

# **Manual for Promoting Sports and recreation**

## The research model of the »Hand in Hand« project

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### RESEARCH SEGMENT OF THE PROJECT

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Funded by  
the European Union



## **MANUAL FOR EVERYONE** **ENCOURAGING YOUTH TO ENGAGE IN SPORTS AND RECREATIONS**

In modern society, where technological advancement and constantly changing work environments present new challenges, physical activity—particularly recreational sports—becomes a key element in promoting the holistic development of youth. Recreational sport is not just a means to improve physical health but also serves as a vital platform for the development of personal traits and competencies essential for academic success, mental well-being, workplace efficiency, and career progression. Through sports, young people not only gain physical fitness but also learn about perseverance, teamwork, stress management, and leadership—skills that are invaluable in all aspects of life.

Recognizing the importance of recreational sports, it is crucial that various stakeholders in society—from local authorities to educational institutions, businesses, and parents—play an active role in encouraging and supporting youth in their sports involvement. Each of these actors possesses unique resources that can contribute to creating an environment that not only motivates young people to engage in regular physical activity but also enables them to derive maximum benefits from sports.

In the following, we will delve into four key aspects of the motivational model, which explains why and how local authorities, businesses, educational institutions, and parents should encourage youth to engage in recreational sports:

**Aspect of Local Authorities:** We will explore why it is crucial for local communities to invest in the development and maintenance of sports infrastructure and how this investment contributes to the overall well-being of youth.

**Aspect of Businesses:** We will discuss why businesses should actively encourage their employees to support the recreational sports activities of young people and how they can contribute to the development of suitable sports facilities.

**Aspect of Educational Institutions and Teachers:** We will examine how schools and teachers can integrate sports into the educational process, thereby contributing to the development of broader competencies in students.

**Aspect of Parents:** Finally, we will focus on the role of parents in encouraging and supporting the sporting activities of their children and how their support can impact the long-term development of youth.

With this holistic approach, we aim to provide insight into the diverse benefits that recreational sports offer and present concrete strategies by which various stakeholders in society can contribute to a healthier, happier, and more successful generation of youth.

## 1. Aspect of Local Authorities

### i. The Importance of Investing in Sports for Local Communities.

Local authorities play a crucial role in shaping an environment that enables youth to actively engage in recreational sports. By establishing and maintaining sports infrastructure, such as parks, sports facilities, and playgrounds, and by supporting sports programs, local authorities not only provide the necessary spatial and material conditions for sports but also promote a culture of healthy living.

Local authorities are at the forefront of efforts to create healthy, connected, and vibrant communities. One key way they can achieve these goals is by promoting recreational sports among youth. In this context, they play a critically important role, as they are directly responsible for planning, developing, and maintaining the infrastructure that facilitates sports activities. Moreover, local authorities are in a unique position to encourage collaboration among schools, sports clubs, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector, thereby creating synergies that provide youth with better access to sports activities.

By establishing and maintaining parks, sports complexes, pools, playgrounds, and other sports facilities, local authorities not only provide space for physical activity but also actively contribute to the development of a sense of community and belonging. This is not only important for promoting the physical health of youth but also has significant psychosocial benefits, including reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation, strengthening team spirit, and promoting social inclusion.

It is also crucial for local authorities to understand and recognize the broader benefits that recreational sports bring to young people. Participation in sports activities is not just a means to improve physical fitness but also serves as a tool for developing life skills such as leadership abilities, teamwork, problem-solving, and perseverance. These skills are essential for the personal and professional development of youth, preparing them for future challenges and promoting their engagement in society as responsible, engaged, and productive citizens.

In this section, we will explore in detail how local authorities can effectively promote regular physical activity among youth through a strategic approach to planning and implementing sports programs and investing in infrastructure. We will discuss various strategies that have proven successful and highlight examples of best practices to provide concrete guidance and inspiration for local decision-makers.

### ii. Benefits of Recreational Sports:

Development of Personality Traits, Mental Health, Academic Success

Recreational sports bring an extensive list of benefits for youth, including improvements in physical health, reduction of the risk of developing chronic diseases such as obesity and cardiovascular diseases, and positive effects on mental health, such as reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety. Additionally, sports foster the development of key personality traits such as self-discipline, responsibility, perseverance, and teamwork skills, which are invaluable in school, in the workplace, and in everyday life.

Recreational sports play a crucial role in the lives of youth, as they bring an extensive spectrum of benefits that extend far beyond physical health. These benefits are essential for the holistic development of adolescents and help lay the foundations for a healthy and successful adult life.

- ***Physical Benefits***

Regular physical activity is the foundation of good physical health. Recreational sports help maintain a healthy body weight, develop strength, flexibility, and endurance, and reduce the risk of numerous chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, and some forms of cancer. Additionally, sports promote healthy lifestyle habits, such as balanced nutrition and adequate sleep, which are essential for the physical development of youth.

- ***Mental benefits***

Sports have a significant impact on the mental well-being of youth. Participation in sports activities can help reduce symptoms of stress, depression, and anxiety. Physical activity releases endorphins, which are natural pain relievers and mood enhancers. Sports also provide an opportunity for a "mental break" from academic or personal pressures, give a sense of accomplishment and confidence, and strengthen the ability to cope with stressful situations.

- ***Development of Personality Traits***

Participation in sports is crucial for the development of vital personality traits and social skills. Through sports, adolescents learn about the importance of hard work, discipline, and perseverance. Involvement in team sports develops skills such as collaboration, communication, and conflict resolution. Sports also create an environment where young people can take on leadership roles, thereby fostering the development of leadership abilities and initiative.

- ***Social Benefits***

Sports serve as a platform for building strong social bonds and fostering a sense of belonging. Through sports activities, adolescents meet peers with similar interests, facilitating the establishment of friendships. Team sports promote a sense of community and mutual support. Additionally, sports activities can connect young people with mentors and positive role models who can have a significant impact on their development.

Due to these diverse benefits, it is essential for local authorities to recognize and support the role of recreational sports in the lives of youth. Investing in sports programs and infrastructure not only brings direct benefits to individuals participating in these activities but also contributes in the long term to the health and well-being of the entire community.

With this detailed review of the benefits of recreational sports, we lay the groundwork for understanding why it is crucial for local authorities to provide support and resources to promote sports participation among youth. The following sections will build upon these findings by exploring investment strategies in infrastructure and providing specific recommendations.

### iii. **Program Examples**

Local authorities around the world have introduced numerous innovative and successful programs aimed at promoting recreational sports among youth. These initiatives vary depending on local needs, resources, and target groups, but they all share a common goal: to improve access to sports activities and encourage young people to lead active lifestyles.

- ***"Sports for All" Program***

The "Sports for All" program focuses on providing free access to sports facilities and organized sports activities for children and adolescents. The program includes the construction of new multipurpose sports areas near schools and residential areas and offers diverse sports clinics, ranging from football and basketball to swimming and athletics. "Sports for All" is funded through a combination of public funds and partnerships with private companies, ensuring its sustainability and broader accessibility.

- ***City Marathon and Sports Festival***

The establishment of an annual city marathon and sports festival serves as a central event for promoting sports and physical activity among youth. The event includes running events for various age groups, workshops on healthy lifestyles, and presentations by local sports clubs and organizations. This approach not only encourages direct participation of youth in sports activities but also strengthens the sense of community and belonging while connecting young people with additional opportunities for regular physical activity.

- ***Subsidized Memberships for Sports Clubs***

Subsidized programs that enable youth to access reduced memberships for participation in local sports clubs and organizations. The program primarily targets families with lower incomes and aims to eliminate financial barriers that may deter young people from participating in organized sports. This approach ensures that sports activities are accessible to a wider range of youth, regardless of their economic background.

- ***Partnerships with Local Schools***

A program in partnership with local schools that promotes the integration of sports activities into the school curriculum. The program includes training teachers to conduct sports and physical education activities, providing necessary equipment and infrastructure, and organizing inter-school sports competitions. This approach enables sports to become a part of everyday school life and promotes regular physical activity among youth.

These examples illustrate how local authorities can actively contribute to promoting recreational sports among youth through various strategies and approaches. By providing access to sports facilities, eliminating financial barriers, and integrating sports into educational programs, local authorities can significantly impact the physical, mental, and social well-being of young people in their communities.

#### iv. **Strategies for Investing in Infrastructure**

The Importance and Benefits of Adequate Infrastructure for Promoting Sports.

In this section, we will discuss various strategies that local authorities can use to invest in sports infrastructure. The focus will be on the importance of diverse sports facilities that can meet the needs of different groups of youth, and on the integration of sports facilities into urban planning, ensuring that sports activities are physically and financially accessible to a larger number of people.

Adequate sports infrastructure is the foundation for promoting youth engagement in an active and healthy lifestyle. Local authorities play a crucial role in ensuring that sports facilities and venues are accessible, safe, and suitable for the needs of young people. Below are some strategies that can help achieve these goals.

- ***Development of Multipurpose Sports Surfaces***

Multipurpose sports surfaces allow for the implementation of various sports activities in one location, increasing their utility and accessibility. Local authorities can collaborate with architects and urban planners in designing such surfaces that can accommodate different sports based on season or community demand. This approach not only optimizes space utilization but also reduces maintenance costs and enables a broader reach within the community.

- ***Partnerships for Funding and Management***

Local authorities can collaborate with the private sector, local businesses, non-governmental organizations, and schools to co-fund and co-manage sports facilities. Such partnerships can expand the financial resources needed for infrastructure development and maintenance and ensure that facilities are better utilized and maintained. Partnerships may include sponsorships, joint investments, or donations of equipment and materials.

- ***Utilization of Existing Public Spaces***

Local authorities can optimize the use of existing public spaces, such as parks, vacant lots, and school playgrounds, for sports activities. Repurposing these spaces for sports purposes may involve installing portable goals, basketball hoops, or marking running tracks. This approach reduces the need for major investments in new facilities and promotes the use of public spaces for recreation.

- ***Ensuring Accessibility and Safety***

To promote sports participation among youth, it is crucial that sports facilities are accessible and safe. Local authorities must ensure that sports surfaces are easily accessible by foot, bicycle, or public transport and equipped with adequate lighting, fences, and safety measures. Additionally, facilities should be accessible for use by individuals with disabilities and provide equal opportunities for all members of the community.

- ***Community Engagement in Planning and Management***

Active involvement of the community in the processes of planning, development, and management of sports infrastructure can ensure that facilities meet local needs and interests. Local authorities can organize public consultations, workshops, and surveys to gather feedback from youth and other community members. This not only enhances the sense of ownership and belonging among users but also increases the likelihood of facilities being regularly utilized.

By employing these strategies, local authorities can effectively invest in sports infrastructure that supports youth development and encourages the wider community to lead an active lifestyle. The next step involves developing concrete action plans that incorporate these strategies to ensure sustainable and long-term benefits for youth and the entire community.

Ensuring and promoting recreational sports among youth is crucial for the development of healthy, resilient, and socially engaged communities. Local authorities have a unique role and responsibility in creating conditions that enable young people to regularly participate in sports activities.

## v. **Recommendations**

- ***Strategic Planning of Sports Infrastructure:***

Local authorities should develop long-term plans for sports infrastructure that take into account the current and future needs of the community. Planning should involve the construction of multi-purpose sports facilities and optimizing the use of existing public spaces.

- ***Establishment of Partnerships:***

To increase resources and reach of sports programs, it is crucial to seek partnerships with the private sector, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations. Such partnerships can assist in funding, management, and promotion of sports activities.

- ***Accessibility and Inclusion:***

Ensuring that sports facilities are accessible and safe for all youth, regardless of their physical abilities or economic background, is essential for promoting broader participation. This also includes adaptations for youth with special needs.

- ***Promotion of Sports Programs:***

Local authorities should actively promote sports programs and events to increase awareness and participation among youth. This can include social media campaigns, collaboration with local media, and organizing public events. Particularly, the establishment and promotion of recreational, non-competitive, and slightly non-traditional sports programs (such as yoga, meditation, etc.) can be beneficial.

- ***Inclusion of Youth in Decision-Making:***

Young people should be actively involved in the planning and decision-making processes regarding sports programs and facilities. Their direct participation can ensure that initiatives reflect their interests and needs.

- ***Continuous evaluation and adaptation***

Local authorities should establish mechanisms for regularly assessing the effectiveness of sports programs and infrastructure. This includes gathering feedback from users and adjusting programs to ensure their relevance and effectiveness.

By implementing these recommendations, local authorities can play a crucial role in shaping a future where young people are more engaged in recreational sports, contributing to their overall development and well-being. It is important to recognize and support the value of sports as a means of building stronger, healthier, and more connected communities.



## 2. Aspect of Businesses

Companies have unique resources, knowledge, and technologies that they can use to have a positive impact on society, especially when it comes to promoting a healthy and active lifestyle. By investing in recreational sports and supporting sports programs for young people, companies not only demonstrate their corporate social responsibility but also contribute to building stronger communities.

Support for recreational sports takes various forms, including the construction of sports infrastructure, organizing sports events, sponsoring local sports teams and programs, and collaborating with schools and non-profit organizations. These efforts not only provide direct benefits to young people and communities but also create a positive impact for the company, increasing its visibility and enhancing its reputation in the eyes of consumers, employees, and partners.

For companies that choose to support recreational sports, the benefits are two-fold. On one hand, it improves the physical and mental health of employees, leading to lower absenteeism due to illness and increased productivity. On the other hand, such initiatives strengthen the sense of belonging and pride among employees, as they can identify with the charitable and positive values promoted by their company.

In this segment, we will explore how companies can leverage their role in the community to promote recreational sports among young people, the benefits this brings to both companies and society, and how they can develop and implement effective strategies to achieve these goals.

We want to emphasize that the role of companies in promoting recreational sports among young people is crucial for building healthy, productive, and connected communities.

### i. Benefits for Companies and Employees

Increased productivity, improved work environment, competency development.

- ***Enhanced productivity and work environment***

- *Reducing absenteeism due to illness*

Regular physical activity is crucial for maintaining good health. When companies encourage employees and young people in the community to adopt an active lifestyle, they contribute to reducing absenteeism due to illness, which directly impacts increased productivity, efficiency, and continuity.

- *Increased employee satisfaction:*

Employees who regularly engage in sports often report higher job satisfaction. Encouraging sports activities and providing the necessary infrastructure strengthens the sense of belonging to the company and improves the work atmosphere.

- *Increased energy and focus:*

Physical activity boosts energy levels and enhances concentration abilities. Employees who regularly engage in sports activities often report better focus and efficiency at work, aiding in problem-solving and reducing fatigue during working hours.

- *Stress Reduction:*

Sports activities serve as an effective mechanism for stress relief. Reducing stress among employees can contribute to a more harmonious work environment and decrease the likelihood of conflicts.

- *Strengthening team bonds and skills:*

Joint sports activities strengthen the spirit of teamwork and enhance interpersonal relationships among employees. Teamwork on the sports field can positively impact the work environment by improving communication and collaboration among colleagues.

- Strengthening work morale:

Sports and recreation can significantly enhance work morale. Employees who are physically active often express greater satisfaction with their working conditions and exhibit a more positive attitude toward their work and the company.

- Corporate social responsibility and branding:

Analysis of how support for sports programs and infrastructure enhances the company's image in the eyes of consumers, investors, and the community.

- A positive public reputation.

Companies that actively contribute to promoting health and well-being in the community build a positive reputation. This not only enhances brand perception among consumers but can also attract higher-quality talent interested in working for a socially responsible company.

- Attracting and retaining talent:

Companies that offer recreational sports opportunities to their employees are often more attractive to potential hires. Likewise, there is a greater likelihood that employees will remain loyal to a company that invests in their well-being.

- Opportunities for marketing and promotion:

Sponsoring sports events, teams, or constructing sports facilities offers companies strong opportunities for promotion. Such activities can directly target specific market segments and enhance brand awareness among the wider public.

- Establishing sustainable relationships with local communities:

Companies that invest in local sports programs and infrastructure can establish long-lasting relationships with local communities. This not only enhances the local economic environment but also solidifies the company as a key player in community development.

- Growth of corporate culture.

When a company demonstrates commitment to the well-being of its employees and the community, it strengthens a corporate culture based on mutual respect, care, and collaboration. Employees in such an environment feel valued and are more inclined towards long-term commitment to the company.

- Employees as brand ambassadors

Happy and healthy employees often naturally become brand ambassadors, spreading positive word-of-mouth about the company within their social circles and communities. This informal promotion is difficult to achieve through other means and can have a powerful impact on the company's perception.

By investing in recreational sports and sports infrastructure, companies not only contribute to the improvement of societal well-being but also gain tangible benefits that can enhance their work environment, employer brand, and business outcomes. The next steps will explore how companies can practically implement and develop their sports initiatives for maximum societal and corporate impact.

## ii. The Role of Companies in Supporting the Community:

- ***Development of Sports Programs and Infrastructure***

Companies can invest in the development and maintenance of sports infrastructure, such as sports complexes, playgrounds, and fitness centers. By doing so, they not only improve the accessibility of sports facilities for young people but also encourage regular physical activity. Corporate support for the construction or renovation of local sports facilities is crucial to ensure that these spaces are accessible and safe for all youth in the community.

- **Partnerships with schools and local organizations**

Companies can collaborate with local schools and universities to develop sports programs integrated into the educational system. This may involve funding school sports teams, organizing interscholastic competitions, or providing scholarships for sports participation. Such partnerships not only enhance the sports skills of youth but also promote the development of leadership abilities and teamwork.

- **Encouraging employees to volunteer**

Companies can encourage their employees to volunteer in local sports programs. This includes mentoring young athletes, assisting in the organization of sports events, or participating in programs that provide access to sports activities for young people. Volunteering not only has a positive impact on the community but also strengthens a sense of belonging and satisfaction among employees.

- **Corporate social responsibility and visibility**

Podjetja, ki aktivno podpirajo športne dejavnosti in programe za mlade, si ustvarjajo pozitivno podobo v očeh javnosti in krepijo svoj ugled kot odgovorni družbeni akterji. To ne samo da izboljšuje njihovo korporativno identiteto, ampak tudi spodbuja pozitivne poslovne odnose in lojalnost potrošnikov.

