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THE ASSESSMENT OF SPORT ACTIVITIES AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE

Review
Article

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Abstract

The Annual Campus Festival is among the summer music festivals in Hungary targeting higher education students that attracts large crowds. The organisers of the festival pay special attention to boosting visitors' interest in sport and music events: the Campus Sport Festival takes place annually to promote sport and give higher education students, fans and participants from Hungary and abroad (Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine) the opportunity to forge relationships and socialize. Based on the results of a survey in 2017, this study describes the sporting activities organised on such occasions and examines higher education students' motivation to participate in the festival. The focus is on comparing the opinions of foreign students. The analysis carried out by SPSS used the Pearson's Chi-square and Kruskal-Wallis test to find out the differences among students.

INTRODUCTION

Three to six festivals take place in Hungary annually as these events are the most marketable among cultural products in the 21st century. The statement is backed by the fact that festivals welcome 5-6 million visitors annually (Benedek-Stark, 2007). Music festivals in summer attracting large crowds is one type of festivals. Due to their special characters, the aim of these events is to satisfy the requirements of younger generations. Higher education students belong to one of the special segments in the age group. Only two among the Hungarian pop festivals target higher education students (Bácsné, 2014). One of them is the Campus Festival in Debrecen, which has been organised since 2008: the majority of its visitors cover higher education students. The Campus Sport Festival is the side event of the Campus Festival with the central organizer of the University of Debrecen. The Campus Sport Festival has taken place annually since 2008 targeting higher education students from Hungary and abroad. The aim of Campus Sport Festival is to promote sport and to organise a social event where higher education students, fans and participants from Hungary and abroad can establish relationships with each other. The Sport Festival is a related event of the Campus Festival juxtaposing sport and entertainment. 500 higher education students from abroad participated in the event with the help of Hungarian higher education students in the first 2 years and by HURO Programme (Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Co-operation Programme) in 2010. Participants from abroad have been visiting the event year by year since 2010. During the years, the festival welcomed visitors from Romania, Ukraine and Slovakia. The event is also popular among Hungarian higher education students. Approximately 1,000 higher education students nearly from 20 Hungarian and 10 foreign higher education institutions participate in the Campus Sport Festival annually. The organizers thought in 2017 that it was time to carry out a needs assessment questionnaire to identify the requirements and opinions of higher education students about sport festivals and recreational sports. This study processes questions in connection with sport activities favoured by higher education students; the sample focuses on differences and similarities revealed by international students' opinions. We examine significant differences among countries regarding such factors as the assessment of sport festival initiative, reasons for the importance of sport festivals and reasons for disregarding sport activities.

Several research studies showed the positive effect of sport on physical, mental health and state of mind. Sport, in general, has a strong impact on social and

economic life of citizens (Miragaiaa – Soares, 2017). “Sport has a special role in contemporary society that goes well beyond entertainment” (Kurtzman - Zauhar, 2006). Young sportsmen have lower smoking rates, follow healthier diet, are more self-confident and have fewer psychosomatic symptoms, whereas lower physical activity may be associated with taking drugs and unsafe sexual behaviour (Mikulán et al., 2010). Regular physical activity is a significant factor in health behaviour (Nagy – Tobak, 2015). According to Kirk (2005) higher education institutions can provide young people who are still in the education system with great opportunities so that they can pursue sports in an organised way and integrate it into their values as part of a lifelong physical activity.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Our assessment is based on a survey. The sample included higher education students who had already participated once or more times in the annual Campus Sport Festival and had their e-mail addresses in our database or our Facebook page sparked their interest in the Campus Sport Festival. The link to the questionnaire was sent via e-mail and Facebook in July and August 2017. A sample was devised on the answers to the questionnaires we received and removing those responses which were incomplete. We had 1036 assessable questionnaires in the end. Respondents included higher education students aged 18-26 years: 43.3 % of them were women (449 persons) while 56.7 % of them were men (587 persons). Higher education students from 4 countries completed the questionnaire: 73 % (755 persons) from Hungarian, 15 % (156 persons) from Romanian, 9 % (94 persons) from Ukrainian and 3 % (31 persons) from Slovakian higher education institutions. The target group of the Campus Sport Festival included higher education students from Hungary and abroad. Participants from Romania have been visiting the event for 8 years, from Ukraine for 7 years while from Slovakia for 3 years. There were also cases when previous visitors - who had been unable to participate in the event after graduation – visited the event as fans of their previous institutions.

