

# REALISATION OF SPORT AND RECREATION CURRICULUM AT UNIVERSITY “GOCE DELCEV”STHIP, REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA – ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS OPPINIONS

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**Abstract:** University sport is a composed part of university curricula at all faculties at the University “Goce Delcev” in Sthip, Republic of Macedonia. It is realized as a university subject named as Sport and recreation. The aim of this paper is to present the realization of Sport and recreation curriculum analyzing student’s opinions for educational process of Sport and recreation, its organization, realization and the expected effects. The research was realized on a sample of 670 examiners, full time students in the first academic year at thirteen faculties at University “Goce Delcev”. Students’ opinions for sport and recreation were determined using closed form of questionnaire, composed from 11 questions. Results were analyzed and presented using frequencies (f) and percent (%). Obtained results give us information for future directions and possibilities for improvement of the current curriculum and its enrichment with other sport contents and activities according students preferences, interests and needs.

**Key words:** *sport and recreation, first year students, opinions, analysis.*

Physical education as a source of positive development changes that occurs in the periods of early childhood, late adolescence, the period of maturity and what denotes a process of a life-long learning have one main imperative – creation of *a physically educated person* or a person that have adopted abilities for engagement in various physical activities which provide easier maintenance of good health and wellbeing throughout the entire life; person who engages in certain physical activities on regular basis because they are highly enjoyable and because of the pleasant feeling they bring, understands the values of the physical activity, as well as the gains derived from the active and healthy manner of life [8]. In these sense, starting with the pre-school system of education, through the primary and secondary education, the sport at the universities presents a logical consequence in the educational system in the process of sport education of the youth. These means that sport and physical education implemented in the educational system are a foundation for creation of habits for regular physical activity and healthy life style and present a starting point for involvement and practice of sport and physical activity during the entire life. Regular physical activity and creation of habits for healthy and active life style are especially important in contemporary life conditions considering the fact that they are confronting at the fourth risk factor for peoples mortality - physical inactivity.

According to the reports of the World Health Organization, approximately 3.2 million of people die each year as a result of physical inactivity. The physical inactivity is the key risk-factor for occurrence of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and diabetes. The increased body weight and obesity, which are very often responsible for 5% of the mortality in people at the global scale, are frequently a result of the physical inactivity. The level of physical inactivity notes a continuous incensement in many countries with great implications over the overall health of the world-wide population. Globally, according the statistics of WHO one out of three adult persons are insufficiently active [22].

According the results from numerous studies, as well as the data from the WHO, the period of adolescence (15-19 years) and the period of young adults (20-25 years) or the students population are noted as especially critical one in which there is remarkable drop of the physical activity and engagement with sports. The transition to university brings a lot of changes which are direct indicators for the condition of student’s inactivity. Namely, the life of the students is being significantly transformed from and academic, social, emotional, and motoric aspect. Both the academic obligations and responsibilities are being increased; the

lectures and the studying demand more efficient management of the time. In the field of the social life, the student find themselves in a new surroundings, they leave their home, the parents, and the old friends, make new contacts and friends. This often leads to insecurity and loss of the self-confidence. The students often complain on loneliness, nostalgia, conflicts and disorders in the communication with their peers, as well as an increased stress [20]. From the aspect of the motoric, many of the studies point out to the decrease of the physical activity in the period of university studies [3, 13, and 16]. This decrease has been more stressed in the female population of students, compared to the male population of students, and is co-related with the previously held habits for movement [3, 13].

This realistic condition is opposite to the developmental postulates according to which from the aspect of ontogenetically development, the student population is located at the top of its physical, motoric, functional, and psychological development [9, 10]. In the literature, the period of late adolescence (after 17th year) and the period of young adults (20-25 years) is the so-called period of higher performances and perfections of the skills [7]. In this period, all of the developmental processes have been completed, the functions have been stabilized, and the maximum in the manifestation of all human potentials- both intellectual and physical - is being reached [10]. The motoric segment in these period is with maximal motoric efficiency which lasts until the 21<sup>st</sup> year for females, i.e. 25 years for males. If trained regularly, motor abilities reach their peak in this particular period.

