

DOI: 10.1515/tperj-2015-0006

## Consumers of leisure sports activities. Case study

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### Abstract

Nowadays, contextual dynamics of society require new understandings of leisure available to the individual. The manner in which he intends to spend his free time may affect the quality of life, beneficial or not. We intend to identify the preferences of the population over 25 years in Iași city, for leisure practicing sport and physical activities in specialized institutions. The sample survey included 150 citizens of Iași (75 male, 75 female), distributed by age ranges: 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64 years. They answered a questionnaire with 14 questions that focused customer profile (demographics: age, sex), the behavior of consumption (frequency of practicing sport and physical leisure activities, frequency of practicing sport and physical activities in sports clubs, preferences for various sport and physical activities). The results suggest that sport and physical activities play an important place in free time, preferences turning to programs and services offered by sports clubs and associations in the city. There are gender differences regarding: leisure sports (men devote more time to, but also include several sports activities in their free time than women; also, young people pay more attention to sports activities compared to subjects other intervals age); in sports (even if there are a number of common sports), the reasons underlying their practice (women prevail desire to lose weight and men wish to keep fit). The understanding that free time is becoming shorter and shorter and precious determines behavior directed towards ensuring the individual benefits: better health condition, relaxation and satisfaction.

**Key words:** *consumer, leisure, sports activities*

### Rezumat

Dinamicile contextuale ale societății zilelor actuale determină noi accepțiuni ale timpului liber de care dispune individul. Modalitățile prin care acesta înțelege să petreacă timpul liber poate influența benefic sau nu calitatea vieții. Ne propunem să identificăm preferințele populației de peste 25 de ani din municipiul Iași pentru petrecerea timpului liber practicând activități fizice și sportive în instituții specializate. Eșantionul studiului a inclus 150 de cetățeni ai municipiului Iași (75 de gen masculin, 75 de gen feminin), distribuiți de intervale de vârstă: 25-34 ani; 35-44 ani; 45-54 ani; 55-64 ani. Aceștia au răspuns unui chestionar cu 14 întrebări care au vizat profilul consumatorului (caracteristici demografice: vârstă, sex), comportamentul de consum (frecvența practicării activităților fizice și sportive de timp liber, frecvența practicării activităților fizice și sportive în cadru formal, preferințe pentru diverse activități fizice și sportive). Rezultatele sugerează că activitățile fizice și sportive ocupă un loc important, preferințele orientându-se către ofertele de programe și servicii ale cluburilor și asociațiilor din oraș. Există diferențe de gen în ce privește: activitățile sportive de timp liber (bărbații alocă mai mult timp dar și includ mai multe activități sportive în timpul liber comparativ cu femeile; de asemenea, tinerii acordă o mai mare atenție activităților sportive comparativ cu subiecții din alte intervale de vârstă); în practicarea sporturilor (chiar dacă există și o serie de sporturi comune), motivațiile care stau la baza practicării acestora (la femei primează dorința de a slăbi, iar la bărbați dorința de a se menține în formă). Conștientizarea faptului că timpul liber devine din ce în ce mai scurt și mai prețios determină un comportament dirijat spre asigurarea unor beneficii asupra individului: stare de sănătate mai bună, relaxare și satisfacție.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *consumator, timp liber, activități sportive*

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## Introduction

Nowadays, contextual dynamics of society require new understandings of leisure time available to the individual. Social-cultural transfers, but also political and economic in post-modern society has led to the implementation of several models of leisure, generic concept accepted [1]. Personal manner of leisure is the common element of these models.

The manners in which the individual intends to spend his leisure time may affect the quality of life, beneficial or not. A number of studies highlight these issues [2-4]. Also, there were found studies on the identification of the Romanian leisure activities [5-7].

Sports activities are an important component of leisure time activities of individuals. In the last period, on the national and local levels (in city of Iasi), there is a trend for development of programs and services of specialized institutions, but also in non-formal framework [8-10]. Opening several fitness centers offer variety of leisure activities assisted by, for different age groups, professionalizing services - activities organized under the guidance of specialized instructors, variety of forms of practicing sport activities, policies of certain companies to provide the possibility of spending free time with employees in an organized manner etc., and media influences are reasons to change attitudes and behavior towards individual sports.

## Aim

The purpose of this study is to identify the preferences of the population over 25 years of city of Iași for practicing leisure sports activities in specialized institutions. We also want to emphasize offers of services and programs made available by the sports clubs and associations in city of Iasi.

