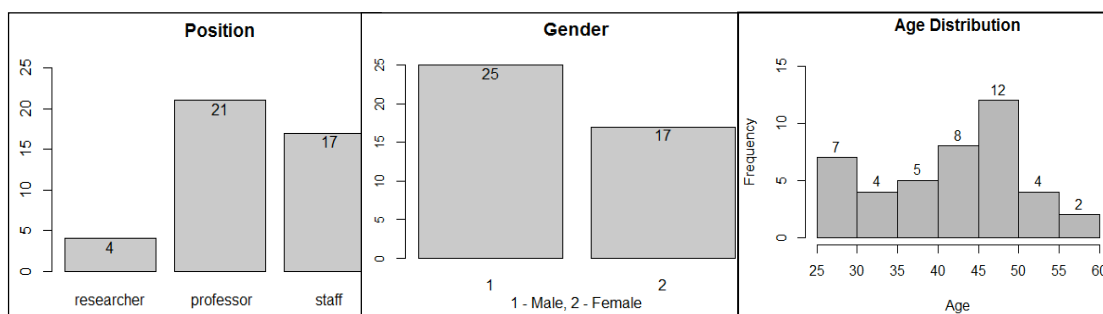


Fig.1. Key characteristics of respondents

The distribution across age groups is: 45-50 years 28.57 %, 40-45 years 19,04%, 25-30 years 16.66%, 35-40 years 11.90%, 30-35 years and 50-55 years are equal with a percentage of 9.52 % and 55-60 years 4.7 % (Figure no. 1). When it comes to the working place, 61 % do their activity very close to the Counselling Center. For the remaining 39 % the working place is fairly far from the Center (Figure no. 2).

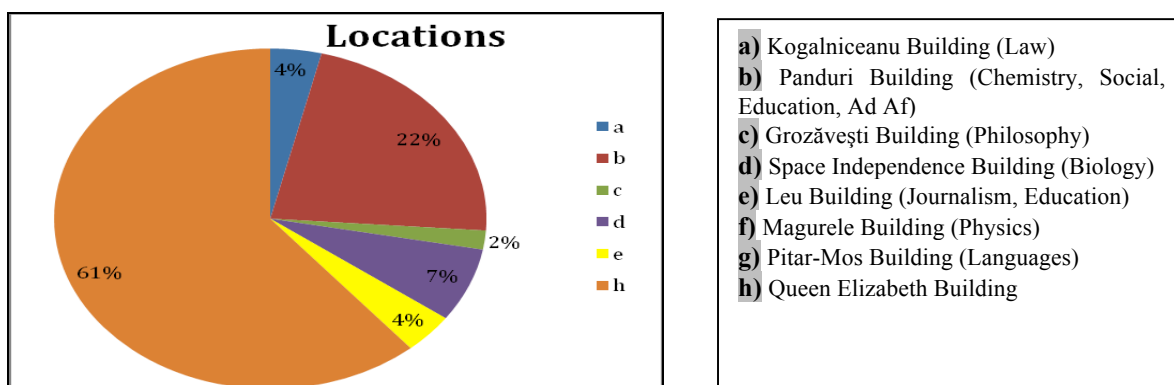


Fig. 2. Class locations

The highest percentage (55.9%) is represented by people that sit at a desk, followed by who stand in the classroom or laboratory (17.8 %), with intensive use of the blackboard. 12.1% use the blackboard and move in the classroom or laboratory (chemists, biologists, geologists). Those who do field work (geologists, geographers, biologists, auxiliary teachers etc.) (10%), and those whose work involves other types of activity (4.2 %) are the least numerous. (Figure no. 3).

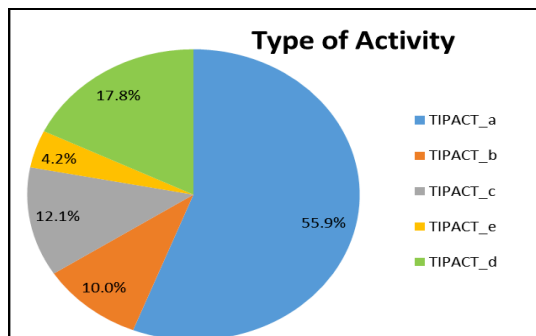


Fig. 3. Job types

83.33 % of the subjects prefer exercising in the afternoon, between 14:00-20:00 (Figure no. 4). 47.61 % participated two times a week, 28.57 % three times a week, 11.90% once a week, 7.14 % four times a week, and 4.76 % five times a week (Figure no. 5).

