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### THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES ON STUDENTS ENGAGED IN MOUNTAIN SPORTS ACTIVITIES

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#### *Abstract*

The purpose of this study consists in determining the contribution of every specific function concerning the cultural activities of Mountain Sports Activities: social function (social adjustment and accommodation), recreational function (entertainment, spending and organizing of free time), educational function, correctional function (prevention of conflicts, limitation of the social-cultural deviation), and critical function (searching and creating new reports between the individual and the group), all this having as perspective the widening of the consciousness of the University of Bucharest's students. The method of questionnaire, the mathematical-statistical method and the graphical method were applied. 121 subjects participated, 64 girls (52, 90%) and 57 boys (47, 10%), first and second year students at the 18 faculties of the University of Bucharest, enrolled on the courses of sport and physical education. At the beginning of the school year, these students opted for the *Mountain Sports Activities* course, subject offered in the educational offer by the Department of Sport and Physical. From the processing of data, it was concluded that the cultural activities have determined major changes in the research groups according to the typology of practice lessons and to psychometric oddities. Although girls have supremacy when it comes to the participants' number, it has been discovered that, during an academic year, in the four applications, boys are the ones who keep a constancy in participations.

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**Keywords:** Cultural activities, accommodation, participate, self -knowing, creativity.



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## 1. Introduction

The conducted analysis provides a statistical argumentation regarding the influence of cultural activities on students and the impact which this subject matter had over the years. We aimed to complete the curriculum of "Mountain Sport Activities" subject matter for the students in the first and second academic years, at the University of Bucharest, and therefore contribute not only to building a minimal set of practical and methodical knowledge, but also to develop social communication and increase human awareness meant to relieve everyday stress.

According to the Educational Plan, two or three mountain applications are scheduled each semester of the academic year. Each stage runs for three days and usually takes place over the weekend.

This schedule generates an advantage for students who do not have to miss classes, since physical education is mostly optional.

The mountain routes nearby are part of the Bucegi Mountains circuit, the zonal mountain variants that allow groups to return every day, in due time, to the premises of the facility where they are accommodated and also complete the other scheduled steps –courses, non-formal recreational activities.

"Thus, the World Tourism Organization recommended to countries, as early as 1975, to include tourism and travels in the curriculum of schools and universities, due to their educational role. At this level, it is an acknowledged fact that tourism plays a role both in terms of the aspirations of knowing and understanding your own age, and in terms of a feeling of detachment from the family protection. Therefore, tourism should be seen as a young people's right and a serve of an important social interest. On the social side, the training-educational function of tourism requires knowledge of reality, creating emotions and therefore facilitative creative activities; for those who are socially awkward, tourism facilities a new socializing process, and for those with walking problems, revalidation is facilitated" (Pelin, Stroe, & Vasilescu, 2010, p.51).

"More than ever, tourists seem to be classified into two distinct categories: those looking for standardized tourist products and services, and those willing to have authentic experiences" (Păduraru, Ungureanu, & Tacu, 2015, p.2).

Just as with the definitions of cultural tourism, there is more than one typology being used. The five types are presented in Table no. 1.

**Table 01.** Types of cultural tourists

Type of cultural tourist	Short characterization
The purposeful cultural tourist	Cultural tourism is the primary motive for visiting a destination and the tourist has a very deep cultural experience
The sightseeing cultural tourist	Cultural tourism is a primary reason for visiting a destination, but the experience is less deep
The serendipitous cultural tourist	A tourist who does not travel for cultural reasons, but who, after participating, ends up having a deep cultural tourism experience
The casual cultural tourist	Cultural tourism is a weak motive for travel and the resulting experience is shallow
The incidental cultural tourist	This tourist does not travel for cultural reasons, but nonetheless participates in some activities and has shallow experiences

Source: City Tourism and Culture, Chapter 1, p.4

"Mountain areas have always been an attraction, as they facilitate various sport activities which triggered the development of mountain resorts" (Pârvu & Fleșeriu, 2018, p.1).