### iii. Suggestions and examples

- **The company "HealthFirst, Inc."**

- Overview:

"HealthFirst Inc." is an internationally recognized company specializing in health technologies. As part of its corporate social responsibility, it has focused on promoting a healthy lifestyle among young people by funding the construction of local sports facilities and sponsoring sports events for schools.

- Strategies:

*Funding and construction of sports facilities:* The company has invested in the construction of multipurpose sports complexes in five cities across the country, with a particular emphasis on accessibility for children from socioeconomically disadvantaged families.

*Sponsoring sports events and tournaments:* "HealthFirst, Inc." has organized and funded annual sports tournaments for schools, aiming to promote competition, teamwork skills, and physical activity.

- Results:

Increase in youth participation in sports activities by 40% in participating communities. Improvement in health indicators among youth, including a 15% reduction in obesity cases. Positive media coverage and enhancement of the company's public reputation.

- **Company "BuildingCommunity, Ltd."**

- Overview:

"BuildingCommunity, Ltd." is a construction company that has developed an innovative program for transforming unused land into urban sports fields accessible to all youth in the local community.

- Strategies:

*Partnerships with local authorities and schools:* To identify suitable locations for sports fields and ensure that these projects are aligned with local needs.

*Volunteer work initiatives and material donations:* Company employees have volunteered in the construction and maintenance of the fields, and the company has donated construction materials.

- **Results:**

Creation of 10 new urban sports fields within one year, providing young people with a safe environment for recreational sports.

Increased employee engagement and strengthening of a corporate culture of volunteering and community work.

Recognition in local media and by local authorities as an example of excellent corporate social responsibility practice.

#### iv. **Conclusion**

The case studies illustrate the diversity of approaches that companies can employ to promote recreational sports among youth, and the positive impact such initiatives can have on both the communities and the companies themselves. With a clear focus on corporate social responsibility, innovation, and partnerships, companies can contribute to building stronger, healthier communities while also enhancing their brand, culture, and business performance.

- ***Recommendations - How Companies Can Continue and Expand Their Role.***

Companies have a unique opportunity and responsibility to contribute to the improvement of the communities in which they operate. Investing in recreational sports and supporting youth physical activity is not only a socially responsible act but also brings numerous benefits to the companies themselves, including improved productivity, employee engagement, and brand reputation.

- ***Developing a corporate social responsibility strategy that includes support for youth and sports:***

Identifying opportunities for collaboration with local communities, schools, and sports clubs. This may include funding programs, equipment donations, or organizing events.

- ***Engaging employees in voluntary sports initiatives:***

Encouraging employees to participate in and assist with youth sports programs. This not only contributes to the community but also enhances team spirit and job satisfaction.

- ***Leveraging sports events to build brand and marketing:***

Sponsoring local sports events or teams can increase the company's visibility and solidify its reputation as a supporter of a healthy lifestyle.

- ***Developing partnerships for sustainable impact:***

Collaborating with other companies, NGOs, and local authorities in the development and maintenance of sports infrastructure. This can help expand the impact of efforts and ensure long-term benefits for the community.

- ***Measuring and reporting on the impact of initiatives:***

Monitoring the progress and effectiveness of sports programs and infrastructure projects. This not only ensures transparency of efforts but can also serve as a basis for improvements and further planning.

- ***Innovation and adaptability:***

The world is constantly changing, as are the needs of youth and communities. Be open to new ideas and approaches to supporting recreational sports to keep your initiatives relevant and effective.

Companies committed to promoting recreational sports among youth not only contribute to building stronger, healthier, and more connected communities but also enjoy the benefits that such efforts bring to their own work environment, employees, and brand. With strategies focused on collaboration, innovation, and sustainability, companies can play a key role in shaping a better future for all.

### 3. Aspect of Educational Institutions and Teachers

Educational institutions and teachers play a crucial role in shaping healthy habits and values in young people. By incorporating recreational sports into the school curriculum and daily school activities, schools can promote not only physical but also mental and social well-being among students.

In modern society, where there is increasing awareness of the importance of health and well-being, educational institutions and teachers play a crucial role in shaping healthy lifestyles among youth. Introducing and promoting recreational sports in the educational process not only contributes to improving students' physical health but also plays an important role in developing their personal and social skills.

#### i. Role of Educational Institutions and Teachers

Educational institutions are often the primary environment where children and adolescents spend most of their time, providing schools and teachers with a unique opportunity to positively influence the lifestyle of young people. Promoting recreational sports and physical activity in the school environment can play a crucial role in preventing sedentary lifestyles, which are often associated with various health issues such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, and mental disorders.

In addition to the direct benefits for physical health, physical activity also brings extensive psychological and social benefits. Regular sports programs and activities can improve students' self-esteem and confidence, reduce symptoms of stress and anxiety, and promote positive social interaction among peers. Furthermore, sports teach young people the importance of discipline, goal-setting, teamwork, and leadership skills, which are essential for success in the academic world and later in professional life.

However, integrating sports into the educational process is not always straightforward. Schools face various challenges, including limited resources, lack of space, and the need for specialized teacher training. Despite these challenges, there are innovative and effective strategies that schools and teachers can employ to promote physical activity among their students without negatively impacting the academic schedule or outcomes.

By introducing and promoting sports as an integral part of education, educational institutions and teachers not only contribute to the health and well-being of young people but also lay the foundation for the development of responsible, confident, and socially engaged individuals.

#### ii. Development of Skills through Sports:

How Sports Contribute to Academic Success.

Sports in educational settings offer much more than just physical benefits; it is an exceptional tool for developing a wide range of key competencies that serve young people in their academic and personal lives. Recreational sports contribute to the development of these skills, including improving academic performance, strengthening social skills, and fostering the development of personal attributes such as confidence, responsibility, and leadership abilities.

- ***Academic Success and Sports:***

- ***Positive Effects on Cognitive Functions:***

Regular physical activity has been shown to improve cognitive functions such as attention, concentration, and memory, directly contributing to better academic performance. Sports activities enable students to stay more focused and efficient in problem-solving at school.

- *Stress Reduction and Mood Enhancement:*

Physical activity releases endorphins that improve mood and reduce feelings of stress and anxiety. Students who are less stressed can better absorb and process information, leading to improved academic performance.

- *Development of Personal and Social Skills:*

*Teamwork and Collaboration:*

Participation in team sports teaches young people how to function as part of a team, support each other, and share success and responsibility. These skills are transferable to the academic environment and later to the workplace.

*Leadership skills:*

Sports provide opportunities for learning and practicing leadership skills. Team captains and participants in leadership roles learn how to motivate others, set goals, and lead by example.

*Self-discipline and Responsibility:*

Regular sports activity requires discipline and commitment. Students learn to value time, set priorities, and take responsibility for their health and well-being.

*Time management:*

Young people involved in sports must learn to balance their academic commitments with sports-related obligations. This promotes the development of effective time management strategies, which are crucial for success in many aspects of life.

- *Building Confidence and Self-Esteem:*

*Confidence Building:*

Successes and improvements in sports can significantly impact students' self-esteem. Knowing that they are capable of achieving set goals through practice and effort strengthens their confidence and sense of self-worth.

*Social Inclusion:*

Participation in sports activities allows young people to form new friendships and feel part of a community. This is especially important for those who may find it difficult to engage in other social activities.

Through sports, educational institutions and teachers not only promote physical health but also contribute to the development of the holistic personality of young people. By integrating recreational sports into their programs, schools open doors for the holistic development of students, encompassing academic achievements and important life skills. This approach prepares young people for the challenges of the future and enables them to develop into confident, responsible, and socially engaged individuals.

### iii. **Integration of Sports into the Curriculum:**

The integration of sports into the curriculum represents a key strategy that educational institutions can use to promote the holistic development of young people. Not only does physical activity improve physical health, but it also enhances cognitive abilities and fosters the development of social and emotional skills.

- ***Innovative Approaches to Sports Education:***

- *Theme of the Week:*

Focus on a specific sport or physical activity each week or month, tying it to specific learning objectives from other subjects. For example, a week of athletics could be accompanied by lessons on human anatomy, the physics of movement, and the history of the Olympic Games.

- Outdoor Education:

Whenever possible, conduct theoretical parts of lessons outdoors, on sports fields, or in nature. For instance, in biology, students could explore biodiversity in a local park, or in geography, they could measure distances on a sports field.

- Interdisciplinary Connections:

Explore how sports can serve as a tool for learning and understanding other subjects, such as mathematics (counting points, calculating distances) or science (understanding the human body and health).

- Mathematics and Sports:

Utilize sports statistics and results for practical mathematical tasks, such as calculating averages, percentages, and probabilities. This not only brings mathematical concepts to life but also increases students' interest in the subject.

- Science and Sports:

Explore concepts such as force, motion, and the human body through sports activities. Experiments involving measuring heart rate before and after exercise or analyzing movement in different sports provide a practical understanding of scientific principles.

- **Connecting with Cultural and Social Studies:**

- Sports as a Cultural Phenomenon:

Incorporate sports into the teaching of social sciences or history by exploring its role in different cultures and periods. This could include studying the history of the Olympic Games, the impact of sports on national identity, or exploring the history of women in sports.

- Languages and Sports:

Promote language learning through sports activities and communication. This could involve reading sports news in the target language, writing reports on sports events, or learning sports terminology.

- **Student Engagement and Participation:**

- Students as Planners:

Involve students in the planning and execution of sports days or tournaments. This not only increases their engagement and motivation but also strengthens their organizational and leadership skills.

- Technology and Sports:

Utilize applications and online tools for tracking physical activity, setting goals, and self-assessment. Technology can serve as a motivational tool and allows students to track their progress.

The integration of sports into the curriculum is not just about complementing traditional physical education but about creating a rich, interdisciplinary learning environment that promotes physical, intellectual, and social growth in young people. With innovative approaches and interdisciplinary connections, educational institutions can make sports relevant and engaging for every student while emphasizing the importance of physical activity for lifelong health and well-being.

#### iv. **Collaboration with Parents and the Community**

Collaboration with Parents and the Community

Collaboration among schools, parents, and the local community is crucial in promoting recreational sports among youth. Such partnerships not only bolster support for sports programs but also create a richer environment for youth development.

- ***Involving Parents in Sports Programs***

- *Organizing Informational Meetings:*

Regular meetings with parents to present the goals and benefits of sports programs can increase understanding and support at home. Providing opportunities for asking questions and expressing concerns can reassure parents that sports activities are safe, accessible, and beneficial for their children.

- *Volunteering and Mentoring:*

Encouraging parents to get involved as volunteers or mentors in sports events and activities. This not only facilitates the organization of events but also strengthens the sense of community and belonging among parents, students, and teachers.

- ***Engaging with the Wider Community***

- *Partnerships with Local Sports Clubs and Associations:*

Collaborating with sports clubs can provide schools with access to additional resources such as professional training, equipment, and facilities. This may involve joint training sessions, workshops, and sports days that encourage students to engage in regular physical activity. Additionally, it can introduce different, non-competitive, and non-traditional sports activities into the program, such as meditation, yoga, pilates, climbing, crossfit, etc., allowing young people to explore alternative sporting activities.

- *Organizing Community Events:*

Community-wide sports days, tournaments, and charity runs strengthen the bonds between the school and the local community. Such events not only promote physical activity but also showcase the school as a community hub.

- ***Communication Strategies***

- *Regular Updates:*

Utilizing school websites, newsletters, and social media to disseminate information about sports activities, events, and achievements. This ensures that information is accessible and reaches a wide audience.

- *Emphasis on Early Collaboration:*

Involving parents and the community from the outset in the planning of sports programs and events. This ensures that the interests and needs of all parties are considered right from the start.

- ***Creating a Supportive Environment***

- *Developing Strategies to Support Sports and Physical Activity:*

Creating clear strategies and guidelines that promote physical activity among students, such as safe play spaces, equipment for active breaks, and incentives for participation in sports activities.

- *Support for Families with Limited Resources:*

Ensuring that financial constraints do not hinder participation in sports activities. This may include subsidies, lending equipment, or organizing free events.

Collaboration among schools, parents, and the community in promoting recreational sports creates a strong support network for young people. Such partnerships not only encourage physical activity but also foster a sense of belonging, support, and community. By actively involving all parties, schools can ensure that physical activity is valued and accessible to all students, contributing to their overall development and well-being.



The conclusion of our investigation into the role of educational institutions and teachers in promoting recreational sports among youth underscores the importance of physical activity not only for physical but also for psychological and social well-being of students. Through various strategies and approaches we have examined, it becomes evident that schools play a pivotal role in fostering healthy lifestyle habits that can endure throughout life.

- **For Educational Institutions**

- Developing a Comprehensive Approach to Sports and Physical Activity:

Educational institutions should treat sports as an integral part of holistic education, contributing to the physical, psychological, and social development of students. This includes providing diverse sports programs tailored to the interests and abilities of different students.

- Incorporating Physical Activity into the Daily Schedule:

Schools should seek opportunities to integrate short periods of physical activity throughout the school day, not just as part of regular physical education classes. This could include active breaks, morning exercises, or promoting walking and cycling to school.

- Emphasizing Teacher Training:

Ensuring that teachers are well-trained to lead sports activities and understand their impact on learning and development is crucial. Professional development in this area can enhance the quality and effectiveness of sports programs.

- **For Teachers**

- Integrating Sports into Curriculum:

Teachers should develop innovative ways to integrate sports with academic goals, which can increase students' interest in both areas. Using sports for practical understanding of mathematics, science, or social studies subjects can significantly enhance learning experiences.

- Developing Partnerships with Parents and the Local Community:

Active engagement with parents and local sports clubs can help schools expand their sports programs and provide additional opportunities for students. Organizing joint events can strengthen the community and increase support for sports initiatives.

- Promoting Inclusivity and Accessibility:

Special attention should be paid to ensuring that sports programs are accessible and inclusive for all students, regardless of their physical abilities, gender, or socioeconomic status.

- **General Recommendations**

- Measuring and Evaluating the Impact of Sports Programs:

Regularly monitoring and evaluating the impact of sports programs on students enables schools to adjust and improve their practices and maximize the benefits for students.

- Promoting Lifelong Physical Activity:

The goal of educational institutions and teachers should be to develop a positive attitude towards physical activity, encouraging students to maintain an active lifestyle even after completing their schooling.

With these recommendations, educational institutions and teachers can more effectively integrate sports into the educational process, thereby contributing to the development of healthy, happy, and well-rounded youth.

## 4. Parental Aspect

### i. The Role of Parents in Encouraging Sports

In concluding our comprehensive discussion on the motivational model of promoting recreational sports among youth, we will focus on the role played by parents. Parents are key actors in the lives of young people, as their example, encouragement, and support can significantly influence a child's habit regarding physical activity. This section will illuminate why it is important for parents to encourage children to engage in sports and offer practical recommendations for parents on how to do so effectively.

Parents have a direct and lasting impact on the health, well-being, and development of their children. Encouraging recreational sports is crucial not only for a child's physical development but also for strengthening mental resilience, social skills, and self-esteem.

In today's society, where children and adolescents increasingly face pressures of academic success, technological disruptions, and lack of physical activity, parents play a crucial role in shaping their children's healthy lifestyle habits. Physical activity, including recreational sports, is essential not only for physical health but also for the mental well-being and social development of young people.

Parents are the first role models and mentors for their children. Their attitude towards physical activity and sports can greatly influence how children perceive and value sports in their lives. In an era of rapid social change and increasing demands for a sedentary lifestyle, it is crucial for parents to take an active role in promoting a healthy and active way of life.

As previously mentioned, physical activity is crucial for the development of children and adolescents. The benefits range from improving physical health, such as stronger bones, better cardiovascular health, and weight management, to psychological benefits, including reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression. Additionally, sports and physical activity strengthen social skills such as collaboration, teamwork, and leadership.

Parents have a unique opportunity and responsibility to guide and motivate their children to engage in regular physical activity. They can do this in several ways:

- *By setting an example:* Active parents are more likely to raise active children. By regularly incorporating physical activity into their daily lives, parents show children that movement is an important and enjoyable part of life.
- *Encouragement and support:* Positive encouragement and support for children's sports interests and participation can significantly influence their commitment and persistence.
- *Shared activities:* Family activities such as cycling, hiking, or outdoor games not only strengthen family bonds but also promote a love of movement.
- *Logistical and moral support:* From driving to practices to attending competitions, parental logistical support and moral presence are crucial for a child's sports participation.

- **Setting Realistic Goals:**

Set short-term and long-term goals regarding physical activity together with your child. This may include determining the number of days per week dedicated to sports or participating in a local sports league or event.

- **Variety of Activities:**

Children can quickly become bored with monotony, so it's important to keep physical activity interesting and fun. Encourage your child to try out different sports and activities to discover what they enjoy most.

- ***Learning Through Play:***

Especially for younger children, play can be an excellent way to promote physical activity. Organize games that involve movement, such as hide-and-seek, tag, or family sports days.

- ***Emphasizing Fun Over Competition:***

While healthy competition can be motivating, it's important to emphasize fun and personal progress over winning. This helps develop a positive attitude towards physical activity.

## ii. The Role of Parents in Supporting Sports Participation

The role of parents in supporting their children's sports participation is crucial. Parents not only provide logistical support, such as transportation to practices and competitions, but they are also their children's first and most important cheerleaders. This section focuses on various ways parents can actively support their children's sports ambitions without creating undue pressure or expectations.

- ***Supporting Children's Sporting Interests:***

Emphasizing the importance of listening to and supporting children's interests in particular sports and encouraging participation regardless of the child's athletic talent or competitiveness.

- *Positive Encouragement:*

Parents should encourage their child to try out different sports and participate in various sporting activities until they find the one that suits them best. It's important to consider the child's opinions and desires without forcing them into specific activities.

- *Active Listening:*

Be open to the child's desires and interests related to sports. Some children may be more interested in individual sports than team sports, or in less traditional activities such as climbing.

- *Importance of Unbiased Support:*

Regardless of the child's talent or level of success, it is important for parents to provide constant support and encouragement. The focus should be on enjoying the sport and personal progress, rather than winning or achievements.

- **Logistical and Financial Support**

- *Providing Transportation and Equipment:*

One of the practical roles of parents is ensuring that their child has access to necessary training sessions, competitions, and adequate equipment. This can pose a challenge, so it's important to seek creative solutions, such as carpooling with other parents or seeking equipment subsidies.

