

COMPARATIVE STUDY ON PRACTICING OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES IN ROMANIA AND EASTERN EUROPE

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Keywords:

- outdoor activities
- Romania
- Eastern Europe

Abstract:

This paper presents a comparative study regarding the development of outdoor activities in Romania and in Eastern Europe.

The main premise of this study is represented by the fact that the outdoor education is mistaken with the environmental-ecological education; this is because both of them are conducted outdoors, but outdoor education does not mean just that, it has multiple uses for all fields, not only for environmental protection.

Most physical education and sports specialists believe that outdoor education represents a strong source of learning experiences – a free, relaxing environment, without the constraints imposed by the 4 walls of a classroom, it can offer the pupils numerous challenges, thus making the education process stronger, more inspirational and able to change the antisocial behaviors, creating a strong relationship between people, based on mutual support.

The answers of the subjects show that two categories of respondents have completely different information about the components of outdoor activities, and that 25.92% of the Romanians responding to the printed questionnaire declared that they never practice this type of activities.

In Romania this type of activities seems to not to be considered beneficial for the education of children, 57.41% of the respondents declaring that in the curricula of Romanian schools the outdoor activities DO NOT EXIST, unlike in the schools of Eastern Europe, where, according to 78.11% of the respondents, in the curricula of the schools in their countries the outdoor activities EXIST.

INTRODUCTION

The outdoors as a physical or social setting may meet the needs of physical health, self-sufficiency, risk-taking, the building of social ties (including teambuilding), and the needs of achievement (such as practicing, enhancing and challenging skills, testing stamina and endurance, and seeking adventure or excitement). The outdoors can be an environment in which people "show what they can do" [Rolston, H III., 1988].

University outdoor recreation programs are becoming more popular in the Europe where some Universities often offer indoor rock climbing walls, equipment rental, ropes courses and trip programming. Even though Romania is a member of the European community, it can be observed that outdoor activities are present in an insignificant proportion in the curricula of Romanian universities.

The outdoor education is best suited with the informal education, because like the latter, outdoor education is based mostly on active participation, maximizing the learning process, minimizing the specific constraints of the school, offering an immediate practical utility of what is learned, being developed in various contexts with a pleasant content, using methods

that stimulate the pupils' involvement and participation, with a flexible structure and planning, the educational process being focused on the participant, and being based on the participants' experience.

The central idea for choosing this theme is that in Romania the outdoor activities, seen as *activities outside the institutional space of the school*, are found in a very small proportion in the curricula of Romanian schools.

At the same time, another motivation for choosing this theme is the belief that teachers need to expand their knowledge regarding the concept of **outdoor activity**, as an alternative to the formal education - *An ensemble of pedagogical activities that are institutionally designed as an expression of an educational policy that establishes the finalities, being legalized and developed within a national education system that is structured in a precise manner, on gradual hierarchies on age stages, comprising education units and institutions of various types and levels* - [Cojocariu V.M., 2008].

THE MATERIAL AND THE METHODOLOGY

Due to the fact that the authors of this paper have been actively involved throughout their lives in outdoor activities, which allowed them to collaborate with many experts, Romanian and foreign, this study revealed itself as necessary, as an attempt to present an objective image of what outdoor activities truly mean and the way in which they are perceived in Romania.

The study was conducted between November 2016 and June 2017. For this study, we used the **questionnaire-based inquiry**.

The questionnaire had 14 questions and was distributed electronically and in print form, in Romanian and English.

The **electronic questionnaire** can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/18YZwkMew08wypK2xFmKTy68OFLhKB6VPd4VEfMRBHT8/edit> - the questionnaire in English;

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1AC_A_SURgeB0sXPIwpZnQPYRpqJnKTzZAChXcTiG0A/edit - the questionnaire in Romanian.

The **printed questionnaire** was distributed to the students of the:

1. Faculty of Sports Studies of Brno - Czech Republic;
2. Faculty of Physical Education and Sports of Bratislava - Slovakia;
3. Faculty of Physical Education of Presov - Slovakia;
4. Faculty of Physical Education of Ruzomberok - Slovakia;
5. Faculty of Physical Education of Banja Luka - Bosnia Herzegovina;
6. Faculty of Physical Education of Olomouc - Czech Republic;
7. Faculty of Physical Education of Warsaw- Poland;
8. Faculty of Physical Education and Sports of Zajecar - Serbia;
9. Faculty of Movement, Sports, and Health Sciences of Bacău - Romania;
10. Faculty of Physical Education and Sports of Cluj Napoca - Romania;
11. Faculty of Physical Education and Sports of Galați - Romania;

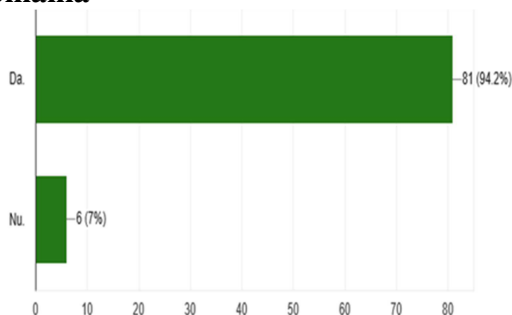
On **Google Forms** a number of **89** questionnaires was received, filled out by Romanians, and **12** questionnaires filled out by subjects from Eastern Europe.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

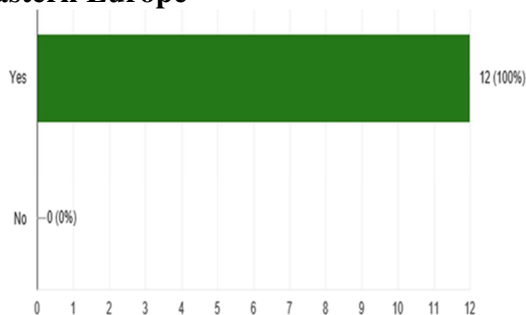
After analyzing each question, the following aspects can be noted:

Question 1: Do you know anything about outdoor activities? received the following answers:

**Google Forms :
Romania**

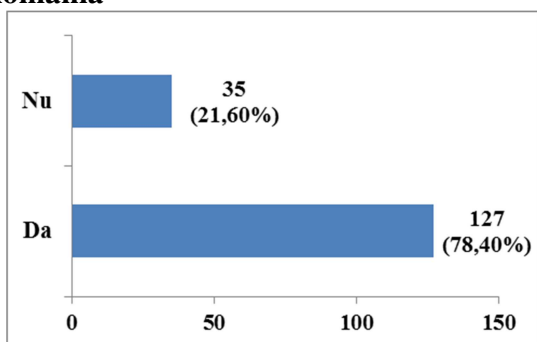


Eastern Europe

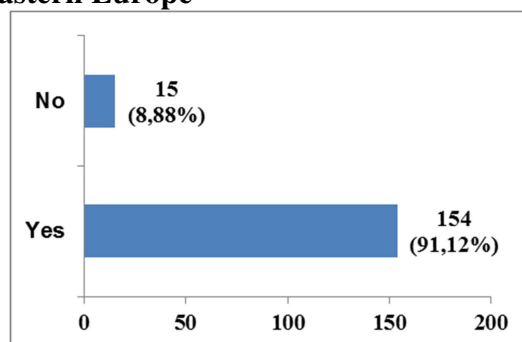


Printed questionnaire:

Romania



Eastern Europe



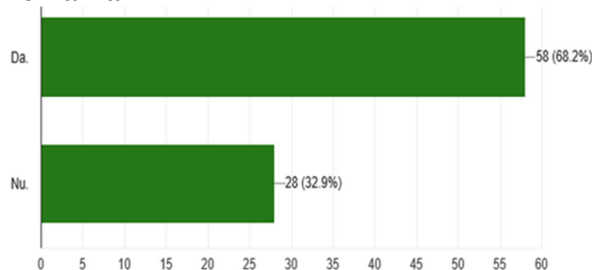
The results show different answers in the two categories of respondents, the Eastern Europe subjects answering YES 100% in the Google Forms questionnaire and 91.12% in the printed questionnaire, whereas the Romanian subjects have answered 94.2% YES on Google Forms and 78.40% in the printed questionnaire.

