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Original article

## THE MOTIVATION OF HIGH-SCHOOL PUPILS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE CURRICULAR PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

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### Abstract

*Aim.* The aim was to discover, through a questionnaire, the elements that influence the pupils' motivation, by seeing the sources of needs that act the best on them during the high-school physical education activity.

*Methods.* The research methods used were: the bibliographical study, the observation, the inquiry, the statistical-mathematical method, and the graphical representation.

*Results.* The human social contacts group of needs and motives was situated very high in the preferences of the inquired pupils. Their motivation is given by the relating degree within society, obviously having effects in the formation of their personality.

*Conclusions.* After analyzing and interpreting the results, one can see that the research hypothesis was confirmed, hence we can say that the identification of the hierarchy of the needs and motives, constitutes a way to know the high-school pupils.

*Keywords:* high-school pupils, motivation, physical education activity.

### Introduction

The physical education teacher's role is to develop the pupils' love for exercise, for understanding the usefulness and the necessity of exercise; to ensure that all conditions are met for exercising, to attract pupils in exercising outside the curriculum. Given the specific age of high-school pupils, this period is particularly important for the growth and development of the body, and in the formation of the moral profile.

Motivation is one of the psychological factors that, along with the personality traits and aptitudes, direct and regulate the individuals' behavior. Believed by Atkinson & Hilgard (2005, p. 507) to be "a state that energizes the behavior, offering it a direction, motivation is lived subjectively as a conscious desire," to do or to achieve something, to perfect oneself, to reach an expected goal.

As the psycho pedagogues define it, motivation is a basic process that activates, directs and maintains the human behavior. In other words, in order for a pupil to be able to assimilate the information after a didactic process, this pupil needs to have his or her own motivation to exert this activity, being aware of its importance.

The problem of pupils' motivation must not be understood as being a simple process, the effort to motivate them in a certain direction will be more successful if the teacher-pupil relationship is considered to be one of collaboration between people who can share the same goals, purpose, and feelings. Thus, the motivational interventions that do not respect the pupils' emotions and beliefs in regards to a certain

determine the behavioral guidelines, the specific conducts, and their social adaptation. This way, one

activity can produce short-term effects, while over a longer period of time these interventions can fail.

After analyzing, based on a bibliographical study, the determining factors for motivation, one must be aware that autonomy, competence, and relating are psychological attributes that mediates the relation between the social factors and the manifestation of motivation.

Even though it is believed that the motor skill results that are specific to the high-school age are due only to aptitudes, one must accept the fact that a determining role in reaching the goals of physical education is played by the pupils' motivation to participate in the curricular activities. (Rață, Dobrescu, Rață, Rață & Mareș, 2011).

Starting from the statement by Roșca (1966, p. 439), that "without the teacher knowing the students, their psychological particularities, he or she cannot organize and direct their perception, conduct, attention, nor he or she can predict their learning curve," we initiated this study in the high-school education system.

### Methods

*The aim* of this research was to discover, through a questionnaire, the elements that influence the pupils' motivation, by seeing the sources of needs that act the best on them during the high-school physical education activity.

The goals of the research were to identify the pupils' favorite motivational sources and their characteristic values, in order to can obtain important information regarding the functioning of these essential personality elements

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within the inter-relational system (Vîjială, Ignat, 2010).

The goals of the research envisaged to:

- identify in the pupils their favorite motivational sources and their characteristic values;
- identify the role models for the pupils' behavior, specific conducts, and social adaptation;
- verify how these essential elements of the personality work within the interrelation system.

The research started from the idea that like the athletes who are motivated to participate in the training process to improve their performances (Dobrescu, Dobreci & Rață, 2013), so the high-school pupils must be determined to practice physical education activities, for a better self-knowledge and perception of the effectiveness of exercising in an organized manner.

In this sense, the *research hypothesis* was elaborated, stating that the identification of a hierarchy in the need groups as elements of motivation can influence the accomplishment of the curricular objectives, and the motor content in the high-school physical education lessons.

In order to verify the hypothesis, a sociological study was conducted at the "Gheorghe Vrânceanu" National College of Bacau, on a target group of 30 pupils in 2 ninth grades, during the academic year 2014-2015.

