

## A SOCIOMETRIC STUDY ON IMPROVING SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES OF THE DISCIPLINE TOURISM-ORIENTATION FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS FOR 1ST YEAR STUDENTS

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### Abstract

*The continuous changes of the national system of higher education bring forward the need for a specific content of the disciplines included in the curriculum, so that the transversal and professional competences of this discipline are met. These are required for the socio-professional integration of the graduates. The subject "Methodology of Mountain Sports Disciplines: Tourism-Orientation" is part of the merged educational activities, taking place at the end of the 1st year, during the practical training, comprises 28 hours of practical activities and is compulsory, having a positive influence on the process of knowledge and ability acquirement of graduates in Physical Education and Sports' graduates.*

**Key words:** questionnaire-based investigation, competences, tourism and orientation, hiking.

### INTRODUCTION

The discipline "Tourism-Orientation" requires more focus on the themes under discussion and on its general and specific objectives, in the context of a modern approach to the educational activity centered on the student, who is the main beneficiary of the educational process. The present study reflects the way in which students perceive this discipline as a positive factor in the process of

professional development, being adapted to current social requirements. The objectives of the discipline are, presented in the table below, and help understanding its characteristics and the complexity of its main activities. They have been created according to the specificity of this activity and according to knowledge in specialised literature [1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11].

**Table 1.** Main and specific objectives, as mentioned in the syllabus

<b>Main Objective</b>	Understanding its specific notions and acquiring organizing skills, as well as practising tourist activities (excursions, hiking, sportive tourist orientation)
<b>Specific Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning the basic rules that are required for an efficient organization of the tourist orientation activity;</li> <li>- Understanding the importance of the steps to be followed and of their corresponding tasks, in order to organize educational excursions;</li> <li>- Learning the notions and understanding the technology used in the tourist orientation activity;</li> <li>- Knowing and explaining the benefits of the factors that help conditioning the body;</li> <li>- Knowing and putting into practice first aid techniques in case of emergency;</li> <li>- Developing the capacity of intervening and coming up with measures meant to solve interpersonal conflicts and to raise group cohesion, during the specific activities;</li> <li>- Understanding the techniques of working in the team and of taking up specific roles during teamwork, showing respect towards leaders;</li> <li>- Having initiative in organizing and controlling multiple specific activities.</li> </ul>

### WORKING HYPOTHESIS AND ORGANISATION OF RESEARCH

At the end of the activities, with the help of direct interrogation on the beneficiaries, some main conclusions can be drawn: how to improve the activities, how to identify and avoid the factors preventing the objectives from being met. The applied research methods have been: analysing and generalizing speciality literature information, questionnaire-based investigation, statistical-mathematical methods, graphical and tabular

representation of data [4, 6]. Microsoft Office Word has been used for drawing the graphics.

The research has been done at the end of the second semester of the academic year 2012-2013, on a sample of 48 students, divided into 2 groups - 29 boys and 19 girls, all 1<sup>st</sup> year students at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports, Galati. Because of budget restrictions, each group had been given 5 days for achieving the specific objectives, which meant merging of the activities. Soveja Resort from Vrancea county has been the perfect location for going through with the activities planned. The

questionnaire has 10 accessible questions, with various ways of answering: closed answers, multiple choice and open answers:

1. What do you think is the relevance of the discipline "Methodology of the Sportive Mountainous Disciplines: Tourism-Oriented"-*The stage of merged educational activities* in helping your educational development: a-Very important/Useful; b-Important; c-Of average importance; d-Less important; e-Irrelevant/Useless. Do you think that the 28 hours in the curriculum are enough for the study of its content and for meeting its specific objectives? Yes/No.

2. Is the mountainous location adequate for organizing and hosting the activities? a-Yes, it ensures the best conditions for meeting the objectives; b-It only partially ensures the conditions; c-It does not help in meeting the objectives.