72 % of the respondents stated that they had already participated in all previous events while 28 % of the respondents had never visited the sport festival before. This factor is significant to identify whether there are any differences between the sport activities and sport behaviour of those higher education students who visit or not these events. Is it possible to gather information based on the survey that helps convince non-sport festival goers to visit the event?

Regarding the assessment sample, we used descriptive statistical methods and showed the structure of the sample using rates based on gender, countries and sport festival participation. We assessed the questions by countries (place of higher education institution – Hungary, Romania, Ukraine, Slovakia) as a group criteria. To assess the country and the sport festival participation, we used Pearson's Chi-square test. We tried to find out whether the rate of sport festival goers and non-sport festival goers varied according to the country. Normal distribution of measured variables was not a precondition of its completion. When analysing questions with multiple responses, the observed values were the numbers of answers to the question and the expected values were the numbers corrected by the distribution of the population (Balogh, 2016). Furthermore, Kruskal-Wallis test was used to reveal differences among countries. Respondents had to answer the questions with a score from 1 to 7, and in the case of the question "How often do you pursue sport" with a score from 1 to 6. Kruskal-Wallis test is a method for analysing 3 or more samples. Test conditions include random sampling, sample independence and at least ordinal variables. It is also known as a rank transformation process since after integrating the samples the rank numbers have to be determined and then grouped on the original groups. The hypothesis conclusion can be deduced from the average rank of the transformed values (Tóthné, 2011).

TEST RESULTS

Responses to the questionnaire of the participants in the sport festival were also analysed by countries (Figure 1). It can be concluded that 33.5% of Hungarian respondents had not participated in this event before, followed by Slovakia (17%) and Ukraine (16.1%) and Romania (11.5%). Based on Chi2 test, there were differences among countries in terms of sport festival participation ($\text{Chi}^2(\text{df}:3)=39.9; p<0.001$), but it was due to the fact that (Table 1) participation in festivals is significantly lower in Hungary (67 %) compared to the other three countries (83-84-89 %) where the rate of those who had already visited sport festival in Debrecen was over 80 % (Figure 1).

749 respondents answered the following question in connection with the sport festival initiative, according to a 7-point scale: 'What is your opinion about the sport festival?' (1 – It isn't a good initiative at all, 7 – It is quite a good initiative). Regarding countries, higher education students from Ukraine (6.51) and Romania (6.42) reached the highest mean values. Students from Hungarian institutions reached the lowest values with a mean value of 6.65, which was a basically positive result (Table 2).

We used Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test during comparisons to reveal the differences. We delved into the test in terms of the valuation of the sport festival and the frequency of pursuing sport among the students (Table 3). After the test, there were significant differences among the countries and the popularity of the sport festival initiative ($\text{Chi}^2(\text{df}:3)=44.6; p<0.001$) (Table 4.) The festival was more popular among Ukrainian and Romanian higher education students than among Slovakian and Hungarian higher education students (Table 3). This is also backed by the increasing number of Romanian participants year by year. There is no increasing participation tendency among Ukrainian higher education students because only 1-1 team represents higher education institutions due to financial reasons. Students can reach our event with the support of the higher education institution (catering, travelling) and contribution of the University of Debrecen (such as accommodation). Ukrainian students would be unable to visit our event without any support. Romanian students finance themselves with own resources to visit the event.

We intended to define the significance that higher education students attached to their participation in the sport festival. They could qualify in a 7-point scale how typical a particular factor was for them. There was significant difference according to each factor (Table 5). The data suggested that sport activities received the highest mean score among higher education students. In addition to sport activities, entertainment and experience-related activities also received high scores. To sum it up, the highest scores were given by Romanian and Ukrainian students while the lowest were given by Hungarian students. It can be concluded that learning, self-fulfilment and rewards received the lowest mean values from each country.

We also delved into how often students had done sports some months before the completion of the questionnaire: 39 % of them had done sport once or twice a week outside school while 35 % of them had done sports more times a week outside school. It can be concluded that 74 % of the respondents did sports regularly (Figure 2).