The *research methods* used were: the bibliographical study, the observation, the inquiry, the

statistical-mathematical method, and the graphical representation.

The inquiry was based on the "professional motivation questionnaire," adapted by Roco (2001, p. 214-215), based on Bazin. This questionnaire assessed the needs and motives that the pupils' behavior is based on during the physical education activities, by ranging the 35 assertions in the order of their importance, according to each subject.

The points given by the respondents to each item offered us the possibility to analyze the motives within the 5 groups identified by the authors: physiology, security, social contacts, esteem, consideration, and self-accomplishment.

The normative evaluations lead to the assessment of the motivational psychological tendencies of the subjects, using the professional motivation questionnaire, adapted by Roco (2001, p. 214-215), based on Bazin.

### Results

In order to emphasize the needs and motives on which the manifestation of the target group is based, the results recorded in the 5 groups were interpreted taking into account the average, maximum, and minimum group (Table 1) and individual values. (Fig. 1-5)

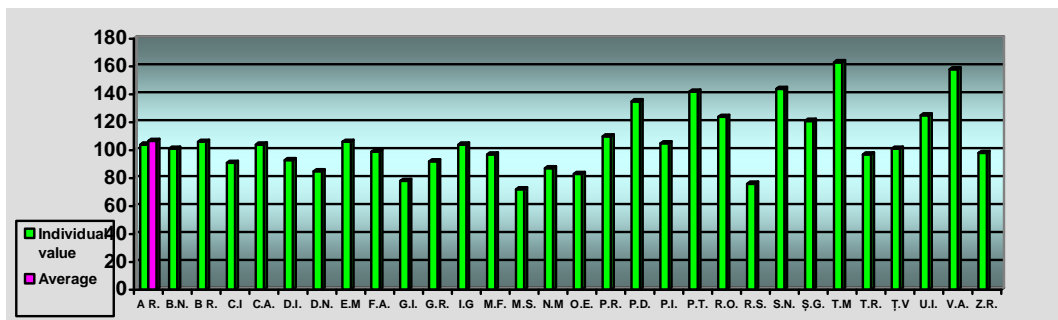
**Table 1.** Centralization of the target group's statistical results for the motivation questionnaire

Statistical markers	Groups of motives and needs				
	Hsc	Sa	Ps	S	Ec
Arithmetical mean	106.70	111.96	128	137.50	145.83
Standard deviation	23.15	26.28	18.94	26.31	38.21
Maximum value	163	154	164	181	200
Minimum value	72	59	96	106	69

**Legend:** Human social contacts (Hsc), Self-accomplishment (Sa), Physiology (Ps), Security (S), Esteem, consideration (Ec).

The motive group regarding *human social contacts (Hsc)* have individual values between 163 and 72 points, with a difference between the average and

minimum value of 34.7 points, smaller than the one between the maximum and the average value, of 56.3 points.



**Figure 1.** The human social contacts results

The needs and motives regarding *self-accomplishment (Sa)* have individual values between 154 and 59 points (Table 1). The difference between

the average and minimum value is of 32 points, smaller than the one between the maximum and the average value, of 36 points.

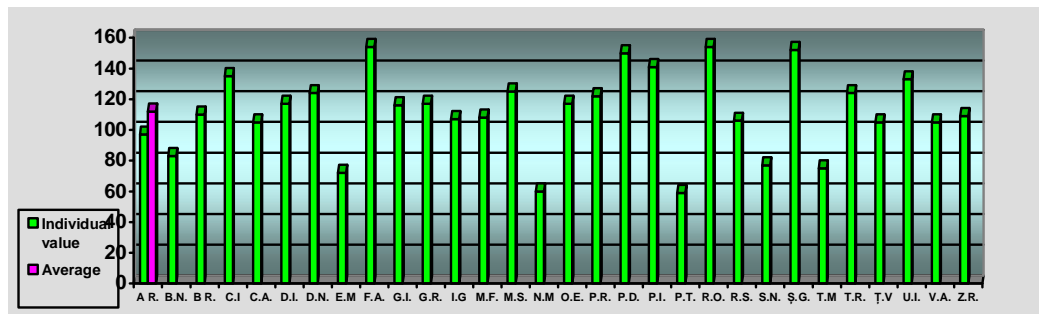


Figure 2. The self-accomplishment results

The group regarding *physiology (Ps)* has individual values comprised between 164 and 96 points (Table 1), and the difference between the minimum value and the

average, of 32 points, is smaller than the one between the average and the maximum value, of 36 points, a tendency to go toward the average being observed.