## Objectives

Considering the importance of movement for human being, we intend to identify the level at which leisure sports activities are practiced (how much), but also the size of the group of individuals who wish to practice spar time sports activities in an organized framework. We also intend to identify

reasons and types of leisure sports activities practiced by the target group.

## Hypotheses

1. We appreciate that the preferences of the target group are leisure sports activities in specialized institutions not non-formal.
2. We appreciate that individuals from targeted group prefers to practice leisure sports activities compared to other leisure activities.
3. There are gender differences in preferences for leisure sports activities.
4. There are gender differences in the distribution of spar time activities.
5. There are gender differences in reasons for leisure sports activities.
6. There are differences in the young people' choices to older people for certain leisure sports activities.

## Material and methods

In order to verify the assumptions made, used a questionnaire built, filed on the street in city of Iasi, at random, after a predetermined criterion - minimum age 25 years. The schedule of data collection was at lunch in crowded places (parks, pedestrian) on working days.

The sample included a total of 150 citizens of Iasi, of which 75 were men and 75 were women. Group members were distributed on the age ranges: 25-34; 35-44; 45-54 years; 55-64; over 65 years. Because subjects were identified in the age over 65 years, they have been ignored in the analysis results.

The questionnaire included 14 questions and was focused on the issues that have kept the local market characterization:

customer profile

- demographic characteristics: age, gender consumer behavior

- frequency of practicing leisure sports activities;

- frequency of practicing formal leisure physical and sports activities (sports clubs);

- preferences for various leisure physical activities and sports;

the benefits of leisure sports activities practiced.

**Results**

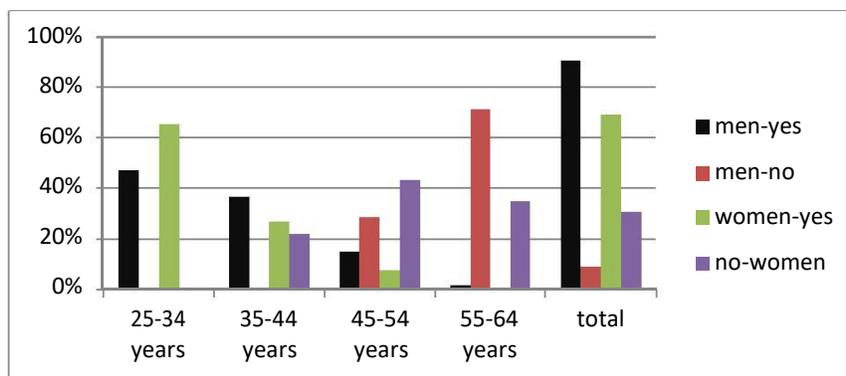
Distribution of after the gender variable highlights the fact that the sample is proportionate: 150 subjects of which 75 are men and 75 are women. Of the 75 male subjects, 91% (68) responded that they practice sports in their free time, and 9% (7) responded that they do not practice any physical activities during leisure. Respondents in the 25-34 age range practice most leisure sports activities (47%), followed by those between 35-44 (38%). Compared with younger, male subjects in the age range 55-64 years (1.5%) did not practice sports. Not identified any subject in the ranges 25-34 and 35-44 who does not practice any leisure sports activities (Graph 1).

From the sample of 75 female subjects, 69.3% (52) responded that they practice sports during the spare time, and 30.7% (23) responded that they do not practice any physical activities during leisure. Like the men, younger women (25-34 years) practice sports in greater numbers (65.4%) compared to older people (26.9% for 35-44 years, and 7.7 % in the range 45-54 years). Results vary from women