- *Time Management:*

Parents can assist their child in balancing school commitments and sports activities, which is especially crucial as academic demands increase over time.

- **Psychological Support and Education**

- *Learning from Setbacks:*

Sports offer important lessons about both winning and losing moments. Parents play a crucial role in how children perceive defeats. Teaching that setbacks are part of the learning process and not a final judgment on an individual's worth is crucial.

- Fostering a Healthy Attitude Towards Competition:

It's important for parents to help children understand that competition is an opportunity for learning and growth, rather than something that should cause excessive stress or anxiety.

- **Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle**

- Serving as Healthy Lifestyle Models:

Parents should serve as models of a healthy lifestyle, including balanced nutrition and regular physical activity. Family activities such as hiking, cycling, or swimming not only strengthen family bonds but also foster a love for movement.

Parental support plays a crucial role in encouraging a child's sports participation and developing a positive attitude towards physical activity. By providing logistical support, encouraging a positive approach to competition, learning from setbacks, and fostering a healthy lifestyle, parents can significantly contribute to their child's physical, mental, and social development. It's important for parents to focus on the enjoyment and personal growth that sports bring, not just on achievements and outcomes.

- iii. **The Importance of Sports for Child Development:**

Psychological health, social skills, academic success.

Sport plays an indispensable role in child development, ranging from physical benefits to significant psychological and social advantages. The versatile impact of sports on a child's growth and development is crucial for shaping well-rounded, healthy, and happy individuals. In this section, we will explore how physical activity and participation in sports contribute to the holistic development of a child.

- **Physical Benefits**

- Improvement of Physical Health:

Regular physical activity is fundamental for developing strong bones, muscles, and joints. It also helps maintain a healthy body weight, reduces the risk of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular diseases and type 2 diabetes, and enhances overall physical fitness.

- Development of Motor Skills:

Sports enable children to develop key motor skills such as coordination, balance, and agility, which are essential for everyday life and injury prevention.

- **Mental Benefits**

- Enhancement of Mental Health:

Physical activity increases the release of endorphins, improving mood and reducing feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression. Sports also aid in developing better self-esteem and confidence.

- Strengthening Concentration and Academic Achievement:

Participation in sports activities can enhance cognitive functions such as attention, concentration, and problem-solving skills, positively impacting academic performance.

- **Social Benefits**

- Development of Social Skills:

Team sports and even individual sports activities involving training and competitions promote the development of social skills. Children learn how to function as part of a team, develop empathy, learn to respect rules and authority, and acquire communication and conflict resolution skills.

- Establishment of Positive Social Connections:

Sports activities provide an opportunity to meet peers and establish friendships with people who share similar interests. These connections can contribute to a sense of belonging and community.

- **Development of Personality Traits**

- Persistence and Self-Discipline:

Participation in sports requires commitment and hard work. Children learn the value of persistence and self-discipline as they work to improve their skills and achieve goals.

- Handling Setbacks and Frustrations:

Sports provide a safe environment where children face defeats and challenges. They learn how to stay positive, learn from their mistakes, and not dwell on negative experiences.

Therefore, sports play a crucial role in supporting the holistic development of a child, providing the foundation for a healthy life and shaping strong, confident, and socially adaptable personalities. Encouraging physical activity and sports involvement should be a priority for all involved in the upbringing and development of youth. Parents, as the first and most influential role models in a child's life, play a key role in this process, ensuring that sports become a valued and integral part of a child's life.

#### iv. Strategies for Encouraging Sports:

How Parents Can Actively Support Their Children.

Encouraging sports within the family environment and by parents plays a crucial role in shaping children's healthy lifestyle habits. Active parental involvement not only helps children develop a love for sports but also strengthens family bonds and promotes a healthy lifestyle for all family members. Below are strategies that parents can use to promote sports and physical activity within the family.

- **Shared Family Activities**

- Plan Regular Family Sports Days:

Choose a day of the week for family physical activity, such as cycling, hiking, or playing group games in the park. This not only promotes regular physical activity but also serves as an excellent opportunity for quality time spent together.

- Participate in Shared Sports Events:

As a family, attend local sports events, such as charity runs or family sports gatherings. This may also include attending sports matches as spectators, allowing children to experience the excitement of sports and perhaps become enthusiastic about certain activities.

- **Leading by Example**

- Be an Active Role Model:

Children learn by observation. By regularly engaging in sports and physical activity, parents show their children that movement is an important and enjoyable part of everyday life.

- Emphasize Fun and Enjoyment:

Communicate that the goal of sports activity is fun and enjoyment, rather than winning or achievement. Choose activities that are fun and can be enjoyed by the whole family together.

- **Encouragement and Support**

- Positive Encouragement:

Encourage your child's sports participation with positive comments and praise. Emphasize effort and improvements rather than solely focusing on wins or losses.

- Support for Child's Interests and Abilities:

Pay attention to your child's interests and encourage them to try different sports until they find one that suits them best. It's important to support your child's decision, even if it differs from parental expectations or interests.

- **Overcoming Barriers**

- Managing Logistical Challenges:

Seeking collaborative solutions to overcome logistical challenges, such as scheduling and transportation to practices. Consider organizing carpooling with other parents or choosing local activities that require less logistical organization.

- Financial Accessibility:

Explore options for subsidized sports clubs or free community sports programs that allow children to participate in sports activities without imposing a significant financial burden on the family.

Providing an encouraging and supportive environment for physical activity within the family can greatly impact a child's health, well-being, and overall development. By using the above strategies, parents can help establish a foundation for an active lifestyle that will benefit their children throughout their lives. It's important for parents to set a positive example, create fun and appealing opportunities for movement, and provide the necessary encouragement and support for their children's sports ambitions.

## v. Barriers and How to Overcome Them:

Common barriers faced by parents and strategies to overcome them.

- **Lack of Time**

- Barrier:

Family schedules are often very busy, with commitments at school, work, and additional activities, limiting time for physical activity.

- Strategies:

**Prioritization:** Review the family schedule and identify activities that are not essential or beneficial, and reduce or remove them to make space for physical activity.

- Integration:

Incorporate physical activity into everyday tasks, such as walking or biking to school, the store, or visits to friends.

- **Financial Constraints**

- Barrier:

Membership fees for sports clubs, equipment, and uniforms can pose a financial burden for families.

- Strategies:

**Seeking Grants and Scholarships:** Explore local sports clubs and organizations that offer financial support or subsidized programs for young athletes.

**Equipment Borrowing or Exchange:** Participate in local sports equipment exchange groups or events where you can purchase equipment at discounted prices or even get it for free.

- **Lack of interest or motivation**

- Barrier:

Some children may lack interest in physical activity or sports due to a lack of motivation or negative experiences with competition.

- Strategies:

*Exploring different sports:* Encourage the child to try out various sports activities to discover what suits them best. Variety can increase interest and motivation.

*Setting realistic goals and positive reinforcement:* Establishing achievable goals and positively reinforcing progress and effort can enhance the child's motivation.

- **Logistic difficulties**

- Barrier:

Organizing transportation to sports facilities and coordinating schedules for practices and competitions with family commitments.

- Strategies:

*Group transportation organization:* Collaborate with other parents whose children are in the same sports programs to organize shared transportation.

*Choosing local options:* Prioritize sports clubs and activities that are closer to home to reduce the need for longer commutes.

- **Fear of injuries**

- Barrier:

Concerns about the possibility of injuries can deter some parents from encouraging their children to participate in certain sports.

- Strategies:

*Education on safety:* Familiarize yourself with safety protocols and equipment that protect children during sports activities. Also, learn about proper warm-up and cool-down techniques.

*Choosing safe and organized programs:* Enroll children in sports programs with a good reputation for safety standards and where coaches are trained in injury prevention.

Overcoming barriers to promoting sports within the family requires a creative approach and often involves collaboration with other families and the community. With strategies such as adjusting family schedules, seeking financially accessible options, increasing children's motivation, and providing a safe sports environment, parents can help their children develop a love for physical activity. This approach not only benefits the physical and mental health of children but also strengthens family bonds through shared activities and goals.

Parents are in a unique position to strongly influence their children's healthy lifestyle habits. By actively promoting physical activity and supporting their children's sports interests, parents can significantly contribute to the physical, mental, and social development of their children. In doing so, they not only strengthen family ties but also lay the foundation for a healthy and active future for their children.

## vi. Conclusion and Recommendations

- **Be an Active Role Model:** Children learn by observing. Parents should demonstrate a healthy attitude toward sports and physical activity by regularly engaging in such activities themselves.
- **Encourage and Support:** Positive encouragement and support are key to maintaining children's interest in sports. Emphasize fun, personal progress, and positive experiences.
- **Participate in Family Activities:** Plan and engage in regular physical activities that are fun and suitable for all family members. This strengthens family bonds and promotes a healthy lifestyle.
- **Overcoming Barriers:** Actively address and overcome barriers such as time and financial constraints by seeking creative solutions, such as carpooling, equipment sharing, or choosing free activities.
- **Establish a Healthy Balance:** While promoting physical activity is important, establishing a healthy balance between sports, academic obligations, and leisure time is crucial.
- **Education and Communication:** Talk to children about the importance of physical activity for health and well-being. Encourage open dialogue about what they like and dislike, and explore new opportunities for participation in sports activities together.
- **Support Throughout the Journey:** Be there for your child through all the ups and downs of sports participation. Help them learn from setbacks and celebrate successes.
- **Building Community:** Seeking or creating a community of like-minded families can provide additional support and opportunities for group activities.
- **Collaborate with Educational Institutions and Local Sports Clubs:** Partnering with organizations that can offer additional opportunities and resources for physical activity helps expand options for children's participation in sports.

Promoting sports and physical activity among young people is a collaborative effort that requires active involvement from parents and families. By creating a supportive environment that prioritizes health, well-being, and personal development, families can lay the foundation for their children's healthy lifestyle. It's important for parents to approach this task with understanding, patience, and dedication, which will help children develop a love for sports and an active life.



## RESEARCH SEGMENT OF THE PROJECT

### SUMMARY:

Motivation for engaging in sports activity is a well-explored area among psychologists. More and more psychologists are investigating motivation from a socio-cognitive perspective. In the research associated with the international project Hand in Hand (HiH), we decided to develop or attempt to develop a motivational model for engaging in sports activity (regular, non-professional). Participants in the project, aged between 14 and 29, were psychologically tested at the beginning and end of their involvement in regular, innovative sports activities.

The observed variables were chosen based on desirable personality traits that employers have been expecting from candidates in recent years during staff selection. These data were collected based on the regular activities of the Anamarija Toth Kostevc, which operates in the field of psychological testing for staff selection purposes. The variables included general intellectual functioning, opinion on the influence of sports activity, openness, emotional stability, level of anxiety, personality structure, self-initiative, and aspects of self-esteem.

These variables were measured using the test-retest method, and we compared whether there were statistically significant changes that could be attributed to regular sports activity. Therefore, the main purpose of the research was to determine the effect of regular sports activity on changes or development of personality traits and, upon the emergence of a positive effect, to transfer this into the motivational structure and present it as a model for motivating adolescents and young adults.

The obtained results confirmed some previous findings and showed a positive impact on psychological variables that positively influence success, productivity, interpersonal relationships, career success, and life satisfaction. However, the research also revealed additional questions and guidelines for further research and the development of motivation methods, which would need to be developed for counseling services, coaches, teachers, in short, for all those who have regular contact with children, adolescents, and young adults.

# 1. THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION

An active lifestyle is among the key factors contributing to the maintenance, protection, and enhancement of health, while physical inactivity increases the risk of developing chronic non-communicable diseases, reduces quality of life, and so forth. Therefore, it is important to seize every opportunity for movement or to be physically active for the preservation and enhancement of health. Data from the National Institute of Public Health reports that 80% of adults achieve the minimum amount of physical activity, but only 47% of adults reach the level of activity that provides additional health benefits, with the concept of calculating physical activity being redefined in the past year (NIJZ, 2021). However, it is concerning that only 59% of the population reaches the amount of aerobic physical activity that provides additional health benefits for adults, with the trend of sedentary behavior increasing linearly over the years (NIJZ, 2021). To change this, it is important to promote engagement in sports during childhood and adolescence. Indeed, those who are introduced to sports early and receive support from significant others in sports activities are more likely to engage in sports in adulthood (Loy, McPherson, & Kenyon, 1978).

Physical activity encompasses any bodily movement that increases and maintains physical fitness and, consequently, overall health. It is often performed with the intention of strengthening muscles, the cardiovascular system, improving athletic skills, and with the aim of weight loss or maintenance. The positive effects of physical activity are evident in both physical and mental well-being – it reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and obesity, lowers high blood pressure and osteoporosis, reduces the risk of stroke, manages overweight and obesity, increases physical fitness, maintains muscle strength, and joint flexibility, reduces stress, anxiety, depression, and loneliness, and improves quality of life (NIJZ, 2021). In the following, we will focus on the positive psychological consequences of physical activity, namely why it is important for individuals to engage in sports, what they gain from it, and how it can impact their daily functioning.

One of the primary needs of a child is movement, as it allows them to perceive and discover their body, test their abilities, and experience joy and pride as they develop their skills and abilities, which in turn affects their self-confidence. Videmšek and Visinski (2001) state that various feelings arise in children during movement, including joy, pleasure, safety, well-being, acceptance in the environment, and so on.

Researchers were interested in why adolescents engage in sports and which psychosocial factors influence the maintenance and continuation of sports activity. Motives such as enjoyment of sports, skill development, achievement of success/status, sports as a challenge, belongingness, feeling capable of something, have been identified (Klint & Weiss, 1987). Individual motivation is influenced by personal interest and the attractiveness of a particular sports activity. Thus, internal motivation is reflected in the attractiveness that sports represent to the individual, enjoying it, improving one's abilities, skills, and knowledge. The activity itself represents the goal, and the reinforcement source lies within the individual (Tušak, 2003). Internally motivated individuals are motivated by the involvement in sports activity itself and its impact on the individual, such as the desire for challenges, tasks, and achieving a broader range of skills, as well as the joy that sports activity brings, the desire for fun, stimulation, and pursuit of personal interests (Weinberg et al., 2000). It manifests in voluntary training, where individuals' behavior is not influenced by the expectation of external rewards or punishments. The individual is sports-active because of experiencing satisfaction in mastering new techniques or achieving a result (Tušak, 2003). On the other hand, externally motivated individuals engage in sports to achieve rewards or consequences that are not contingent on their behavior, such as the desire to win and improve their image (Weinberg et al., 2000). External motivation stems from the environment, so individuals are motivated by material rewards, social status, parental approval, peer popularity, achievements, and victories. The individual is sports-active to achieve positive consequences or avoid negative ones. If a sportsman is unmotivated, it is highly likely that they will discontinue active participation, as they will question why they are involved in sports (Tušak, 2003).

Sports activity also determines achievement motivation through behavioral intensity, persistence, and choice and execution of activities to achieve a goal, which leads to the need for achievement. High achievement motivation influences an increased level of concentration in performing tasks (Tušak & Tušak, 2003). Psychological motives for engaging in sports are important for maintaining and continuing sports activity. Individual exercise relaxes and improves mood. The individual has a need for self-esteem, experiencing challenges, usefulness, or belongingness, playfulness, and maintaining well-being, with emotional and stress management being important (Jeromen, 2005). Motives for engaging in sports vary; primarily, children seek social acceptance and support from peers, parents, coaches, and teachers. They want to develop and showcase their motor skills, abilities, and physical appearance, which represent an important part of a person's body and overall self-esteem (Planinšec & Čagran, 2004).

Physical activity plays a significant role in building an individual's self-esteem. In the early stages, it helps a child and adolescent to establish confidence in their physical and social skills. Positive experiences can be gained through adults helping them understand that sports activity is crucial for developing a healthy life and that movement is a healthy way to experience pleasure, joy, and satisfaction (Tušak & Kandare, 2004). Corbin and Pangrazi (1992) also state that children and adolescents gain positive experiences, personal competence, improved feelings of success, and develop positive self-esteem through sports education and other sports activities.

However, self-esteem is not just an image of one's functioning; it represents the physical and mental reflection of a person, including the physical self, family self, social and moral-ethical self, and personality self. The individual's self-esteem includes opinions about what I am like, whether I like myself, whether I have a nice figure, whether I am too fat, how skilled I am, whether my family loves me, how I communicate with others, whether I can form friendships, etc. The personality self contains opinions about oneself as a personality, with self-evaluation being extremely important. When most components of self-esteem are high, self-evaluation will usually be high as well, meaning the individual will highly value themselves. It is important for an individual to have a positive self-image, as this way, they will perceive most stressors positively, seek challenges in difficult tasks, experience less negative stress, which has negative consequences for the individual and their health. This means that self-esteem represents a central part of models of success in life, as it motivationally influences the individual (Tušak & Kandare, 2004). Thus, sports activity affects the development of positive body and overall self-esteem, resulting in higher self-evaluation (Tušak & Kandare, 2004).

A child's self-esteem is also one of the psychological factors of academic success as it conditions the learning process. Individuals with a more positive self-esteem will approach school tasks, learning, and testing or knowledge assessment more confidently and with self-assurance. In this way, they will be more successful, which will positively affect their self-esteem, leading to an expected increase in success (Juriševič, 1999). With higher or positive self-esteem, an individual's confidence also increases (Lasan, 2004). However, it is necessary to be cautious so that a child or adolescent does not develop negative self-esteem due to negative experiences and failures in sports, as a result of their own actions, as this can lead to increasing distrust, feelings of incompetence, anxiety, and later even depression. Therefore, in adulthood, we usually try to correct such feelings of physical incompetence or poor self-esteem, which also stem from excessive body weight and other stressors (Tušak & Kandare, 2004). To prevent a child from developing a negative self-esteem, the perceived support of parents plays a significant role. If a child feels supported by parents and other significant individuals in their life, such as friends, teachers, coaches, and siblings, they will enjoy physical activity, which will affect higher self-respect, self-confidence, and a better self-esteem of the child (Tušak, Marinšek, & Tušak, 2009). In this way, individuals will be more oriented towards the set goal, thereby influencing the enhancement of their personality (Tušak & Faganel, 2004).