The analysis of the answers given by the two categories of subjects permits the statement that a significant part of the Romanian respondents do not have knowledge about outdoor activities.

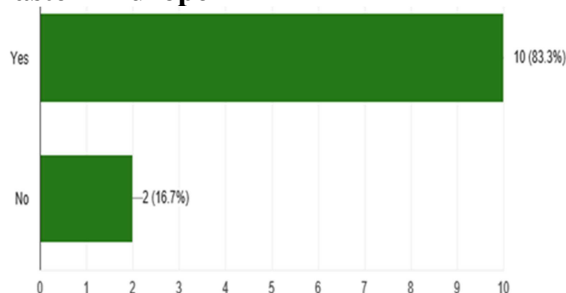
Question 2: Are outdoor activities a part of your current program?, received the following answers:

Google Forms :

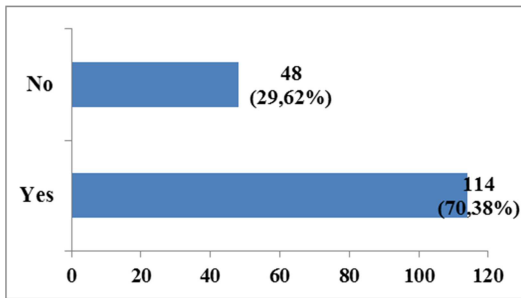
Romania



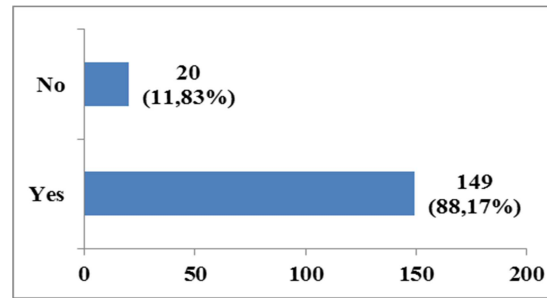
Eastern Europe



**Printed questionnaire:
Romania**



Eastern Europe



The previous figures show a significant difference between the answers of the Eastern European subjects and the ones of the Romanian subjects, as follows:

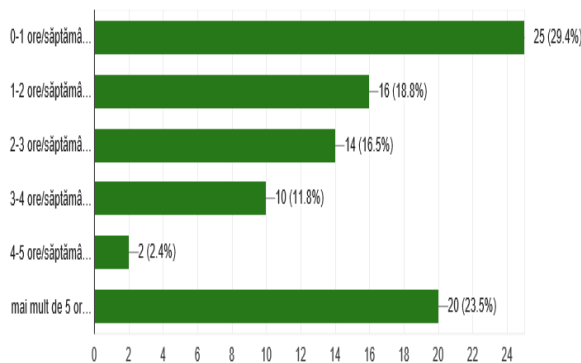
- 32.9% of the Romanian Google Forms respondents declare that the outdoor activities are not a part of their current program, while the percentage of the Eastern European respondents who do not have these activities as a part of their current program is much smaller, 16.7.
- The very large difference between the number of the two categories of respondents, Romania - 85 and Eastern Europe - 12, leads to the statement that these answers are inconclusive.
- The relatively equal number of the respondents to the printed questionnaire leads to the belief that the analysis of these answers is objective, with the negative answers of the Romanian subjects (29.62%) being higher by 17.79% than the answers of the Eastern European subjects (11.83%).

This significant percentage leads to the conclusion that in Romania the outdoor activities are not a part of the people's current program.

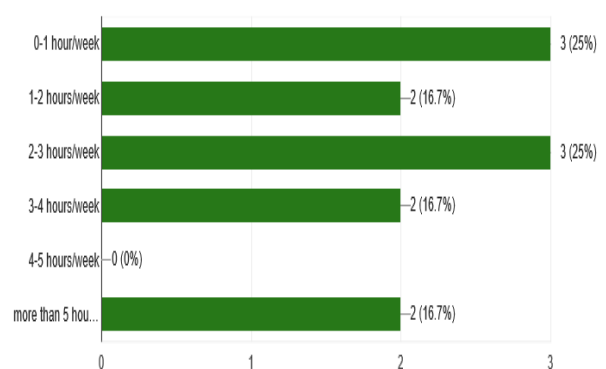
Question 3: How many hours a week do you do outdoor activities?, received the following answers:

Google Forms :

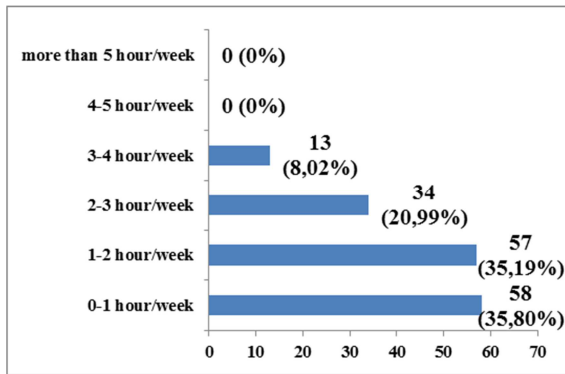
Romania



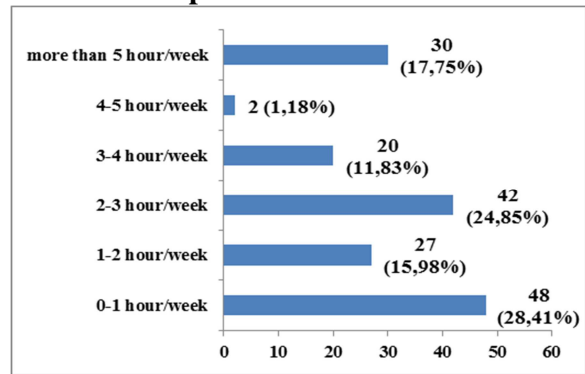
Eastern Europe



**Printed questionnaire:
Romania**



Eastern Europe



The results of the Google Forms questionnaire, presented in the previous figures show that the number of hours per week given to this type of activities is approximately equal in Romania and in Eastern Europe:

- 1 hour/week - 29.4% in Romania and 25% in Eastern Europe;
- 2 hours/week - 18.8% in Romania and 16.7% in Eastern Europe;

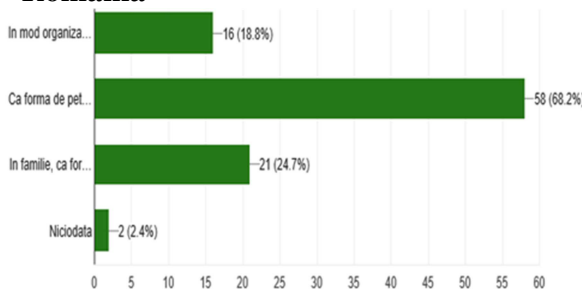
However, the printed questionnaire results show significant differences between the answers of the two categories of subjects:

- 1 hour/week - 35.8% in Romania and 28.41% in Eastern Europe;
- 2 hours/week - 35.19% in Romania and 15.98% in Eastern Europe;

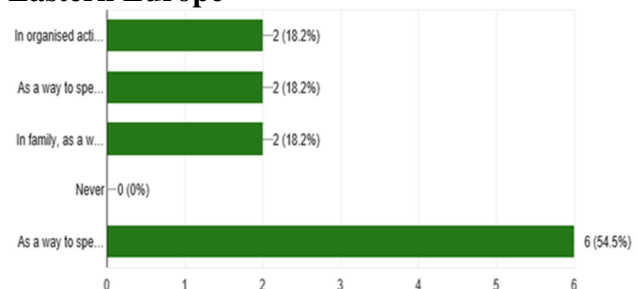
For this study, it is significant to see that 17.75% of the Eastern European respondents allocate weekly more than 5 hours for outdoor activities, while the Romanian respondents allocate 0 (zero) hours for this type of activities.

Question 4: You usually get involved in outdoor activities received the following answers:
Google Forms:

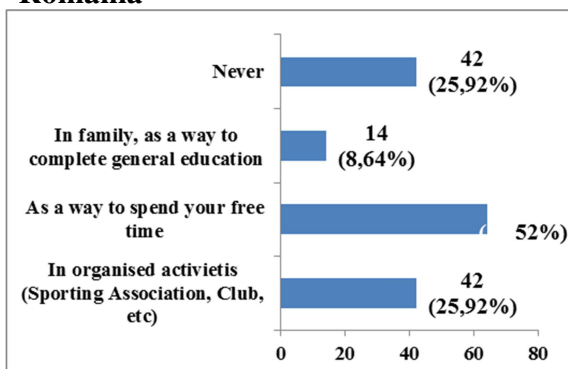
Romania



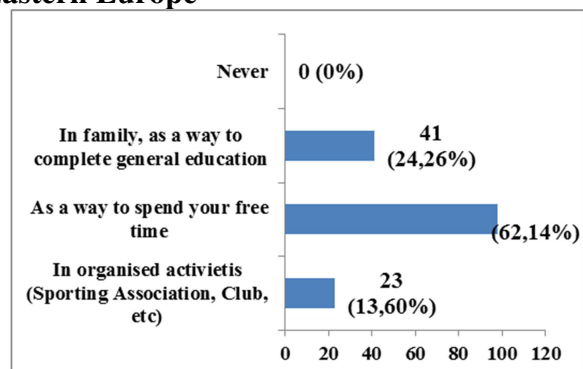
Eastern Europe



**Printed questionnaire:
Romania**



Eastern Europe



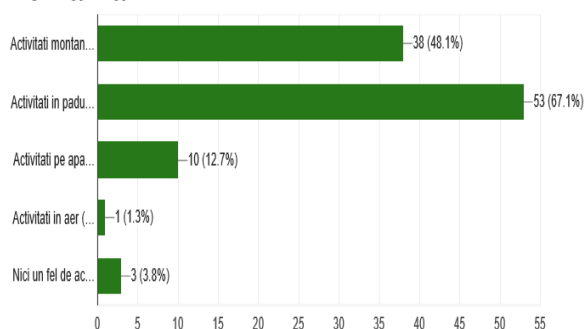
The figures presenting the groups of subjects responding to the Google Forms questionnaire show that the answers to this question are almost identical in both groups, the Romanians and the Eastern Europeans.

- The Romanian respondents said that they practice outdoor activities in proportion of 68.2% as a leisure time activity, while this answer was chosen by 72.7% of the Eastern European respondents.
- The percentage of 62.14 of the Eastern Europeans who chose the answer in the printed questionnaire "As a leisure time activity" is significantly higher than the Romanians' percentage - 39.52.

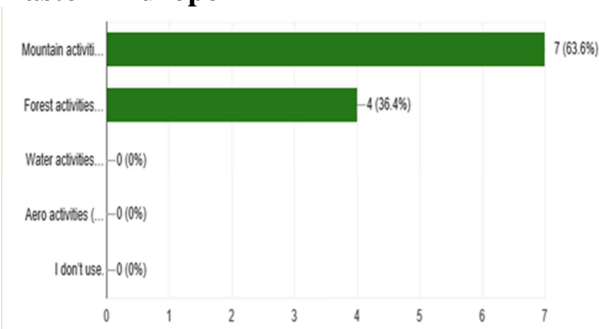
The significant fact for this study is the sad reality that 25.92% of the Romanian respondents to the printed questionnaire have said that they never practice any type of outdoor activities.

Question 5: Give examples of outdoor activities you do most often, received the following answers: Google Forms :

Romania

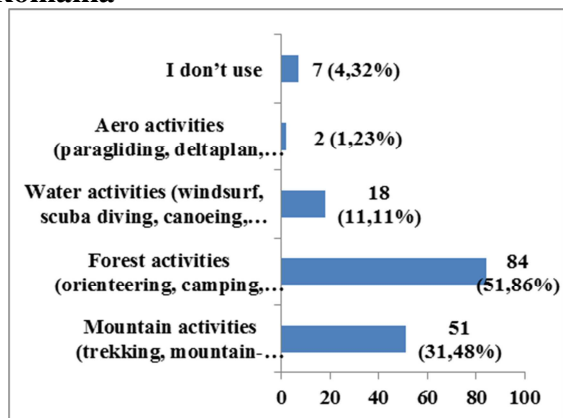


Eastern Europe

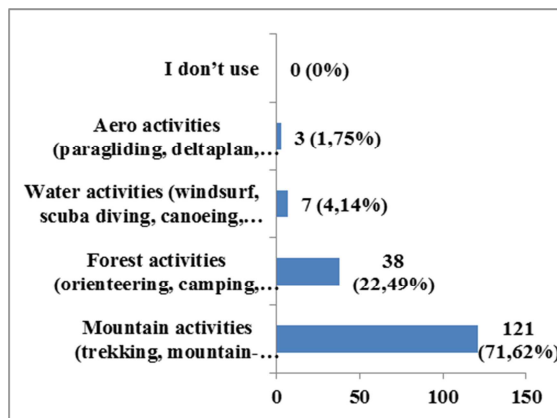


Printed questionnaire:

Romania



Eastern Europe



The Google Forms figures show an approximately equal percentage in the answers chosen for this question - the answers *Mountain activities* + *Forest activities*, however the authors of this study believe that the two categories of respondents have completely different information about the components of outdoor activities from the category of forest activities and mountain activities.