26 % of the respondents did not do sport regularly during that period. We inquired why they did not do sports. They were requested to qualify the following factors in a 7-point scale: lack of time, lack of motivation, lack of money, health condition and lack of sport equipment and place. There were significant differences related to lack of time, lack of motivation and lack of sport equipment and a suitable place while opinions about lack of money and health condition did not differ. Lack of time was qualified with a high mean score by higher education students from all of the four countries. Lack of motivation in Hungary, lack of sport equipment and place in Ukraine and Romania while health

condition in Slovakia received the second highest score. The findings were also supported by the Ukrainian and Romanian higher education students' opinions that described the infrastructural background of their higher education institutions as requiring modernization. In addition, there were cases when adequate sport infrastructural conditions were not available (for Ukrainian higher education students) in the vicinity of their place of living (Table 6).

We intended to reveal how important sport as a motivational factor was among higher education students. Based on Kruskal-Wallis test, there were significant variances among family, sport, money and love, as motivational tools. Family and friends reached the highest mean scores among higher education students in each country. Social status reached the lowest score. Sport, as a motivational factor, reached the highest score by Slovakian students while it received the lowest value from Ukrainian students. It can be concluded that sport is a less important motivational factor in life, money reached a relatively important level. Love is the strongest motivational factor compared to other countries while family had lower importance. Family is given paramount importance in Ukraine. Romanian respondents gave relatively lower scores in each category than others (Table7).

CONCLUSION

Literature has repeatedly stated that higher education institutions can provide students with great opportunities to practise sports in organized circumstances and turn sport into a lifelong physical activity. Sport programmes, such as the annual Campus Sport Festival in Debrecen, organised by higher education institutions, such as the Campus Sport Festival in Debrecen, can contribute to this process. This study processed questions related to higher education students' sport activities (1,036 persons); the sample focused on the differences and similarities that were identified in the higher education international students' responses. We concluded that there were significant differences in the way participants rated the popularity of the sport festival initiative. The reasons related to the importance of sport festival and participants' perceptions of the festival varied ranging from social meeting, entertainment facility, free time, learning, self-fulfilment, reward and sport. The reasons for ignoring sport activities were as follows: lack of time, lack of motivation and lack of sport equipment and places, lack of money and health status. The study of students' motivation to do sport highlighted

significant differences among the countries in the terms of the most motivational factors.