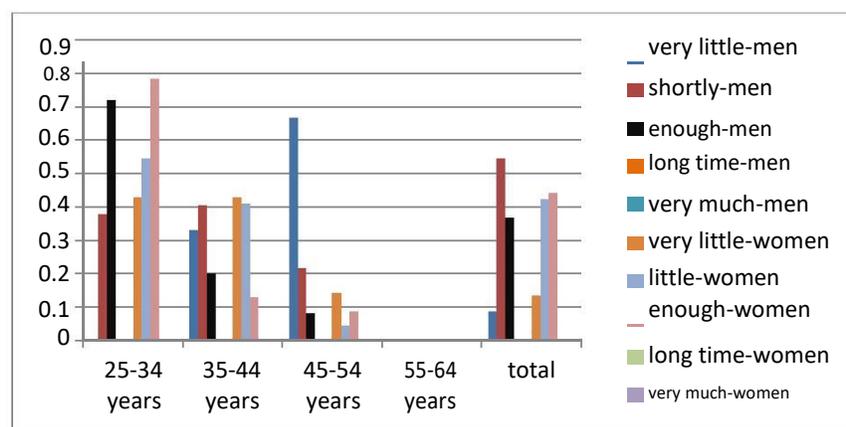
who do not practice leisure sports activities: higher percentages (43.5%) are subjects aged 45-54 years, 34.8% for subjects between 55-64 years and 21.7% for subjects between 35-44 years.

From the data obtained, it is noted that male subjects prefer more leisure sports activities compared to female subjects (Graph 1).

As regards the distribution of time allocated to physical activities and sports as leisure activities, male subjects had answered: how long have the leisure sport activities, men said those who were given very little time 8.8 % (2/3 aged 45-54 years and 35-44 years of age 1/3), who were granted shortly 54.5% (including 37.8% aged 25-34 years, 40.5% aged 34-44 years and 21.7% aged 45-54 years), those who have sufficient time was 36.8% (of which 72% aged 25-34 years old, 20% between the ages of 35-44 years, and 8% between 45-54 years of age). None of the interviewed subjects do pay "much/long time" or "very much" free time for sports activities.



**Graph 1.** Distribution of variable by gender in leisure sports activities

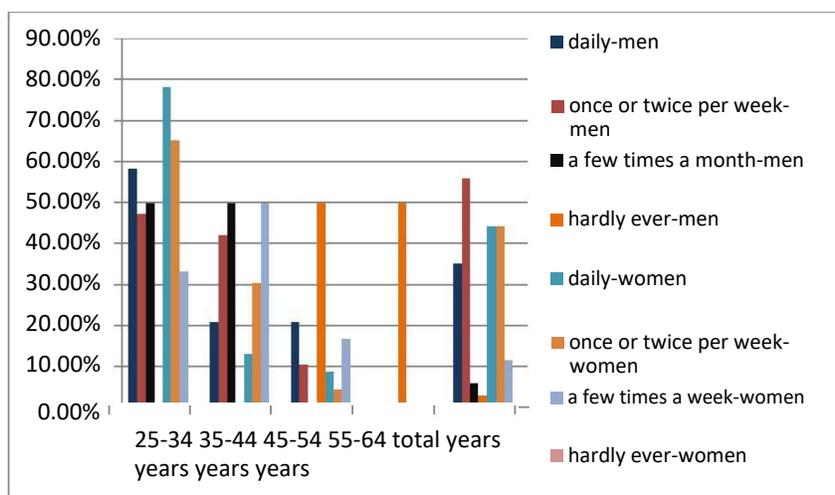


**Graph 2.** Distribution of time allocated for leisure sports activities by gender VARIABLE

The time spent on leisure sports female subjects vary so "very little time" - 13.5% (of which 42.8% subjects aged 25-34 years, and 35-44 years for 14 4% for subjects aged 45-54 years), "shortly" - 42.3% (54.5% for those aged 25-34, 41% for 35-44 age range and 4 5% for the 45-54 years range), "enough time" - 44.2% (78.3% among subjects aged 25-34 years, 13% for the 35-44 age range, accounting for 8.7% for ages 45-54 years). Like the men, female respondents answered that they did not allocate "much" or "very much" free time for sports activities.

Analysis of the results by gender variable indicates that female subjects have less time than men to practice sports in their free time (Graph 2).

When asked what the targeted frequency of practicing leisure sports, male subjects responded as follows: 35.3% practice "every day" (of which 58.4% are between those aged 25-34, 20 8% between the ages of 35-44 years and 45-54 years of age); 56% practice "once or twice a week" (of which 47.4% are those aged 25,034 years, 42.1% between 35-44 years of age, aged 45-54 10.5% years), 5.9% practice "a few times a month" (by 50% between 25-34 years and 35-44 years). 2.8% of respondents said doing "hardly ever" these leisure sports activities, of which 50% are aged between 45-54 years, 50% air aged 55-64 (Graph 3).