Therefore, with aim to decrease the negative consequences of physical inactivity typical for the period of the beginning and duration of studies, to respect that what means an ontogenetic characteristics, as well as to continue the trend of regular physical activity and creation of habits for healthy life, starting from the school year 2010/2011 the subject Sport and Recreation has been introduced in new curricula and programs of the faculties at the Goce Delchev University in Shtip, Republic of Macedonia. The subject Sport and recreation is represented as an obligatory subject for the students of the first year of university education, with weekly fond of classes 0+0+2, or in other words, the students have only practical exercises. This subject does not obtain credits nor is being assessed with a mark and a final exam. Exposed in this manner, the general goal is being based upon the realistic needs of the students. Hence, the main goal of Sport and Recreation classes is to enable the student to fulfill their needs for movement and dosed physical activity, according their personal needs and interests, conducting certain transformational changes. In this way, conditions for continuation with the sporting activity are being created, as well as improvement and maintenance of the motoric abilities and the physical readiness at a satisfactory level in every segments of the anthropological status of the human, encouragement of a healthy and active life, formation of healthy lifestyle habits, as well as prevention of illnesses related to the physical inactivity and a sedentary way of life, which is typical for the student population.

The essence of Sport and recreation curriculum is it's foundation of students possibilities and its aim is to satisfy their needs for movement and physical activity in accordance to personal possibilities, interests and needs. In these direction, we defined the subject, aims and specific tasks of this study.

### **Method of work**

The subject of this study are first year students from thirteen faculties at the Goce Delchev University in Shtip. The main goal of this research is to determine and present the current condition with sport as a university subject considering the analysis of student's attitudes for placement of Sport and recreation curriculum, the manners of is realization and organization, realized contents as well as the effects of their practicing.

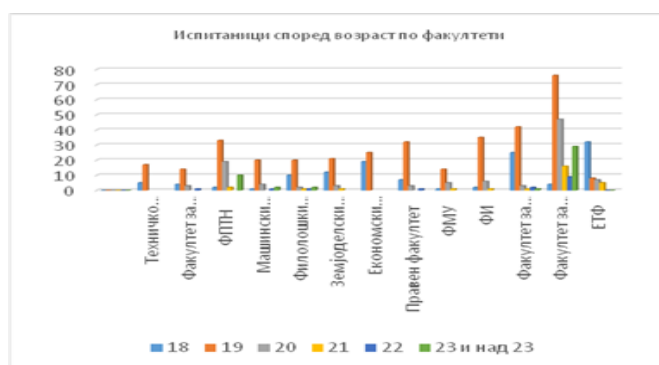
The research has been realized with a total number of 670 respondents, full - time students in the first year of study at thirteen faculties at the Goce Delchev University in Shtip

(Faculty of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Faculty of Philology, Academy of Music, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Informatics, Faculty of Natural and Technical Sciences, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Tourism and Business Logistics, Faculty of Technology, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering) who regularly attend Sport and Recreation classes during the winter and summer semester in the school year 2013/2014. From the total number of students included in the research, 41% (275 students) are male, while 59% (395 students) are female. Related to the age of the examiners, 375 are aged 19, 124 are 18 year old, while 102 are 20 year olds. The rest of examined students, precisely 87, are above 20 years of age (Graph 1).

The research has been conducted anonymously and it was realized in the last teaching week (December, 2013 and May 2014, respectively), depending from the attendant semester. Student's opinions were determined using questionnaire which is a modified and adopted version of questionnaire used in similar research realized by Šeparović & Užičanin [19]. The original questionnaire was adopted according to the Sport and recreation curriculum at Goce Delchev University in Shtip. Beside the general questions (gender, age, and university) the questionnaire was conducted from 11 questions or 7 three-item questions, i.e. with three choices, two four-item questions of which one (the seventh one) is comprised of five sub questions and two questions which give ten optional answers. Obtained results were analyzed using frequencies (f) and percent (%). Results from these study gave directions for further possible changes in the current curriculum for Sport and recreation in a sense of curriculum foundation, organization of the classes, the level of students activity as well as the possibilities for certain changes in the current curriculum according to students needs and interests with a final result – enrichment of the current curriculum with new sports and forms of physical activity.

