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Recreational sport culture in Romania and some European countries¹

Adrian GAGEA², Gheorghe MARINESCU³, Mariana CORDUN⁴, Gabriela GAGEA⁵, Gabriela SZABO⁶, Mihaela PAUNESCU⁷

Abstract

The aim of the study is to explore how should be manage recreational sport for to be more attractive and feasible for professional active people. The professional literature and official documents issued in developed European countries reveal various meanings for the phrase “recreational sport”, some of which extremely rigorous and restrictive and others rather vague and confusing. As for instance, the relationship between sports and economics no longer represents a taboo subject and, in view of the multiple virtues of recreational sports, it tends to expand into the field of leisure sports as well. The experiment revealed that an inferred share of 9 units can be attributed to education, with a share of 23 units allocable to facilities. As far as the way of making such investments, their succession or simultaneity is concerned, it is believed that the investment should be carried out simultaneously, in the above-mentioned ratios. The burden of implementing these findings, regarding the necessity of investments, devolves, anyway, upon the decision-makers, the authors having no grounds to doubt their good intentions regarding the increasing of the quality of life in Romania or concerning the rate of integrating in the EU, as an expression of civilizing.

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Keywords: recreational sport; culture; implementation in Romania; education and facilities.

Introduction

References are filled with opinions and empirical interpretations of recreational sport. Few scientific and official documents are dealing with such a serious issue that should be recognized, it seems simple of getting for anyone to interpret (because of the postulate virtues of recreational sports, widely accepted and proven). However, it is difficult to scientifically arguments how recreational sport can be exploits as an instrument or justifying factor of measuring the benefit of free time and, especially, for to combat dissipating or faulty utilize of leisure (Dumitrascu, 1995). From our findings come out that, in some economically advanced and civilized countries, more than 80% of adults is practicing recreational sport. Unfortunately, our preliminary data notes that only about 20% of social active adults are practicing recreational sport in Romania. The concept of loisire (Fr.), leisure (Engl.), Freizeit (Germ.) may be approached from multiple points of view; a uniform definition is lacking (Rheker, 1995). From what has been written so far on the subject we try to draw an amount of features and functions such as to explain time and although often encounter some conflicting opinions of authors (Dieckert, 2002, Bach, 1991).

The concept of recreational sports, developed by us, respect the rules of a scientific definition, because is justified (due to avoiding multiple meanings, sometimes confusing, found in the literature), is conserving by states the main causes and effects, is consistent with system and, of course, pragmatic, eliminating the triviality of confusion between input feed-back and outcome (Gallien, 2001). As subsequent, recreational sport can be synthesized, in a theoretical manner, even in a common vocabulary or phrases, as a systematically practiced sporting activity, done with enjoyment and awarded of benefits of:

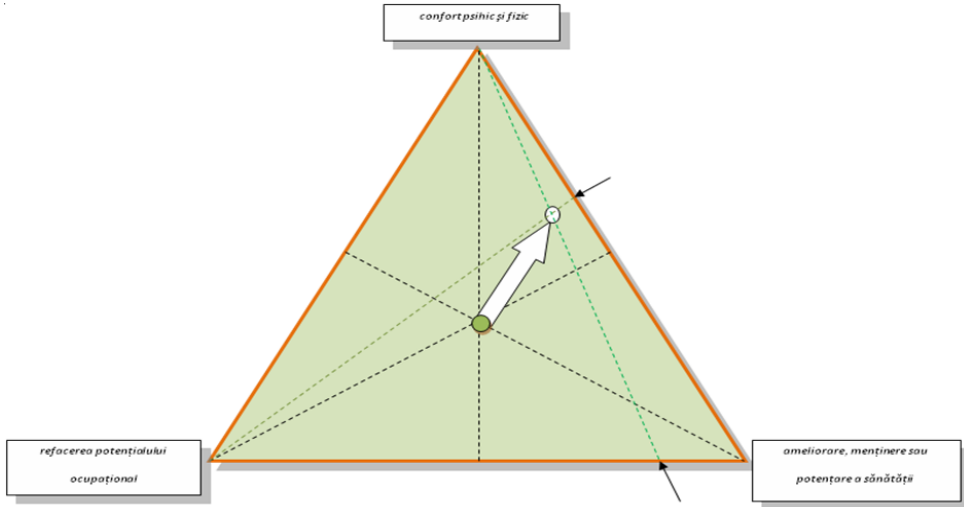
- the potential occupational rehabilitation within the meaning of restoration work capacity, the metabolic balance, efficiency creative skills, etc.;
- the improvement, maintenance or enhancement of health, appearance and good looking;
- to achieve a psychological and physical comfort, pleasure, in its broadest meaning, hobby or lifestyle.