Graph 3. The frequency of practicing leisure sports activities after the gender variable

For female subjects, the data is as follows: the same percentages, 44.2%, practice "every day" or "once or twice a month" leisure sports activities. Differences percentages are given for each category, by age ranges. Therefore, the female subjects who practice "every day" 78.3% were aged 25-34 years, 13% between 35-44 years and 8.7% were aged 45-54 years. Respondents who practice "once or twice a week" is distributed as follows: 65.2% were in the age range 25-34 years, 30.4% between 35-44 years, and 4.4% aged 45-54 years.

A percentage of 11.6% of subjects responded that practice "a few times a month", 33.3% are aged 25-34 years, 50% aged 35-44 years and 16.7 % aged 45-54 years.

None of the subjects did reply that practice "hardly ever" leisure sports activities.

Overall, by comparison between the two genders, male subjects had a higher frequency in sport activities during free time compared to women. If many women practice leisure sports activities "every day" than men (44.2% compared to 35.3%), the proportions are higher when done "once or twice a week" or "rarely" (56% as compared to 44.2%, 2.8% compared to 0%).

When we asked which concern the reasons underlying the practice of leisure sports activities, male subjects responded as follows: 32.4% indicated that pursuing "keeping fit" (of these, 54.8% are aged 25-34 years, 18.2% between 45-54 years and respectively 35-44 years, 9.1% aged 55-64 years); 17.6% would "lose weight" practicing leisure sports activities (of which 25% are represented by the young - 25-34 years, but middle-

aged people - 55-64 years too, 16.7% are subjects aged 35-44 years and 33.3% of the 45-54 years category). 8.9% believe that sports activities are a source of fun ("I want to have fun"), being represented 83.3% of young people between 25-34 years and 16.7% of subjects in the range of 45-54 years. "I want to relax" is another reason that is present in 23.5% of male subjects, of which 25% are aged 25-34 years, 43.7% between 35-44 years, 18.7% between 45-54 years and 12.6% aged 55-64 years.

Other reasons that were sent to the same aspects of "better health condition" were united under the category "other" (17.6%). Here, subjects for each age range have responded in the same proportion, 25%.

For female subjects main reason that underlies leisure sports practicing is "the desire to lose weight" - 34.1%. The following reasons related to the desire to "keep fit" - 25.1% "relaxing / refresh" - 18.1%, "having a good health" - 16.9% and "to fun" - 5.8%.

As regards distribution by age ranges, the reason "I want to lose weight" appears greater proportion of women aged 25-34 - 61.1%, compared to 35-44 years - 22.2%, 45 -54 years - 11.2%. The lowest percentage recorded in people aged 55-64 - 5.5%.

"I want to keep fit" is another reason most frequent female persons aged 25-34 (55.6%) than those aged 45-54 years - 11.1%. There was no response to people ranging from 55-64 years and those between 35-44 years for this choice are in proportion of 33.3%. Other two motivations, "relaxation, recreation/ refresh" and "I want to have fun", were

recorded in identical proportions to two age categories: by 66.7% for subjects in the range 25-34 years respectively by 33.3% the interval 35-44%. None subject of the ranges 45-54 years and 55-64 years, chose this option.

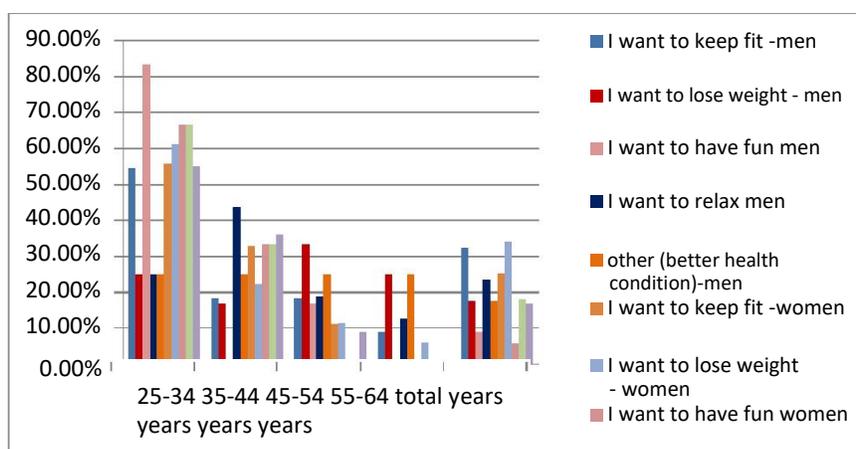
"To have a better health condition" was another reason currently to 54.5% of subjects aged 25-34 years, 36.4% aged 35-44 years and 9.1% for the period 45-54 years. No answer was provided to the subjects in the age range 55-64 years.