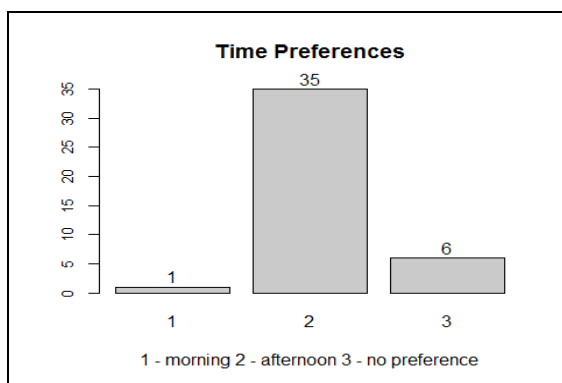


Fig. 4. Time preferences

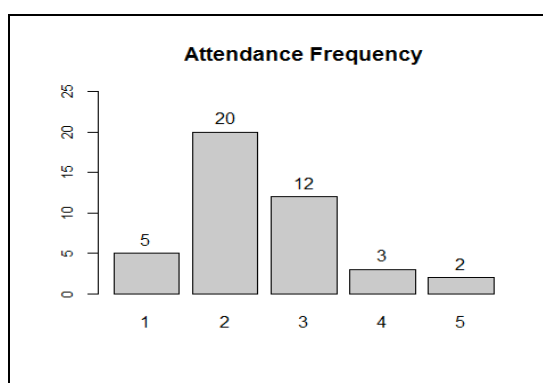


Fig. 5. Weekly Attendance

The specialists' contribution is important because 69.04 % of the subjects prefer to be trained by a qualified teacher, 21.42 % want to practice on their own following a special program learned initially with the teacher, and 9.52 % prefer to diversify by adding new exercises found on different fitness sites based on their knowledge (Figure no. 6). A high percentage (40.47 %) prefer to work out in groups, mainly those who practice aerobic gymnastics, maintenance gymnastics, tae-bo and aerobics step. 57.14 % want to work out both in groups and individually (Figure no. 7).

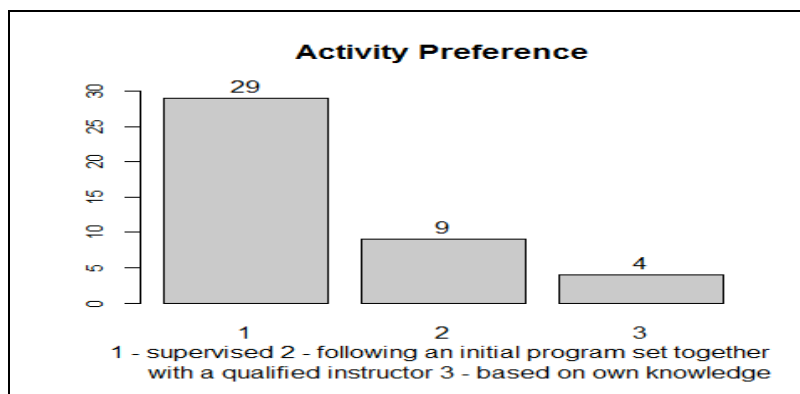


Fig. 6. Activity preference

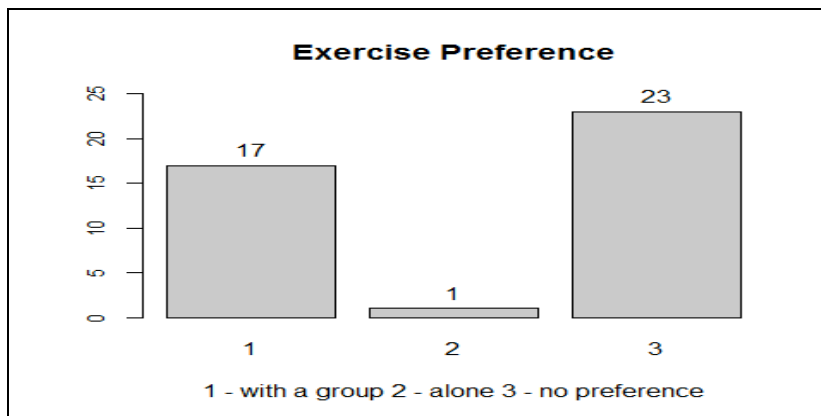


Fig. 7. Exercise preference

The fact that most subjects prefer alternate intensity (59.52 %), with 26.19 % preferring moderate intensity, shows that the subjects do not have a physical base that can sustain a longer effort. Thus the high preference for the following disciplines: table tennis, maintenance gymnastics, aerobics, fitness, bodybuilding, dance (Latin, ballroom), medical gymnastics. (Figure no. 8 and Figure no. 9).