We underline that recreational sports are integrated in his concept some causes or motives, logically necessary, including:

- the awareness, understanding the meaning and accepting of benefices effects;
- free consent;

- aptness and desire for progress;
- ludisme within the meaning of mimicry instinct of competitions, races and even form of driving skills comparative findings.

Fig. 1. The expression of vector components "target" for various recreational sports, according to three benefits (explanation in the text)



These causal factors can add links type feedback with psycho-neuro-endocrino-metabolics requirements, with the psycho-social and even cultural aspects of tradition or education.

European Sports Charta (EU Commission, 2003). defines sport as a recreational activity, more or less organized to practice in all aspects of physical exercise, which causes a good psycho-physical state, raises the level of health of the population, contribute to raising the quality of life, has the role of social and can produce sporting performance at different levels of participation.

Recreational sport in some EU countries

A very recent study of the Austrian Federal Chancellery of Sports shows that 50% of Austrian population comes to character recreational physical activity once a week (Dieckert, 2002). As workforce in this regard (recreational sports at least 3 times per week) are considered third quarter of the men and women. It was agreed that, for to benefit of the effects of recreational sport, it is healthily necessary an energy consumption by working muscles of approx. 1000 kcal per week, thus contributing to reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and to higher health satisfaction on its own - a fact noted only for the 10 to 20% of adults (Pfeiffer, 2000).

In England, about one of six people has proven to be sedentary, reporting that it had any activity in the reference period of 4 weeks, which would fall into the moderate or high intensity and a duration exceeding 20 minutes (Graton, 2000). A high participation in recreational sports and exercise between 16-34 years was reported. Notwithstanding the frequency of participation, 80% of men and 66% of women have practiced recreational sports at a moderate or higher intensity, in the reference period of 4 weeks. The proportion of participation in vigorous sports decreased over age groups. Only 10% of men and 2% of women aged roughly 75 years and older were active at a moderate level of intensity.

In Finland, a study conducted by regular mail and dealing with recreational physical activity in leisure time and behaviour and related to health in the adult was repeated annually since 1978 to date. These studies used a representative national sample of about 5000 individuals with a response rate of 70%, included questions on leisure exercises, walking and cycling to work. Several studies have provided further data on cross and longitudinal section, relating to physical activity and recreational sports for children, adults and the elderly (W. Health Report, 2005).

Surprisingly, in France, especially in rural area, recreational sport is practiced in very large proportions, peaking at 87% (Braun, 2005).

Recreational sport in Romania

In many countries where average incomes are modest, as in Romania, recreational sport is, rightly, still not a priority (ANS report, 2008). But the question is whether economic growth will automatically pull rise and interest in recreational sports or will require a national strategy to counter the tendency of youth to “lose” pseudo-leisure activities fun, but less beneficial for health and social and professional vigour. It should be noted that the main legal institution of the country, the Romanian Federation of Sports For All, is considering these issues very important, as well as the studies conducted by National Research Institute for Sport and National University of Physical Education and Sport which are shows sharp decrease of bio-motric potential in students and, generally, in youth people in Romania.

We underline, once again, that the states of facts about health and vigour of the active population, as well as other realities are visible as reasons for gathering relevant information about the “phenomenon” recreational sport (Bota, 2006).

Logically, these reasons lead motivations, which, to assign three levels. Perhaps most important is the national level, that of the policy governors and legislators, who are called to identify appropriate strategies and funds of implementation.

Premises and hypothesis

An arrangement for recreational sports depends on traditions, culture (in *Cultus* to an idea of respect and devotion for movement), education and facilities offered by the community. From this premise falls off interrogation of the problem (subject matter covered in this research), namely: What are appropriate ways of practicing effective recreational sport in Romania and which predictive models can be developed?

Free time management is an individual prerogative, in which everybody can replace sedentary and other harmful health practices into recreational sport. Ultimately, recreational sport can download energy, otherwise wasted in tenses (e.g. even violence run by football supporters).

Regarding the group of specific conditions of Romania to promote recreational sports, it is to take account about geographical factors, climatic, demographic and, of course, the bio-socio-cultural aspects. Romania is located in the temperate zone, with four seasons, therefore, theoretically, favouring a great diversity of recreational sports; has at least 200 sunny days annually (which is an advantage for outdoor sports practice), has mountains, sea, rivers, landscape, in other words, offers great temptation for sport recreational in nature.

In terms of population, Romania has a normal density of population (compared with economically advanced countries), an excess of rural population, still insufficient transport and communications infrastructure, however, has difficulties of spending or saving free time.