Interpretation of the data, according to each gender, highlights the fact that, as expected, women are more motivated to "lose weight" as a result of practicing sports activities (34.1%) compared to males (17.6%). At the same time, the desire to "keep fit" is more prevalent in male subjects (32.4%) compared to female subjects (25.1%). And on the other reasons listed, male subjects had higher scores than women (Graph 4).

Various sport branches are practiced by male subjects: in order of preferences, football - 27.9%, jogging - 17.6%, tennis and bodybuilding - 16.2%, cycling - 11.8%, swimming - 5.9%, martial arts - 2.9%, dance - 1.5%.

In every age range, football is practiced equally by those aged 25-34, and those between 35-44 years - by 42.1%. No option has been recorded for the period 55-64 years and 45-54 years the percentage is 15.8%.

Martial arts and dance are practiced only by those in the category 25-34 years, while swimming is practiced in equal proportions of younger people - 25-34 years and 45-54 years.



Graph 4. Distribution reasons for practicing leisure sports activities after the gender variable

Tennis is the option that prevails in the category 45-54 years - 45.4%, and for those between 35-44 years - 36.4%, compared with younger respondents - 18.2%.

Bodybuilding is one of the sport branches practiced by the young people - 90.9% and only 9.1% by those aged 45-54 years.

Jogging is practiced by those between 35-44 years - 58.4% compared to the category 45-54 years and 55-64 years 8.3%. 25% of the respondents choose this sport they aged 25-34.

Cycling is practiced equally by those between 35-44 years and those between 45-54 years - by 37.5%. Categories of subjects between 25-34 years and 55-64 years, in smaller proportions, opted for this sport - 12.5%.

Preferences female subjects regarding sport branches practiced in descending order are: fitness or aerobic - by 17.3%, Kangoo Jumps - 15.5%, zumba - 11.5%, jogging - 9.7 %, cycling or swimming - by 5.8% each, dancing, tennis and martial arts - by 3.8% each, tae-bo, yoga and Power Jump - by 3.8% each.

The distribution by age ranges for practicing tennis and dance shows that these sports are practiced equally to younger subjects - ranging proportions for 25-34 years and 35-44 years. There were no answers to subjects in other age groups.

Tae-bo, yoga, power jump and martial arts represent sports practiced exclusively by young subjects (25-34 years).

Cycling, swimming, the Kangoo Jumps, zumba and jogging are practiced exclusively in categories of young subjects (25-34 years and 35-44 years), but in different proportions. Therefore, cycling is practiced by people in the range 35-44 years (66.7%) than younger ones (25-34 years) - 33.3%. in case of swimming, age ranges are reversed - those between 25-34 years - 66.7%, while those between 35-44 years are 33.3%. 75% of respondents who practice Kangoo Jumps are part of 25-34 years, while 25% are represented by those aged 34-44 years. Zumba is the preferences of young female subjects greater (83.3%) compared with those in the range 35-44 years (16.7%). Jogging is practiced in 60% of young people (25-34 years), and 40% of those between 35-44 years.

Fitness is practiced in the vast majority of young (25-34 years) - 55.6%, followed by those in the 35-44 category (33.3%) and 45-54 years (11.1%). No answers were recorded for other age groups.

The preferences of those between 35-44 years for practicing aerobics is thus a higher percentage (44.5%) compared to subjects in the range 25-34 years (33.3%) and 45-54 years (22.2%) .

The data reveal that there are preferences for certain sports industry guidelines by gender variable: men choose for football, bodybuilding, dance, while women pick fitness, aerobics site, zumba, tae-bo, yoga, power jump. But there are common preferences of the two genders, with varying proportions: jogging and cycling (a higher percentage of men than women), swimming (the same proportion between the two types), martial arts (women more than men).