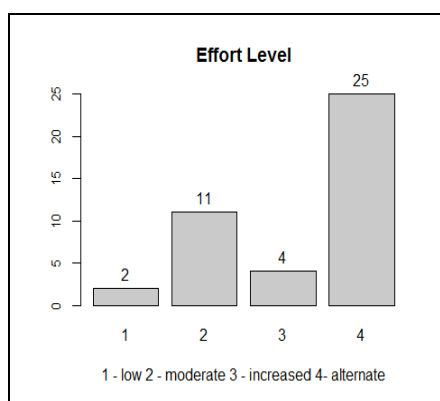


Fig. 8. Effort level

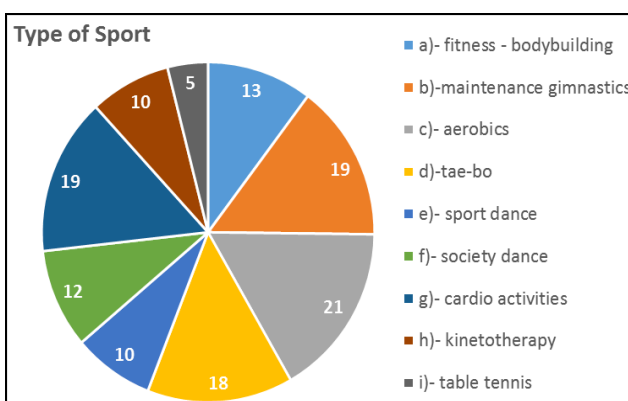


Fig. 9. Favorite activity

The main participation cause is the improvement of the physical condition, primarily in physical maintenance activities 80.95 %, followed by sports activities 26.19 % and therapeutic activities 19.04 % (Figure no. 10). Furthermore, 45.32 % of the subjects realize that the psychical and physical benefits are important for the professional performance (Figure no.11).

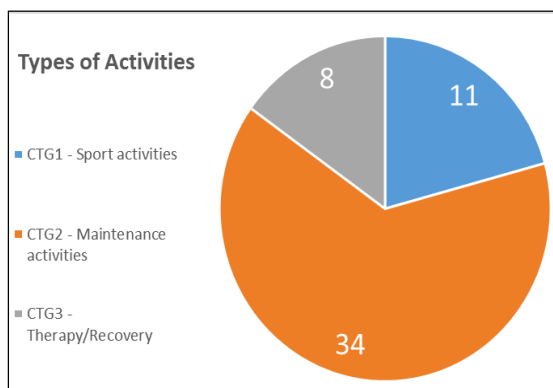


Fig. 10. Preferred activity types

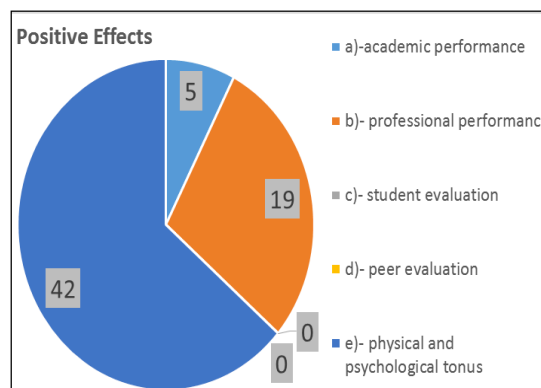


Fig. 11. Reported benefits

When it comes to health impact, participants demonstrate a high level of knowledge regarding the relation between the physical exercise and health, and the influence of doing physical exercises in prevention, treatment or cure of some diseases (e.g. osteoporosis, hearth disease, diabetes, obesity).

Results confirm the fact that organized practice of physical exercises in an institutional setting becomes an opportunity to increase the number of acquaintances (80.95%) , more optimism (76.19 %), increased socializing thanks to the common subjects and preoccupations (71.42 %) a positive psychical state (71.42 %), becoming less isolated, initiating institutional collaborations (23.80%) (projects, scientific meetings etc.) and extra institutional collaborations (19.04%) (cultural sportive activities, free time recreation etc.) (**Figure no. 12**).