3. Which of the following topics do you think have been best presented, studied and understood at the end? a- How to find your way in nature with and without a compass and guessing the time; b-Where and how to camp, how to make a bonfire and what/how to eat; c-How to make up the groups of tourists, setting up a schedule in the camp and how to give first aid; d-Visiting the attractions and the institutions with a cultural, historical, religious, tourist and economic value; e-Hiking on trails with different levels of length and difficulty. f-Organizing orientation and sportive competitions, including camp championships (football/volleyball).

4. What effects does this discipline have on motricity and health condition? (open ended).

5. Do you think that this discipline has a positive impact on developing character traits and consolidating team spirit? If so, what are these traits? a-Improving personal self and growing the desire of overachieving; b-Taking responsibilities and solving tasks; c-Improving the cohesion of the group and harmonising interpersonal relationships; d-Respect for leaders and group members; e-Discovering the peers' personality; f-Taking initiative in organizing and managing different activities.

6. What did you like the most? Mention positive aspects noticed while taking part in the activities? (open ended).

7. What did you like the least? Mention negative aspects noticed while taking part in the activities? (open ended).

8. In comparison with other subjects studied in the 1st year, this practical activity is: a-More appealing; b-As appealing as other activities; c-Less appealing.

9. What suggestions do you have to improve this activities pertaining to this discipline in the following year, so that the objectives are met? (open ended).

### STUDY RESULTS

In terms of how important the discipline is, 21% of the students consider it very important, 38% important, 31% think it has medium importance, and only 6% consider it less important and 4% irrelevant. These answers prove that the majority of students are aware of the importance of the objectives and the role this discipline play in their professional growth (Fig. 1).

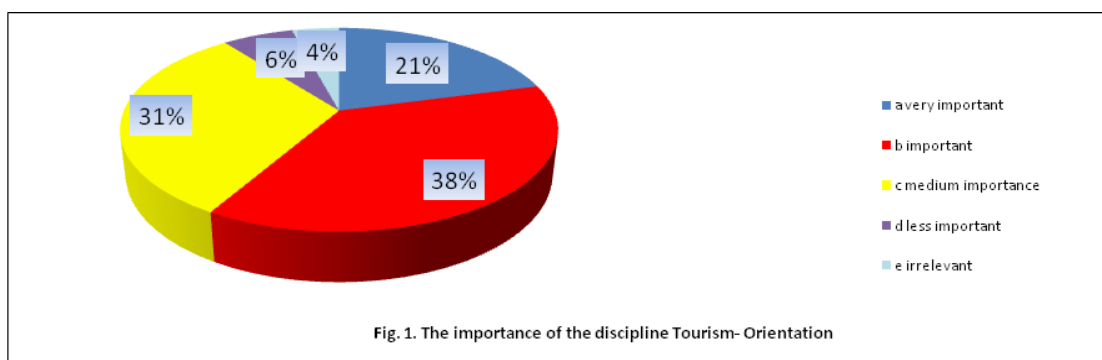
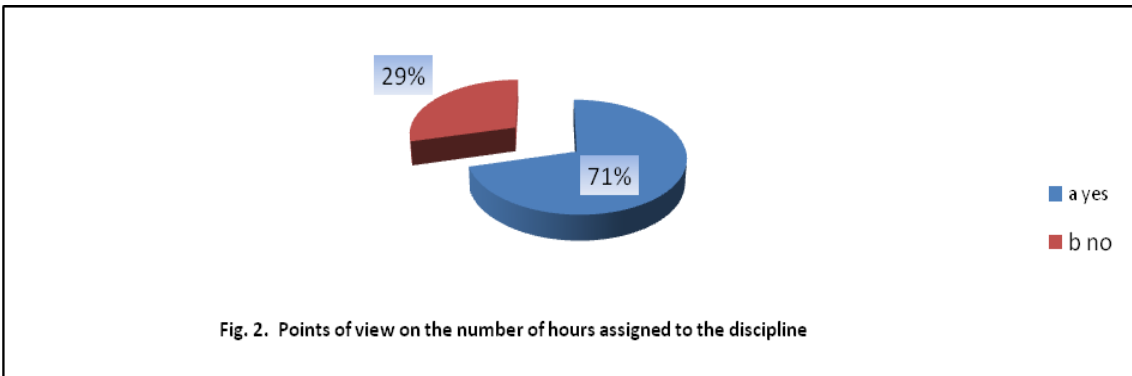


