

STUDY ON THE OPINIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ABOUT THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT CURRICULUM

Vera PÎSLARU¹

Virgil TUDOR²

Sorina CERNAIANU³

Iulius Radulian MĂRGĂRIT⁴

Abstract

The main curricular document underpinning the physical education and sport activity of high school students is the school curriculum in force no. 5099/09.09.2009.

The framework plans issued by the Ministry of Education for the physical education and sport subject provide 1 hour per week for grades 9-12, except the 10th grade science class, which has 2 hours per week.

Taking into account the legislative reform in Romanian education, this study aimed to find students' opinions on the content of the current school curriculum with respect to the tests and evaluation criteria for the subject of physical education and sport subject; we believe that these opinions should be the basis for future curriculum documents.

The methods used in this study were the questionnaire survey and the analysis, processing, and interpretation of the obtained data.

The analysis undertaken reveals that some elements can improve the future school curriculum for student-centred education, which would lead to developing the necessary competencies for the socio-professional integration of high school graduates.

Keywords: *physical education; curriculum; high school.*

JEL classification: I20, I29, M31

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1. Introduction

The curricular documents that regulate teaching activity in Romanian education are the following: framework plans, school curricula, alternative textbooks, auxiliary documents, and calendar planning. The learning outcomes and

¹ National University of Physical Education and Sport, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, Bucharest, Romania, verapislaru@yahoo.com, Telephone: 0726387370

² National University of Physical Education and Sport, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, Bucharest, Romania, virgiltro@yahoo.com

³ University of Craiova, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, s_cernaianu@yahoo.com

⁴ CSO Plopeni, Romania, margarit_csn@yahoo.com



content, as well as the strategies needed to achieve the objectives and evaluate their degree of success, can be found in the aforementioned curricular documents.

The instructive-educational process carried out by each teacher is guided by the school curriculum, which has a conceptual-regulatory dimension.

Each school subject has a curriculum for each educational level, which confers it with a unique character.

In high school education, the physical education and sport subject is provided in the framework plans with 1 hour per week for grades 9-12, except for the 10th grade science class, which has 2 hours per week.

The current school curriculum, which guides the activity in the subject concerned, was developed in 2009. The curricular reform in the education system also affects the curricular documents; thus, the teaching activity for grades 9 and 10 in the academic year 2022-2023 is regulated by the *Methodological Benchmarks* issued by the Ministry of Education for each school subject, therefore, for physical education and sport, too.

2. Purpose of the study

The topicality of the proposed theme is justified by the need to improve the physical education and sport curriculum for student-centred education, which would lead to developing the necessary competencies for the socio-professional integration of high school graduates.

For this purpose, we aimed to find out the students' opinions about the current school curriculum and thus identify the elements that could lead to its optimisation for the physical education and sport subject in high school education.

3. Material and methods

In this paper, we used the questionnaire survey method to find out the students' opinions about the current physical education and sport curriculum. The questionnaire was developed and applied between February and April 2021; it was created in Google Forms, and the generated link was distributed on the educational platforms used by students.

This method was chosen for the advantages offered, namely:

- speed of obtaining information;
- sincerity of the responses, conferred by the anonymous nature of the questionnaires;
- collection of a large number of responses (4477), which led to a representativeness with an error margin of 2% and a confidence level of 99%, given that the number of high school students was 618,275 (Institutul Național de Statistică [National Institute of Statistics], 2019).



The main rules in establishing the questionnaire (Gagea, 2010; Niculescu, 2003) were respected, so we clearly and precisely set its objectives and documented the topic of the survey. The questionnaire design took into account the recipient in terms of expression and explanation; the questions asked were univocal, succinct, neutral, disjoint, and respectful; data processing was performed based on validated techniques.

The questionnaire included single-choice items, multiple-choice items, response matrices, rating scales, and open-ended questions.

The results were analysed using mathematical and statistical methods, and the data obtained were summarised in order to be statistically processed and interpreted.

4. Results

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the total number of respondents and their distribution by grade.