The American National Institute of Mental Health states that physical activity is associated with reduced levels of anxiety, decreased rates of mild to moderate depression, and a decrease in symptoms of neuroticism and anxiety. It represents a good strategy in treating severe depression, reduces various indicators of stress, and also has positive effects on emotional well-being, both in women and men of all ages (Morgan & Goldston, 1987). Engaging in sports activities enables easier anger management, contributes to faster relaxation, better stress management, and accelerates addiction recovery. Physical exercise can serve as an alternative or adjunct to professional interventions such as psychotherapy and medication therapy. Through sports activity, we can alter emotional and mental factors. In the emotional category, we include joy, happiness, pleasure, relaxation, confidence, pleasant fatigue, while in the mental aspect, we refer to balance, mental relaxation, improved mental capacity, better mental state, easier coping with mental burdens, anxiety relief, and reduced depression (Berčič et al., 2001).

Team sports positively affect the reduction of anxiety, which cannot be assumed for individual sports (Dimech & Seiler, 2011). Participation in team sports is associated with a lower tendency for risky behaviors and fewer problems with general and mental health (Steiner et al., 2000). Athletes experience higher well-being, are more adaptable, feel less nervousness and anxiety, are more energetic, satisfied with their lives, less likely to feel sadness and depression (Ferron et al., 1999).

Tomori (2000) states that a condition for good mental health is good physical health and good physical adaptability, and vice versa. Muscle tension, sweating, chest tightness, increased heart rate, and rapid breathing are signs accompanying anxiety, and these signs are reduced or improved by physical activity, enhancing the body's ability to cope with them. Both occasional and regular activity reduce the level of anxiety, which applies to all types of exercises, various durations of exercise, and all groups of people. Some exercises are more effective, especially aerobic activities such as cycling, swimming, and running. The effectiveness increases if the movement lasts longer, every 10 weeks or more than 15 weeks, and the effect on reducing anxiety is expected to last from 4 to 6 hours after exercise (Edmunds, Biggs, & Goldie, 2013).

Through sports, individuals also socialize and develop social skills. Society, through socialization, imparts behavioral patterns and sets of values that are socially acceptable and desirable. Those who become familiar with sports early on and have support from significant others in sports activities will also engage in sports later in adulthood. In doing so, they will acquire skills such as networking, taking on various roles, learning social skills, and introducing positive elements of lifestyle such as healthy eating habits, work habits, etc., which they will carry into adulthood (Loy, McPherson, & Kenyon, 1978). Among the social factors influenced by participation in sports are socializing with friends, asserting oneself, competition, belonging, relaxed interactions, cooperation, new acquaintances, healthy affirmation, and family life (Berčič et al., 2001).

Adolescents develop more under high pressures, experience happiness, success, recognition in society, gain experience, and develop their potentials. They also develop communication skills and the ability to collaborate because it is important to listen, respect, work with other people, and react appropriately in various situations. Such skills are important later on, when they are no longer involved in sports, especially in seeking employment, forming friendships, and shaping romantic relationships (Jones & Lavalley, 2008). The social contribution is evident in positive relationships with coaches, the creation of new friendships, the development of teamwork abilities, and social skills (Holt et al., 2011). It positively influences social acceptance and satisfaction with physical appearance (Boone & Leadbeater, 2006). Participation in team sports is associated with less social isolation later in life compared to other extracurricular activities during schooling (Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001).

Sports direct young people towards productive activity, teaching them goal setting and achievement, while also developing individual patience, frustration tolerance, and the ability to accept defeat (Kajtina & Tušak, 2005). Zurc

(2008) states that additional sports activities enhance the level of physical fitness in individuals, influencing endurance in mental work, creativity, self-expression, emotion regulation, work habits, collaboration with others, and positive self-evaluation. Sports activity also has a stimulating effect on the development of the central nervous system structure, which is responsible for cognitive functioning (Planinšec, 2006). Children who are more physically fit have a larger volume of the dorsal striatum, an area in the brain responsible for attention regulation. In tasks requiring high levels of concentration, physically fit children were more accurate and quicker compared to physically inactive children. Sports-active children also demonstrate better information processing skills and retain information more effectively in memory (Macpherson et al., 2017).

For athletes balancing sports and education, higher well-being and health are characteristic, leading to a more balanced lifestyle, less stress, greater life satisfaction, better conditions for individual development (multiple identity, improved self-regulatory abilities, positive self-esteem), and enhanced life and social skills (good relationships, broader social network, supportive environment) (Cecić Erpič, 2013). Personal contributions are evident in emotional control, the tendency for exploration, self-confidence, discipline, and academic performance (Holt et al., 2011). Drum, Ladd, Geary, and Fitzpatrick (2014) found statistically significant differences between a sample of American athletes and non-athletes, with athletes reporting fewer problems and better coping with interpersonal relationships, substance abuse, family dynamics, and suicidal tendencies. However, there were no statistically significant differences in academic and career-related areas. Competitive sports in children and adolescents are even believed to build self-confidence, self-discipline, perseverance, and national consciousness (Gaisbacher & Jorg Pongratz, 2011).

Thus, the most common health factors (psychological and social) significantly positively associated with participation in sports in adolescents and children include higher self-esteem, better social skills, reduced incidence of depressive symptoms, higher confidence, and better performance compared to individuals not engaged in sports activities. Other factors include assertiveness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, self-control, cooperativeness, reduced despair, suicidality, stress experience, conflict resolution tendency, reduced social anxiety, personal development, etc. (Eime et al., 2013). Among the most common health factors (psychological and social) significantly positively associated with participation in sports in adults are improved well-being, reduced stress, increased activity in the social environment, and vitality. In addition to these factors, various studies also describe associations with hedonism, belongingness, life satisfaction, reduced depressive symptomatology, better mental health, and a stronger sense of community (Eime et al., 2013).

## 2. PROBLEM

In the study, we sought to address the following questions, which we believe are important for the future of adolescents and young adults:

Can we understand regular physical activity as a factor that positively influences the development and maintenance of psychological variables important for academic success, psychological stability, and career development?

We were interested in whether regular physical activity contributes to favorable development of personality structure and psychological factors that positively impact academic success, interpersonal relationships, emotional stability, and professional success.

**At the same time, we aimed to create comprehensive material to convey all the data to important adults in the lives of young people, so that these young individuals could internalize it, thereby serving as motivation for regular engagement in physical activity.**

### 3. METHOD

The method of work followed the needs of the project, which was designed so that participants voluntarily signed up for the project based on registration forms.

Registered individuals participated in free guided activities of the project.

Before the start of regular sports activities, psychological testing of the test group was conducted. This was followed by regular training sessions. Finally, a second round of psychological testing was conducted using the same psychological tests as in the initial testing.

This was followed by the analysis and interpretation of results and the development of a motivation model.

The members of the test group HIH (hereinafter: participants) (37) were aged 14 to 29. Among them, 56% were already active, while the remaining 44% were inactive in sports activities.

Testing was conducted anonymously and in groups.

The members of the test group represented a representative sample, determined based on random selection and a tendency to participate. Due to the latter, we believe that some parameters of the first measurement will be different, better, than expected with just random selection. However, we still consider the test group to be sufficiently representative, as the distribution of men and women, active and inactive individuals, is very similar to the composition among participants.

The project had international participation, so we applied questionnaires and test materials in Slovenian, Croatian, and English.

#### Tools

The Number Series Test (NST), created by Vida Pogačnik (1983), is based on the process model of intelligence. The author defines intelligence as the ability of a living being to process information independently of experience. NST primarily measures fluid intelligence but also includes some perceptual and spatial components. The results are mainly influenced by the ability to detect relationships and regularities, i.e., reasoning based on nonverbal material, good working memory, processing speed, and the ability to mentally manipulate figures. We used the NST-10, a shortened 10-minute version.

The Questionnaire of Opinions on the Influence of Regular Physical Activity on Certain Parameters was designed specifically for the project. It consisted of 26 items assessing the potential impact of regular physical activity on various parameters (Appendix 1). Participants responded by indicating, on a 5-point scale, how much they believed regular physical activity influenced the described parameter. A rating of 1 indicated no influence, while a rating of 5 indicated a significant influence.

The Profile of Emotions Inventory (PEI), developed by Plutchik and Kellerman (1974), is a personality questionnaire that provides unique insights into certain basic personality traits and conflicts. It identifies problem areas and allows psychologists to understand the nature of issues. Based on a multidimensional model of emotions derived from basic patterns of behavior, the PEI assumes a connection between the functional analysis of emotions and the subjective and objective aspects. The circular profile indicates the relative strength of basic personality traits: self-protection, aggression, incorporation, oppositionality, exploration, uncontrollability, reproduction, deprivation, and bias.

The Self-Esteem Questionnaire III (SDQ III) by Marsh and O'Neill (1992) is comprised of 136 items measuring 13 aspects of self-esteem for individuals and adolescents in late adolescence and early adulthood: general self-esteem, academic self-esteem, self-esteem in mathematics abilities, verbal abilities, physical abilities, emotional stability, creativity and problem-solving, external appearance, relationships with same-sex peers, relationships with opposite-sex peers, relationships with parents, religion/spirituality, and honesty.

The Big Five Questionnaire (BFQ), developed by G.V. Caprara and C. Barbaranelli (1997), is a self-assessment questionnaire measuring personality structure. The BFQ consists of 132 statements to which respondents answer on a 5-point scale. The five main dimensions and ten sub-dimensions it measures are: Energy (sub-dimensions Activity and Dominance), Agreeableness (sub-dimensions Cooperation and Friendliness), Conscientiousness (sub-dimensions Accuracy and Persistence), Emotional Stability (sub-dimensions Emotional Control and Impulse Control), and Openness (sub-dimensions Openness to Culture and Openness to Experience).

The Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ) by Folkman and Lazarus (1988) assesses how individuals think and act when faced with various stressful situations encountered in everyday life. The scale measures coping as a strategy used by individuals in specific situations. It contains 66 items categorized into 8 categories: Confrontation, Distancing, Self-control, Seeking social support, Acceptance of responsibility, Escape/Avoidance, Problem-focused coping, and Positive reappraisal.



## 4. RESULTS

In the study, we attempted to find an answer to the question of whether sports activity affects our personality traits, how they respond to the set motivators, and based on this, we tried to establish a motivational model that explains how sports indirectly influence academic and work performance and the development of positive psychological traits.

On the first day, participants began with orientation meetings, followed by testing. They first underwent testing with TN-10, a timed test, followed by questionnaires (Appendix 1).

The first part of the questionnaire collected demographic data, followed by the questionnaires in the following sequence: Questionnaire on the influence of sports activity on the described abilities, characteristics, features, BFQ, PIE, SDQ III, and WCQ I.

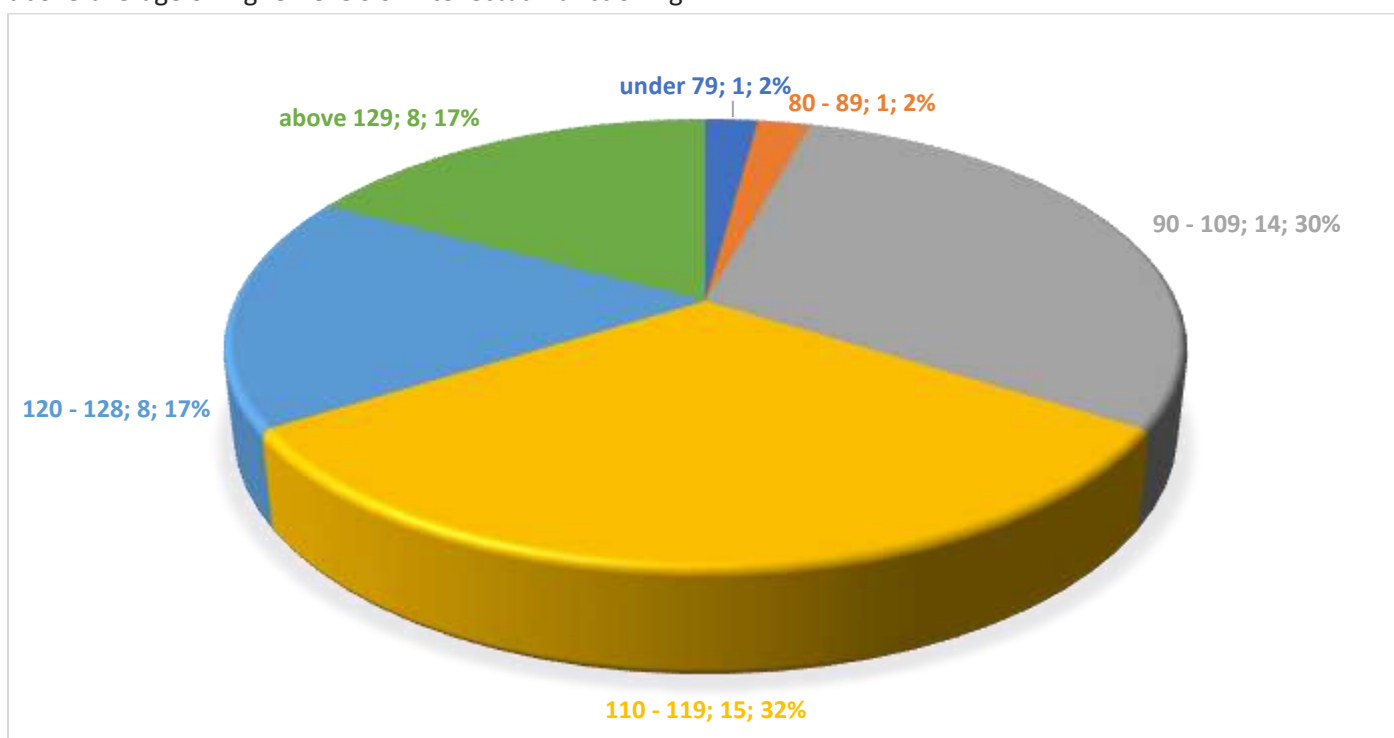
At the end of the period of sports activities, there was a re-testing where we re-administered all the questionnaires from the first day. This was followed by analysis and interpretation of the obtained results.

### A. INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING TESTING

Participants completed the Test of Series (TN), developed by Vida Pogačnik (1983), which is based on the processing model of intelligence.

As shown in Figure 1, the largest percentage (32%) of participants demonstrated a baseline level of intellectual functioning above average (between 110 and 119), followed by 30% of participants in the category of average cognitive functioning. Surprisingly, a significant 17% of participants exhibited a baseline level of intellectual functioning in the very high above-average range (above 129). Similarly, 17% of participants demonstrated a high above-average baseline level of intellectual functioning (120 – 128).

In other words, 30% of participants had an average level of intellectual functioning, while 66% of participants exhibited above-average or higher levels of intellectual functioning.



Slika 1. Prikaz IQ vrednosti udeležencev po kategorijah.

## B. QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE IMPACT OF SPORTS ACTIVITY ON SPECIFIC PARAMETERS

Table 1. Display of the calculation of arithmetic means of responses to the questionnaire of opinions

Question	First testing - Mean					Second testing - Mean				
	all	F	M	Act.	Not-act.	all	F	M	Act.	Not-act.
1. Physical fitness	4,8	4,8	4,8	4,8	4,8	4,7	4,8	4,4	4,7	4,8
2. Health	4,6	4,6	4,6	4,6	4,7	4,3	4,5	3,6	4,3	4,5
3. Self – discipline	4,2	4,3	4,0	4,2	4,3	4,0	4,1	3,4	4,1	3,8
4. Vitality	4,2	4,2	4,2	4,3	4,0	3,9	4,1	3,2	3,9	4,0
5. Stress relief	4,0	4,1	3,2	3,9	4,2	3,9	4,1	3,0	4,0	3,7
6. Social skills	3,3	3,4	2,8	3,5	2,7	3,4	3,6	2,6	3,6	2,8
7. Collaborating with others	3,7	3,9	2,8	3,7	3,8	3,8	4,0	3,0	3,9	3,7
8. Confidence	4,2	4,1	4,2	4,3	3,8	3,9	4,0	3,4	4,1	3,5
9. Concentration	4,0	4,1	3,4	4,0	4,0	3,9	4,2	2,8	3,8	4,3
10. Time management	3,7	3,9	3,0	3,9	3,2	3,5	3,9	2,2	3,6	3,3
11. Manual dexterity	3,7	3,7	3,4	3,9	3,0	3,7	3,9	2,8	3,5	4,3
12. Hand-eye coordination	4,3	4,5	3,6	4,3	4,5	4,4	4,7	3,4	4,3	4,8
13. Energy for learning and work	3,9	4,1	3,0	3,9	4,0	3,8	4,1	2,4	3,8	4,0
14. Attention	3,6	3,8	3,0	3,8	3,0	3,7	4,0	2,2	3,7	3,5
15. Leadership skills	3,4	3,5	2,8	3,7	2,5	3,5	3,8	2,4	3,6	3,3
16. Teamwork	3,7	3,8	3,4	3,8	3,3	3,9	4,1	2,8	3,9	3,8
17. Interpersonal relationships	3,5	3,7	2,8	3,7	2,8	3,7	4,0	2,4	3,9	3,0
18. Stress management	4,1	4,1	4,0	4,2	4,0	3,9	4,0	3,4	4,0	3,7
19. Maintaining composure	3,7	3,8	3,4	3,9	3,3	3,5	3,8	2,2	3,6	3,2
20. Understanding others' emotions	2,9	3,0	2,2	3,2	1,8	3,1	3,3	2,2	3,2	2,8
21. Public speaking	2,7	2,8	2,0	2,8	2,2	3,0	3,2	2,2	2,9	3,5
22. Problem-solving	3,3	3,4	3,2	3,5	2,8	3,2	3,5	2,2	3,4	2,7
23. Body image	4,2	4,4	3,6	4,4	3,8	4,4	4,6	3,8	4,4	4,5
24. Confidence	4,1	4,1	4,0	4,2	3,8	3,7	4,0	2,8	3,9	3,2
25. Sense of self-worth	3,8	3,9	3,8	4,0	3,3	3,9	4,0	3,4	4,1	3,2
26. Overall mental well-being	4,3	4,3	4,2	4,4	4,2	4,1	4,2	3,4	4,2	3,8

From the results in Table 1, it is evident that the differences in opinions between men and women have mostly changed between the first and second testing (highlighted cell). Women consistently rated the importance higher in all marked results compared to men, and the number of items where the difference was at least 0.85 increased in the second testing, mainly because men even lowered their ratings of influence on the described items, while women slightly raised their ratings on certain items.