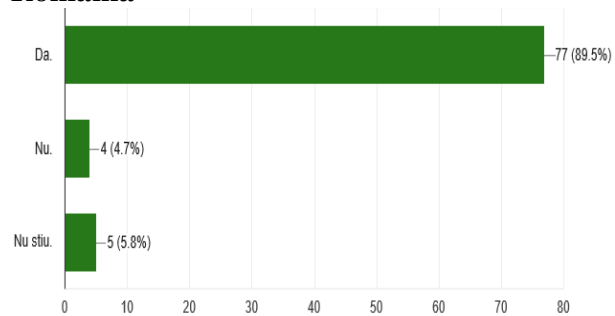
This equal percentage is completely reversed for the printed questionnaire answers, with 51.86% of the Romanian subjects choosing the answer Forest activities (tourist orientation, camping, paintball, jogging, etc.). while 71.62% of the Eastern European respondents chose the answers Mountain activities (trekking, mountain-biking, skiing, spelunking, mountain climbing, etc.).

This difference of opinion leads to the conclusion that the two categories of respondents have completely different information about the components of outdoor activities.

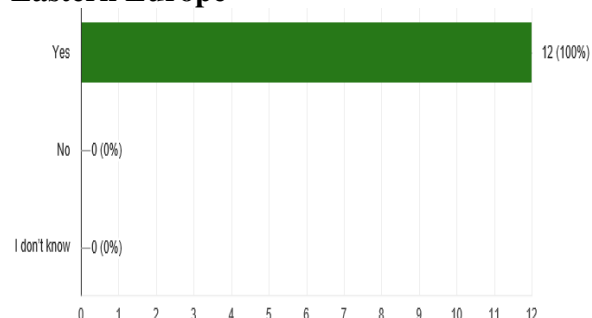
Question 6: Do you think it is necessary to include this type of activities in the school curriculum?, received the following answers:

Google Forms :

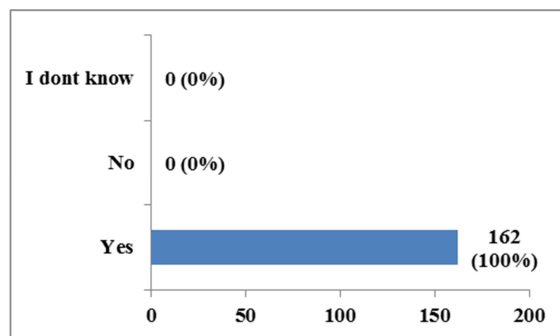
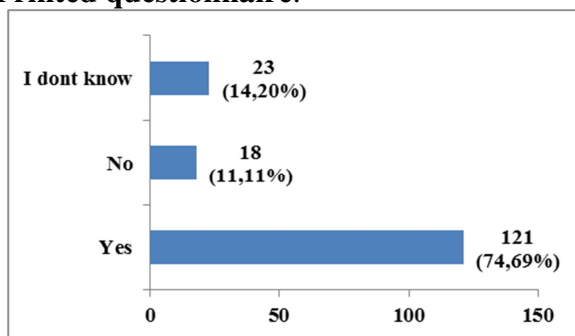
Romania



Eastern Europe



Printed questionnaire:



The analysis of the Google Forms answers shows that the opinions are significantly different for this question, in the sense that 100 % of the Eastern European respondents believe it is necessary to include this type of activities in the school curriculum, while 4.7% of the Romanian respondents think it is not necessary to include this type of activities in the school curriculum, and 5.8% of them do not know.

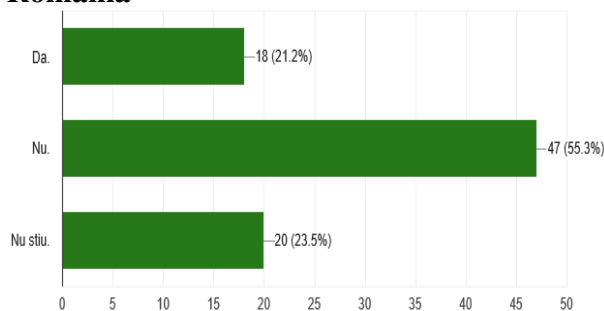
The results of the printed questionnaire show that there are different answers in the two categories of subjects, all Eastern European respondents (162 – 100%) believing it is necessary to include this type of activities in the school curriculum, unlike the Romanian respondents, who believe this in proportion of only 74.69%.

Considering the objectivity of the answers of the questioned people (who had no reason to give false answers), it can be said that in Romania, this type of activities is not considered beneficial or necessary for the education of children.

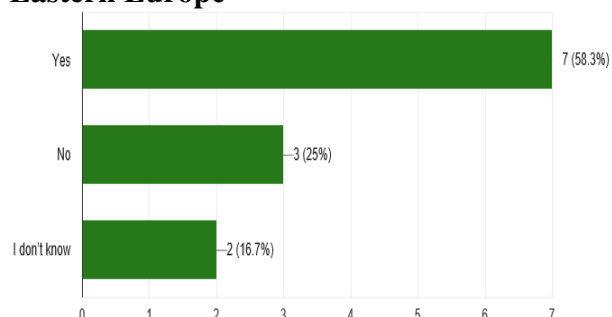
Question 7: Does the school curriculum in your country include any outdoor activities?, received the following answers:

Google Forms :

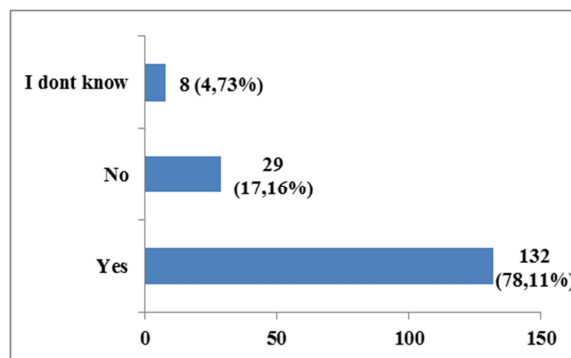
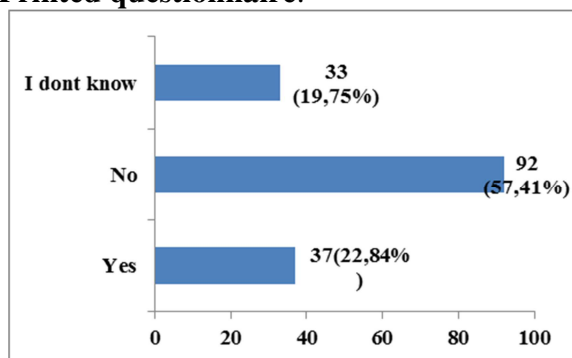
Romania



Eastern Europe



Printed questionnaire:



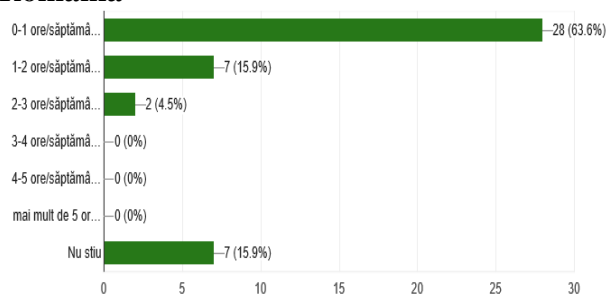
The analysis of the Google Forms answers confirms the answers received to the previous question, **55.3%** of the Romanian respondents declaring that in the curricula of Romanian schools the outdoor activities **DO NOT EXIST**, unlike in the schools of Eastern Europe, where, according to **58.3%** of the respondents, in the curricula of the schools in their countries the outdoor activities **EXIST**.