Table 1. Grade and number of respondents

Grade	Number	%
9th	1301	29.06
10th	1245	27.81
11th	1225	27.36
12th	706	15.77
Total	4477	100.00

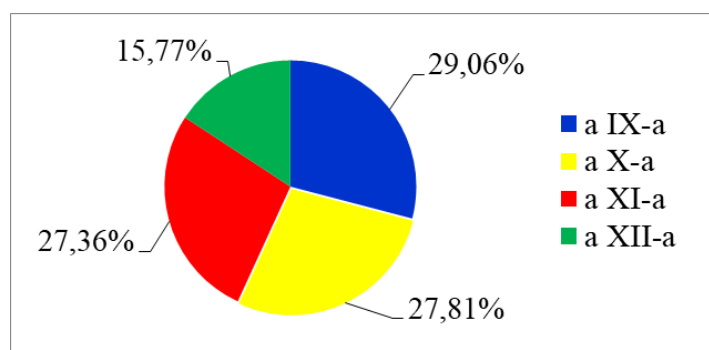


Figure 1. Graphical representation of the respondents' grades

Analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from the questionnaire administered to high school students



1. On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you like physical education and sport lessons?

The average score of 3.93 out of 5 shows that the students' responses to this item are distributed more in the upper part of the scale, with 40.45% of them awarding 5 points, and 27.28%, 4 points. Only 10.85% of students do not participate with pleasure in physical education and sport lessons, awarding 1 or 2 points. (Table 2 and Figure 2)

Table 2. Preference for physical education and sport lessons

On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you like physical education and sport lessons?	Number	%
1	174	3.89
2	315	7.04
3	951	21.24
4	1226	27.38
5	1811	40.45
Total	4477	100.00

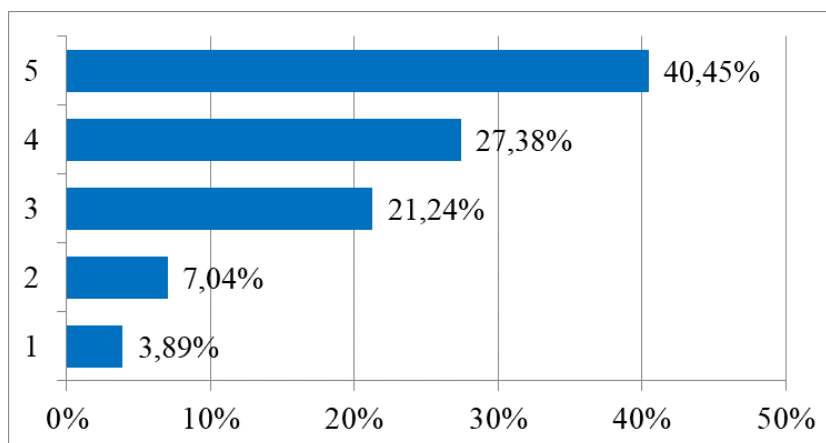


Figure 2. Graphical representation of the preference for physical education and sport lessons

2. To what extent do you play *sports games* during the physical education and sport lesson?

Over 90% of the surveyed students state that they play sports games during the physical education and sport lesson, and more than half of them (53.38%) say "to a large extent" or "entirely" (Table 3).

**Table 3. Playing sports games during the physical education and sport lesson**

To what extent do you play <i>sports games</i> during the physical education and sport lesson?	Number	%
Not at all	282	6.30
To a small extent	514	11.48
Neither to a small nor to a large extent	1291	28.84
To a large extent	1687	37.68
Entirely	703	15.70
Total	4477	100.00

3. To what extent do you practise *athletics* during the physical education and sport lesson?

The surveyed students state that they practise athletics during the physical education and sport lesson “to a large extent” or “entirely” in a proportion of 31.52%; however, 19.79% of them say that they practise this sport “to a small extent”, and 12.35% report that it is missing from their lessons (Table 4).

Table 4. Practising athletics during the physical education and sport lesson

To what extent do you practise <i>athletics</i> during the physical education and sport lesson?	Number	%
Not at all	553	12.35
To a small extent	886	19.79
Neither to a small nor to a large extent	1627	36.34
To a large extent	1091	24.37
Entirely	320	7.15
Total	4477	100.0

4. To what extent do you practise *gymnastics* during the physical education and sport lesson?

Less than 10% of respondents say that they do not practise gymnastics during the physical education and sport lesson. The highest percentage (35.2%) is recorded among those who state that they do not practise this sport either “to a small extent” or “to a large extent”. Gymnastics is “entirely” practised by 8.35% of respondents. (Table 5)



Table 5. Practising gymnastics during the physical education and sport lesson

To what extent do you practise <i>gymnastics</i> during the physical education and sport lesson?	Number	%
Not at all	438	9.78
To a small extent	853	19.05
Neither to a small nor to a large extent	1576	35.20
To a large extent	1236	27.61
Entirely	374	8.35
Total	4477	100.00

5. Based on your preferences, indicate your degree of interest in practising sports disciplines during the physical education and sport lesson:
Sports games

More than 60% of students have a high and very high degree of interest in playing sports games, while 4.89% indicate a very low degree of interest in such sports (Table 6).

