

Comparative study on the number of pupils registered as sportsmen in the middle schools from Iasi and at a national level

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Abstract

Practicing sports at the age of puberty is important for the development of a harmonious body, as well as for the acquisition of the habit of practicing a sport activity by the teenagers to be during their spare time. This study relies on two data categories: the ones presented by the Romanian Federation of School and University Sports and the results of a vaster project developed by the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport from Iasi in partnership with the School Inspectorate of Iasi County. The research identified the percentage of middle school pupils who have the status of registered sportsmen by carrying out a sociological survey at all the middle schools (36) from the Iasi city. The study monitored a number of 8911 pupils and the statistical processing of the data showed that 4.3% of them are registered at various school sports clubs or private clubs. These values have been compared with the data provided by the Romanian Federation of School and University Sports and we have reached the conclusion that the number of pupils who practice sports is highly heterogeneous.

Key words: *pupil, registered sportsmen, statistics*

Rezumat

Practicarea sportului la vârsta pubertății este importantă atât pentru dezvoltarea unui corp armonios cât și pentru formarea deprinderilor de practicare a unei activități sportive în bugetul de timp liber al viitorului adolescent. Studiul are la bază două categorii de date: cele prezentate de Federația Sportului Școlar și Universitar din România și rezultatele unui proiect mai amplu realizat de Facultatea de Educație Fizică și Sport din Iași în parteneriat cu Inspectoratul Școlar Județean. Cercetarea a evidențiat procentul de elevi din ciclul gimnazial, cu statut de sportivi legitimați, printr-o anchetă sociologică efectuată la toate școlile generale (36) din orașul Iași. În studiu au fost monitorizați un număr de 8911 elevi iar din prelucrarea statistică a datelor a rezultat că 4,3% sunt legitimați la diferite cluburi sportive școlare sau cluburi particulare. Aceste valori au fost raportate la datele FSSU și s-a ajuns la concluzia că numărul de elevi practicanți a sportului este foarte eterogen.

Cuvinte cheie: *elev, sportiv legitimat, statistică*

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Introduction

“Sport in the EU all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels. Sport is a growing social and economic phenomenon which makes an important contribution to the European Union's strategic objectives of solidarity and prosperity. The Olympic ideal of developing sport to promote peace and understanding among nations and cultures as well as the education of young people was born in Europe and has been fostered by the International Olympic Committee and the European Olympic Committees” (1).

In this context, Romania cannot disregard European legislation with respect to physical education and sport, the organization and financing of this system. Sports activity must be implemented, supported and developed from early ages and in an organized setting. The most efficient, predictable and controllable setting is the one provided by the school system through the physical education class, school sports clubs, sports high schools, as well as special classes.

The prevailing feature of juvenile sport, at a national level in general and at a school level in particular, is the dramatic decrease of the number of persons who practice sports. The very small number of participants to various competitions (we refer to registered sportsmen and not to competitions between schools) and especially the various statistical analyses carried out at a national or local level come to support this statement.

In Romania, school sport is ensured by two categories of clubs: those which belong to the Ministry of National Education and private clubs. The category of clubs subordinated to the Ministry of National Education can be further divided in two categories of clubs:

- those which are part of *supplementary education* – School Sports Clubs;
- those which are part of *integrated education* – Sports High Schools and special classes.

The number of persons who practice sports in a country reflects the level of sports culture, the legislative measures taken at a certain moment, the conception of local and national policy makers with respect to the importance of practicing sports. Most specialists in this field explain the small number of

persons who practice sports by invoking the Sports Law, without taking into consideration the fact that this law has an “administrative” and not an “imperative” nature. Most specialists perceive sports only as a means for the sportsman to gain recognition, as a means of promoting an area, city and, last but not least, as an “ambassador” of the country, whereas the law sets out the following definition: “*Physical education and sports comprise the following activities: physical education, school and university sports, sport for everyone, elite sport, physical exercises practiced for maintenance, prevention or therapeutic purposes*” (2). We mention this because one of the causes of the abandonment of sports practice is the fact that pupils are required to win competitions from early ages and this is an objective that not all children who practice sports can handle!

Main hypothesis

1. The number of pupils registered at various sports clubs is small and differs from one school to another, depending on the region!
2. The sports with the biggest level of attendance are team sports, respectively football and volleyball!
3. The numbers reported by the Romanian Federation of School and University Sports are presented in a too general and biased manner and aim at determining authorities to increase the budget allotted to sports.