Fig. 2. *The downward trend in the number of professional active inhabitants in Romania for the coming decades (according to data and original representation by the National Institute of Statistics)*

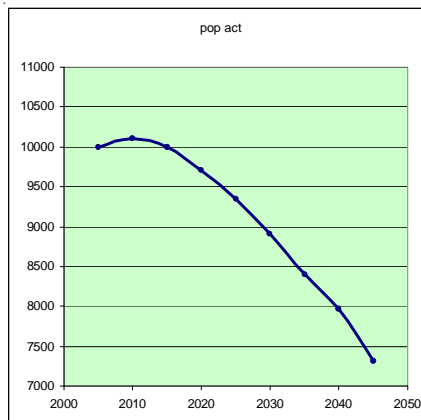
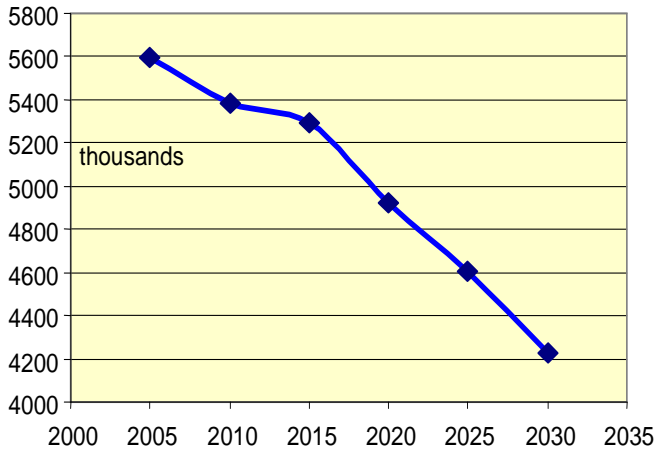


Fig. 3. Prediction of the decline of what experts from the National Statistics Institute calls "fertile women" (original representation after the official statistics of Statistics Year Book



Difficult situation faced by Romania in this period concern the massive emigration of the population (especially the active young professional), change the optic in the ideals, the temptations and aggressiveness of commercial products, etc., which turn up and the interest of leisure development.

The hypotheses of this research are provisional answers to interrogation of the problem's frame described as follows:

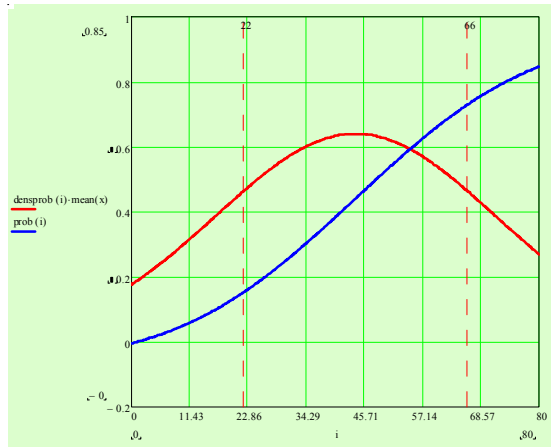
- *Facilitative assertion:*

Recreational sport virtues are known and recognized (for practitioners, as well as for the virtual governors).

- *Restrictive assertion:*

In Romania, only a small proportion (about 13%) of the active population is practicing recreational sport (Conversely as in France where 87% of rural people are practicing leisure sport). The prestigious National Institute of Statistics and Demographic Studies define three categories of empirical age working population: 15-24, 25-39, 40-64 years. Other age groups outside the working population are children and the elderly, usually maintained by family and society. We are using biological categories of 11 years samples, derived from processing Fuzzy theory.

Fig. 4. Density of frequency for population of Romania (theoretically deduced by Interdisciplinary Research Centre)



- *Interrogation:* How should be manage recreational sport for to be more attractive and feasible for professional active people? Hypothetically, by answers to one interview applied to representative samples of practitioners and decision governors of recreational sport it can be create an array of acceptable diagnosis for evidence of trends and the role of recreational sport in Romania today. Based on data processing and opinions gathered from different statistically representative samples it is possible to identify causal factors that determine the weights of recreational sport. Similarly, one can identify solutions to improve the recreational sport adapt to current practice in Romania, and, finally, increase the quality of life, the meaning of “liveability” (Veenhoven, 1990).

Probably, based on the diagnosis, it will possible to identify solutions for bidirectional osmosis values to and from European Union, harmonization of legislation, investments in education and facilities, attract sponsorships that bring immediate profit (resorts, hotels, venues and tourist resorts with standardized leisure facilities etc.).