## Results

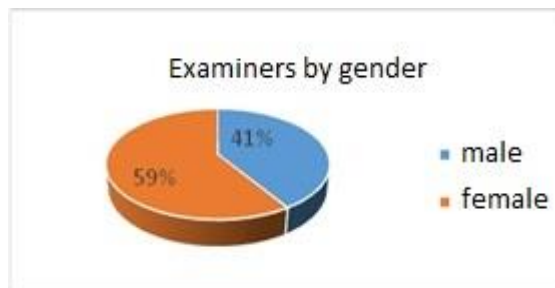
Obtained results are presented as analyses of student's answers of all 11 questions conducted in the applied questionnaire. All questions are analyzed separately. The gained results are presented graphically.



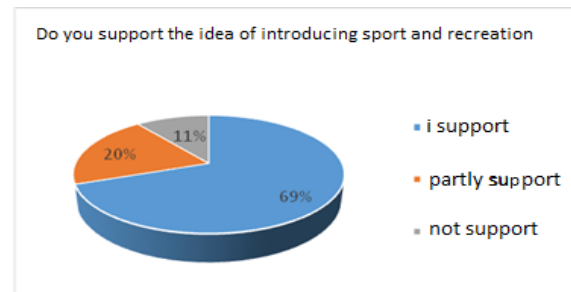
Graphic 1

The first question reveals students attitude for support or dissupport of the idea of introducing subject Sport and recreation. On our pleasure, the main number of examined students, both male and female, supports this idea. Namely, 69% from examined students supports the idea for introducing Sport and recreation, against 20% that particularly supports this idea and 11% of interviewed students that do not support this idea. Aldo with smaller percent of support for this idea (61%) similar results were obtained in the research conducted by Popeska, Stojanova & Mitevska – Petrusheva (2010) realized in 2010 with students at four faculties that attended Sport and recreation classes in that certain period. Similar results are

also obtained in other similar studies [12]. In similar research realized by the same group of authors [17] that refers to differences in students attitudes regarding to their sex, its determined higher acceptance of Sport and recreation curriculum among male students, compared with female students(77.56% m and 62,47% f). The results from analysis, justifies the decision for implementation of Sport and recreation as a university subject at Goce Delchev University in Shtip and are directed to future maintain and improvement of this curriculum.