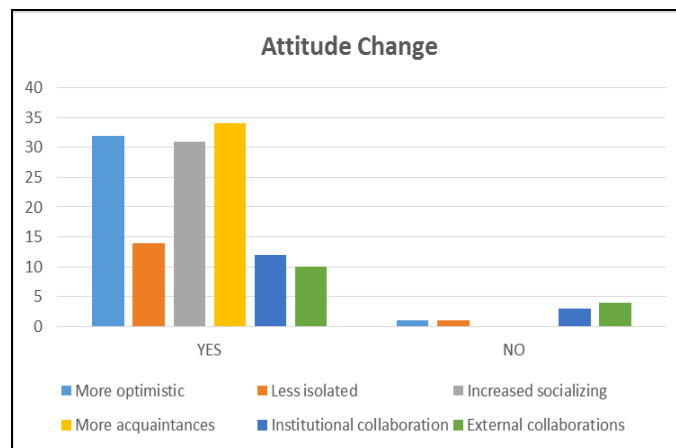


Fig. 12. Effects on subjects' attitude

The awareness of the importance of counselling, and the accumulation of more knowledge in this domain made us conclude that our objectives were met. We noticed that 97.61 % of our subjects formed a positive attitude towards physical exercises and physical effort, 54.76 % consider that this facility helped them to adapt easily to the requirements of their daily activity. For 42.85 % of those inclined to have morpho- functional limitations, extreme stress, psychical shocks, stereotypes etc., the perceived control helped them overcome their inhibitions as they can practice different physical exercises, in group and individually. Those who had physical problems (23.80%) such as traumas or an unhealthy lifestyle, received stimulation from programs. 21.42 % noticed that respecting the rules of good practice helped them balance their lifestyle (**Figure no.13**).

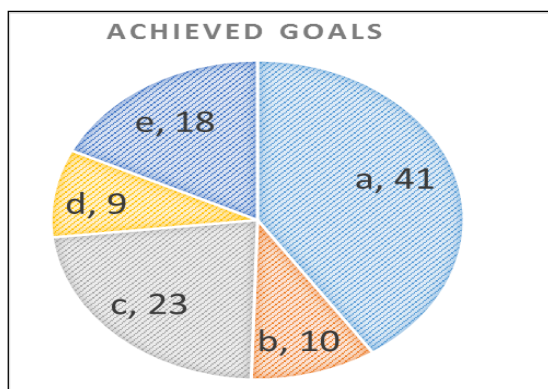


Fig. 13. Achieved goals

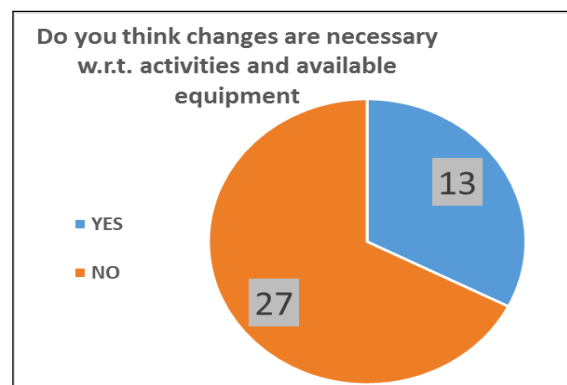


Fig. 14. Change proposals

There is a significant percentage of 64.28 % who declare being happy with the programs and equipment. We can claim that those make up some essential aspects: the wish for movement, the quality of the programs and specialists can compensate the need for more sophisticated equipment and accessories. A percent of 30.95 % represented those who pointed out the need for some enhancements in the material base, especially regarding the equipment and the accessories for the bodybuilding and fitness disciplines (**Figure no.14**).

8. Conclusions

The results of the study confirm its assumptions. The analysis of scientific and methodological literature shows that, although achievements in the physical education and kinetotherapy are obvious, there are still some unsolved problems regarding the formation of perceptions concerning educational values of the physical exercise in general and their significance, the psychomotor and social acts, which help the adult development, even among people with high levels of education.

Answers showed that all participants consider that practice of physical activities for the maintenance of physical and psychical health and their social impact are important.

It is confirmed that the subjects are aware of the positive impact of physical movement on the daily tasks, and on personality traits such as courage, responsibility, perseverance, critical spirit, initiative, organizational skills, correctness, will and optimism.

Results of this study allowed us to determine, based on its interests and motivations, the factors and the influence of physical activities on the participants, individually and as a whole. Among these motivations, the most important is the creation of a positive attitude towards physical exercises and physical effort to the benefit of health (97.61 %), followed by the maintenance of a physical condition suitable for performance of daily tasks.

We consider that it would be important to expand this type of study at national level, regarding the effects of practicing physical and sports activities on maintenance of health and improvement in life quality, for the academic communities, and improve their opinion on the need of creating Psychomotor Counselling Centers in higher education establishments, as a key social facility.