The authors Marković & Petrović (2013, p.80) focus on the mountains as being places for travel, sports and tourist recreation, considered as the main touristic holiday activities.

One strategy for going beyond seasonality is to develop the resorts for the four seasons, so that sport and entertainment facilities are open throughout the whole year, not only in winter when the focus is on winter sports only" (Monitoring Network in Tourism, 2018c).

"By organizing trips with students, we have the possibility to contribute to the development of their personality by capitalizing on their interests and skills. They learn to cherish the cultural, folk and historical values of our people and show interest in learning as much as they can in that respect. The trip strengthens not only the students' body, but also their mind, by nourishing good personality traits" (Zlate, 2017, p.2).

According to Cârstea (2000, p.42), the socializing activity of tourist groups is about "developing your responsibility in achieving certain tasks or objectives, building the respect for the colleagues' efforts, the understanding of the need for a role hierarchy within the group, as well as developing organizational habits and skills, etc."

According to authors Pelin, Stroe and Vasilescu (2010, p.52) "the facilitator has the following tasks:

- carry out educational activities, as well as (physical and mental) relaxation activities;
- carry out an activity meant to raise awareness on the tourist potential of the area;
- organize ad-hoc contests or competitions, by developing an appropriate set of rules for that purpose;
- support activities of an educational nature;
- organize cultural evening events including age-specific games taking place inside the chalet, competitions such as "who knows wins" or dance, poem reading and singing contests;
- organize easy tourist orientation contests, near the camp;
- have a package of movement (collective and individual) games, which he/she will organize in the open air, as well as inside, such as chalet games, as well as procuring the supplies for organizing the program specific to the "camp fire".

"Generally speaking, facilitation means any action carried out in or on a group, a community or an environment, meant to develop communication and ensure social life, by using entertaining or semi-entertaining methods" (Uscatu & Istrate, 1993, p.155).

"Starting from the variety of learning situation and the various degrees of intention specific to actions, education can be classified into three categories, based on its goals: formal, non-formal and informal" (Cucoş, 2006, p.47).

"Mountain hiking (in an organized way) is important for young people, since it helps them develop their personality. Climbing and descending from a mountain, that is walking on an inclined area, are exercises which can be done by anyone, provided that they are aware of their physical possibilities and choose an accessible trail as a result" (Dumitrescu, 2013, p.84).

Mountain tourism often combines the recreational and the sport aspects, and is therefore an instrument of physical education, as well as a training and educational objective.

Cultural tourism is “the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs” (Richards, 1996, p. 24).

“Social benefits achieved by tourism: better ability to socialize; build friendships; adapt to environmental conditions; become aware of social rules and values; accept personal mistakes, accept the mistakes made by colleagues or friends; express your personality” (Enoiu & Enoiu, 2008, p.87).

“This is the reason why I don’t see the perspective that supports the synergetic and dialectic relation between emotion and affection, that gives expressively cultural and civility qualities to human behaviour as an exaggeration”(Neacșu, 2010, p.161).

## 2. Problem Statement

The physical education methods create, by way of the teaching tourism, many opportunities for social and human relationships, helping others and developing the group spirit. These practical methods can also help in acquiring knowledge about bio-diversity and geo-diversity, the cultural and historical heritage. The topography, landforms and ecosystem of those places can be opportunities for connecting students from various specializations (science, humanities) to the reality of the region, by the harmless exploration of the sites.

In this context, the students that attend faculties other than sport and physical education are particularly entitled to have thorough knowledge about tourism, sport orientation and ecology, and about how can this be mixed with the other pedagogical, psychological, sociological, biological etc. notions acquired during faculty, which will result in there and the future generations’ education and development.

## 3. Research Questions

Cultural activities in the mountain environment can be a process of self-awareness, since it provides the conditions required that any individual discovers himself.

The interaction between individuals and groups and the environment, the expression of your own self, your own initiative and responsibility can generate a creativity process with multiple educational possibilities for the entire life.

## 4. Purpose of the Study

Checking how valid the influence of the cultural activities’ functions is on young students, in terms of communication development and social life, by using entertaining methods and means.