Material and method

This study analyzes the middle school population of the Iasi city, with the 36 normal and special middle schools, which comprise a total number of 8911 pupils. The special schools include the schools for pupils with special needs (3), as well as schools with special classes, where, theoretically, all pupils should be registered. We have decided to include these schools because pupils with special needs are also part of the national education system. We conducted a cross-sectional study which was carried out during a month, with the participation of approximately 100 MA students. Field research consisted in the monitoring of somatic illnesses during physical education classes, occasion on which we also conducted an informal interview which aimed at identifying the pupils registered at various sports clubs, as well as the sport they practice.

The objective of the research was to identify pupils who are registered sportsmen, their favorite sports, as well as their correlation with the offer of the society: types of clubs – state or private, type of provided sport, material facility.

This research has also been carried out in response to the statistical report from November 2012 of the Romanian Federation of School and University Sports of the Ministry of National Education, which presented the following situation:

- 21.248 schools;
- 3.139.355 pupils;
- only 47.787 are registered sportsmen (22.474 practice individual sports and 25.313 team sports); of whom 27.459 only in Bucharest
- 1.592 coaches/teachers;

Based on these data, we may reach the conclusion that only 1.4% of the pupils practice sports as “registered sportsmen”, which is a problem for the future of Romanian sport or for the health of the adult population in a couple of years.

The data presented in this report also show that from the 47.787 pupils registered as sportsmen in the whole country, 27.459 are from Bucharest, which means that we will find a number of 20.328 registered sportsmen in the entire country (Bucharest excluded). If we analyze the presented figures in relation with the census of the population from 2011, we notice that there are approximately 184.573 pupils in Bucharest; this means that the percentage of pupils that are registered sportsmen in our capital city is of 14.8%.

These calculi alone show that the percentage difference between Bucharest and the whole country is big. However, we consider that, in elaborating this report, several elements which are essential for statistical calculation, as well as for the real interpretation of the figures, with a view to drawing a clear image of the situation of pupils who practice sports in the national education system, have been omitted. Thus, the report did not take into consideration:

- the fact that the national percentage comprises all the pupils – 1st-12th grades. The number of pupils from grades I-IV, registered as sportsmen, is very small!
- the fact that the total number of pupils includes pupils from the city (approximately 1.695.251 = 54%), as well as pupils from the countryside (approximately 1.444.104 = 46%). We know that

there are no integrated or supplementary sports education units at the countryside and private clubs, where pupils can practice sports in an organized manner, would involve significant financial costs; hence, it is difficult to believe that we will meet such structures in villages.

- the fact that integrated and supplementary sports education units, where pupils could practice sports in an organized manner, are present only in big cities (with over 50.000 inhabitants).

After eliminating the number of pupils registered as sportsmen in Bucharest, we obtained a number of 20.238 pupils registered as sportsmen in the whole country, from a total of 2.954.782; thus, we have a percentage of 0.68% pupils who practice sports and, if we make the calculi only for pupils from the city, where the possibility of practicing sports exists, the obtained percentage is of 1.34%, almost equal to the percentage presented in the report.

The fact that the statistical survey was conducted at a central level (FSȘU) is very important: this way, the exclusive identification of registered pupils was possible; however, there is no guarantee that registered pupils are still practicing sports or participating to sports competitions.

If specialists had tried to elaborate a statistical report by taking into consideration the number of pupils registered as sportsmen, who are part of the training groups at the level of the School Sports Clubs, the following calculation would surely have been made: number of teachers/coaches x number of groups from the quota (at least two) x 20 pupils registered as sportsmen. If we followed this reasoning, we would observe that, according to the previously mentioned calculi, there should be 63.680 pupils registered as sportsmen (1.592 x 2 x 20) in Romania. However, the questionnaire is the safest source for identifying the real number of pupils who practice sports.

Using as a reference the data presented in the report of FSȘU from the Ministry of National Education, we have conducted a study only at the level of the middle schools from Iasi city, Further to the statistical processing of the recorded data, we have outlined that there are 384 pupils registered as sportsmen at the level of middle schools (chart no. 1), with a number of 175 pupils in the 5th grade. The percentage of pupils registered at sports clubs during the four years varies (chart no. 2), the

smallest percentage being registered in the 6th grade (2%). We must mention the fact that, at the level of Iasi city, we have both supplementary sport education units, such as the Unirea School Sporting Club, with a number of 7 sections (judo for boys, judo for girls, volleyball for girls, basketball for boys and girls, rugby for boys, box, tennis, wrestling), as well as integrated sport education units such as the Sports High School with classes of: athletics for boys, girls; handball for girls, boys, football.