Table 6. Degree of interest in playing sports games during the physical education and sport lesson

Based on your preferences, indicate your degree of interest in practising <i>sports games</i> during the physical education and sport lesson	Number	%
Very low	219	4.89
Low	279	6.23
Average	1111	24.82
High	1403	31.34
Very high	1465	32.72
Total	4477	100.00

6. Based on your preferences, indicate your degree of interest in practising sports disciplines during the physical education and sport lesson:
Athletics

Athletics is preferred by more than 60% of respondents; however, 33.73% of them are rather little interested in this discipline (Table 7).



Table 7. Degree of interest in practising athletics during the physical education and sport lesson

Based on your preferences, indicate your degree of interest in practising <i>athletics</i> during the physical education and sport lesson	Number	%
Very low	546	12.20
Low	964	21.53
Average	1680	37.53
High	876	19.57
Very high	411	9.18
Total	4477	100.00

7. Based on your preferences, indicate your degree of interest in practising sports disciplines during the physical education and sport lesson: *Gymnastics*

The degree of interest in gymnastics is average for 35.07% of the students participating in the research and low and very low for 34.86% of them (Table 8).

Table 8. Degree of interest in practising gymnastics during the physical education and sport lesson

Based on your preferences, indicate your degree of interest in practising <i>gymnastics</i> during the physical education and sport lesson	Number	%
Very low	635	14.18
Low	926	20.68
Average	1570	35.07
High	877	19.59
Very high	469	10.48
Total	4477	100.00

8. Based on your preferences, indicate your degree of interest in practising sports disciplines during the physical education and sport lesson: *Alternative sports disciplines*

In this case, as in the other sports disciplines, most students (38.46%) show an average interest in practising alternative sports disciplines, and 19.26% state that they have a low or very low interest in them (Table 9).



Table 9. Degree of interest in practising alternative sports disciplines during the physical education and sport lesson

Based on your preferences, indicate your degree of interest in practising <i>alternative sports disciplines</i> during the physical education and sport lesson	Number	%
Very low	341	7.62
Low	521	11.64
Average	1722	38.46
High	1171	26.16
Very high	722	16.13
Total	4477	100.00

9. Based on your preferences, indicate your degree of interest in developing motor skills during the physical education and sport lesson: *Speed*

An average or higher degree of interest in developing speed is expressed by most respondents (86.22%), while only 4.6% of them show a very low interest in this issue (Table 10).

Table 10. Degree of interest in developing speed during the physical education and sport lesson

Based on your preferences, indicate your degree of interest in developing <i>speed</i> during the physical education and sport lesson	Number	%
Very low	206	4.60
Low	411	9.18
Average	1433	32.01
High	1319	29.46
Very high	1108	24.75
Total	4477	100.00

10. Based on your preferences, indicate your degree of interest in developing motor skills during the physical education and sport lesson: *Agility*

Agility is also among the students' preferences with a percentage of 91.04% and only 8.96% of respondents have a low and very low interest in developing this motor skill (Table 11).



Table 11. Degree of interest in developing agility during the physical education and sport lesson

Based on your preferences, indicate your degree of interest in developing <i>agility</i> during the physical education and sport lesson	Number	%
Very low	116	2.59
Low	285	6.37
Average	1463	32.68
High	1572	35.11
Very high	1041	23.25
Total	4477	100.00

11. Based on your preferences, indicate your degree of interest in developing motor skills during the physical education and sport lesson: *Endurance*

Almost the same distribution is maintained for this motor skill, with 58.28% of students showing a high and very high interest in developing it. An average degree of interest is recorded for 27.97% of respondents, while 4.31% are very little interested in this issue (Table 12).

Table 12. Degree of interest in developing endurance during the physical education and sport lesson

Based on your preferences, indicate your degree of interest in developing <i>endurance</i> during the physical education and sport lesson	Number	%
Very low	193	4.31
Low	423	9.45
Average	1252	27.97
High	1373	30.67
Very high	1236	27.61
Total	4477	100.00

12. Based on your preferences, indicate your degree of interest in developing motor skills during the physical education and sport lesson: *Strength*

This motor skill is preferred by 85.88% of students, who show an average, high and very high interest in developing it, and only 4.69% of them have a very low interest in this issue (Table 13).



Table 13. Degree of interest in developing strength during the physical education and sport lesson

Based on your preferences, indicate your degree of interest in developing <i>strength</i> during the physical education and sport lesson	Number	%
Very low	210	4.69
Low	422	9.43
Average	1355	30.27
High	1321	29.51
Very high	1169	26.11
Total	4477	100.00

13. To what extent do you believe that the evaluation tests for physical education and sport reflect your acquisitions in this school subject?