Method

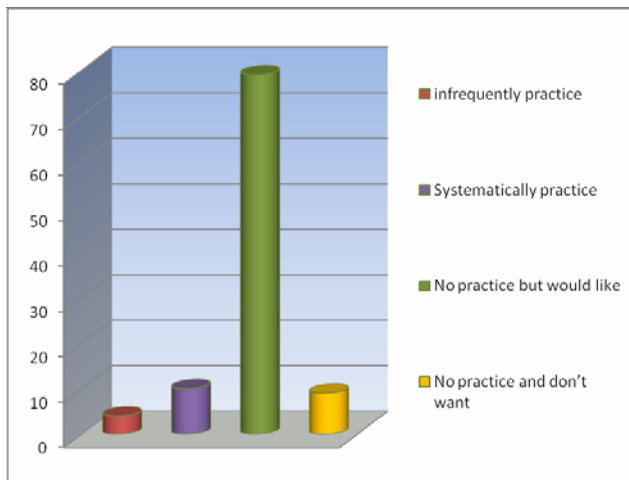
Questionnaire method was applied to several socio-professional categories, with the interest of reaching practicality information in the subject of recreational sports and opportunity to apply striking statistics. The investigations were carried on under a scheme similar questionnaire interview. We have to note the advantage of anonymity, of undersized responses (dichotomised type) and exceptionally short length of what, may be called, the interview or survey (Gagea, 1999). We

also tried a guidance and opportunity normative dialogues type interview as a sampling and testing socio-metrics. Our strongly interest was to have interviews with the decision governors, to those people who have access to sport policy and strategy in Romania and EU. Brief interviews applied to 711 adults of different ages and professions, men and women, have revealed cases illustrated graphically below. By our opinion, the graphical presentation illustrates better the practical application results than in the tables, of course, to diagnose and identify trends in recreational sports.

Results

Of those surveyed, 83% responded that having no practice of any recreational sports and 17% said they systematically or occasionally are practicing recreational sports (with the meaning as defined by us). The percentage of those who do not practice any recreational sports is alarmingly high, although the running dialogue showed that in general virtues of recreational sport seem to be popular. Unlike, in France the proportion of rural active people which are practicing leisure sport is, by a strange coincidence, just as high but the reverse (EU Commision,2003). That is to admire that 83% of rural people in France are practicing different recreational sport, are participate without any hesitation in voluntary work in rural community and, probably, by both approaches, have made a lifestyle of a remarkable social cohesion.

Fig. 5. Appearance about recreational sport (% , coming up from applied interviews)



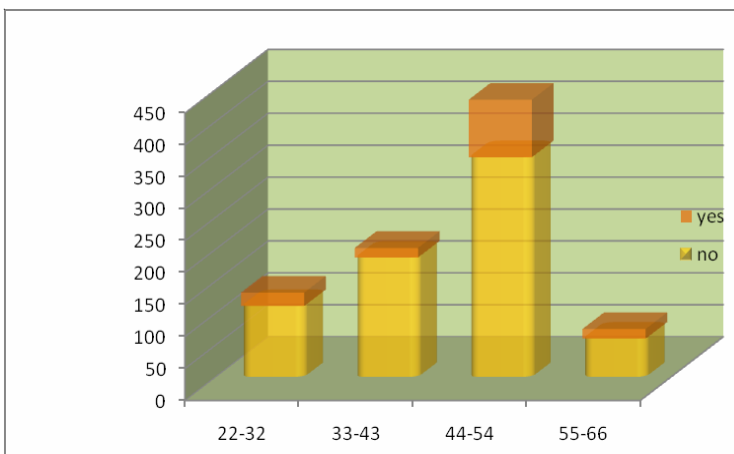
It should also be noted that solutions of how can improve the interest for recreational sport can not be contrary of EU sport trends and foresight. Of these, it is ought to remember the follows:

- Promoting the sport in school and university clubs, in exchange of reducing physical education and sport curriculum. Physical Education lessons should have the tendency to be “introduction” to physical culture; therefore the goals of “harmonious physically development”, “education of psychomotor skills “, etc. need to be transferred to school and university clubs,
- Professionalization of high performance sport,
- The focus of educational interest to qualifications: instructors, organizers, entertainers or recreational sport managers,
- Development towards kineto-prophylaxis a kind of “sports-therapy”, included, also in the big family of medical therapies.

Conclusions

The virtues of recreational sport are known and recognized. The systematically practiced recreational sport is a form of beneficial use of leisure time which undoubtedly brings benefits to all groups of community. In the long term, improper management of leisure time, without a convenient form of movement (based on physical and mental participation) can have adverse consequences on the bio-socio-cultural potential of any population.

Fig.6. The proportion of the recreational sport in the range of professional (working) active age samples of 11 years



We consider that the community investment is the most appropriate way for recreational sport to pay an important role in rising of the liveability. The right investments, that are follows the developing legislative framework and the will of governors, has to be based on scientific findings. Our results shows that the largest share, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a hypothetical sufficient buget, should be directed to facilities for to ensure conditions of practicing recreational sport and $\frac{1}{4}$ to education and information. The two causal factors are mutually interdependent, mutually reinforcing and are producing a hysteresis effect with long routine, justifying the role of recreational sport as a measure of liveability.

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