Acknowledgements

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APPENDIX

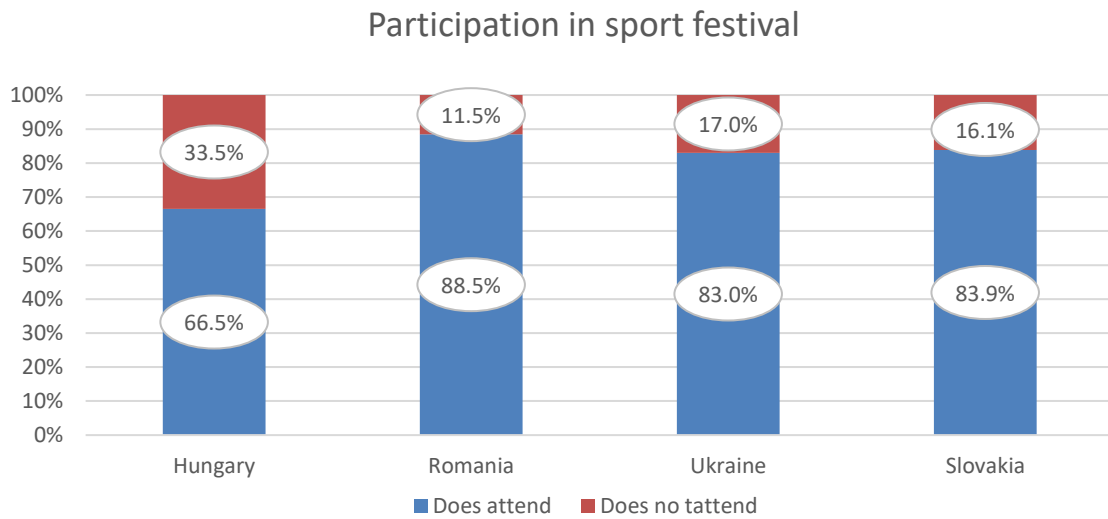


Figure 1. Rate of sport festival participation by countries

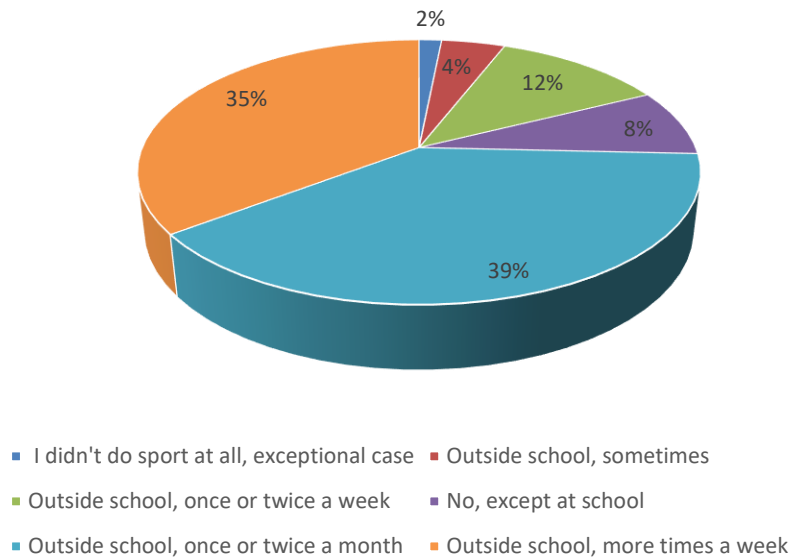


Figure 2. Distribution of sport frequency among higher education students

Table 1 Chi-Square Test result in terms of sport festival participation

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	39.947a	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	44.493	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	26.650	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	1036		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.74.

Table 2. Assessment of sport festival initiative by countries

Country	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Grouped Median	Median	Skewness
Hungary	5.65	525	1.691	6.13	6.00	-1.350
Romania	6.42	122	1.198	6.67	7.00	-2.588
Ukraine	6.51	86	.793	6.62	7.00	-1.487
Slovakia	5.94	16	.772	5.92	6.00	.113
Total	5.88	749	1.565	6.31	7.00	-1.615

Table 3 Kruskal-Wallis rank sum probe result based on the assessment of the sport festival initiative and the frequency of sport activities

Country	Popularity of the sport festival		Frequency of sport activities	
	N	Mean Rank	N	Mean Rank
Hungary	525	345.62	752	517.79
Romania	122	454.68	156	525.50
Ukraine	86	451.27	94	490.09
Slovakia	16	321.56	31	536.71
Total	749		1033	

Table 4 Kruskal-Wallis probe result based on the assessment of the sport festival initiative and the frequency of sport activities

Name	Popularity of the sport festival	Frequency of sport activities
Chi-Square	44.551	1.153
df	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.764

Table 5 Reasons for the importance of the sport festival by countries

Factor	Hungary	Romania	Ukraine	Slovakia	Chi2	p
Social meeting	5.22	5.77	5.90	5.03	29.229	.000
Entertainment facility	5.80	6.28	6.22	5.61	29.610	.000
Experience	5.81	6.33	6.36	5.68	35.361	.000
Free time	5.41	6.04	6.18	5.03	50.206	.000
Learning	3.38	4.29	4.49	4.03	65.055	.000
Self-fulfilment	3.88	4.88	4.91	4.74	67.940	.000
Reward	3.86	4.35	4.39	4.48	17.045	.001
Sport activity	6.05	6.38	6.39	5.94	13.874	.003

Table 6 Reasons for ignoring sport activities by countries

Factor	Hungary	Romania	Ukraine	Slovakia	Chi2	p
Lack of time	5.01	4.57	5.05	3.84	11.116	.011
Lack of motivation	3.13	2.76	2.76	2.58	9.804	.020
Lack of money	2.62	2.42	2.69	2.55	2.751	.432
Health condition	2.41	2.73	2.72	2.71	7.240	.065
Sport equipment and place	2.78	2.91	3.88	2.52	25.268	.000

Table 7 Motivational factors among higher education students by countries

Factor	Hungary	Romania	Ukraine	Slovakia	Chi2	p
Family	6.55	6.57	6.88	6.61	13.374	.004
Sport	5.05	5.40	5.63	5.81	22.310	.000
Money	5.07	4.81	4.73	5.29	14.330	.002
Love	5.78	5.40	5.60	5.42	10.092	.018
Friends	6.14	6.04	6.22	6.19	1.203	.752
Social status	4.32	4.53	4.54	4.71	4.986	.173
Carrier	5.55	5.61	5.44	5.74	3.521	.318
Entertainment	5.17	5.21	5.11	5.65	3.512	.319