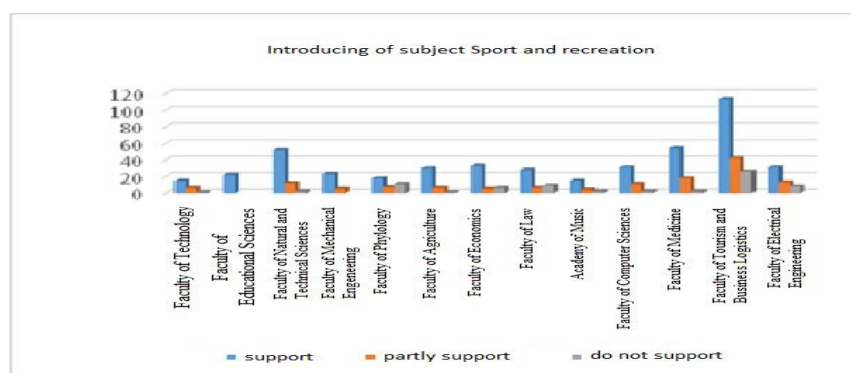


Graphic 1



Graphic 2

Upon the second question “What does the Sport and Recreation subject mean to you?” analyzes of obtained answers (Graphic 3), point out that most of the examiners or particularly 45,6% it presents an humans` everyday need, while for 38,8% of them it presents a good opportunity for recreation. Only a small number of respondents or 9,7% the total number of interviewed students anticipate Sport and recreation from an academic point of view, i.e. as a constitutional part of the educational process. For only 5,82 % this classes anticipate as an obligation. The obtained results refer to the formed consciousness of the students about the significance of the physical activity as way of life, and certainly the possibility to use Sport and recreation classes in a sense to overcome the trend of increased physical inactivity determined for the period of studies [3, 13, 16]. Compared with the research conducted in 2010 [15] (51% for possibility for recreation and 34% humans everyday need). It could be noted an increased awareness for the consequences of contemporary life and the value of physical activity in there overcoming, which from the other side remains as one of aims for the university sport.



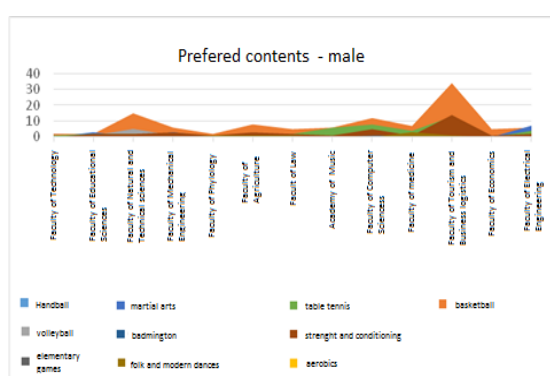
Graphic 3

In order to improve and enrich the Sport and recreation curriculum and to make it similar to student`s needs and interests, student`s answers about the preferred contents are especially important. Regarding the selection of sport of a choice offered in the current program (Graphic 4) students show very heterogenic interests. The largest number of students preferes basketball, significantly smaller number prefer table tennis and general physical

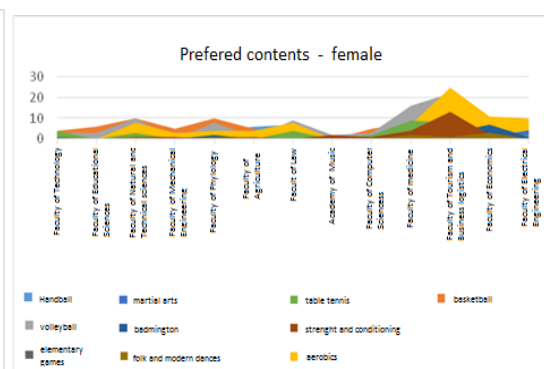
preparation 13.5%. The female students have different interests. Namely, they have displayed equal interest in basketball (30%), volleyball (16%) aerobics (13%) and table tennis (12%). The least preferred activities among the examiners are elementary games (1%) or only 6 students from the total number of 670 examiners, folk and modern dances (2 %) and badminton (2 %).

These choices of the students have been also confirmed in many other researches [4, 11, 15, 19]. The selection of contents shows that the students are interested in activities which are directed toward improvement of the motoric performances and functional abilities, have an emphasized social component, particularly activities that involved team games or group activities that have a competing spirit (basketball, volleyball, handball) as well as activities directed to estimation of personal capabilities and competing with our selves (aerobics). The small interest for the elementary games and the folk and modern dances can be explained by the lesser intensity these activities have, as well as the perception of the dances as a dancing category which has little influence of the improvement of the motoric efficiency. Badminton as a content from Sport and Recreation curriculum is relatively unfamiliar sport, because it is not part of the PE programs in the elementary schools, i.e. sport and sporting activities curriculum in the high school. Additionally, the realization of the aforementioned contents in a short time period probably is one of the many possible reasons for the little interest they have among the students.