## 5. Research Methods

Research methods included study of reference works, the Market Research questionnaire method, the statistical methods and the graphical method by using the Microsoft Office Excel 2007 software.

### 5.1. Time and place of the research

The study was conducted at the University of Bucharest between November 2017 and April 2018.

The subjects are students in the 1st and 2nd academic year attending one of the 18 faculties of the University of Bucharest, are aged between 19 and 30 years, and were involved in the Mountain Sport Activities classes

The questionnaire was filled out by 121 students, of which 64 were girls, accounting for 52,90% of respondents and 57 were boys, accounting for 47,10%, of respondents.

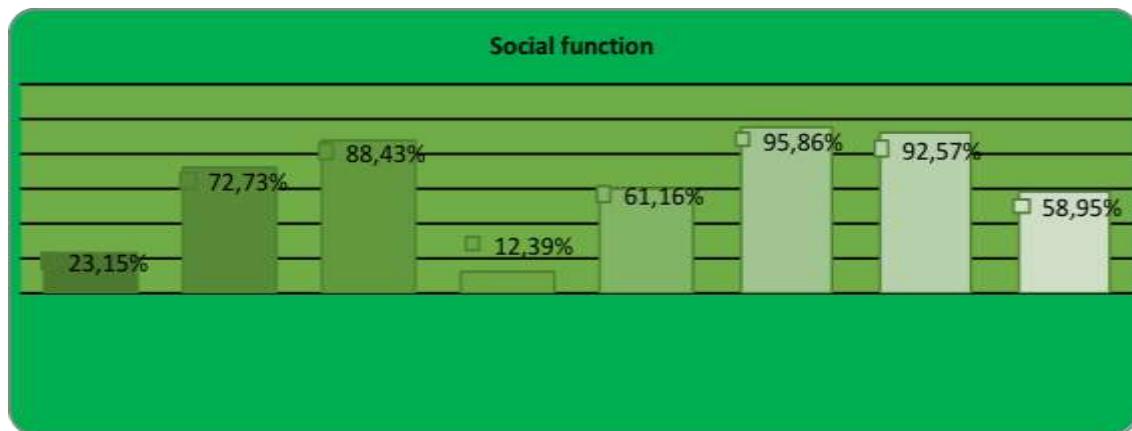
The data were collected based on a questionnaire that was sent online.

All subjects received written information about the purpose of the study and give their informed consent about the data use in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, the Amsterdam Protocol and Directive 86/609/EEC. The approval of the Ethics Committee of the University of Bucharest and the Physical Education and Sport Department was obtained.

## 6. Findings

The subjects' to the questionnaire is set out based on the five key indicators.

### 6.1.Social function

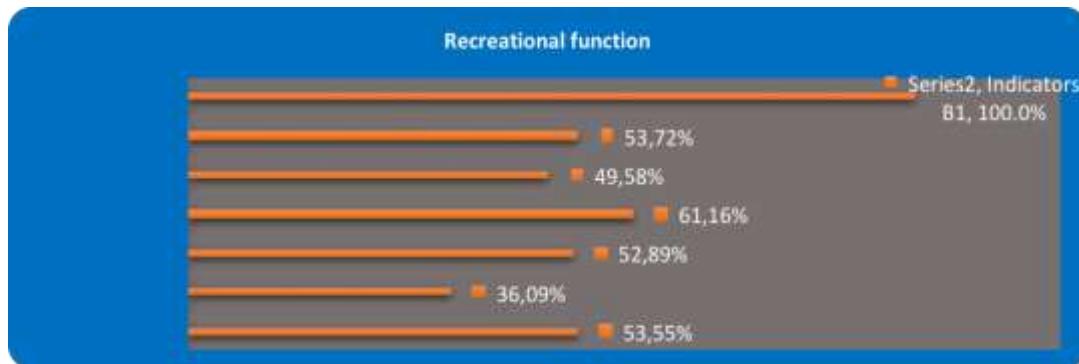


**Figure 01.** The weight of the indicators specific to the social function

Figure no. 1, shows the percentage distribution of the eight indicators specific to the *social function*:

- almost 2/3 (73,56%) of the students completing the questionnaire make friends easily and very easily 72,73% can rely on their friends' support, and 88,43% are motivated and optimistic with regard to the achievement of the plans they set for themselves, both within a group and individually;
- 12,39% of subjects do volunteering work in the environment greening area 61,60% do other forms of social and humanitarian volunteering work 95,89% have a helping spirit, responding to their colleagues' needs, while 92,57% were helped in certain circumstances;
- at the end of each day dedicated to classes and hands-on lessons mixed with cultural evenings 76,85% of subjects like to exchange impressions, and 65,29% like to draw conclusions about what happened.

## 6.2. Recreational function

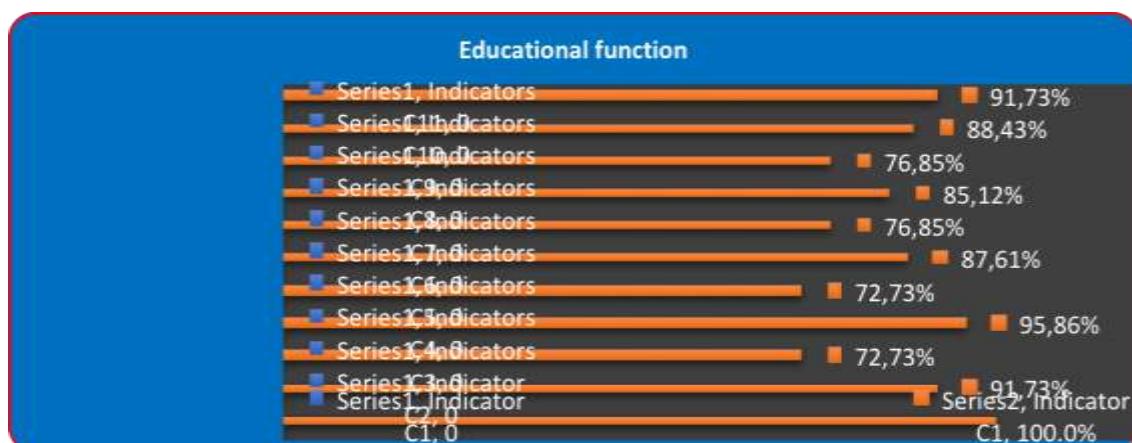


**Figure 02.** The weight of the indicators specific to the recreational function

Figure no. 2, shows the percentage distribution of the seven indicators specific to the *recreational function*:

- 100% of the subjects say that they enjoy team activities;
- in the first three options regarding music genres, we have identified the *pop* genre in proportion of 49,86%, followed by *rock* 38,84%, and the last two with equal results, *folk* and *traditional* genres with a proportion of 19,01%, here being highlighted that the subjects prefer to dance on their desired music in a percent of 61,16% and when they have the occasion they prefer to dance in groups the percent is 61,99%, and with a partner 54,55%, this percent could be interpreted as a win in the relationships sphere. Here, we identify the misfits of the group or the ones that lack coordinative abilities that are required for dancing, preferring to dance alone in a percent of 42,14%;
- they like to sing at the campfire 61,99%, in artistic nights 45,46% or karaoke 38,02%, and among the most loved camp games we identify playing cards 91,73% followed by rummy 72,73%, chess 42,15% and backgammon 38,02%.