The Table 1 also shows that there are very small differences between active and inactive participants in rating the importance of the influence of sports activity on the described parameters.

Furthermore, Table 1 reveals that participants believe that regular physical sports activity has the most significant impact on Physical fitness, Health (ratings above 4.5), followed by Self-discipline, Energy, Relaxation, Confidence, Concentration, Hand-eye coordination, Coping with stress, Body image, Self-esteem, and General psychological well-being (ratings between 4 and 4.5). Participants perceive that regular sports activity has the least impact on Public speaking (2.7) and Understanding others' emotions (2.9).

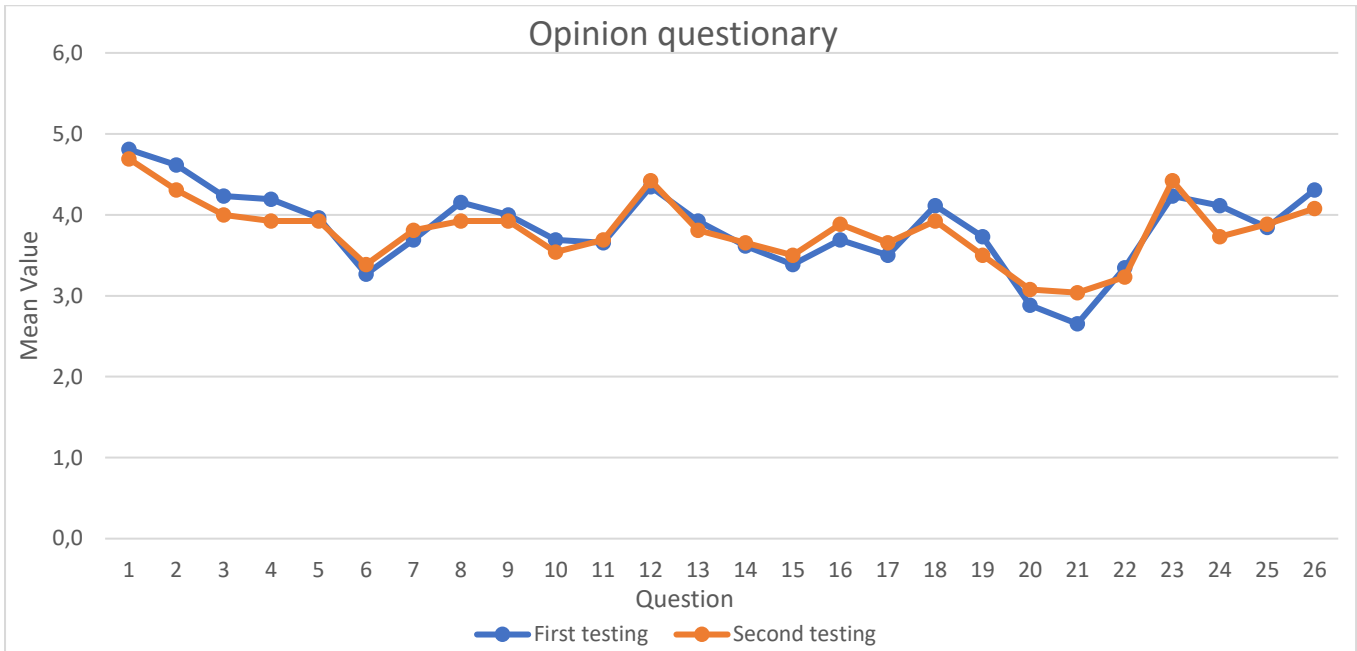


Image 2. Display of arithmetic means of all participants for individual items of the first and second measurements.

Image 2 shows that the ratings in the first measurement were even slightly higher than in the second measurement (there was an increase in the rating for 12 items). The largest difference in the arithmetic mean of the rating is observed for items 21 and 24, but none of these are statistically significant according to the T-test ( $p=0.05$ ).

Only for item 21, we also notice an increase in the arithmetic mean of the rating in the second measurement, indicating that participants perceived that regular physical activity has a greater impact on the parameter of Public Speaking after completing the sports activities than they originally thought during the first testing.

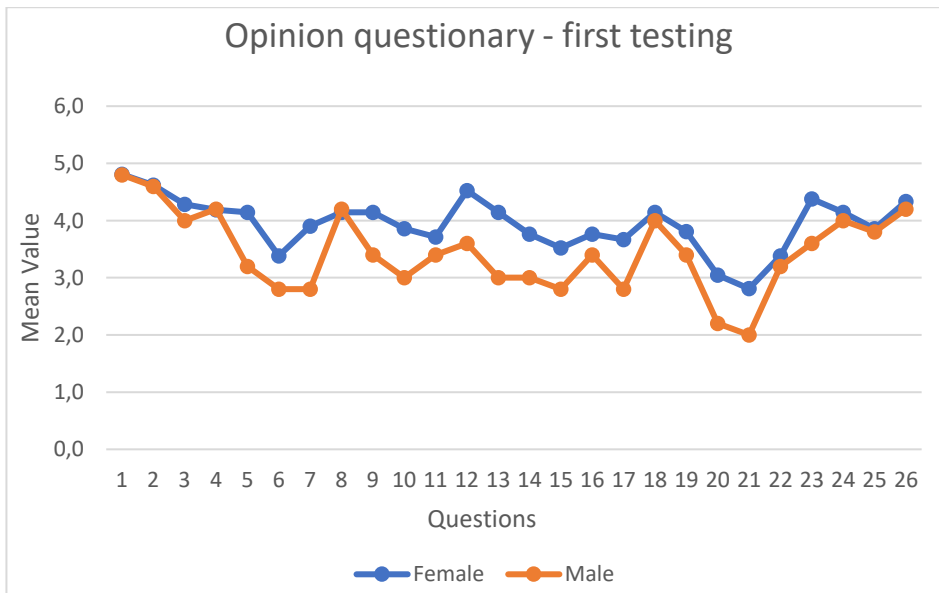


Image 3 shows that there are differences in the arithmetic means of the ratings given by male and female participants, mainly indicating that women gave higher ratings for most items. This suggests that women believe that sports activity has a greater impact on the described parameters than men do. The largest differences (more than 0.9 points) are observed for items 5, 7, 12, and 13, where women participants gave higher ratings for all these items. Only for items 4 and 8 did male participants give slightly higher ratings.

Image 3. Display of arithmetic means of ratings given by men and women for individual items in the first measurement.

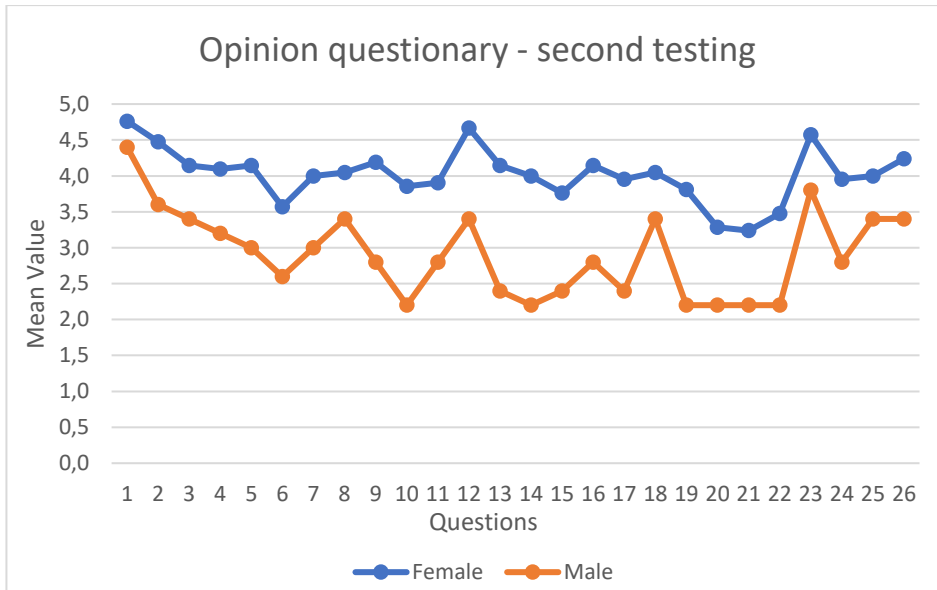


Image 4. The chart indicates that the difference between male and female participants increased in the second measurement. Women provided similar ratings for most items, while men drastically lowered their ratings. This resulted in a greater number of statistically significant differences ( $p=0.05$ ) in the mean ratings, specifically for items 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, and 19-22. Further details on differences between men and women and comparisons between the first and second tests will be provided below.

Image 4. Display of the arithmetic means of ratings by men and women for each item in the second measurement.

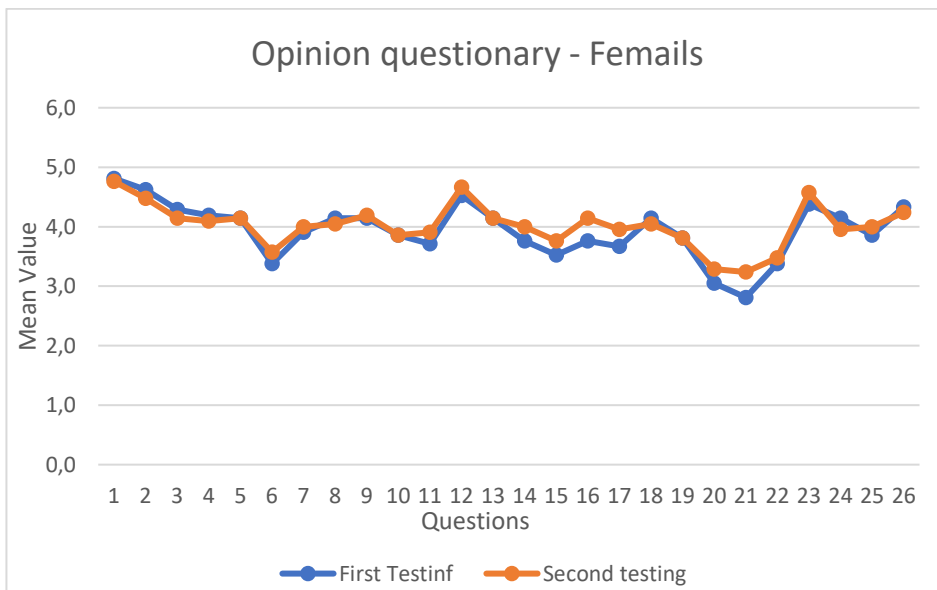


Image 4 shows that there were no significant changes among female participants between the first and second measurements. Slight increases in mean ratings are observed for items related to personality and psychological components that influence academic and work performance. Once again, the item regarding public speaking stands out, with women perceiving an increase in the impact of sports activity on this parameter.

Image 5. Display of the arithmetic means of ratings by women across individual items for the first and second measurements.

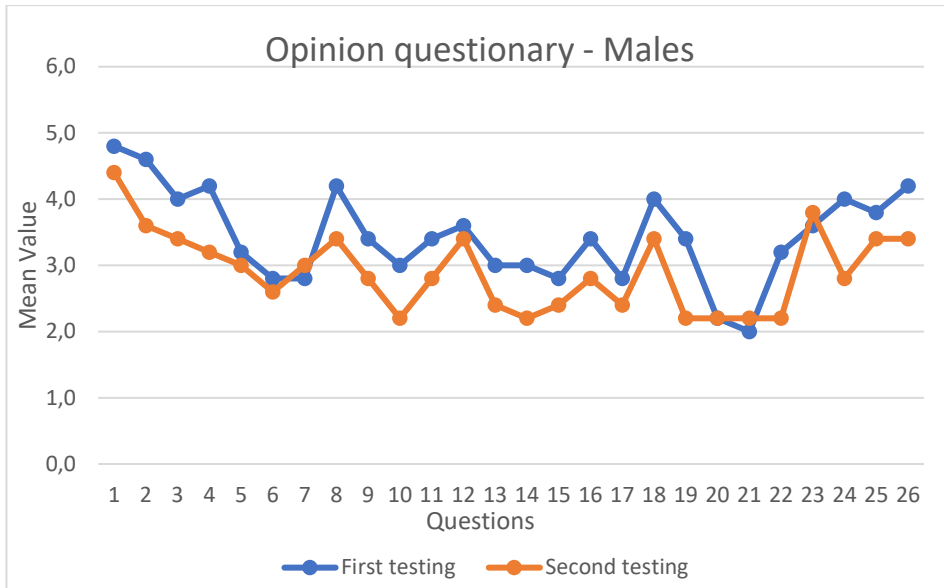


Image 6 illustrates the difference in the arithmetic mean of ratings provided by men in the first and second measurements. As evident, there was a decrease in ratings across almost all items. While a statistically significant difference ( $p=0.05$ ) is observed only in item 19, items 8, 13, and 14 show a statistically significant difference assuming  $p=0.1$ .

Image 6. Display of the arithmetic means of ratings provided by men for each item in the first and second measurements.

Among the already active participants, there was no difference between the first and second measurements, unlike the inactive participants.

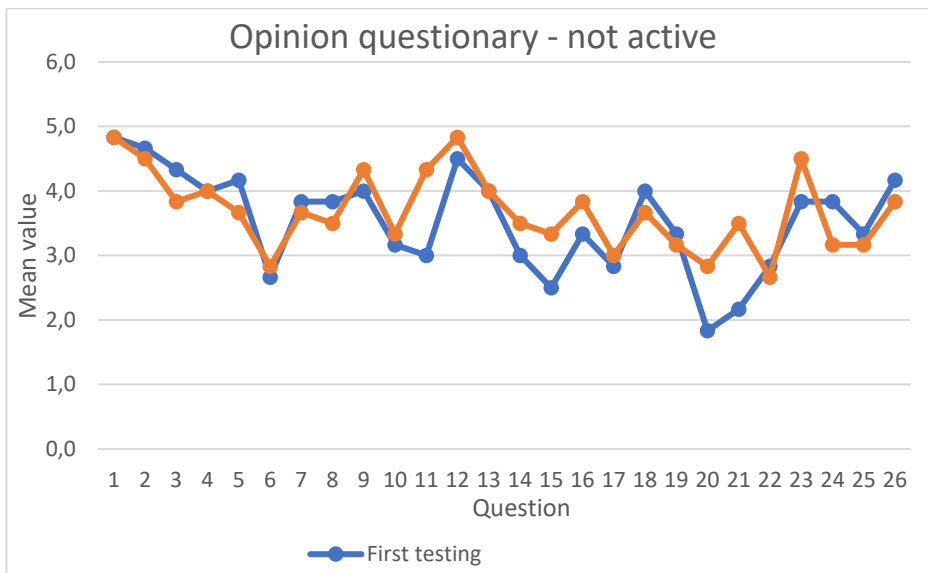
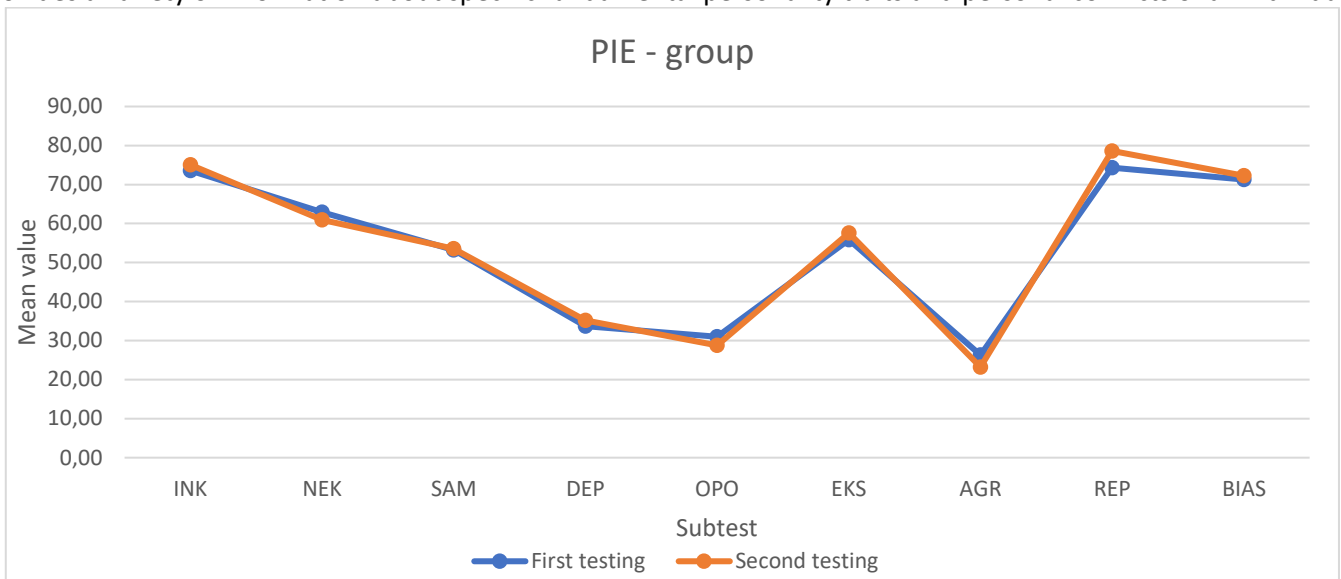


Image 7 shows an increase in ratings, especially in items not related to the contribution to physical attributes but to psychological, social, and interpersonal parameters. Statistically significant differences were observed mainly in items 11, 20, 21, and 23 ( $p=0.05$ ). Ratings increased for all items in the second measurement.

Image 7. Display of the arithmetic means of ratings for inactive participants by individual items of the first and second measurements.

### C. EMOTIONAL PROFILE INDEX

Emotion Profile Index (PIE), authored by Plutchik and Kellerman (1974), is a personality questionnaire that uniquely provides a variety of information about specific fundamental personality traits and personal conflicts of an individual.



\*SAM - self-protection, AGR - aggressiveness, INK - incorporation, OPO - oppositionality, EKS - exploration, NEK - lack of control, REP - reproduction, DEP - deprivation, and bias - socially desirable response.

Figure 8. Display of arithmetic means of results for all participants according to categories of personality profile.

Figure 8 shows that there were no statistically significant changes in relation to the structure of the personality profile according to the PIE questionnaire between the first and second testing.