From the list of ten sports activities which could be included in the Sport and Recreation curriculum (Graphic 5) most of the students choose football (19%) and fitness (19%). Next on the list of selection are tennis (14%), swimming (14%) and hiking (10 %). These choices of the students have been also confirmed in many other researches [4, 15, and 19]. Students are less interested in skiing (3%) and athletics (3%). Analyzed from the aspect of gender (Graphic 6), football as a first choice of male students and fitness as a preferred activity for female students point out that they should be composed part of Sport and recreation curriculum. Considering the main determination that the Sport and recreation curriculum should represent students interests and needs, there is no doubt whatsoever that the programs should be enriched with football, fitness, tennis and swimming. Regarding to this, future investments in sports facilities and equipment should be pointed to maintaining of fitness gym, football playground and tennis court as well as swimming pool.



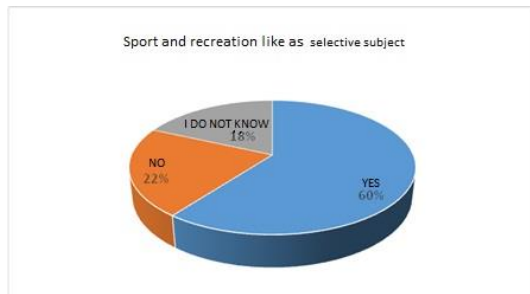
Graphic 5



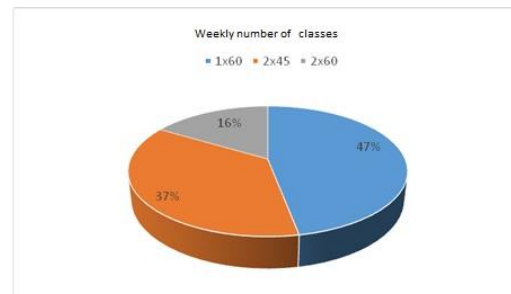
Graphic 6

Fifth, sixth, eighth and ninth question refers to the status of the subject Sport and Recreation, its representations per study years, the weekly number of classes, as well as the possibility for theory lectures. For the question regarding to the status of the subject Sport and recreation (Graphic 7) according 60% of interviewed students this subject should be placed at the university list of selective subjects, 22% do not support this form, while 18% of the students do not have created an opinion for this. Information that most of the half of interviewed students involved in the study declare positively regarding to this question, point out to the

possibility to enlarge the university list of selective subjects in all years of study with different sports activities which additionally will have a positive impact toward creation of habits for movement and healthy life style. Meanwhile, the possibility to have additional classes for sport will able students to select sports activity according their interests and preferences.



Graphic 7



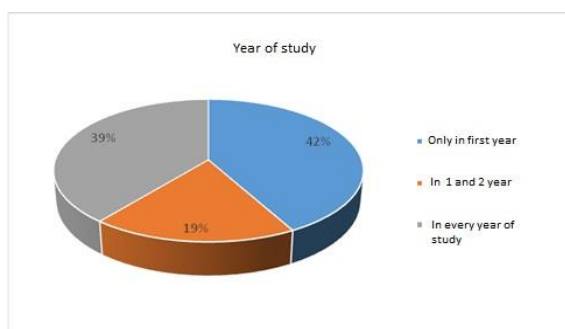
Graphic 8

The current fond for Sport and recreation is once a week with duration of 60 minutes and it is selected from 47% of interviewed students (Graphic 8), according 37% this classes should be realized with increased number or 2 x 45 minutes, while for 16% of the total number of students involved in the study Sport and recreation activities should be realized twice a week with 60 minutes duration. Aldo not enough to indicate serious transformational changes in certain segments of anthropological status of the students, still, the current number of on class in a week is suitable to students needs and it should be maintain in future. Compared with the research of the students realized in 2010 [15] a possitive trend is noted in a sense of need for more frequent realization of Sport and recreation classes, or 26% for the fond 2 x45 min obtained in the study from 2010, compared 37% obtained in this research. This result points out at the understanding of the need for more frequent physical activity during the week.