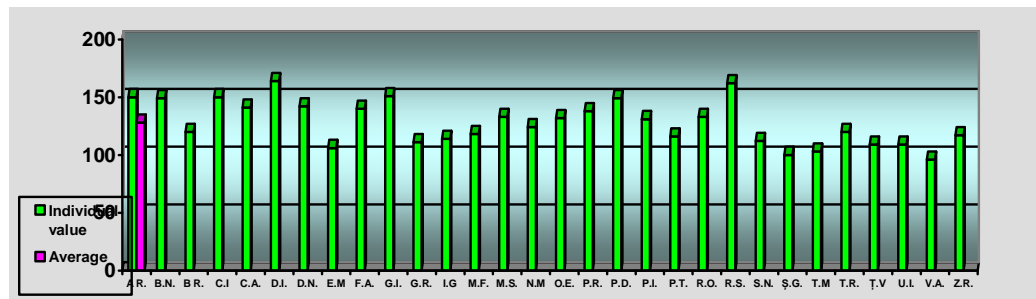


Figure 3. The physiology results

The needs and motives regarding *security (S)* have individual values between 181 and 106 points, with the difference between the average and minimum value is

of 31.53 points, smaller than the one between the maximum and the average value, of 43.5 points.

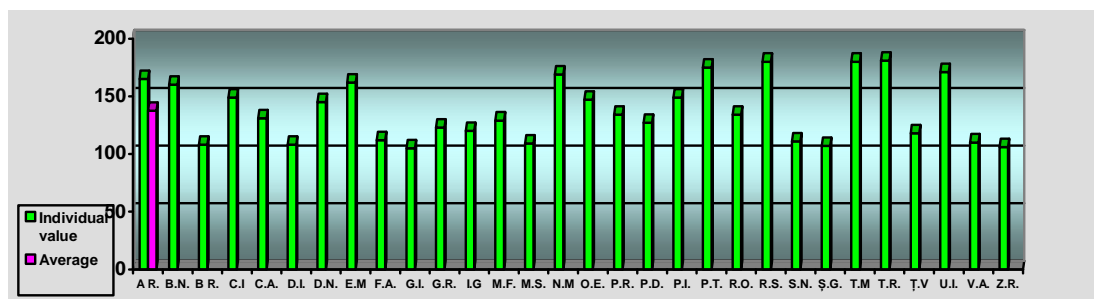


Figure 4. The security needs and motives results

The needs and motives regarding *esteem and consideration (Ec)* have individual values between 200 and 69 points, with the difference between the average value, of 54.17 points.

and minimum value is of 76.83 points, smaller than the one between the maximum and the average

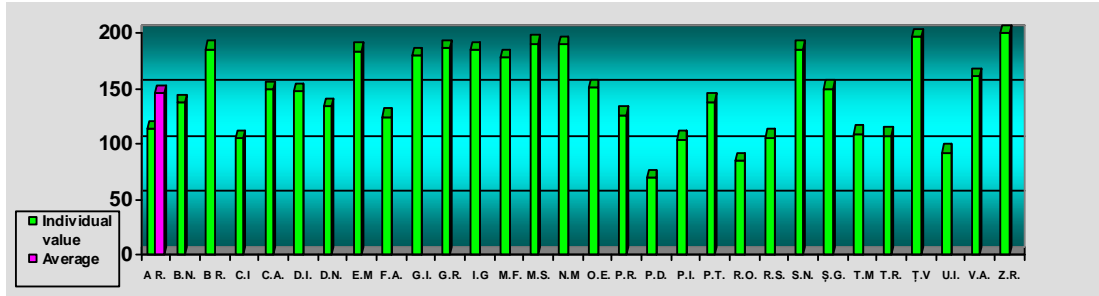


Figure 5. The esteem and consideration (Ec) results

The results recorded for the 5 groups of needs and motives identified in the target group's perception were analyzed and interpreted taking into account the

average, maximum, and minimum values, related to the level of the entire group.