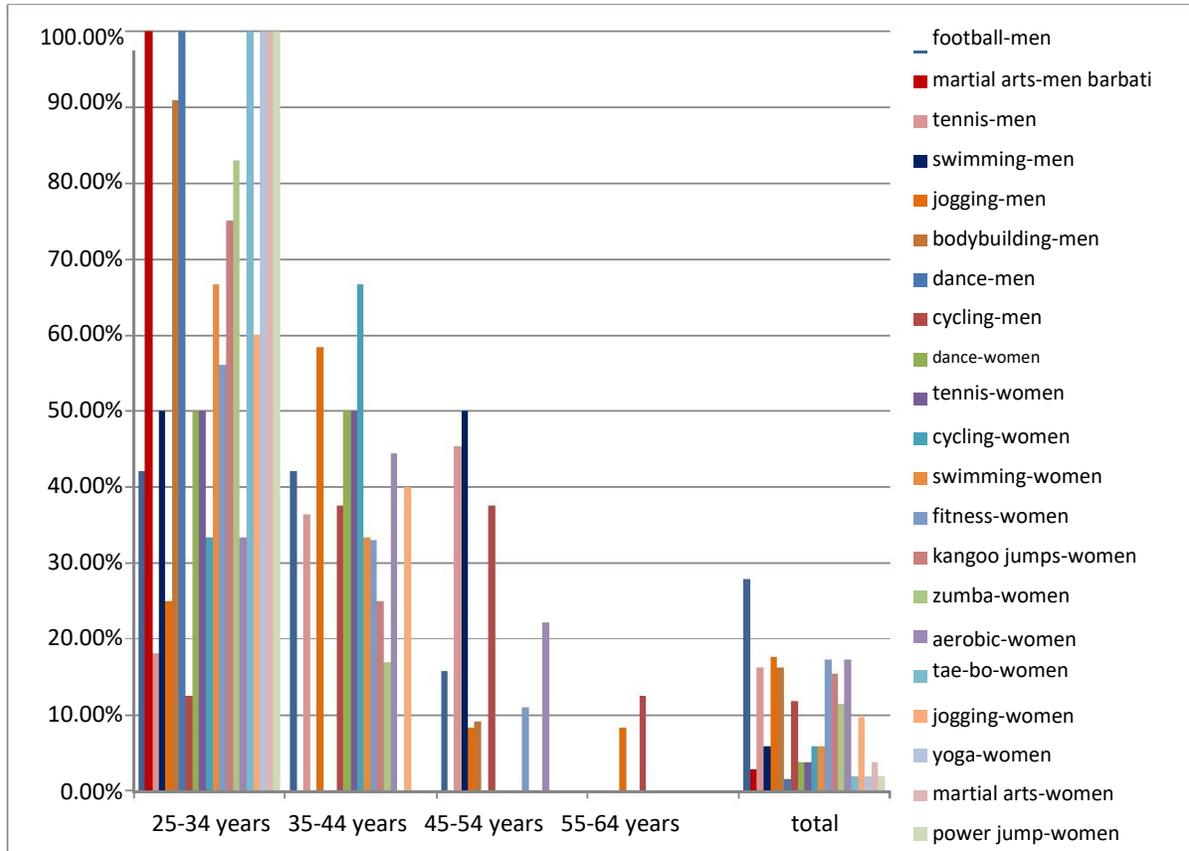
As a conclusion, there are gender differences in the choices practiced sports specific, as there are common choices (Graph 5).

Male subjects interviewed stated that these sports are more practiced in organized forms, in sports clubs, associations, and fitness centers in the city (73.5% vs. 26.5%). The age range of those who practice predominantly organized forms of leisure sports activities is 25-34 (52%), followed by 35-44 years (26%), 45-54 years (14%) and 55-64 years (8%).

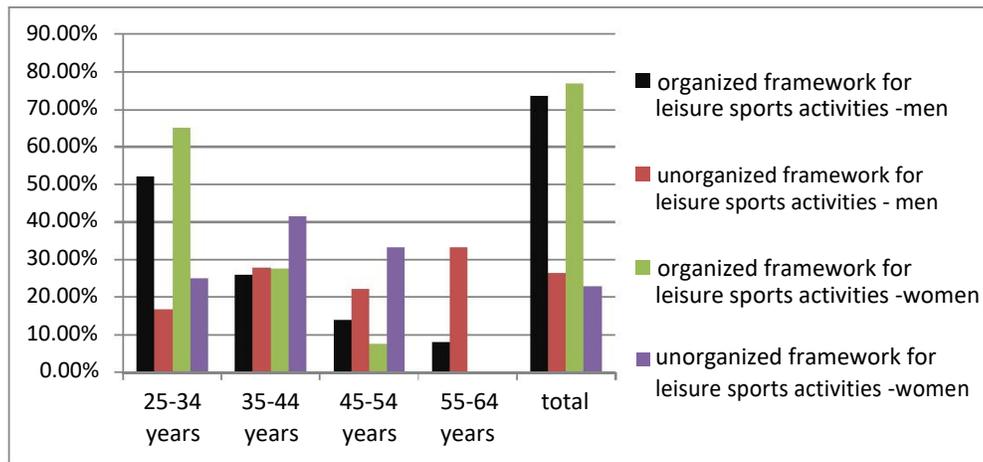
Proportionality is relatively inverse relation to age in subjects interviewed who practice leisure sports in unorganized framework (16.7% - 25-34 years, 27.8% - 35-44 years, 22.2% - 45 -54 years, 33.3% - 55-64).