## 6.3. Educational function



**Figure 03.** Weight of the indicators specific to the educational function

Figure no. 3, shows the percentage distribution of the eleven indicators specific to the *educational function*:

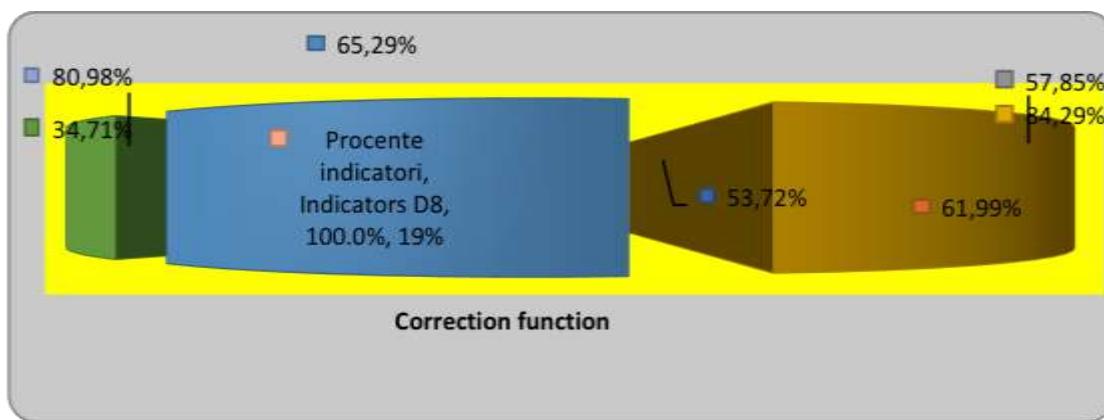
- subjects confirm the benefits of this type of education in proportion of 91,73% and have categorised the first three types: non-formal education 72,73%, followed by formal education 38,73% and informal education 34,71%;

- regarding the managerial roles of the coordinative teacher, the respondents have categorised the first three places: the *organisation* 95,86%, the *coordination* 91,73% and *motivation* 85,12%;

- the self esteem development is confirmed by respondents with the help of these activities by 72,73% and the reach of goals that have been set has brought a plus of trust encouraging them regarding initiatives, as well as improving the in the creativity chapter by the nature of unforeseen situations, and the adaptability of finding quick solutions regarding unusual situations 76,85%;

- organisation, self-organisation centred on formative initiatives, as well as, the improvement of general knowledge have won some ground in the habits of the questioned subjects 84,12% the positive attitudes have helped them to prove tolerance and humanitarianism, mutual support and a beginning of a healthy lifestyle.

#### 6.4. Correction function



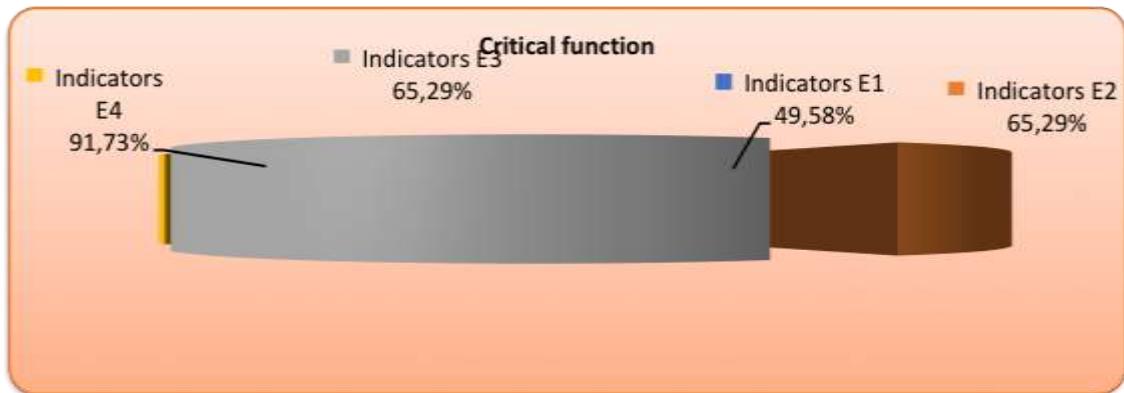
**Figure 04.** Weight of the indicators specific to the correction function

Figure no. 4, shows the percentage distribution of the four indicators specific to the *correction function*:

- the data obtained from a percentage of 53,72% of the respondents that have chosen the *Yes* choice of answer cumulated with the *Sometimes* variant 46,29%, entitle us to affirm that fun activities have a determining role in the educational sphere and also in the cultural one, as well as in the processes of efficient adjustment of some emotional imbalances, limiting socio-cultural deviations specific to the ones that are socially misfits;