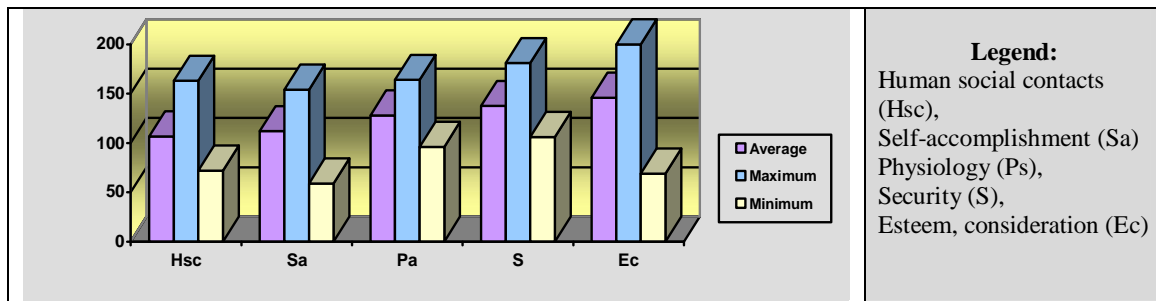


Figure 6. The average, maximum, and minimum results of motivation

The standard deviation (Table 1, Fig. 7) for the 5 groups of identified motives recorded values between 38.21 (Ec) and 18.94 (Ps) points, values that are

considered to be high, proving a low homogeneity degree of the inquired group, a normal aspect.

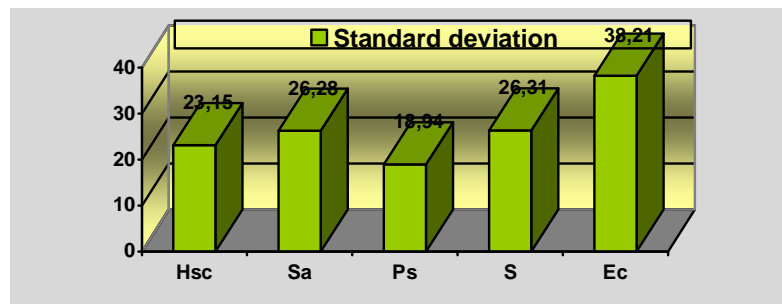


Figure 7. The standard deviation results of the motivation on need groups

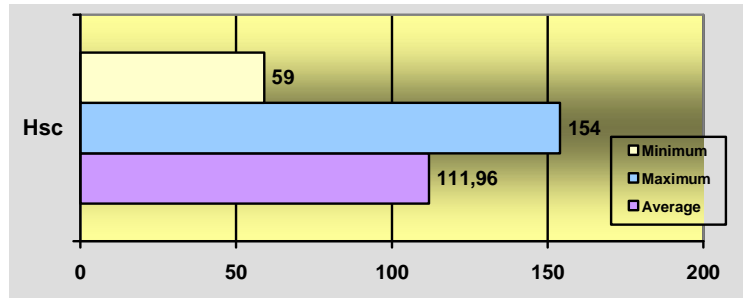
The human social contacts group of needs and motives was situated very high in the preferences of the inquired pupils, with an arithmetical mean of 106.70 points, a minimum value of 72 points and a maximum value of 163 points. (Fig. 8)

These results prove that the subjects appreciate the curricular physical activities that are conducted in working formations such as classes, while the athletic competitions that comprise them contribute to the formation of a spirit of collaboration, communication, and understanding within a community. Their

motivation is given by the relating degree within society, obviously having effects in the formation of their personality.

The fact that adolescent pupils are preoccupied by physical education activities more through the perspective of social contacts shows a lack of perception of the fundamental goals of this discipline in the high-school curriculum.

The standard deviation (Fig. 7) in this group of motives recorded a value of 26.28, which shows a low degree of homogeneity in the studied group.