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Appendix 1 . QUESTIONNAIRE (lifestyle analysis)

Please accept to join the target group for a case study by filling out this questionnaire, with the purpose of improving the Psychomotricity Counselling Center. Its results will be published in an academic journal. We need you to provide honest answers and we need you to be aware of certain issues raised in our study.

1. Teaching Staff researcher auxiliary teaching staff age/ gender (F/M), married single children how long have you been teaching/active.....

2. **Where and when do you teach your classes/activity** (fill the corresponding letter in the appropriate time slot)

- a) Kogalniceanu Building (Law) b) Panduri Building (Chemistry, Sociology, Psycho-Pedagogy, Business) c) Grozavesti Building (philosophy) d) Splaiul Independentei Building (biology) e) Leu Building (Journalism, Education) f) Magurele Building (Physics), g) Pitar-Mos Building (Foreign Languages) h) Regina Elisabeta Building (History, Geography, Geology, Mathematics-Computer Sciences, Letters, Chemistry, Business, Journalism, Foreign Languages)

| TIME | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 8- | | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | | |
| 10-12 | | | | | | |
| 12-14 | | | | | | |
| 14-16 | | | | | | |
| 16-18 | | | | | | |
| 18-20 | | | | | | |

3. **Do you have a professional activity that requires:**

- a) office work percent.....%
 b) field work percent.....%
 c) work requiring movement (classroom/ laboratory etc.) percent.....%
 d) work requiring standing (classroom/ laboratory etc.) percent.....%
 e) other conditions (exemplify) percent.....%

4. **When do you prefer to attend sport activities?**

- a) first part of the day (8-14) b) second part of the day (14-20) c) it does not matter

5. **How many times a week can you attend sport activities:**

- 1/a week 2/a week 3/a week 4/a week 5/a week

6. **How would you prefer to participate in sports activities?**

- a) supervised by qualified staff b) after a schedule set initially together with a qualified staff c) based on my own knowledge

7. **Would you like to notice that you will be able to become self-directed in the choice training and nutrition programs, as a result of the Counselling Center specialists' encouragement:** YES / NO

8. **Would you like to participate in sports activities:** a) in group b) individually c) both in group and individually

9. **During lessons, would you like to have:**

- a) partners from the university/office b) members of the academic community that you do not know c) both

10. **Would you like to go to lessons with:**

- a) life partner (husband/ wife) b) children c) life partner and children

11. **What type of effort intensity do you prefer during sports activities:**

- a) low intensity b) moderate intensity c) high intensity d) alternate intensity

12. **What type of sports activity would you like to practice (you can choose multiple disciplines)**

- a) fitness/bodybuilding e) Latin dance i) table tennis
 b) maintenance gymnastics f) ballroom dance j) others
 c) aerobics g) cardio activities (mention).....
 d) tae-bo h) medical gymnastics (kinetotherapy)

13. **For how long have you been practicing sports activities in the Counselling Center:**

- 1 year 2 years 3 years 4 years 5 years

14. **What type of activities made you choose the Counselling Center services:**

- a) sports activities b) maintenance activities c) therapeutic activities (recovery)

15. **By regularly attending the Counselling Center programs, have you noticed positive effects on:**

- a) family life ? b) social life in general ? c) life in the academic community?

16. **Since regularly attending sports activities, have you noticed positive effects in:**

- a) academic performance c) students evaluation e) physical and psychological tonus
 b) professional performance d) colleagues evaluation

17. **Since regularly attending physical activities have you observed some negative effects in:**

- a) academic performance c) students evaluation e) physical and psychological tonus
 b) professional performance d) colleagues evaluation

18. **Do you consider that the activities and the group spirit within the Counselling Center changed your attitude:**

- a) you became more optimistic YES NO
 b) you became less isolated/introverted YES NO
 c) you became more social more less
 d) you made more friends and acquaintances YES NO
 e) you made some institutional collaborations with the members of the Center YES/NO
 / outside the institution YES NO

19. **Which of the main purposes of the Counselling Center were accomplished:**

- a) making of a positive attitude towards physical exercises and physical effort
 b) addressing specific problems (physical deficiencies/traumas/ unhealthy lifestyle) with different programs
 c) help with adapting to the requirements of daily activity
 d) delivery of rules of good practice that must be respected for those who have some morpho-functional particularities
 e) psychological preparation for overcoming difficult situations that can occur when practicing physical exercises (morphological or functional limits, extreme stress situations, psychological shocks, stereotypes etc.)

20. **Do you consider that some changes/additions of programs and/or facilities are needed:** YES / NO

Please provide details.....