This difference of opinions is even higher in the case of the printed questionnaire: 57.41% of the Romanian respondents declared that in the curricula of Romanian schools the outdoor activities **DO NOT EXIST**, unlike in the schools of Eastern Europe, where, according to **78.11%** of the respondents, in the curricula of the schools in their countries the outdoor activities **EXIST**.

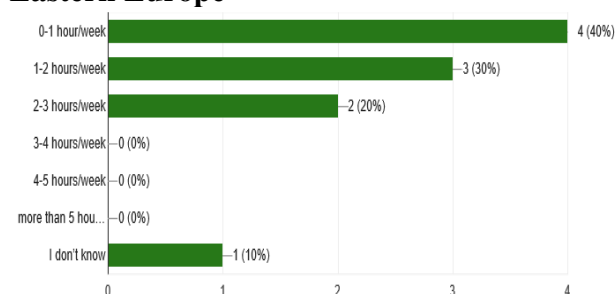
Question 8: If yes, how many hours per week are allotted(approximately) to this type of activities in the school curriculum?, received the following answers:

Google Forms :

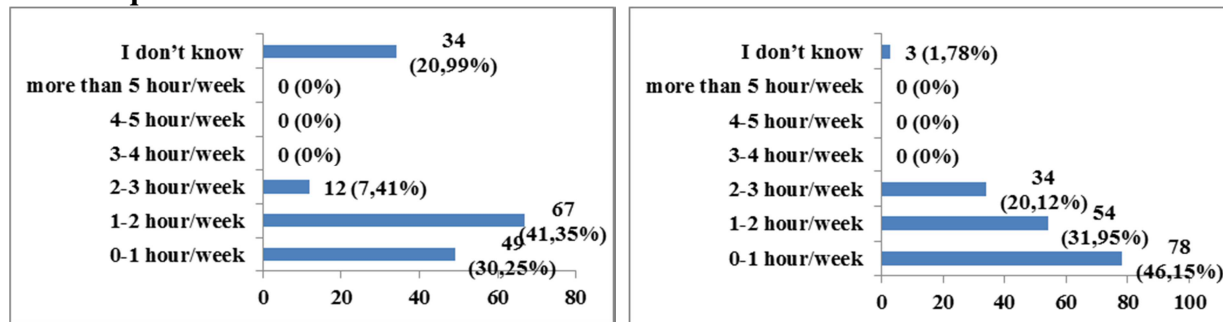
Romania



Eastern Europe



Printed questionnaire:



This question aimed to verify the objectivity of the answers received to question 3 - *How many hours a week do you do outdoor activities?*

After comparing the Google Forms results for the two similar questions, one can notice that the number of hours allocated to this type of activities is different in both categories of subjects, as follows:

- 1 hour/week - 29.4% (question 3) / 63.6% (question 8) in Romania, and 25% (question 3) / 40% (question 8) in Eastern Europe;
- 2 hours/week - 18.8% (question 3) / 15.9% (question 8) in Romania, and 16.7% (question 3) / 30% (question 8) in Eastern Europe.

The printed questionnaire also shows significant differences between the answers to the two questions, as follows:

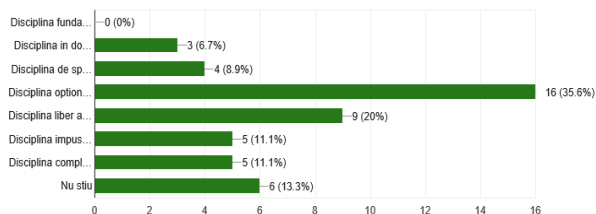
- 1 hour/week - 35.8% (question 3) / 30.25% (question 8) in Romania, and 28.41% (question 3) / 46.15% (question 8) in Eastern Europe;
- 2 hours/week - 35.19% (question 3) / 41.35% (question 8) in Romania, and 15.98% (question 3) / 31.95% (question 8) in Eastern Europe.

These significant differences between the answers to the two similar questions prove that the answers given by both categories of respondents are not objective, or the fact that most respondents do not know how many hours (approximately) are allocated weekly in the school curriculum to outdoor activities.

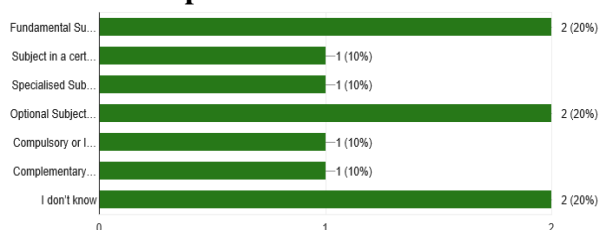
Question 9: Outdoor activities are included in the school curriculum as follows: ..., received the following answers:

Google Forms :

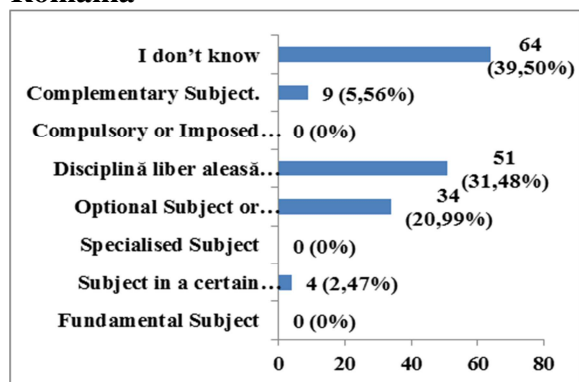
Romania



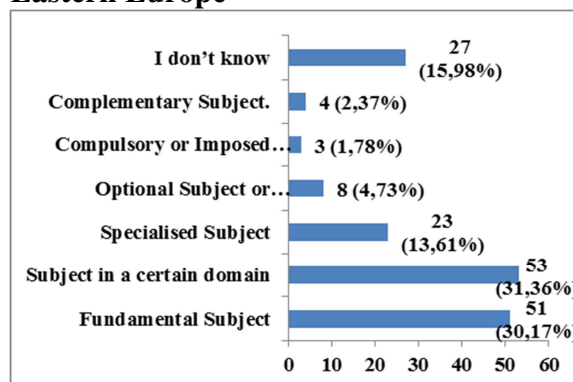
Eastern Europe



**Printed questionnaire:
Romania**



Eastern Europe



Admitting that there is the possibility that the Google Forms questionnaire do not have any knowledge about the presence of outdoor activities in the school curriculum, there will be no analysis of these answers.