The “Petru Poni” School also has four football classes and the “Dimitrie Cantemir” High School, which also provides junior secondary education, 4 classes of athletics. In Iasi there are also several private sports clubs with departments such as football, basketball, martial arts, sport dance, volleyball, handball, box, judo, tennis, rhythmic gymnastics, a chess department at a state club.

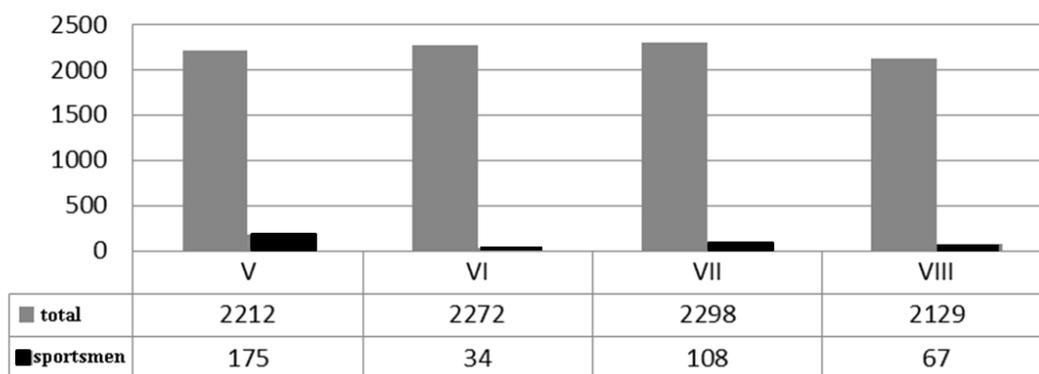


Chart 1. Pupils/sportsmen total ratio

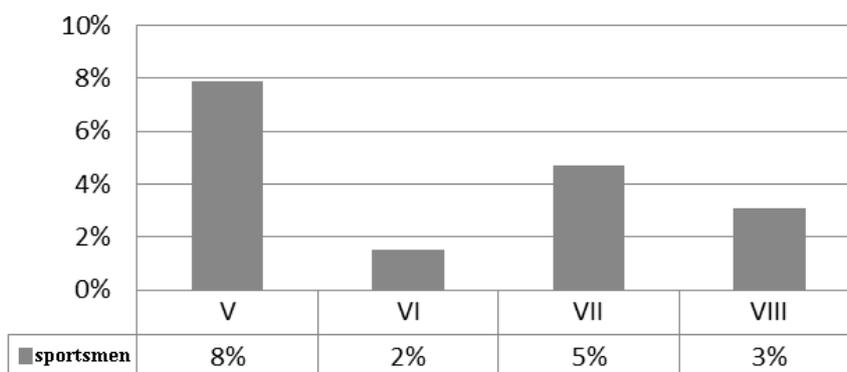


Chart 2. Evolution of the percentage of sportsmen per grades

However, it can be seen that the sports with the highest level of attendance are football for boys (table 1) from the category of team sports, and

athletics as an individual sport, and volleyball, respectively dance, for girls.

Table 1. Pupils' preferences with respect to the practice of sports

Gender	football	volleyball	rugby	athletics	judo	chess	dance	tennis	handball	wrestling	box	basketball
Male	46	-	23	24	21	6	10	11	28	7	6	21
Female	-	39	-	23	15	5	27	13	31	-	-	28
Total	384	46	39	23	47	36	11	37	24	59	7	49

Conclusions and discussions

The number of pupils who practice sports varies from one school to the other, as well as from one grade to the other, their number being directly influenced by the offer of sports departments provided by the community. At a national level, authorities resort to statistical calculi to cover the lack of strategies for promoting sports activities, funds distribution, as well as for justifying certain expenses. The fact that there are no major differences at present between the physical potential of sportsmen from the city and regular pupils from countryside schools also reveals the poor quality of the educational act, caused most of the times by the precarious or inexistent material facility.

By comparing the two categories of studies, we may conclude that the practicing of sports by pupils is highly heterogeneous, falling within a 0-15% range. Given the fact that integrated and supplementary sports education is a major consumer of financial resources and only a few pupils have such resources, which leads to discrimination in financial allocation, we consider that it may be useful for specialists to channel their energy towards identifying national strategies for stimulating the

participation to and the practicing of sports by a big number of pupils.

The bigger percentage registered in Iasi city is the result of the fact that part of the pupils who practice sports and whom we have met do not belong to integrated or supplementary education units and practice sports in private clubs. In other words, the actual total number of pupils who are registered or who practice a sport is bigger than the number presented in the FȘȘU, for some pupils have joined private clubs.

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