The evaluation tests for physical education and sport largely or fully reflect the acquisitions in this discipline for only 37.41% of students. A percentage of 24.39% say that they do not reflect these acquisitions at all or reflect them to a small extent. (Table 14)

Table 14. Extent to which the evaluation tests for physical education and sport reflect the acquisitions in this school subject

To what extent do you believe that the evaluation tests for physical education and sport reflect your acquisitions in this school subject?	Number	%
Not at all	411	9.18
To a small extent	681	15.21
Neither to a small nor to a large extent	1710	38.20
To a large extent	1311	29.28
Entirely	364	8.13
Total	4477	100.00

14. To what extent do you believe that the student's degree of autonomy is reflected in the high school physical education and sport curriculum?

The student's degree of autonomy is reflected to a great extent for 26.85% of respondents, and overall, for only 5.92%. Most students (48.76%) state that this autonomy is not reflected either to a small or to a large extent. (Table 15)



Table 15. Extent to which the student's degree of autonomy is reflected in the high school physical education and sport curriculum

To what extent do you believe that the student's degree of autonomy is reflected in the high school physical education and sport curriculum?	Number	%
Not at all	204	4.56
To a small extent	623	13.92
Neither to a small nor to a large extent	2183	48.76
To a large extent	1202	26.85
Entirely	265	5.92
Total	4477	100.00

15. What factors do you think could lead to increasing the attractiveness of physical education and sport lessons for high school students?

The way in which the teacher conducts the lessons, the educational offer in the school curriculum and material conditions have approximately equal weights in students' responses (about 38%); also, increasing the degree of autonomy in the choice of contents represents (in a proportion of 33.57%) a factor that could lead to increasing the attractiveness of physical education and sport lessons for high school students (Table 16).

Table 16. Factors that could increase the attractiveness of physical education and sport lessons for high school students

What factors do you think could lead to increasing the attractiveness of physical education and sport lessons for high school students?	Number	% of 4477
The way in which the teacher conducts the lessons	1718	38.37
The educational offer in the school curriculum	1707	38.13
Material conditions	1666	37.21
Increasing the degree of autonomy in the choice of contents	1503	33.57
Other	75	1.68

16. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you think that the current content of the high school physical education and sport curriculum is sufficient for physical education to achieve its general and specific competencies?

Only the responses of those who claim that they know the content of the current physical education and sport curriculum for high school education (2321 students) are taken into account. The average of 3.61 points out of 5 indicates that the current curriculum content is considered sufficient for physical education to achieve its general and specific competencies. Only 11.55% of respondents award



1 and 2 points on the scale. More than half of the surveyed students award 4 and 5 points for this issue. (Table 17)

Table 17. Extent to which the current content of the school curriculum is sufficient for physical education to achieve its general and specific competencies

On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you think that the current content of the high school physical education and sport curriculum is sufficient for physical education to achieve its general and specific competencies?	Number	%
1	64	2.76
2	204	8.79
3	819	35.29
4	716	30.85
5	518	22.32
Total	2321	100.00

17. What contents would you like to be included in the physical education and sport curriculum for high school students? (Table 18)

Table 18. Curriculum contents desired by students

What contents would you like to be included in the physical education and sport curriculum for high school students?	Number	% of 3843
Sports games	2097	54.57
Methodological suggestions - autonomy, competitions, evaluation, interactivity	1129	29.38
Other	834	21.70
No one	780	20.30
Motor skills	619	16.11
New sports	354	9.21
Gymnastics	249	6.48
I do not know	214	5.57
Alternative sports disciplines	150	3.90
Theoretical notions	146	3.80
Athletics	110	2.86
Combat sports	105	2.73
Leisure motor activities	32	0.83



Conclusion

From the analysis undertaken, we can conclude that the future school curriculum should respect the students' opinions about this curricular document, which would lead to an increase in their degree of satisfaction with physical education and sport lessons. As can be seen from the analysis of the obtained results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- students should be given a greater degree of autonomy;
- sports games should be present in most physical education and sport lessons;
- motor skills present a degree of interest with similar values;
- special attention should be paid to both the way in which physical education lessons are conducted by respecting the age characteristics of high school students and the presentation of a varied educational offer;
- the implemented evaluation system should reflect the acquisitions in this school subject.

Increasing the attractiveness of physical education and sport lessons for high school students contributes to achieving the objectives of this subject, developing general and specific competencies, and forming the new profile of the future high school graduate.

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