An analysis will be made only on the answers of the two categories that have filled out the printed questionnaire, because this version was completed in proportion of 95% by physical education and sports students.

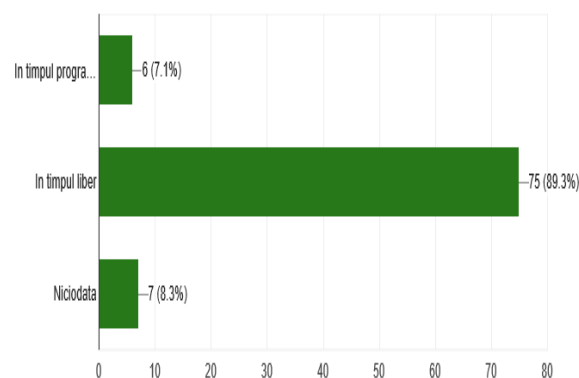
What follows is a hierarchy of the answers given by the Romanian subjects, in comparison to the answers given by the Eastern European ones:

Place	Romania	Eastern Europe
I	Subject of choice 31.48%	Domain subject 31.36%
II	Optional subject 20.99%	Fundamental subject 30.17%
III	Complementary subject 5.56%	Specialized subject 13.61%
IV	Domain subject 2.47%	Optional subject 4.73%
V	Specialized subject 0%	Compulsory subject 1.78%
VI	Compulsory subject 0%	Complementary subject 2.37%
VII	Fundamental subject 0%	Subject of choice 0%
	I don't know 39.50%	I don't know 15.98%

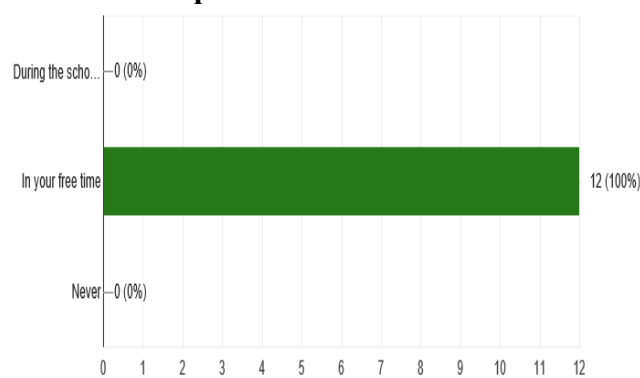
The previous table shows major differences between the two school curricula, in Romania the outdoor activities being present as a Subject of choice (41.48%), while in Eastern Europe these activities are present as a Domain subject (31.36%).

Question 10: When do you usually do outdoor activities? ..., received the following answers Google Forms :

Romania

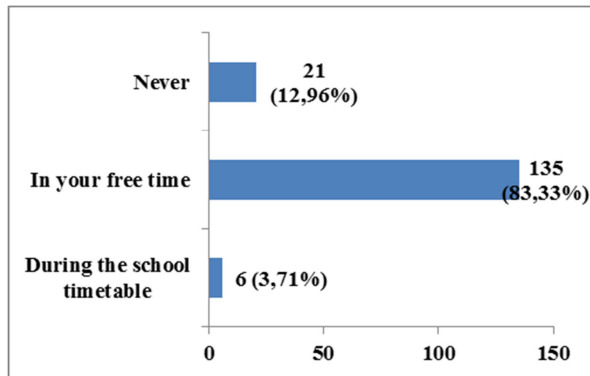


Eastern Europe

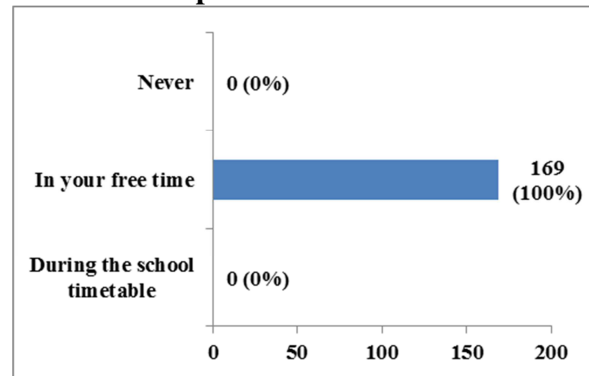


Printed questionnaire:

Romania



Eastern Europe



The analysis of the Google Forms answers shows that the opinions are significantly different for this question, in the sense that 100 % of the Eastern European respondents practice this kind of activities in their leisure time, while 8.3% of the Romanian respondents declare that they never practice this type of activities.

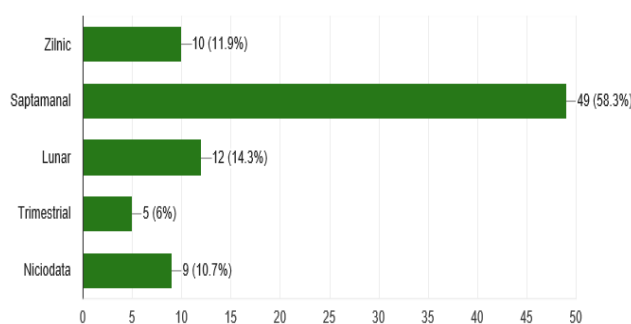
The results of the printed questionnaire show that there are different answers in the two categories of subjects, all Eastern European respondents (169 – 100%) declaring that they practice this kind of activities in their leisure time, unlike the Romanian respondents, who answered as follows: **During school program – 3.71% (6 respondents); In their leisure time - 83.33% (135 respondents); Never - 12.96% (21 respondents).**

Considering the objectivity of the answers of the questioned people (who had no reason to give false answers), it can be said that in Eastern Europe, this type of activities is given special attention.

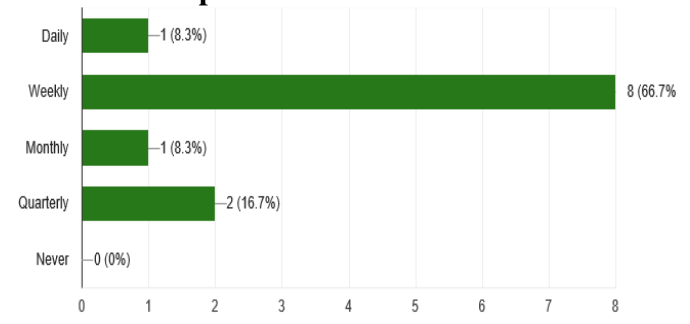
Question 11: You do outdoor activities: ..., received the following answers

Google Forms :