Fig. 1. The importance of the discipline Tourism- Orientation

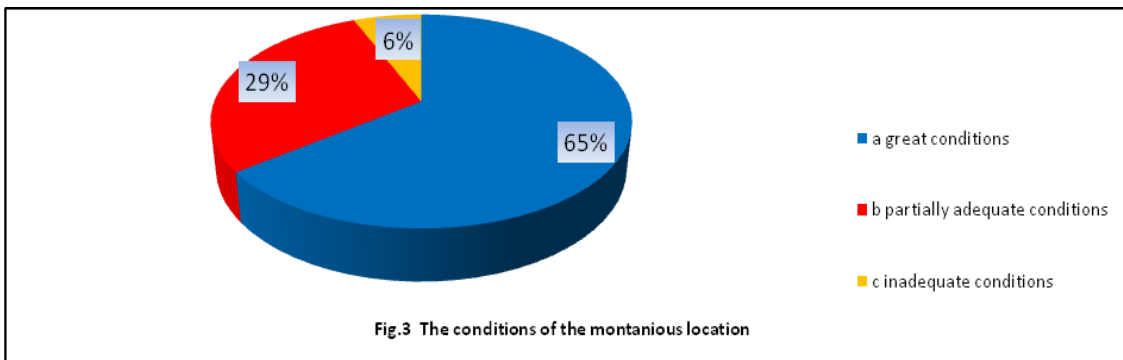
The number of hours assigned to this discipline is considered to be perfect by 71% of those questioned, whereas 29% think the time is not

enough for meeting the objectives and for participating in the activities, an idea expressed at the centralized suggestions, in the last part (Fig. 2).



The location is considered to be adequate by 65% of the students, partially adequate by 29% and inadequate by 6%. The opinions belonging to the lowest percentage are less related to geographical

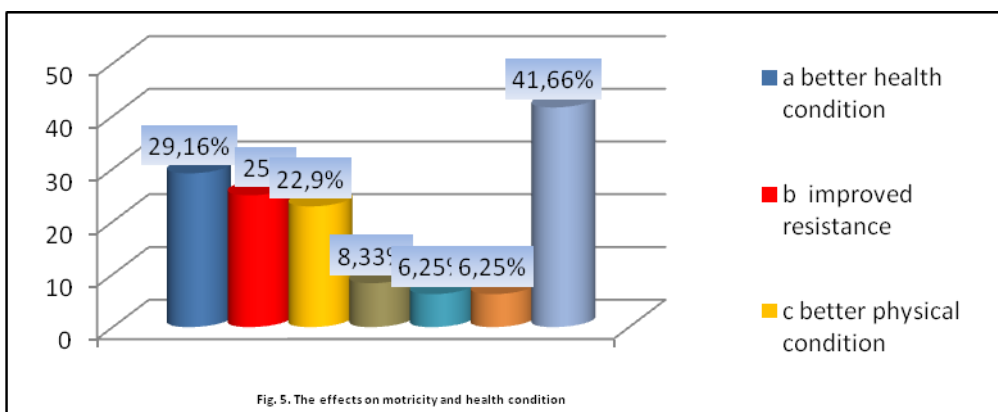
conditions (great for organizing such activities) and more to the need for comfort of a low number of students (Fig. 3).