On average, participants described themselves as trusting with a tendency towards acceptance, curious and adventurous, somewhat inclined to take risks, somewhat pessimistic but still satisfied with life, sufficiently decisive, with good self-control and life expansiveness, and ambiverted.

In all other comparisons between males and females, between the first and second testing, we did not detect any changes or differences. However, a difference was observed between active and inactive participants, both in the first and second testing, but all dimensions remained stable, and no changes were observed between the first and second testing.

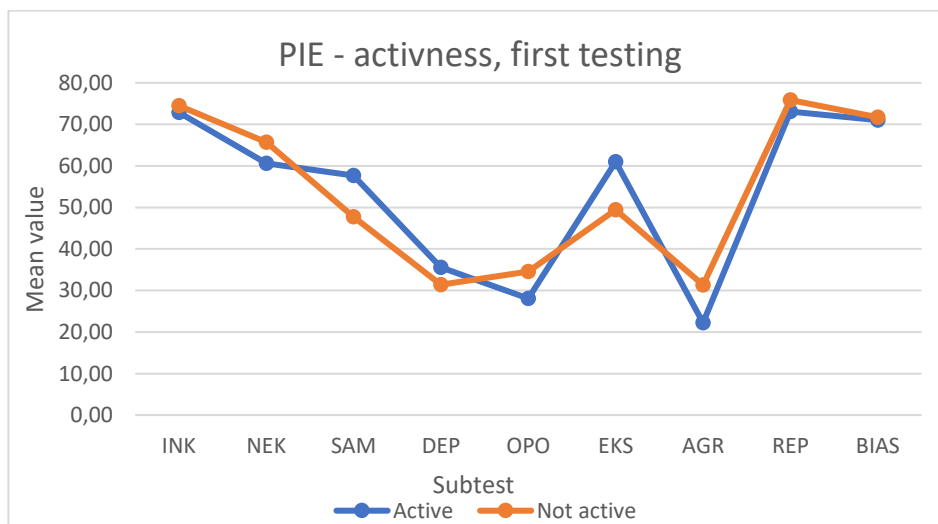
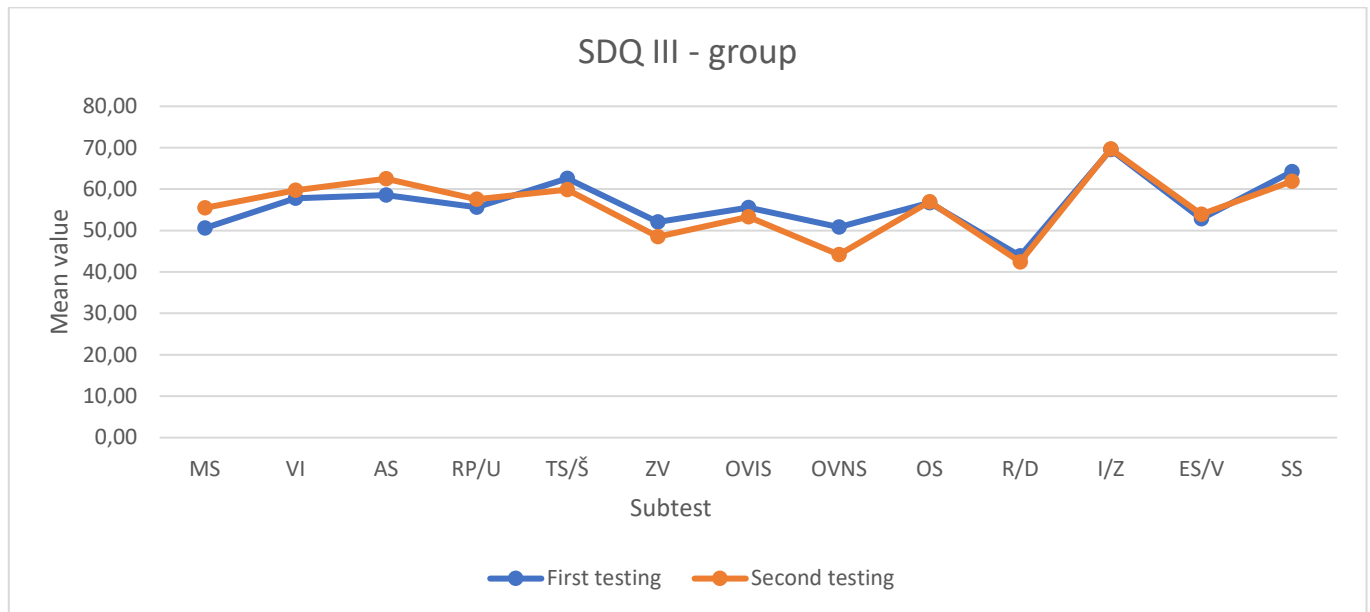


Figure 9 depicts the profile of active and inactive participants at the first testing, showing differences primarily in the dimensions of SAM, OPO, EKS, and AGR. A statistically significant difference ( $p=0.05$ ) is observed only in the dimension of EKS. Other differences are not statistically significant.

Figure 9. Display of arithmetic means of results for active and inactive participants at the first testing

### D. SELF-ESTEEM QUESTIONNAIRE

The Self-Esteem Questionnaire (SDQ III) for Individuals and Adolescents in Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood by Marsh and O'Neill (1992) consists of 136 items and measures 13 aspects of self-esteem.



\*MS - mathematical skills, VI - verbal expression, AS - academic self-esteem, RP/C - problem solving/creativity, PS/SS - physical self-esteem/sports, AP - appearance, OSMS - same-sex peer relationships, OOPS - opposite-sex peer relationships, PFR - parent-family relationships, R/S - religion/spirituality, H/T - honesty/trustworthiness, ES/S - emotional stability/security, GS - general self-esteem

Figure 10. Arithmetic means of results by dimensions of the self-esteem questionnaire for the first and second measurements

The self-esteem questionnaire and the results obtained in Figure 10 show that there were no significant changes between the first and second measurements. Despite the very short period of regular sports activity, minor but noticeable changes towards higher scores in the second measurement are observed in the following dimensions of self-esteem: MS, VI, AS, RP/U, OS, I/Z, and ES/V. However, the profile indicates the highest expression of Honesty/reliability, Academic self-esteem, Physical self-esteem/sports, and General self-esteem. Most dimensions of self-esteem are average. In the second measurement, a decrease in the dimension of Relationship with peers of the opposite sex is observed, which may be surprising. We can speculate about some unpleasant events within the group of participants.

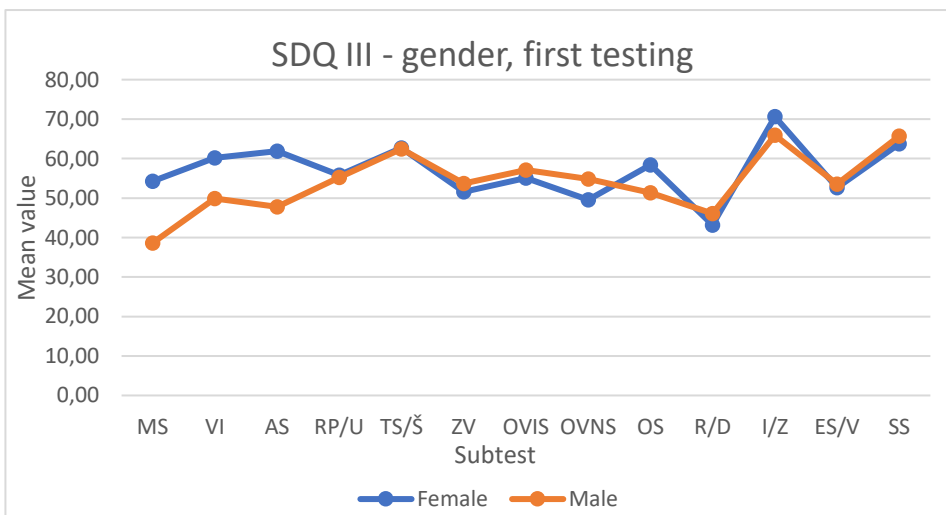


Figure 11 illustrates the difference between the male and female self-esteem profiles in the first round of testing. We can observe that men have slightly lower scores on self-esteem dimensions for MS, VI, AS, and OS. The other dimensions are mostly similar. Statistically significant differences ( $p=0.05$ ) occur in the dimensions of MS, VI, and AS, where women give higher self-ratings on all three dimensions.

Figure 11. Display of arithmetic means of results for males and females in the first round of testing.

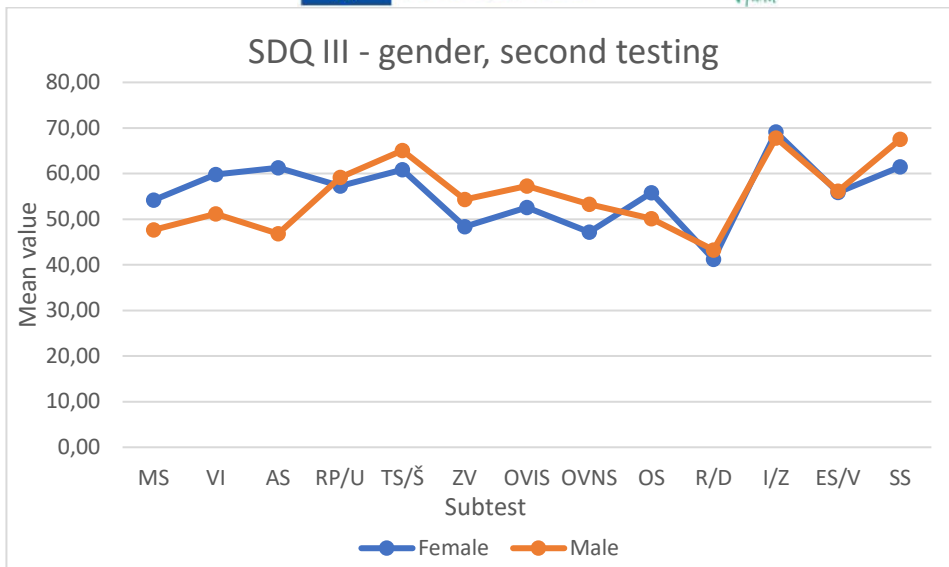


Figure 12. Display of the arithmetic means of results for males and females in the second round of testing.

Figure 12. Display of the difference between male and female self-esteem profiles in the second round of testing, indicating that the differences between them have slightly changed, primarily due to an increase in scores for certain dimensions among males and a simultaneous decrease in scores among females (also seen in Figures 13 and 14). Statistically significant differences have diminished and remain only in dimensions VI and AS, but they are smaller than in the first measurement.

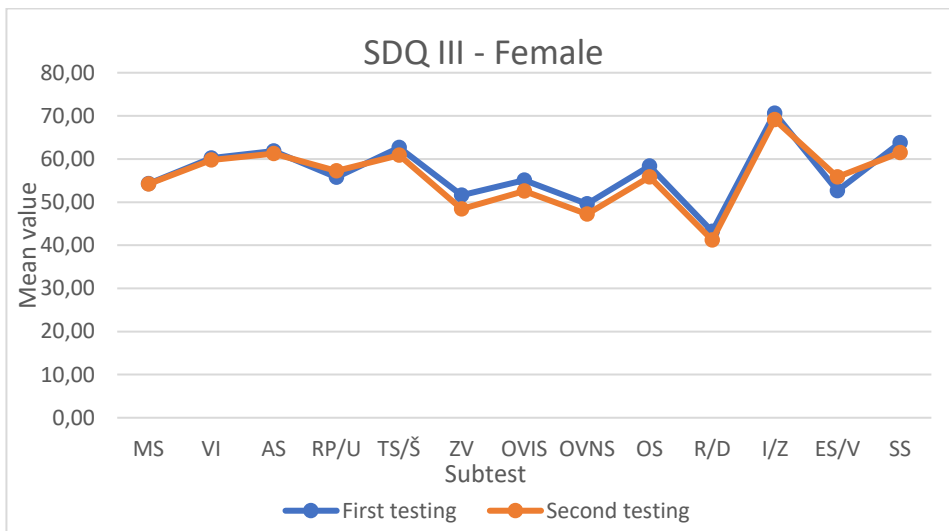


Figure 13. Display of the arithmetic means of results for females in the first and second testing.

Figure 13. Displaying the difference between the first and second measurements for females, showing a slight decrease in the values of self-esteem dimensions in the middle of the scale. These decreases are not statistically significant.

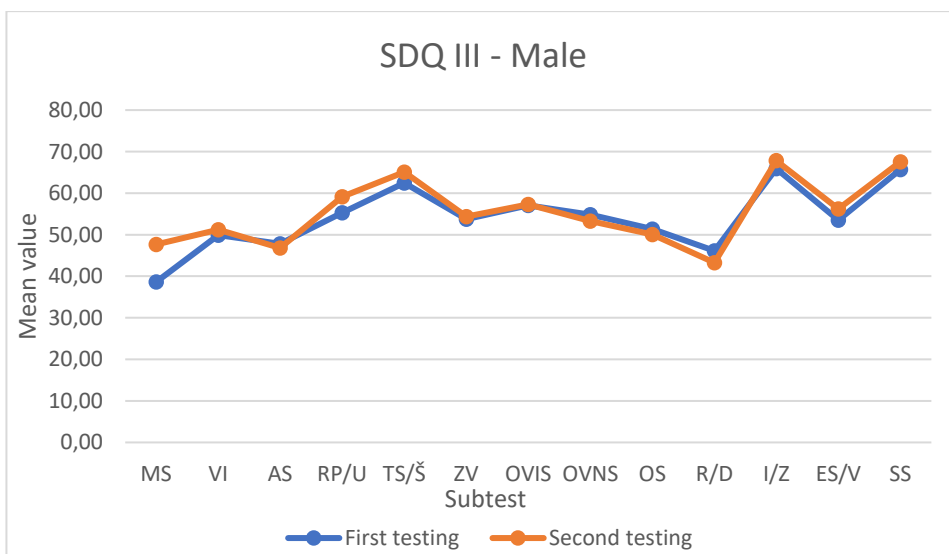
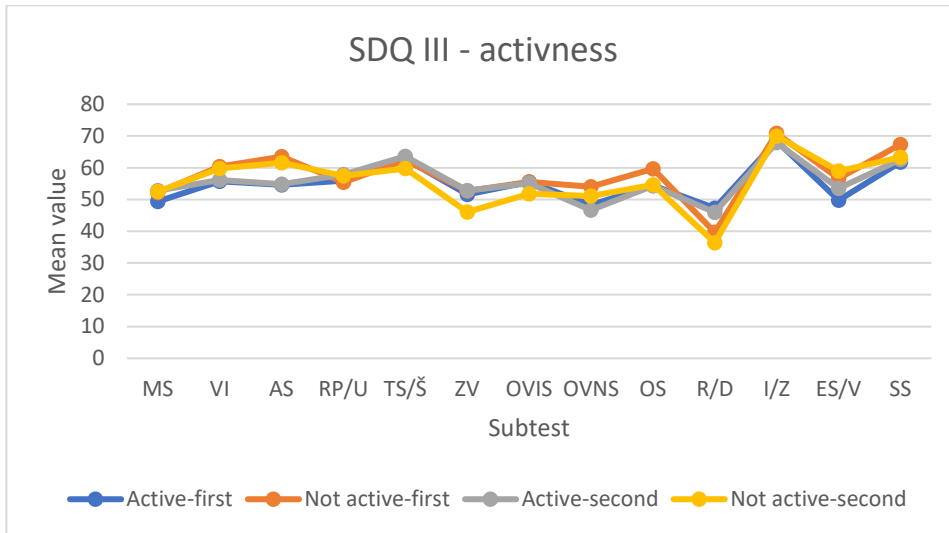


Figure 14. Display of the arithmetic means of results for males in the first and second testing.

Figure 14. Display of the arithmetic means of results for males in the first and second testing.





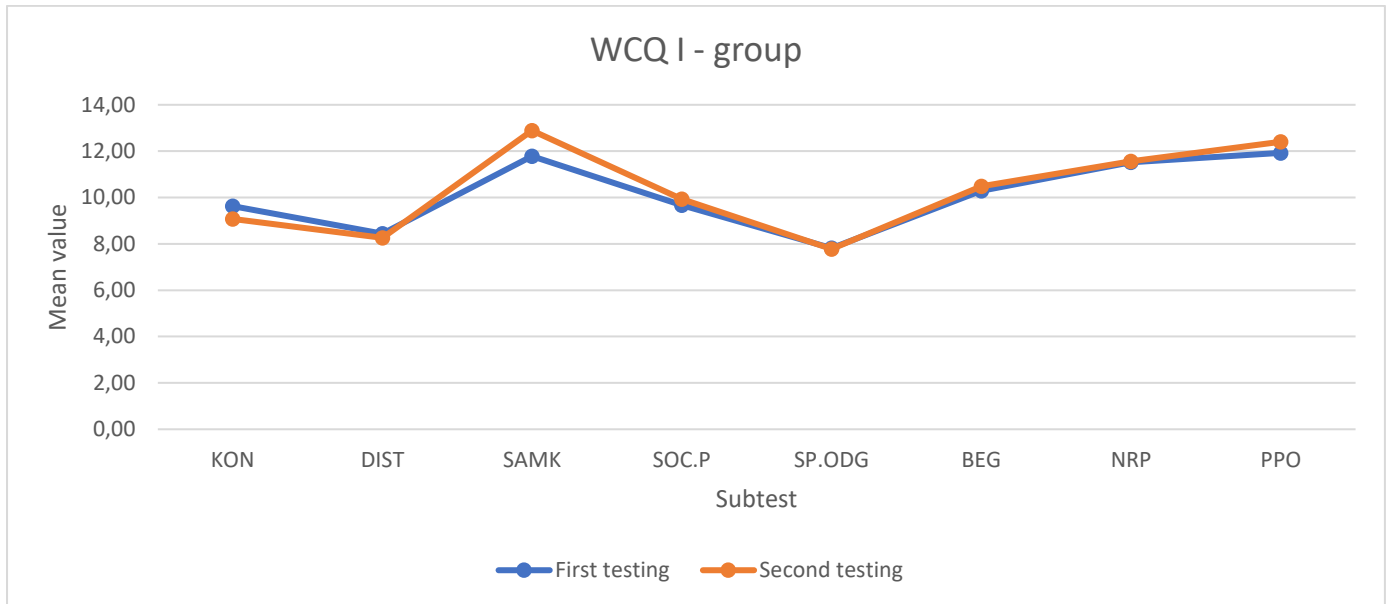
In Figure 15, we can see that there are no changes between the first and second testing among the active participants, while among the inactive ones, there is even a decrease in dimensions such as OVNS, OS, R/D, and SS. No change proves to be statistically significant.