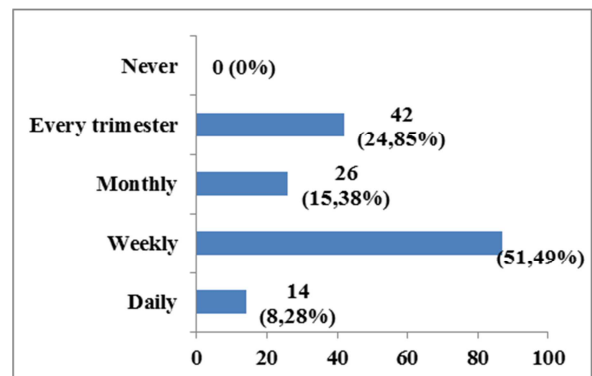
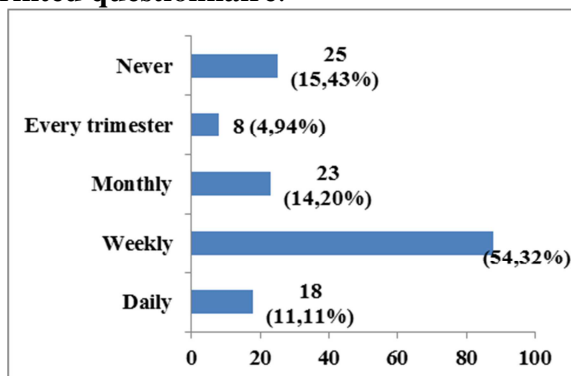
Romania



Eastern Europe



Printed questionnaire:



An analysis will be made only on the answers of the two categories that have filled out the printed questionnaire, because this version was completed in proportion of 95% by physical education and sports students.

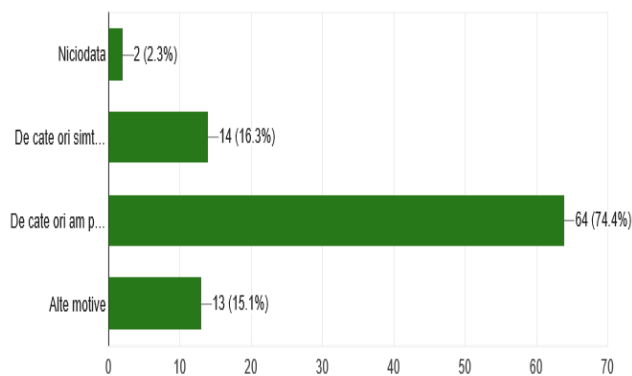
What follows is a hierarchy of the answers given by the Romanian subjects, in comparison to the answers given by the Eastern European ones:

Place	Romania	Eastern Europe
I	Weekly	Weekly
II	Never	Every trimester
III	Monthly	Monthly
IV	Daily	Daily
V	Every trimester	Never

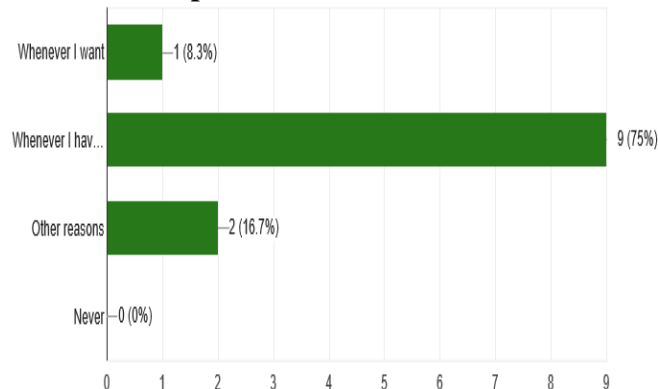
The previous table shows that a significant percentage of the respondents (15.43%) does not practice outdoor activities.

Question 12: *I do outdoor activities: ...*, received the following answers

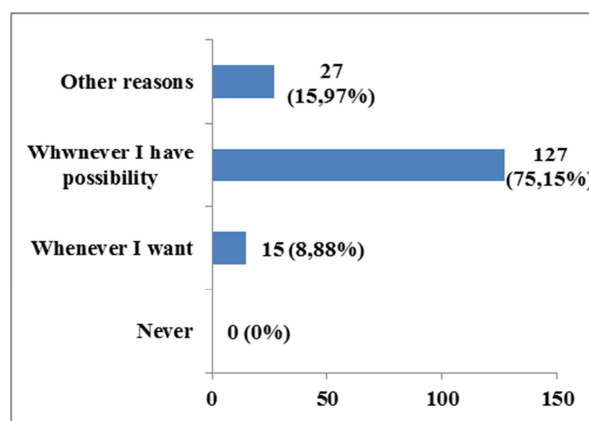
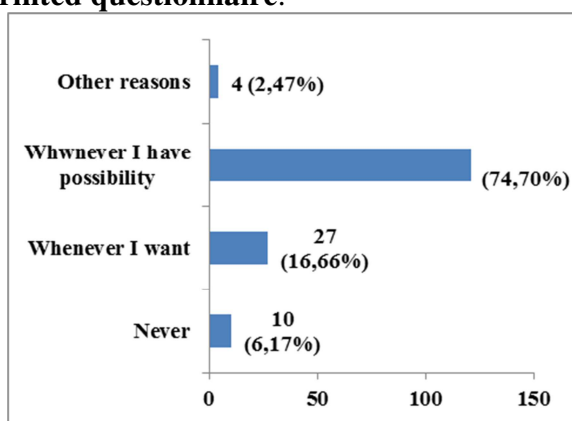
**Google Forms :
Romania**



Eastern Europe



Printed questionnaire:



This question aimed to verify the objectivity of the answers received for the previous question: *You do outdoor activities: ...*

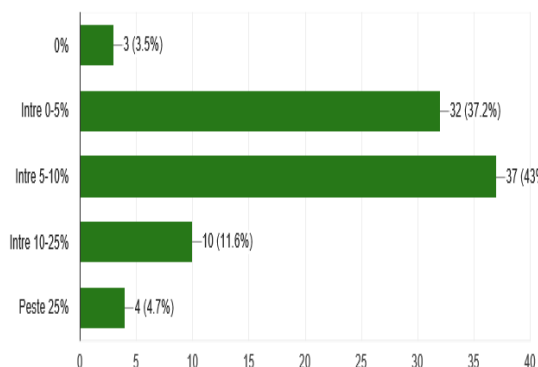
When comparing the Google Forms results for the two similar questions, one can notice that the percentage for the answer *Never* is completely different for the Romanian respondents - 15.43% to the previous question, and 6.17% to this question.

This significant difference proves that the Romanian respondents' answers are not objective.