The process of learning and the importance of each element of the subject is perceived differently: 27% of students believe that finding the way in nature and guessing time related notions have been best presented and therefore understood, 16.66% believe that the best presentation has been made on camping, making the bonfire and choosing the camp location, 39.6% refer to deciding on the camp schedule and organizing the groups, 60.4% make reference to visiting the tourist, economic, social and historical objectives, 89.6% consider that the hiking related objectives have been best achieved, 45.83% mentioned the organization of sportive

competitions. The percentages have been established as a result of multiple choice answers (Fig. 4).

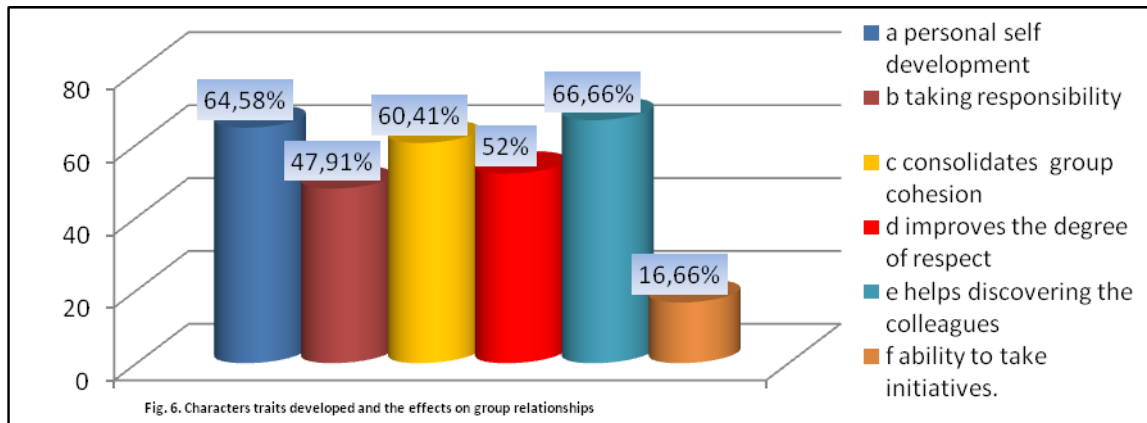
The physical and health condition results of the specific activities have been gathered from the open answers of those questioned: 29.16% refer to a better health condition, 25% refer to an improved resistance, 22.9% refer to a better physical condition, only 8.33% make reference to the positive effects on the major functions of the body, 6.25% refer to body hardening and improving fast reactions. Surprisingly, there is a high number of empty answers: 41.66% (Fig. 5).



The influence of the discipline on developing character traits and consolidating the group has been decided as follows: 64.58% believe that it develops the personal self, 47.91% selected the

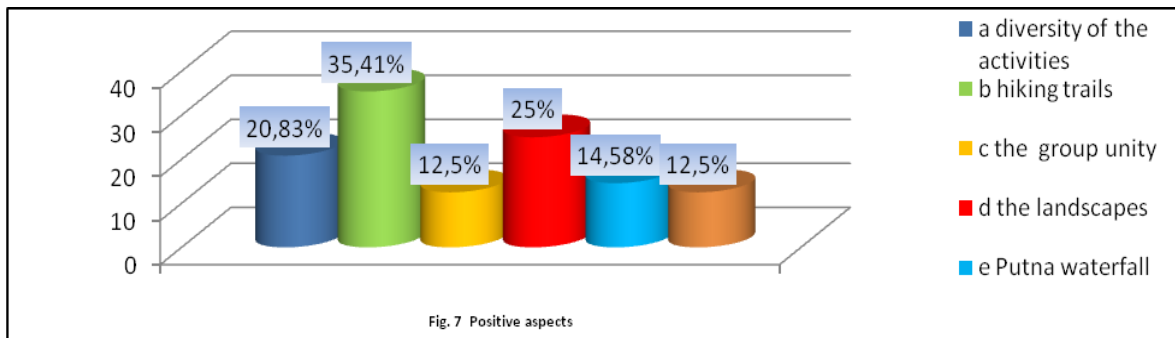
capacity of taking responsibility, 60.41% believe it consolidates the group cohesion, 52% think it improves the degree of respect within the group, 66.66% believe it helps discovering the colleagues,

16.66% selected the ability to take initiatives (Fig. 6).