Figure 15. Display of arithmetic means of results for active and inactive participants for the first and second testing.

### E. COPING WITH STRESS QUESTIONNAIRE

The Ways of Coping with stress Questionnaire (WCQ) is a scale that categorizes items into 8 categories: Confrontation, Distancing, Self-Control, Seeking Social Support, Accepting Responsibility, Escape/Avoidance, Problem Solving, and Positive Reappraisal.

Analysis of the responses provides a profile of the most frequently used coping strategies for dealing with stress.



\*CON - Confrontation, DIST - Distancing, SELF-CTL - Self-Control, SOC.SUP - Seeking Social Support, ACC.RES - Accepting Responsibility, ESC - Escape/Avoidance, PROB-SOLV - Problem Solving, POS.REAPP - Positive Reappraisal.

Figure 16. Display of arithmetic means of all participants for the WCQ-I questionnaire for the first and second testing.

As evident from Figure 16, there were no significant changes between the two measurements. There was a slight increase in the value of the SAMK dimension, but it still remains the predominant coping strategy for stress.

However, the profile shows that when faced with a stressful situation, participants most often choose the strategy of self-control followed by Positive reappraisal. These are not the most effective coping strategies for stress. According to the results, distancing and taking responsibility are the least frequently chosen strategies.

In the following sections, we will see that while the basic profile and the primary coping strategy for stress remain unchanged, there are mild variations in the prevalence of other coping strategies.

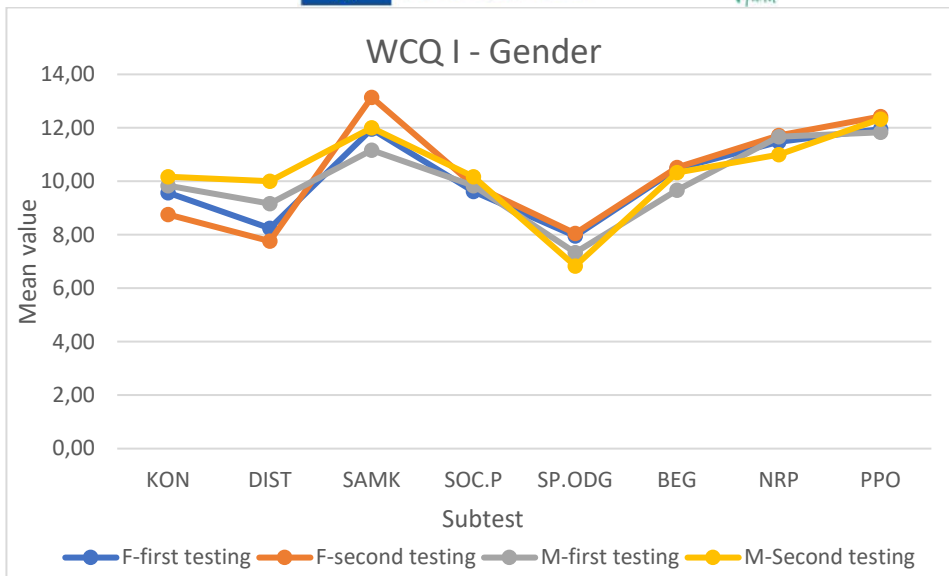


Figure 17. Display of the arithmetic means of the results of men and women from the first and second tests

No differences between men and women in terms of profile shape are observed in Figure 17. They equally frequently choose the same coping strategies and rarely opt for the same strategies.

The second testing indicates, for women, a reinforcement of the SAMK strategy over time, likely at the expense of a slight decrease in the KON strategy.

There are no significant changes detected among men between the first and second testing. However, it is evident from the profile that the KON and DIST strategies are more prevalent among men compared to women.

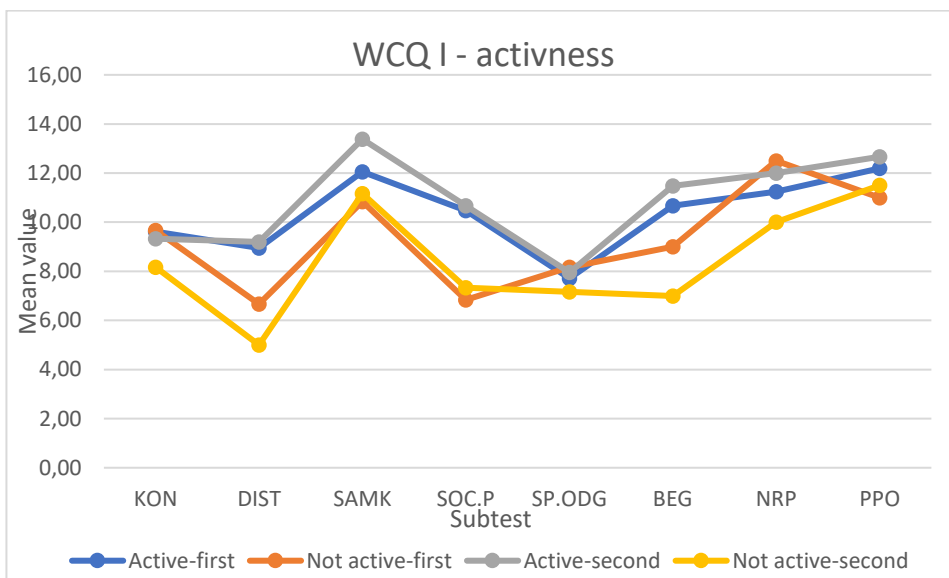
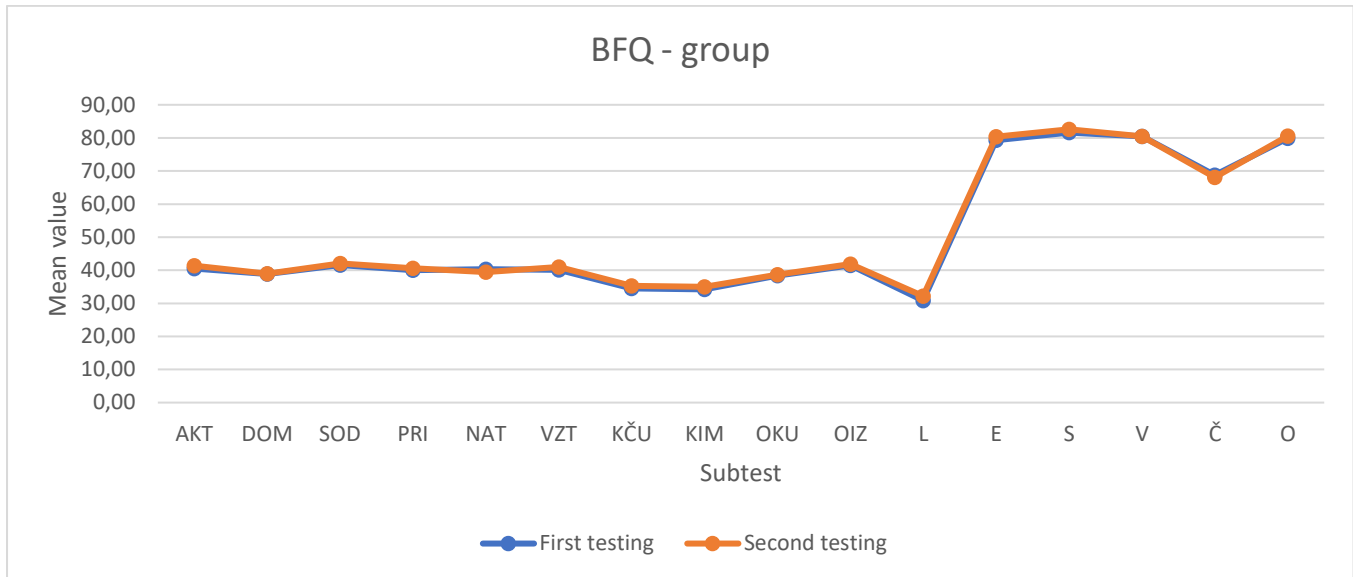


Figure 18. Display of arithmetic means of results for males and females of the first and second tests

From Figure 18, it is evident that there are significant differences between active and inactive individuals. At the same time, the representation of individual coping strategies is similar between active and inactive individuals, with only differences in the intensity of each strategy. Slightly larger changes are observed among inactive individuals between the first and second tests. The most notable changes occurred in the representation of the Avoidance (BEG) and Problem-Solving (NRP) strategies, with the latter falling from the most represented strategy to the third position. The BEG strategy, on the other hand, dropped by 2 positions to second to last place in the second test.

## F. MEASUREMENT ACCORDING TO »BIG FIVE MODEL«

The questionnaire for measuring personality structure according to the "Big Five" model (BFQ) is a self-assessment tool that categorizes results into five main dimensions and ten subdimensions: Energy (subdimensions Activity and Dominance), Agreeableness (subdimensions Cooperation and Friendliness), Conscientiousness (subdimensions Precision and Perseverance), Emotional Stability (subdimensions Emotional Control and Impulse Control), and Openness (subdimensions Openness to Culture and Openness to Experience).



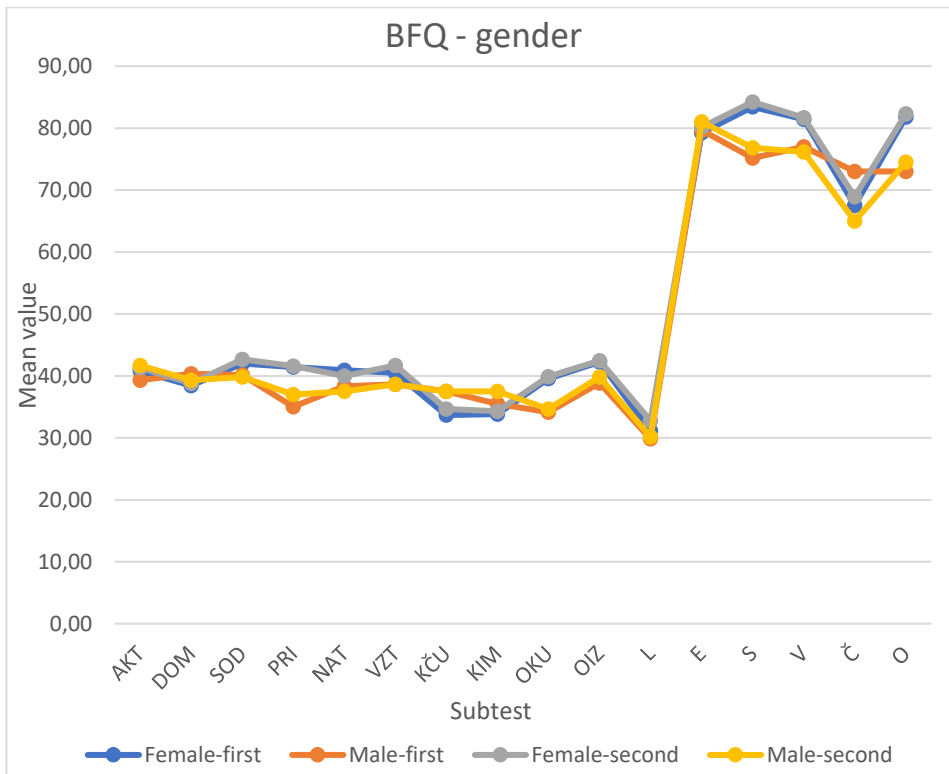
\*ACT-activity, DOM-dominance, COOP-cooperation, FRI-friendliness, PREC-precision, PERS-perseverance, EMOC-emotional control, IMP-impulse control, CUL-openness to culture, EXP-openness to experience, L-deception scale, E-energy, A-agreeableness, C-conscientiousness, ES-emotional stability, O-openness.

FIGURE 19. Arithmetic means of all participants according to individual dimensions of the BFQ questionnaire for the first and second tests.

The profiles of the first and second tests are completely aligned. Individuals in the group positioned themselves as average in all subcategories (from the ACT dimension to OEX), which places them with high scores in the main dimensions, except for the deception scale.

So, on average, individuals in the group described themselves as extroverted, energetic, and dynamic, friendly, cooperative, and empathetic, precise and organized, open to new experiences, connections, and cultures. The score is slightly lower on dimension E, which still indicates that individuals described themselves as emotionally stable, capable of controlling internal tensions.

Minor differences only appear between men and women (regardless of testing) and between active and inactive individuals (regardless of testing).



As evident from Figure 20, there is no difference between men and women between the first and second testing, but there is a difference between men and women in both tests. Men show lower scores in the subdimensions of PRI, OKU, and dimensions S, V, and O. It is also noticeable that there is a statistically significant decrease among men between the first and second testing in the dimension Č.

Figure 20. Display of the arithmetic means of results for men and women in the first and second tests

## 5. DISCUSSION

A well-known and often discussed fact is that physical activity positively impacts bodily functions, contributes to better physical well-being, and consequently maintains our physical health. Slightly less attention is paid to mental health in the context of sports. However, this trend is changing rapidly, with increasing awareness in this direction. Usually, mental health is discussed concerning already developed signs of psychological issues and as a means of alleviating emotional and psychological distress.

Our research was more focused on a preventive perspective and the contribution of regular physical activity to adolescents and young adults, where certain mental functions are developed and shaped. By demonstrating the positive effects on an individual's mental state, we aim to show educators, healthcare professionals, teachers, and local policymakers how important it is to encourage young people to engage in sports. These facts should serve as motivators for counselors to transmit these positive aspects to young people, who could internalize these positive effects and experience them as their own internal motivator for engaging in sports activities.

In addition to the necessary knowledge and skills, there are many psychological components that employers seek. Foremost among these are components such as emotional stability, good conflict resolution strategies, teamwork skills, well-developed coping mechanisms for stress, well-developed performance motivation, low levels of anxiety, openness, good concentration and achievement, and appropriate social orientation. These are standout components that employers seek in their employees, both in candidate selection and in the development of already employed individuals.

Participants in sports activities engaged in various non-traditional sports over a one-week period. Testing was conducted at the beginning of the first day and at the end of the last day. All sports activities were free for participants, which was one of the motivations for their participation. Another motivation was that they participated in sports activities that are not every day, such as swimming, climbing, rowing, and innovative training. These are activities that are more recreational and non-competitive in nature, unlike soccer, volleyball, basketball. At the same time, these are activities intended for both genders, which attracted more female participants than male participants.

An internal motivator is one that drives us into an activity from within, stemming from our own desire and need for that activity, enabling us to achieve our own goals. So, to begin with, to initiate engagement in a sports activity, an external motivator is sufficient (free training, equipment, innovative sports, interesting instructors, etc.), but to sustain involvement in an activity, an internal motivator is necessary. This internal motivator gives a person a sense of purpose for an activity, providing impetus to achieve their goal. Building an internal motivator can be facilitated by significant individuals in a teenager's life, such as parents, teachers, and later in life, supervisors and colleagues. It is important for these significant individuals to demonstrate and help young people internalize the desire for a stable psychological structure, better coping abilities with problems and challenges, and awareness of the development of psychological aspects through participation in sports activities. Therefore, emphasizing the benefits of regular physical activity can facilitate easier learning, greater success in job seeking, increased productivity, overall success in life, and better handling of life challenges. Additionally, they will be better equipped to handle problem situations and stress, be more effective in teamwork, increase their adaptability, be more motivated for other tasks, and improve their self-esteem, making them more confident and successful in their work. These are aspects that adolescents need to be exposed to and learn about so they can internalize them. This increases the likelihood that motivation for sports activities will come from within themselves and that they will be able to persevere in sports activities, experiencing their positive effects over time.

Our research has shown that despite the short follow-up period, changes occur in the measured psychological components, but we cannot with great certainty attribute these changes to engagement in sports activities.

Of course, for a better analysis, we would need a longer period of regular sports activities and also a control group without regular sports activities. Despite the small changes we detected, we can infer that with a larger quantity and longer duration of monitoring, we could identify greater and statistically significant differences that positively influence favorable psychological development in individuals.

Based on the obtained results and the entire project, we conclude that differences exist between men and women, as well as between already active and inactive individuals. Right from the start, we were surprised by the high level of intellectual functioning of the individuals involved, which suggests that such projects offering innovative forms of sports activities attract individuals who are somewhat higher positioned in terms of cognitive levels of intellectual functioning. From this, we can assume that motivating them will be somewhat easier, as they intuitively perceive the need for novelty and diversity. Therefore, it is necessary to offer them different, interesting sports activities, and they will already be motivated to engage. These facts and findings suggest that a bit more creativity will be needed in motivating individuals with average or below-average levels of intellectual functioning.

Engaging in regular sports activities also depends on our perception of the impact of sports on our development. While children and adolescents may not think about this, parents and teachers are influential in determining which sports activities individual students will choose and what approach to sports they will adopt.

Our school system primarily emphasizes team and competitive sports, which are somewhat more "masculine" sports. However, it overlooks more individualistic and parallel sports, as well as recreational sports and activities, which are more often favored by women. Introducing non-traditional sports in schools might motivate young people, especially girls, to engage in sports activities more, even outside the school system.

As we have seen from the research, the prevailing opinion is still that sports activity mostly affects our physical abilities and health, and very little on social and certain psychological aspects. However, the second measurement showed significant changes, which would surely be greater if the participants were involved in regular sports activities for a longer period and if they were given the opportunity to test these described aspects. An interesting aspect would also be the perception of others and not just self-assessment.

Women, on the other hand, rated that regular sports activity affects the psychological and social components of an individual, indicating that they may think more about this aspect and are more aware of it than men, for whom sports activity is somewhat more taken for granted. From societal observation, there are more men engaged in sports activities, especially in group settings, than women. This may lead men to not even think about the impact of sports since it is something they do every day. However, when introducing innovative sports activities, there may be limitations, and it might be harder to attract men, as opposed to women who miss innovative and different sports activities in their environment.

Primarily, we are talking about recreational forms of sports that do not aim for winning but instead focus on entertainment, relaxation, achieving internal goals, and socializing.