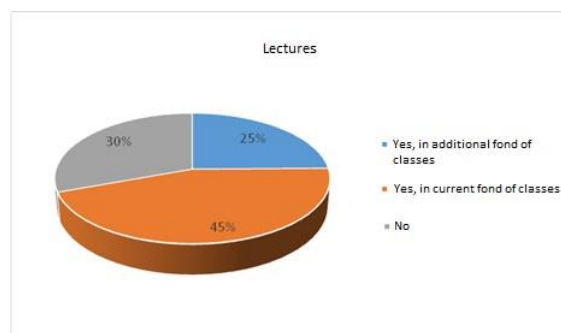
Upon the question for the realization of Sport and recreation curriculum in relation to the years of studies (Graphic 9) students have a divided and partly opposite opinions, particularly 42% support the current representation only in the first year of studies, while closely the same number of students or 39% share the opinion that Sport and recreation should be represented in all years of study. According other 19% of interviewed students this curriculum should be represented only in the 1 and 2 years of study. The number of 39% of students that support the idea for Sport and recreation in every year of study is especially encouraging and positive signal for higher awareness of the students for the need of regular physical activity and suggest to general positive attitude toward these classes and physical activity in general. Positive attitude toward the idea for placement of university sport as a facultative subject related to the years of study is also confirmed in other similar studies [1, 12].

Regarding the question for additional theoretic lectures for healthy life style, regular nutrition, the influence of physical activity to health and prevention from certain diseases as a part of Sport and recreation curriculum, 30 % of the students have negative opinion (Graphic 10). These type of lectures in additional number of classes is accepted for 25% of the students, while according other 45% these type of theoretic lectures should be realized in the range of existing number of classes. Considering the strain with lectures, exercises and other academic obligations that students have, but also considering the fact that huge number of information about nutrition, physical activity and healthy lifestyle are available to students via different media, obtained answers are expected.





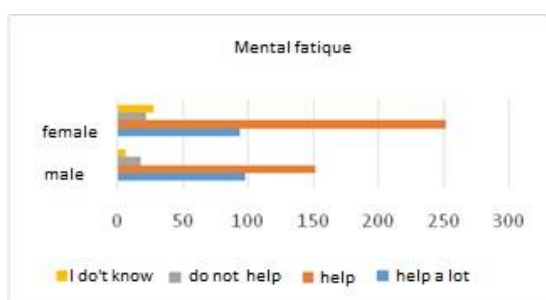
Graphic 9



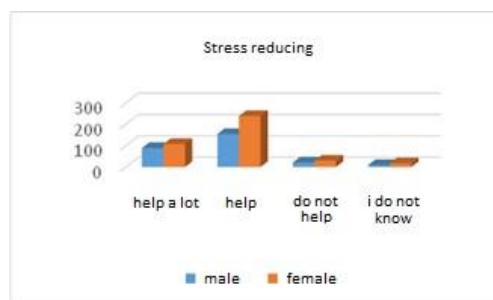
Graphic 10

Student's opinions about the influence of realization of Sport and Recreation contents over the quality of life, i.e. the physical performances and the mental health, have been determined within the five categories of the seventh question. They regard the influence of Sport and recreation curriculum over the lessening of the psychological fatigue and stress, the incensement of the positive emotions and concentration, as well as improvement of the physical strength and condition. The results for each of the aforementioned sub categories have been displayed in the Graphics 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15. Students answers reflects generally positive attitude for the influence of participation in Sport and recreation activities.