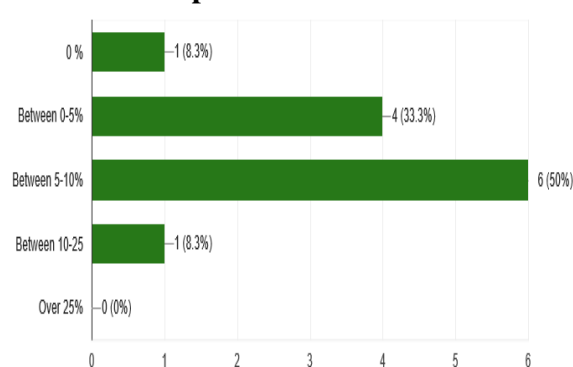
Question 13: What percentage of your personal budget do you allocate in order to do this type of activities (expenses for: special equipment, transport, accommodation, meals)?, received the following answers:

Google Forms :

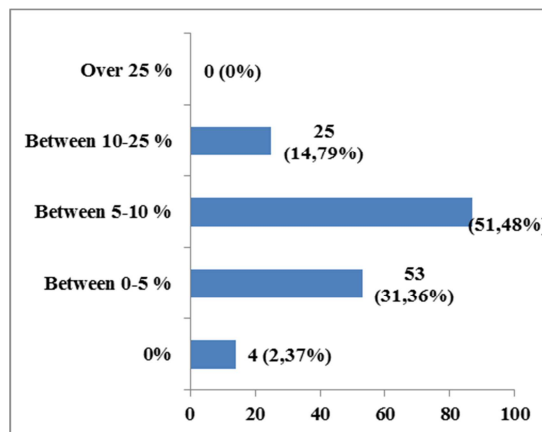
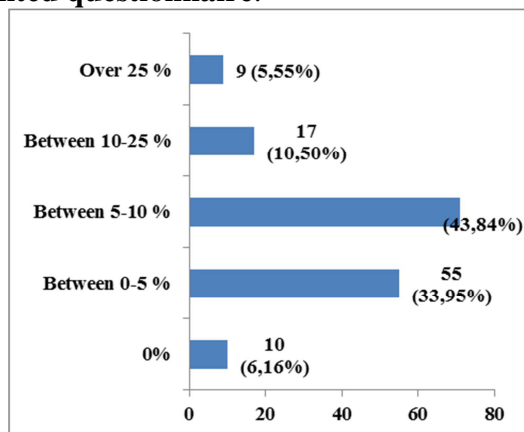
Romania



Eastern Europe



Printed questionnaire:



An analysis will be made only on the answers of the two categories that have filled out the printed questionnaire, because this version was completed in proportion of 95% by physical education and sports students.

What follows is a hierarchy of the answers given by the Romanian subjects, in comparison to the answers given by the Eastern European ones:

Place	Romania	Eastern Europe
I	Between 5-10%	Between 5-10%
II	Between 0-5 %	Between 0-5 %
III	Between 10-25 %	Between 10-25 %
IV	0 %	0 %
V	Over 25%	Over 25%

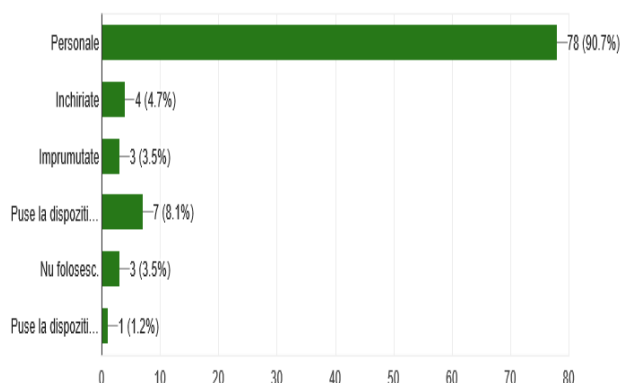
Percentage	Romania	Eastern Europe
I	43.84%	51.48%
II	33.95%	31.36%
III	10.50%	14.79%
IV	6.16%	2.37 %
V	5.55%	0%

The previous table shows that both categories of subjects allocate a *approximately equal percentage to practice outdoor activities (expenses for: specific equipment, transportation, lodging, meals).*

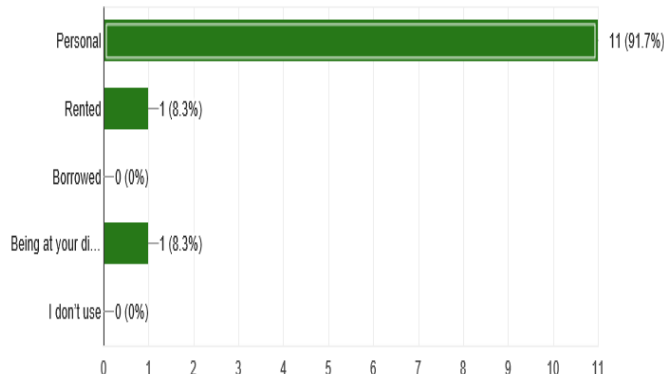
Question 14: The materials I use to do outdoor activities are: ..., received the following answers:

Google Forms :

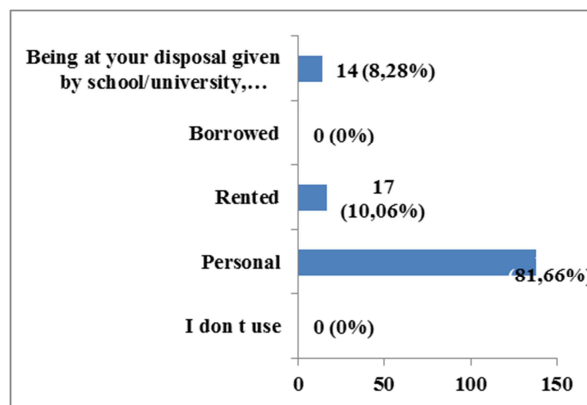
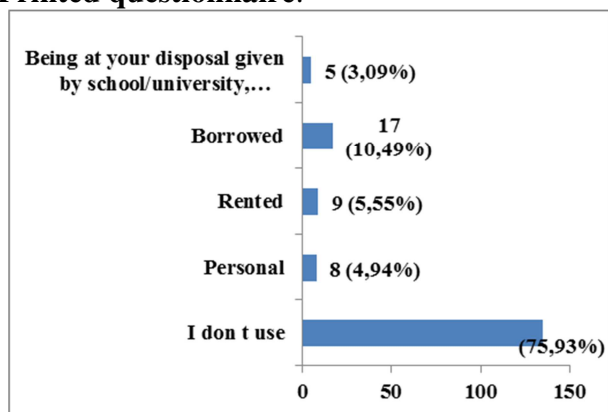
Romania



Eastern Europe



Printed questionnaire:



The figures show that both categories of respondents use personal materials to practice outdoor activities.

CONCLUSIONS

Before elaborating the final conclusions of this study, one admission must be made - the results recorded in this study cannot be generalized because the number of subjects is very small, which, admittedly, does not makes this research an objective one.

After admitting that, however, several final conclusions can be drawn at the end of this study:

1. a significant part of the Romanian respondents do not have knowledge about outdoor activities;
2. in Romania the outdoor activities are not a part of the people's current program.
3. the Eastern European respondents allocate weekly more than 5 hours for outdoor activities, while the Romanian respondents allocate 0 (zero) hours for this type of activities;
4. the significant fact for this study is the sad reality that 25.92% of the Romanian respondents to the printed questionnaire have said that they never practice any type of outdoor activities;
5. the two categories of respondents have completely different information about the components of outdoor activities;
6. it can be concluded that in Romania this type of activities seems to not to be considered beneficial for the education of children, 57.41% of the respondents declaring that in the curricula of Romanian schools the outdoor activities DO NOT

EXIST, unlike in the schools of Eastern Europe, where, according to 78.11% of the respondents, in the curricula of the schools in their countries the outdoor activities EXIST;

7. there are major differences between the two school curricula, in Romania the outdoor activities being present as a *Subject of choice* (41.48%), while in Eastern Europe these activities are present as a *Domain subject* (31.36%).

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