**Figure 8.** The average, maximum, and minimum results of motivation in regards to human social contacts

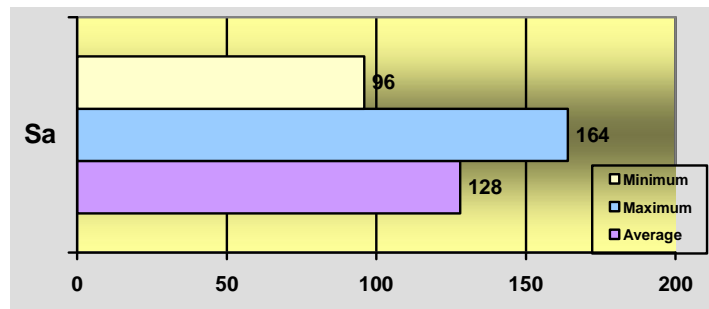
In the order of their values, next there are the motives and needs regarding *self-accomplishment*, with an average value of 111.96 points, a maximum value of 154 points, and a minimum value of 59 points. Thus, one can say that the pupils in this group are characterized by qualities such as permanent adaptation to ever changing situations. (Fig. 9)

This position within the 5 groups of motives and needs supports the pupils' predisposition toward creativity and adaptation during physical activities. They prefer to take chances in what they do, to

appreciate the possibilities of stimulating their interest, of evaluating and assessing their own activities.

They are convinced of the importance of the curricular goals and appreciate the opportunities for a responsible activity involving the stimulation of effort, the increase of working capacity and the development of personality.

The standard deviation (Fig.7) in this group of motives recorded a value of 18.94, which shows the highest degree of homogeneity in the studied group.



**Figure 9.** The average, maximum, and minimum results of motivation regarding self-accomplishment

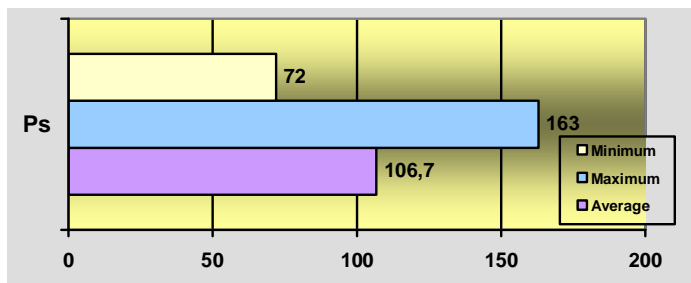
In the third place of the inquired pupils' preferences is the *physiology* group, with an average value of 128 points, a maximum value of 164 points, and a minimum value of 96 points. (Fig.10)

The physiological motives are situated in an inferior position, and the lower score of the research items proves that, for the respondents, the morpho-functional effects of physical education activities in school are not a priority.

The assessment of this group of tendencies did not take too much into consideration the role of the

instruction programs selected for the high-school age, rigorously rationalized and set through curriculum. To this group of motives, a mark has been put by the low interest for ensuring optimal material resources, a lack of preoccupation for increasing the attractiveness of the lessons, and for using diversified means.

The standard deviation (Fig.7) in this group of motives recorded a value of 23.15, which shows a low degree of homogeneity in the studied group.



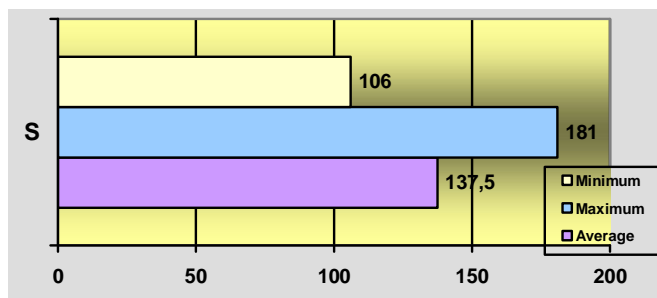
**Figure 10.** The average, maximum, and minimum results of physiological motivation

The group of motives derived from the need for *security* has a smaller importance in the pupils' motivations, recording an average value of 137.50, with a maximum value of 181 and a minimum value of 106. (Fig.11)

These values prove that the respondents have reservations in regards to an imposed work activity, they see school as a safe learning place, but they do not see it as a place where one can benefit from a permanent and direct guidance.

Physical education activity is seen as an influence on the body, but they feel that they do not have every time the best conditions where they can be assisted, ensured, helped during practice. Through the assessment of this group of motives, they sanction the poorly made things.