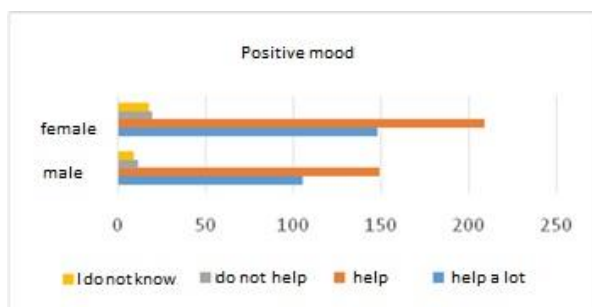
According the results from the total number of 670 examineers 51,3%, consider that participation in Sport and Recreation activities helps a lot in the process of improvement of physical strength, 60,1% that helps in reducing psychological fatigue; 58,8% reduce the stress that and improves the positive mood (53,4%), while according 59,6% of interviewed students helps in improvement of concentration. The summarized results from the students' answers upon the all five categories of the seventh question it could be concluded that most of the obtained answers regards to the first two categories and variations that represent a positive opinion for the effects of participation in Sport and recreation activities (helps a lot/ it helps). If we summarize the answers from these two categories we obtained following results: 89% of intervueved students things that participation in sport and recreation activities helps to reduce a mental fatigue, 88% that reduce the stress, for 91% of the students have an effects for improvement of the mood, 94% consider that improves physical strength and condition and 80% that improves the concentration. These results suggest that curriculum contents are properly selected and realized and are not additional strain for the students. Similar results are obtained in other studies [15, 12].



Graphic 11



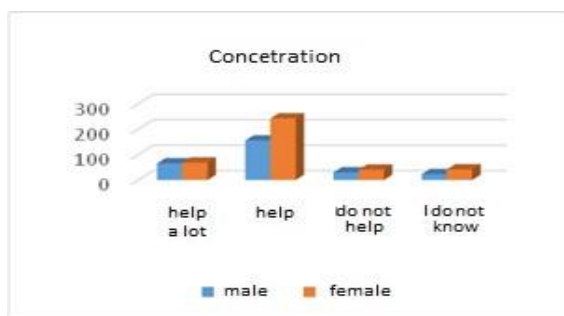
Graphic 12



Graphic 13

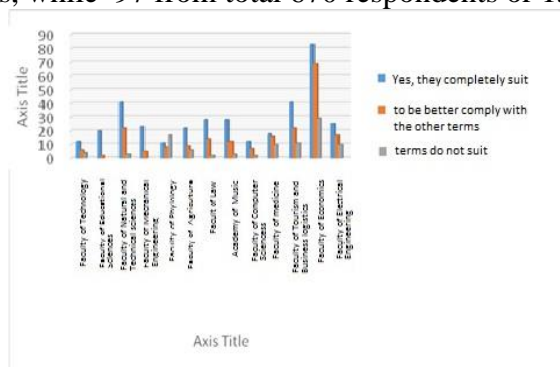


Graphic 14

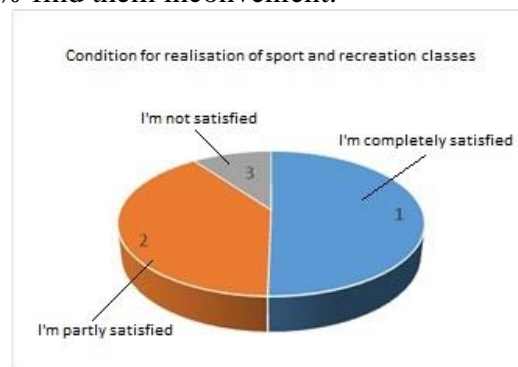


Graphic 15

The last two questions refer to the technical side of the organization of the subject Sport and recreation as a university subject, in particular to the concordance of the existing timetable with the other lectures, as well as the conditions in which the education is being conducted (space, number of students per group). According the current organization, the terms for Sport and recreation exercises are defined in accordance to the schedule of the faculties and they are not selected by the students. At the question “Does sport and recreation terms suits to you?” (Graphic 16) 54% of the surveyed respondents find them completely suitable, for 31% students share the opinion that they should be better adapted with other lectures, while 97 from total 670 respondents or 15 % find them inconvenient.



Graphic 16



Graphic 17

Complete inconvenient of the terms for part of the students could be explained with the time period of realization of classes, as well as the fact that many students travel every day from their living place to the faculty. Therefore, the first and the last terms for Sport and recreation classes are usually the most problematic ones. Compared by faculties, the biggest discrepancy is found between the students at Faculty of Philology and the Faculty of Informatics. While the highest approval of the terms is noted for students at the Faculty of Educational sciences and Faculty of Mechanical Engineering. Acceptance of suggested terms



higher than 60% is obtained for the students from the Faculty of Natural and Technical Sciences, Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Law.