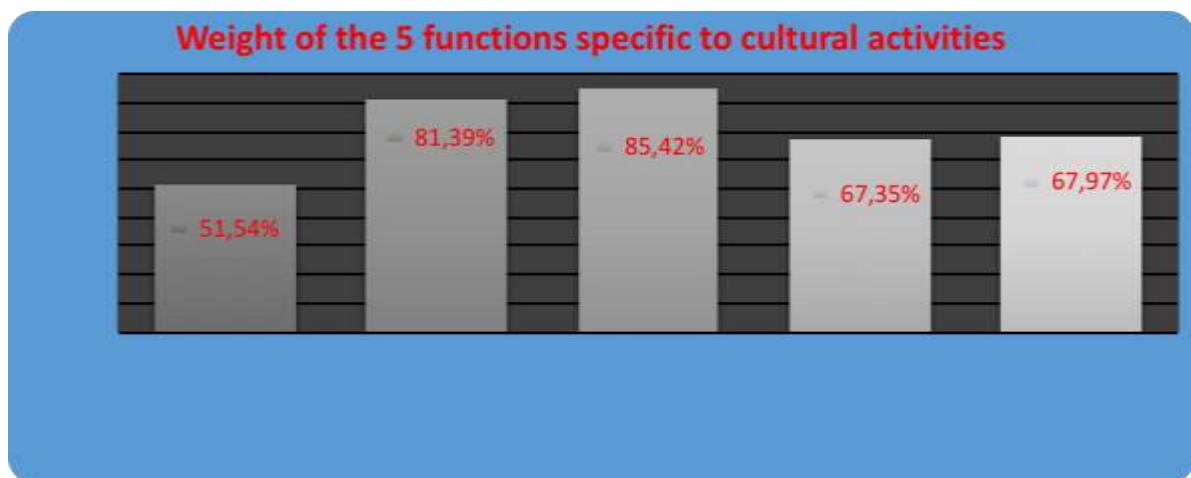
- the efficiency of the drawn conclusions at the end of every activity day, is recognised by 84,29% of the respondents, and the achievement of proposed objectives have confirmed the benefits regarding the development of self image 100% of them have mentioned the *sensorimotor* (dance and games), followed by *volunteer-action* perceived by 69,42% and *attitudinal* in a percent of 61,16%.

### 6.5. Critical function



**Figure 05.** Weight of the indicators specific to the critical function

Figure no. 5, presents the percentage distribution of the four indicators specific to the *critical function*: - subjects perceive in 91,73% the cultural activities role as having a relational normalization function as well as possibilities in the discovery of a qualitative lifestyle, in a percent of 65,29%, managing to ditch some factors of today's society, considering that the level of implication and the criticism level has risen to a 57,85%; - they have developed: *team spirit* 91,73%, followed by *the possibility of socialising and learning new things* of 84,29%.



**Figure 06.** Weight of the 5 functions specific to cultural activities

Figure no. 6, shows the percentage distribution of the five basic indicators and reveals that the most significant percentages were allocated to *educational function* (85.42%) and *recreational functions* (81.39%).

## 7. Conclusion

The study confirms the working hypotheses, namely the influence of the cultural activities on the students who are enrolled in the *Mountain Activities*, identifying not only the shutter of self-acknowledgement and creative processes, facilitated by the surrounding environment and the group homogenous atmosphere, but also the benefits of this type of education, applicable in other occasions

along the way. Classifying the weight of the five functions, we conclude that the first three places are taken by the *educative function*, followed by the *recreational function* and the *critical function*, signalising the fact that the subjects have acknowledged that the proposed objectives have developed their personal image as well as their self esteem.

## Acknowledgments

This study is important for the specialised professors of the University of Bucharest and not just them, but also the students we are working with, whom sent us a positive feedback, that revealed the major contribution of cultural activities, which undoubtedly became an important “niche” within mountain activities.

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