Our research primarily demonstrated to us that change requires time, or rather, consistent engagement in sports activities over a longer period is necessary to observe changes. This is also evidenced by the results of the non-active participants, where minor changes are observed between the two measurements. While the changes are small, they do indicate a trend.

Now, let's answer the question of how to increase youth engagement in sports and recreation based on our research and project findings:

- **Promotion and awareness:** Educate adults, parents, and influential figures about the broader impact of regular sports activities beyond just physical health and appearance. When adults who care for youth internalize the broader significance of sports, they will be motivated to invest in encouraging youth to engage in regular sports activities, regardless of the type of sport chosen.
- **Multi-level collaboration:** This involves collaboration between local decision-makers, employers, educational institutions, and families, all of whom must take responsibility for the favorable psycho-physical development of youth. Deep awareness needs to be created at all levels about the meaning of regular sports activity and the benefits it brings to everyone in a community. This involves a kind of social responsibility.
- **Diverse and attractive programs:** Offer recreational sports activities that are non-competitive, innovative, diverse, and tailored to young people. In addition to traditional sports encountered in schools, it is necessary to consider other sports activities that are more commonly encountered in later stages of life, rather than during childhood and adolescence. Given our diversity, it's beneficial to have access to various sports activities that encourage regular participation.
- **Technological support and innovation:** Utilize digital technology to motivate young people through apps that track progress, create competitions, and offer rewards, thereby increasing interest and participation.
- **Development of local sports mentors and ambassadors:** Implement programs to train young leaders who would serve as sports coaches in their communities, leading sports activities and serving as role models.

By implementing these strategies, we can foster a culture of regular sports participation among youth, leading to numerous physical, mental, and social benefits.



Appendix 1. Questionnaires (certain areas are covered for the protection of test material, as they are copyrighted psychological instruments)

## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

SEX: M                      Ž

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months

I AM ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN SPORTS:                      YES                      NO

IF YOUR PREVIOUS ANSWER WAS »YES«:

- What sport are you actively engaged in? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many years have you been involved in sports? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many times per week? \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT OTHER LEISURE ACTIVITIES DO YOU ENGAGE IN?

How many times per week?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## INSTRUCTION

Below are certain abilities and characteristics listed. For each statement, please assess the impact, in your opinion, of active engagement in sports on the specific ability or characteristic. Please provide your answer on a 5-point scale, where: 1 – No impact; 2 – Minimal impact; 3 – Moderate impact; 4 – Significant impact; 5 – Strong impact

**How much, in your opinion, does active engagement in sports impact the following:**

		No influence	Partial influence	Somewhere in the middle	Influences	Major Influence
1.	Physical fitness	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Health	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Self – discipline	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Vitality	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Stress relief	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Social skills	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Collaborating with others	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Confidence	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Concentration	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Time management	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Manual dexterity	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Hand-eye coordination	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Energy for learning and work	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Attention	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Leadership skills	1	2	3	4	5

16.	Teamwork	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Interpersonal relationships	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Stress management	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Maintaining composure	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Understanding others' emotions	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Public speaking	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Problem-solving	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Body image	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Confidence	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Sense of self-worth	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Overall mental well-being	1	2	3	4	5

## BFQ

### INSTRUCTIONS

This questionnaire was developed with the purpose of allowing you to assess some of your personality traits. There are no right or wrong answers, so it is not possible to achieve a good or bad result. All the answers together can only describe your personality more or less accurately. We are interested in how you think about yourself. Carefully read each statement in the questionnaire and decide to what extent it applies to you. When assessing how well the statement describes your traits, use the rating scale:

<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Very much applies	Quite applies	Moderately applies	Partially applies	Does not apply

Please circle a rating from 1 to 5 for each statement. If you make a mistake and want to choose a different rating, first cross out the previous one and then circle the appropriate rating.

		Very much applies	Quite applies	Moderately applies	Partially applies	Does not apply
1.	I consider myself an active and energetic person.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	I am never a perfectionist.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	I excessively empathize when someone tells me about their problems.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	I don't worry too much about the consequences of my actions for others.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	I am always up to date with what's happening in the world.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	I have never lied.	5	4	3	2	1
7.	I don't like things that require a lot of effort.	5	4	3	2	1
8.	I usually think a lot.	5	4	3	2	1
9.	It doesn't happen often that I feel internally tense.	5	4	3	2	1
10.	I know when people need my help.	5	4	3	2	1
11.	I find it difficult to remember long phone numbers.	5	4	3	2	1
12.	I always get along well with everyone.	5	4	3	2	1
13.	I prefer to stand up and persist rather than withdraw.	5	4	3	2	1
14.	If there are many obstacles, it's not worth persisting in my goals.	5	4	3	2	1
15.	I am quite sensitive.	5	4	3	2	1
16.	It's not necessary to be friendly with everyone.	5	4	3	2	1
17.	New and unexpected situations don't particularly attract me.	5	4	3	2	1
18.	I have always solved every problem I've encountered immediately.	5	4	3	2	1
19.	I don't like a competitive work environment.	5	4	3	2	1
20.	I always want to do work without mistakes, even if it takes more time.	5	4	3	2	1
21.	I don't easily lose patience.	5	4	3	2	1



22.	I enjoy mingling with people.	5	4	3	2	1
23.	I am excited about every novelty.	5	4	3	2	1
24.	I have never been afraid even when in danger, even if it was severe.	5	4	3	2	1
25.	I usually make decisions quickly.	5	4	3	2	1
26.	Before doing anything, I take the time to assess all possible consequences.	5	4	3	2	1
27.	I don't often feel anxious.	5	4	3	2	1
28.	I don't know how to handle it when friends are in trouble.	5	4	3	2	1
29.	I have a very good memory.	5	4	3	2	1
30.	I have always been completely confident in the correctness of all my actions.	5	4	3	2	1
31.	It is not particularly important for me to be better than others at work.	5	4	3	2	1
32.	I don't like being too planned and organized.	5	4	3	2	1
33.	Criticism affects me.	5	4	3	2	1
34.		5	4	3	2	1
35.		5	4	3	2	1
36.		5	4	3	2	1
37.		5	4	3	2	1
38.		5	4	3	2	1
39.		5	4	3	2	1
40.		5	4	3	2	1
41.	I believe there are no values that are valid for everyone.	5	4	3	2	1
42.	When dealing with problems, it's not useful to consider different perspectives.	5	4	3	2	1
43.	In general, things that should actually bother me don't throw me off track.	5	4	3	2	1
44.		5	4	3	2	1
45.		5	4	3	2	1
46.		5	4	3	2	1
47.		5	4	3	2	1
48.		5	4	3	2	1
49.		5	4	3	2	1
50.		5	4	3	2	1
51.	I don't like doing more than one thing at a time.	5	4	3	2	1
52.	I am usually friendly even to people I don't like.	5	4	3	2	1
53.	I enjoy organizing meetings.	5	4	3	2	1
54.	When someone disrupts my plans, I don't insist on them but move on to something else.	5	4	3	2	1
55.	I am not interested in overly serious television shows.	5	4	3	2	1
56.	I am a person who constantly seeks new experiences.	5	4	3	2	1
57.	Mess bothers me a lot.	5	4	3	2	1
58.	I usually don't react quickly and impulsively.	5	4	3	2	1
59.	Leading a meeting or gathering is not difficult for me.	5	4	3	2	1
60.	I like to stay informed about things that are far from my area of responsibility.	5	4	3	2	1
61.	I don't feel the need to prove my abilities to others.	5	4	3	2	1
62.	I am prone to frequent mood swings.	5	4	3	2	1
63.	Sometimes I get angry over trivial things.	5	4	3	2	1
64.	I don't like lending to people, even if I know them well.	5	4	3	2	1
65.		5	4	3	2	1
66.		5	4	3	2	1
67.		5	4	3	2	1
68.		5	4	3	2	1
69.		5	4	3	2	1
70.		5	4	3	2	1
71.		5	4	3	2	1
72.		5	4	3	2	1
73.		5	4	3	2	1
74.	Generally, it's not advisable to trust other people too much.	5	4	3	2	1
75.	I have difficulty letting go of activities I've started.	5	4	3	2	1
76.	I usually don't lose patience.	5	4	3	2	1
77.	I don't dedicate much time to reading.	5	4	3	2	1
78.	I usually don't engage in conversations with potential travel companions.	5	4	3	2	1
79.	I am very cautious when making a big purchase.	5	4	3	2	1
80.	I have always been completely honest and truthful.	5	4	3	2	1
81.	I have no trouble managing my emotions.	5	4	3	2	1



82.	I have never been very precise.	5	4	3	2	1
83.		5	4	3	2	1
84.		5	4	3	2	1
85.		5	4	3	2	1
86.		5	4	3	2	1
87.		5	4	3	2	1
88.	Friends often confide their problems in me.	5	4	3	2	1
89.	I tend to react too intensely, even when strong emotions overwhelm me.	5	4	3	2	1
90.	I don't believe that knowledge of history is particularly useful.	5	4	3	2	1
91.	I usually don't respond to provocations.	5	4	3	2	1
92.		5	4	3	2	1
93.		5	4	3	2	1
94.		5	4	3	2	1
95.		5	4	3	2	1
96.		5	4	3	2	1
97.		5	4	3	2	1
98.		5	4	3	2	1
99.		5	4	3	2	1
100.		5	4	3	2	1
101.		5	4	3	2	1
102.	I am always confident in myself.	5	4	3	2	1
103.	I don't know what drives people to behave contrary to norms.	5	4	3	2	1
104.	It really bothers me when I'm interrupted while doing something interesting.	5	4	3	2	1
105.	I truly enjoy watching cultural and scientific informative shows.	5	4	3	2	1
106.	Before I consider a task truly finished, I spend a lot of time reviewing and making corrections.	5	4	3	2	1
107.	If something doesn't go smoothly right away, I don't persist too much.	5	4	3	2	1
108.	If necessary, I tell others without hesitation to take care of themselves.	5	4	3	2	1
109.	I usually know how to accommodate others.	5	4	3	2	1
110.	Once the work is done, I no longer review every detail.	5	4	3	2	1
111.	Collaboration leads to better results than competition.	5	4	3	2	1
112.		5	4	3	2	1
113.		5	4	3	2	1
114.		5	4	3	2	1
115.		5	4	3	2	1
116.		5	4	3	2	1
117.		5	4	3	2	1
118.		5	4	3	2	1
119.		5	4	3	2	1
120.	Sometimes, even very small problems worry me.	5	4	3	2	1
121.	I am usually not friendly to strangers.	5	4	3	2	1
122.	I don't usually change my mood suddenly.	5	4	3	2	1
123.	I don't like taking risky decisions.	5	4	3	2	1
124.	Scientific or philosophical topics have never interested me too much.	5	4	3	2	1
125.	When I start something, I never know if I'll finish it.	5	4	3	2	1
126.	Generally, I trust people and their intentions.	5	4	3	2	1
127.	I have always liked everyone I have met.	5	4	3	2	1
128.	I shouldn't be too lenient towards some people.	5	4	3	2	1
129.	I usually pay attention to the smallest details in everything I do.	5	4	3	2	1
130.	When working in a group, you can't fully utilize all your abilities.	5	4	3	2	1
131.	I don't seek new solutions for problems that have already been solved.	5	4	3	2	1
132.	I don't believe it is useful to waste time rechecking what has already been done.	5	4	3	2	1





9	I like almost all school subjects.
10	I am never able to find answers to problems unless they are already indicated.
11	I am physically attractive.
12	I have very few same-sex friends that I can truly rely on.
13	I am a good athlete.
14	I hesitate or hesitated about choosing a major that includes mathematics.
15	I am religious.
16	[REDACTED]
17	[REDACTED]
18	[REDACTED]
19	[REDACTED]
20	[REDACTED]
21	[REDACTED]
22	[REDACTED]
23	[REDACTED]
24	[REDACTED]
25	I feel comfortable when talking to peers of the same sex.
26	I am clumsy and inept in most sports and physical activities.
27	Overall, I am (was) better at math than other subjects.
28	Religious beliefs have very little in common with my life philosophy.
29	I fully accept myself.
30	Honesty is not a particularly important trait to me.
31	I have many friends of the opposite sex.
32	I have a limited vocabulary.
33	I am usually happy.
34	There are still many conflicts with my parents that I haven't resolved.
35	I enjoy (enjoyed) almost all school subjects.
36	I would like to have more imagination and be more creative.
37	I am physically well-developed.
38	I don't get along too well with peers of the opposite sex.
39	I am quite persistent and enduring in sports and other physical activities.
40	I feel incapable when it comes to math.
41	[REDACTED]
42	[REDACTED]
43	[REDACTED]
44	[REDACTED]
45	[REDACTED]
46	[REDACTED]
47	[REDACTED]
48	[REDACTED]
49	[REDACTED]
50	[REDACTED]
51	[REDACTED]
52	[REDACTED]
53	[REDACTED]
54	My religious beliefs guide my life.
55	Overall, I have a great deal of self-confidence.
56	Sometimes I take things that don't belong to me.
57	I feel relaxed in conversations with peers.
58	I am not very successful in tasks that require strong verbal expression skills.
59	I am almost never depressed.
60	I have similar values to my parents.
61	I am (was) successful in most school subjects.
62	I am not very successful in problem-solving.
63	I have the right body weight.
64	I seem boring to peers of the same sex.
65	I have a lot of energy for sports and physical activities.
66	I struggle to understand everything related to mathematics.
67	Continuous spiritual or religious growth is very important to me.
68	Overall, I have a very positive opinion of myself.
69	I never cheat.
70	I am quite shy in the company of the opposite sex.



71	Compared to other people, my speaking skills are quite good.
72	I am becoming increasingly tense and restless.
73	My parents have never particularly respected me.
74	I am not very interested in (was not interested in) school subjects.
75	I am intellectually very curious.
76	I am not satisfied with my appearance.
77	I engage in many activities with peers of the same sex.
78	I am not very successful in any activity that requires physical ability and coordination.
79	I am always good at math.
80	Rarely (if ever) do I spend a day in spiritual meditation or religious prayer.
81	[REDACTED]
82	[REDACTED]
83	[REDACTED]
84	[REDACTED]
85	[REDACTED]
86	[REDACTED]
87	[REDACTED]
88	[REDACTED]
89	[REDACTED]
90	[REDACTED]
91	[REDACTED]
92	[REDACTED]
93	[REDACTED]
94	[REDACTED]
95	I am a very honest person.
96	I feel clumsy in relationships with peers of the opposite sex.
97	I can express my thoughts, desires, and emotions well.
98	I often feel down.
99	I have found it difficult to speak to my parents on multiple occasions.
100	I hate (have hated) most school subjects.
101	I have a vivid imagination.
102	I would like to be more physically attractive.
103	I am popular among peers of the same sex.
104	I am weak in almost every sport and physical activity.
105	[REDACTED]
106	[REDACTED]
107	[REDACTED]
108	[REDACTED]
109	[REDACTED]
110	[REDACTED]
111	[REDACTED]
112	[REDACTED]
113	I have (had) good grades in almost all school subjects.
114	I have no interest in inventing things.
115	Most of my friends are more attractive than me.
116	Most people have more friends of the same sex than I do.
117	I enjoy sports and physical activities.
118	I have never been particularly enthusiastic about math.
119	I believe that after my death, my spirit or soul will continue to exist.
120	Overall, my feelings toward myself are quite negative.
121	[REDACTED]
122	[REDACTED]
123	[REDACTED]
124	[REDACTED]
125	[REDACTED]
126	[REDACTED]
127	[REDACTED]
128	[REDACTED]
129	I have many friends of the same sex.
130	I am a "sedentary" type of person who avoids strenuous activities.
131	Overall, I do many things that are important.
132	I am not a very reliable person.



133	Religious beliefs have little to do with the type of person I want to become.
134	I have never stolen anything significant.
135	Overall, I don't accept myself too much.
136	Few of my friends are very religious, if anyone at all.

## WCQ-I questionnaire

### INSTRUCTIONS

When responding to this questionnaire, please keep in mind your **typical response to stressful situations**. A stressful situation is one that you perceive as challenging or burdensome and it makes you feel uncomfortable or requires significant effort to cope with. Such situations can arise in your family, at work, or when you're with friends, and they can relate to anything that is important to you. Consider how you usually react and respond in such situations. Please respond to all statements. Read each statement and enter the corresponding number in the response space, indicating the extent to which you have acted in that way in stressful situations.

Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	Mostly
0	1	2	3

1	I focused on what I needed to do.
2	I tried to break down the problem to better understand it.
3	I directed my attention to other work or activities to stop thinking about the problem.
4	I felt that time would solve the problem and that I just needed to wait.
5	I compromised to get at least something positive out of the situation.
6	I took action even though I thought it wouldn't work, just to do something.
7	I tried to get the person I had a problem with to change their mind.
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
19	I reassured myself with thoughts that helped me feel better.
20	I got inspired to do something constructive about the problem.
21	I tried to forget about it altogether.
22	I sought professional help.
23	I changed and became more mature.
24	I waited to see how things would unfold before taking action.
25	I apologized or did something else that helped calm the situation.
26	I made an action plan and followed it.
27	I settled for the second best solution that was possible.
28	I allowed my emotions to express themselves.
29	
30	
31	
32	
33	
34	
35	
36	
37	
38	
39	I made some changes so that the problem could be resolved favorably.
40	I avoided contact with others.
41	I didn't allow the problem to affect me, so I didn't want to think about it too much.





42	I asked someone I value for advice.
43	I tried to hide from others how bad things really were.
44	I tried to take a more lighthearted approach to the problem, not too seriously.
45	I talked to someone about my feelings.
46	I stood up and fought for what I wanted to achieve.
47	I behaved harshly towards others.
48	I helped myself with experiences from similar situations in the past.
49	I knew what needed to be done, so I doubled my efforts to resolve things.
50	I couldn't believe that it happened.
51	I promised myself that things would be different next time.
52	[REDACTED]
53	[REDACTED]
54	[REDACTED]
55	[REDACTED]
56	[REDACTED]
57	[REDACTED]
58	[REDACTED]
59	[REDACTED]
60	I prayed.
61	I prepared myself for the worst.
62	I repeated in my mind what I would say or do.
63	I thought about how someone I value would act in such a situation.
64	I tried to see things from another person's perspective.
65	I reminded myself that things could be worse.
66	I exercised or engaged in some other physical activity.