The current conditions for realization of Sport and Recreation teaching process regarding the facilities and other material and spatial conditions for realization of, sports equipment, hygienic conditions in the sport gym and other additional objects as well as the number of students organized in one group, are accepted as completely satisfied for 50% of respondents (Graphic 17), 40% are partially satisfied with the conditions, while 10% of the respondents are dissatisfied with the given conditions. Upon this, we expect that permanent and future facilities works will eliminate the present defaults related to conditions for realization of Sport and recreation curriculum and will completely satisfy the needs and criteria of the students.

## **Conclusion**

Sport at the universities presents a logical consequence in the educational system in the process of sport education of the youth. Different forms of organization of university sport has an important role to increase negative consequences indicated by physical inactivity characteristic for the period of study, creation of permanent habits for healthy life style as well as to create a positive attitude toward regular and continuous physical activity. In these sense at the at the Goce Delchev University in Shtip, Republic of Macedonia, the subject Sport and Recreation has been introduced in new curricula and programs of the faculties. The subject Sport and recreation is represented as an obligatory subject for the students of the first year of university education. This paper is a review of the current situation of sport as a university subject analyzing student's attitudes for placement of Sport and recreation curriculum, the manners of its realization and organization, realized contents as well as the effects of their practicing.

The research has been realized with a total number of 670 respondents, full - time students in the first year of study at thirteen faculties at the Goce Delchev University in Shtip, using questionnaire conducted from 11 questions. Obtained results point out on general positive attitude for implementation of the idea for Sport and recreation curriculum, (69% support it completely, 20% partly) and this subject for respondents have a different meaning: humans' everyday need (45,6%), opportunity for recreation (38,8%), constitutional part of the educational process (9,7%) and an obligation (5,82 %). As especially important from the aspect of future improvement and changes in the curriculum are questions that refers to suggested and preferred contents. Regarding the selection of sport of a choice offered in the current program most of the students prefer basketball (30%), volleyball (16%) aerobics (13%) and table tennis (12%). The least preferred activities are elementary games, folk and modern dances and badminton. From the list of sports activities which are not in the permanent curriculum, students mostly prefer football (19%), fitness (19%), tennis (14%), and swimming (14%) and in future this contents should be presented in the Sport and recreation curriculum. The answers on other questions point out on intention for organization of Sport and recreation as a obligatory subject in the first year and facultative subject in all other years of study, followed by proper number of theoretic lectures in the consisting number of classes (45%). The current weekly number of Sport and recreation activities 1 x 60 minutes is supported by 47% of respondents, while 37% of them share the opinion that these subject should be realized with increased number 2 x 45min.

According the obtained answers it could be noted that students recognize the need for sport and regular physical activity in the period of studying as well as the values of sport at the quality of their lives. In this direction, they support the idea for placement of the university sport as an obligatory educational subject (justification for introduction of the Sport and Recreation subject, its implementation, the manners and conditions of its

organization and realization, the selection of contents, the current program and the preferred contents). On the other hand, the obtained results give us the directions for further organization of different sports at the university, in compliance with the students' opinions. In this direction, they support the idea of implementation of the sport as an obligatory subject in the first year of studies, with a possibility for an additional implementation of the sport as a facultative university subject in the rest years of studies, practicing sport with two classes per week, evaluation of students efforts with credits will able to include students according their interests and needs. On the other hand, this gives an opportunity for higher motivation to participate in selected activity and guarantee bigger efficiency and health benefits. This changes emphasize the role of Universities in creation of complete persons giving an opportunities for healthy and active life style by maintaining facilities for every student to include in physical activity according personal preferences. Thus, the Universities impose themselves as a logical link in the system of a continuous physical education as a strategy which would aid the physical education to perform its role in the magnification of the physical activity level, as well as for a promotion of the health.

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