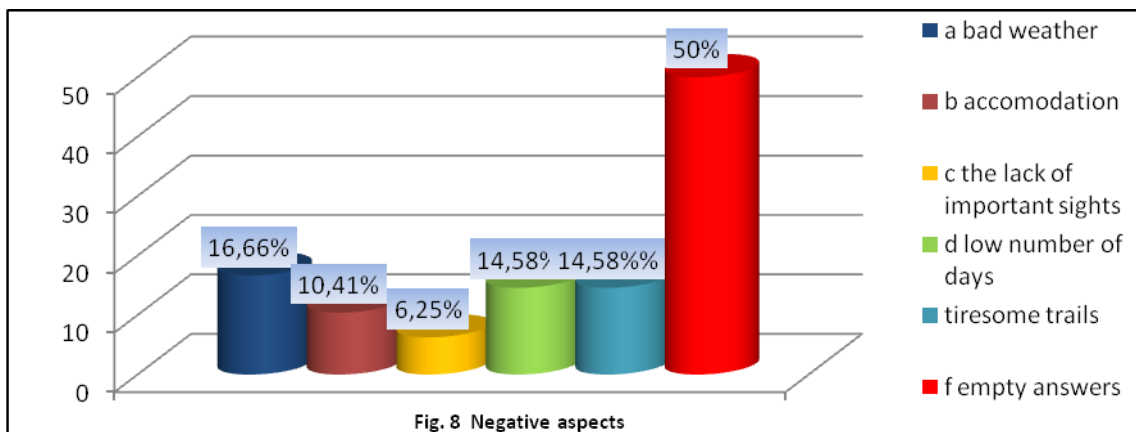
The positive aspects of attending this course have been established as results of the open answers, as follows: 20.83% appreciate the diversity of the activities, 35.41% like the hiking, 12.5% appreciate

the unity of the group, 25% the landscape, 14.58% Putna waterfall and only 12.5% are made up of empty answers (Fig 7).



The negative aspects of attending this course are the following: 16.66% have not been happy with the weather, 10.41% did not like the accommodation, 6.25% remarked the lack of important sights, 14.58% did not like the few time

assigned to the course, the difficulty and the length of the trails and half of students did not have any objections, which is considered as a positive indicator of the quality of the activity (Fig. 8).



Compared to other subjects, this discipline is considered: much more attractive by 39% of

participants, as interesting by 44% and less interesting by 17% (Fig. 9).

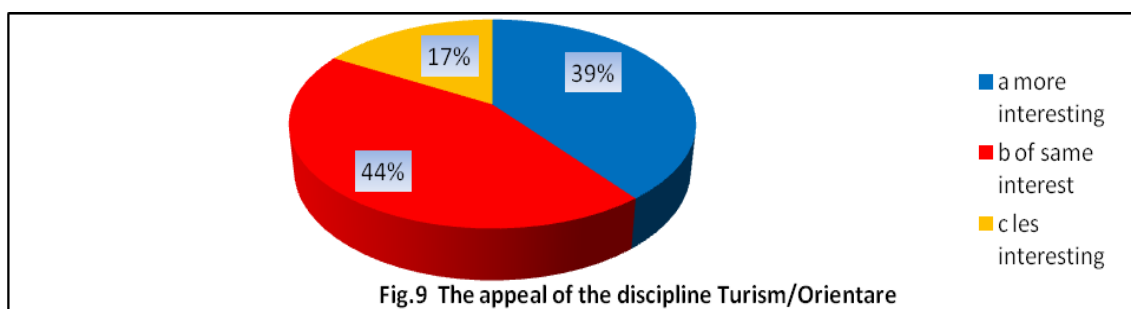


Fig.9 The appeal of the discipline Tourism/Orienteare

The ideas suggested for improving the activity for the next generation of students are the following: 12.5% would change the location, 25% pleaded for a shorter and easier hiking trails, 6.25% for a more

flexible schedule, 14.58% for assigning more days to the course, 8.33% for more excursions, 12.5% for more contests and games, 33.33% did not express their opinions (Fig. 10).