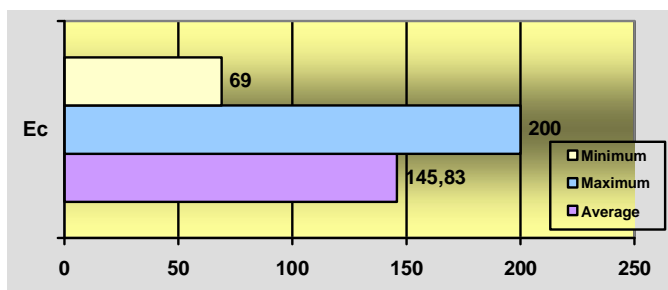
The standard deviation (Fig.7) in this group of motives recorded a value of 26.31, which shows a low degree of homogeneity in the target group.



**Figure 11.** The average, maximum, and minimum results of motivation regarding Security

The last position is taken by the group regarding the formation of the traits *esteem and consideration*, with an average value of 145.83 points, and a maximum value of 200 points. (Fig.12)

The chosen assertions show that the inquired pupils, wanting to perform a quality physical education activity, with clearly defined tasks that demand increased attention, were not convinced by this.



**Figure 12.** The average, maximum, and minimum results of motivation regarding esteem and consideration

The personality of the teacher must show an interest for the utility of the lesson, for the correct assessment of the pupils' effort, at the same time

offering them the joy and freedom to perform their favorite motor activity.

The standard deviation (Fig.7) in this group of motives recorded a value of 38.21, which shows the lowest degree of homogeneity in the studied group.

### Discussions

The adolescent pupils are preoccupied by physical education activities more through the perspective of social contacts, (106.70 pct.) which shows a lack of perception of the fundamental goals of this discipline in the high-school curriculum.

Making a comparison with the results of a survey of a sample of the future trainers in physical education from a faculty profile (Rață et al., 2011), priority had all the necessities and reasons aimed at human social contacts, with a value of 108.12 points. Not for that respondents, the morpho-functional effects of physical education activities in school are not a priority, and the physiological motives are situated in an inferior position.

In a sociological approach regarding the middle school age children's perception of the role played by Physical Education in school, (Dobrescu & Petrovici, 2013), the research shows that 74% out of the questioned pupils consider Physical Education more important and as important a subject as the others. Following the request of why these pupils participate in physical education class, we notice that 50% express their pleasure for physical activity, 22% participate because it is necessary, 12% because presence is compulsory and 16 % because they appreciate their Physical Education teacher. They highlighted the role of this activity in the harmonious physical development (38%), "to strengthen health" (26%), "compensation intellectual effort" (22%), and "increasing resistance immune" (14%).

### Conclusions

In trying to find the best ways to determine what motivates the high-school pupils from the curriculum, it can be said that this research constitutes an important contribution in identifying the pupils' motivation for exercising and in attracting them toward the high-school physical education activities.

The results of the research prove that the pupils appreciate the development of the instructional process in a good institution, with an acquired image and prestige, with qualified teachers, and they perceive the importance of participating in curricular physical activities only through the viewpoint of socializing possibilities, appreciating a teacher who favors this relation.

Within the 5 groups of motives and needs it can be identified the pupils' perception regarding the possibilities of stimulating their interest, creative role, and adaptation during physical activities, assessing their own activities.

They are convinced of the importance of the curricular goals and appreciate the opportunities for a responsible activity involving the stimulation of effort,

the increase of working capacity and the development of personality.

The values identified on groups of needs and motives prove that the respondents appreciate less the most important role of physical education activity, meaning its effects on the adolescents' morpho-functional profile and increase in the desire to exercise.

After analyzing and interpreting the results, one can see that the research hypothesis was confirmed, hence we can say that the identification of the hierarchy of the needs and motives, constitutes a way to know the high-school pupils, and to direct them through new strategies and motivations regarding the high-school physical education activity.

The understanding of high-schoolers' mental structure through the viewpoint of the sources that can motivate them the best during the physical education lesson creates a feedback of their perception of this activity, and the need for a specific training based on the stimulation of their interest for exercising in an organized environment.

### Acknowledgments

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