Female subjects assessed in a larger number (76.9%) work in an organized framework of leisure sports activities compared to a non-formal setting (23.1%). Most subjects interviewed who practice organized sports leisure activities are part of the age group 25-34 years (65%), followed by those aged 35-44 (27.5%) and 45-54 years (7.5%). There has been no response from those aged 55-64.

The distribution of those who practice in organized forms of leisure sports activities indicates a higher percentage (41.7%) subjects aged 35-44 years, compared to 33.3% in those aged 45-54 years, and, finally, 25% for those aged 25-34 years.



Graph 5. Distribution preferences for sports branches by gender variable



Graph 6. Distribution of practicing organized/unorganized framework for leisure sports activities after variable gender

Data analysis given by gender variable shows that female subjects prefer the organized leisure sport activities in comparison with male subjects (76.9% women compared with 73.5% for men). At the same time, the number of those who practice unorganized leisure sports is higher in men (26.5%) than women

(23.1%) (Graph 6). All subjects, both male and female who answered that practice sports in sports clubs said they were satisfied with the location where go for, and services offered by these clubs too.

## Conclusions

The study results confirm assumptions made and the following conclusions can be drawn and other similar studies [2, 6, 5, 11]:

The program of leisure activities, physical activities and sport occupies an important place in our research subjects, their preferences go to programs and services offering by clubs and associations in the city. At the same time, the range of sports is varied, subjects choose mostly for practicing in an organized framework compared with unorganized.

The study results confirmed that subjects in the sample choose sports activities during spare time. As concerns men, they prefer to practice more sports activities in their free time than women, and the time allocated for is higher in men than in women subjects.

The part of time spent is greater as age practitioners are lower. The amount of time for leisure sports activities reduces as age progresses, reaching their lack of leisure activities included. Therefore, physical appearance and condition are values to which the young people compared to the other age groups.

Male subjects in the sample are turning to leisure sports activities practiced 1-2 times a week than those practiced daily. As the age increases (from 45 to 64 years) sports are practiced less often.

In contrast, many young women (25-34 years) are oriented towards sports activities practiced daily or 1-2 times a month.

The results highlight the different views when it comes to the reasons for practicing sports activities during free time. The desire to reduce excess weight is more prevalent in women, particularly younger women, while men choose for keeping fit when choosing to practice sports. The other categories of reasons (fun, relaxation, better health condition) are better represented in the men compared to women.

During the investigation conducted, we found that citizens from Iași practice some common sports to both genders (jogging, tennis, cycling, swimming, martial arts and dance) and other sports which are preferred only by men (in order of preference: football and bodybuilding), but and other sports that prefer only women such as (in order of preference: aerobics, fitness, Kangoo Jumps, zumba,

tae-bo, yoga and power jump). The more young subjects, the tendency is to try new sports. Classic sports are the preserve of the middle age classes (35-44 and 45-54 years).

Regarding place to practice leisure sports activities most preferred organized forms (in sports clubs and associations, fitness centers), but few of them prefer practicing sports activities independently. Age and gender influence the formal/non-formal framework of practicing sports activities. The more young people both genders prefer the organized forms, focusing on women, more than men do, to the formal practice.

A number of further studies can put citizens' options in relation to city sports clubs and associations offer. Also, a number of variables can contribute to a wider shape of ways to practice leisure sports activities (education, occupation, monthly income, interests, prices etc.).

The understanding that free time is becoming shorter and shorter and precious determines behavior directed towards ensuring the individual benefits: better health condition, relaxation and satisfaction.

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