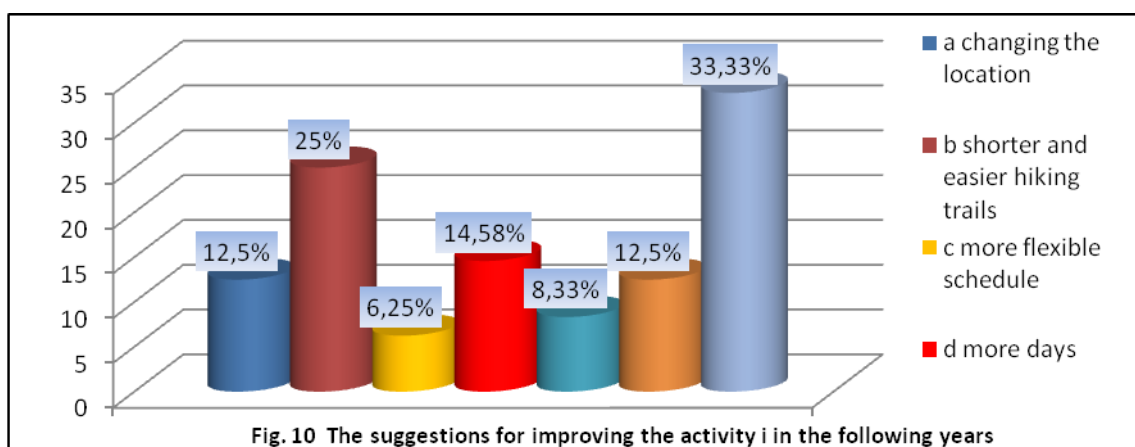


Fig. 10 The suggestions for improving the activity i in the following years

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The majority of students are aware of the importance of this discipline in helping their professional growth, know what objectives need to be met and what competences are developed, skills which are required by the domain they will be professing in. The main objectives to be met are related to hiking, organizing contents and visiting institutions with a socio-economic, cultural and historical value. The aspects that need to be improved and which should have been insisted on are those related to finding the way in nature, camping and making a bonfire.

- A negative aspect can be considered the answers to some free questions and the limited number of variants, which leads to the idea that some students did not take seriously the fill in of the questionnaire. It should be noted that many students identified correctly the personality traits that have been changed by the discipline and the improvement of the interpersonal relationships.

- The few students who identified some negative aspects mentioned elements that are not related to the content or the objectives of the activities: bad weather, tiresome hiking trails, the quality of the accommodation, tourist objectives that did not meet their expectations. These complaints reflect a permanent state of frustration, as the activity, even though it has clear objectives, has been taken for

the activities, standards and preferences characteristics to their own personal holidays.

- One third of students have no suggestions on improving the activity, one quarter have asked for a shorter hiking trail as a result of their poor conditions - they had big problem in keeping the pace during hiking activities. A significant group of students suggested an increase in the number of days assigned to the course, because the objectives are to be met in a large number of activities concentrated in just a few days.

- The results have a low degree of certitude, unlike the experiment. The attitudes, the opinions, the reasons expressed in the questionnaire-based investigation are purely subjective, the negative reactions, the lack of answers or the wish to impress when filling in open answers or selecting the multiple choices do not have a high degree of objectivity.

- Nevertheless, the questionnaire-based investigation answers reflect the quality of the activities organized for the practical part of the discipline mountainous tourism. Taking into consideration the students' opinions, this activity can be constantly improved, by avoiding or amending the problems signalled.

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