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# LEISURE TIME SPORTS ACTIVITIES OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Original research

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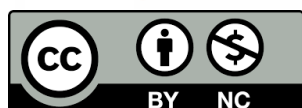
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## ABSTRACT

Being physically active is probably one of the most important decisions that any person can make in order to improve their own health, regardless of gender or age. For the student population, regular physical exercise is of great importance due to excessive learning and sitting. The aim of this research was to show how many students are playing sports in their leisure time, through a survey conducted on a sample of undergraduate students from the Džemal Bijedić University in Mostar. From total number of 142 participants, 76.8% of them are playing sports (63.4% recreational and 13.4% competitive), and most of them are playing team sports with the ball (23.9%) or doing sports activities in the gym (31.7%). 95.8% of students think that sports have positive impact on students life quality, which is less from the percentage of students who play sports (76.8%), so we can conclude that despite the knowledge of importance of physical activity, students don't behave regarding to what they think about sport and physical activity.

**Keywords:** leisure time, students, sports, university, physical activity

## INTRODUCTION

Everyone needs physical activity throughout their life if they want to preserve and improve their health. Health is probably the most precious value and the strongest need of every person regardless of gender, age or level of education anywhere in the world. For human health and well-being, in addition to a healthy diet and quality rest, it's also necessary to have regular physical activity. However, despite the growing knowledge about the importance and necessity of physical activity, nowhere seems to be a greater gap between what we know and what we do than when it comes to this way of behaving. Sports recreation is a freely chosen activity that is carried out in free time. Sports recreation uses the contents of sports and physical exercise in order to meet the need for movement and physical activity (Hadžikadunić et al. 2002). Physical inactivity is also known as a sedentary lifestyle. It refers to the behavior of a person who is relatively inactive and whose lifestyle is characterized by sitting at home and at work, and a lack of physical

activity. In developed countries, sedentary behavior is primarily a consequence of the technological development of society and changes in habits and behavior. For the student population, regular physical exercise is of great importance due to excessive learning and sitting. In the accelerated pace of modern life, especially in the city, there is more and more free time, but it is less and less used for one's own needs (Andrijašević, 2000). According to WHO regular physical activity has been considered a significant factor in the prevention of chronic non-communicable diseases. It's very important to create quality conditions for exercise and sports, in which physical education should play a major role (Ghofrani et. al. 2012, and Ünlü, et al. 2011).

## METHODS

### Participants

S Sample of respondents consisted of a N = 142 undergraduate students from different organizational units of Džemal Bijedić in

Mostar, in 2024/2025 academic year.

### Procedure and Sample of variables

Data about students sports activities on their leisure time, were collected through a questionnaire. Survey method was used to collect the data, which belongs to sociological methods, and which consists of a series of prepared questions the students seeks an answer (Haralambos & Holborn, 2002). The questionnaire was done in Google form and the survey was conducted online.

### Statistical analysis

The data was processed in Excell (Microsof Corp). Basic measures of descriptive parameters were created and reported.

## RESULTS

The first table presents number of respondents (n=142) in percentage, divided in gropus per faculties. The majority of respondents who responded to the survey were from the Faculty of Education (29.6%), Faculty of Law (25.4%), Faculty of Information Technologies (20.4%), while fewer respondents were from University Studies of Interior Design (9.2%), Pharmacy (6.3%), Health Care (4.2%), Agro-Mediterranean Faculty (2.1%), Faculty of Human sciences (1.4%), and Faculty of Civil Engineering (0.7%) and University Studies of Tourism (0.7%).

Table 1. Respondents by faculties in percentage (%) from total number of respondents

Faculty	Respondents by faculties (%)
Faculty of Education	29.6%
Faculty of Law	25.4%
Faculty of Information Technologies	20.4%
University study Interior Design	9.2%
University study Pharmacy	6.3%
University study Health Care	4.2%
Agro-Mediterranean Faculty	2.1%
Faculty of Human Sciences	1.4%
Faculty of Civil Engineering	0.7%
University study of tourism	0.7%

On the table 2. we can see that from the total number of respondents, 63.4% of them play sports as a recreation, and 13.4% play competitive sports, while 23.2% of students don't play sports.

Table 2. Do you play sports?

Competitive	13.4%
Recreation	63.4%
I don't play sports	23.2%

Table 3. is showing what sport do students play, from those students who play sports, either competitive or recreational. We can see that most of students play team sports with ball (23.9%) or they do sports activities in the gym (31.7%).

Table 3. What sport do you play?

Gym	31.7%
Team sports with ball	23.9%
Hiking	7%
Martial Arts	6.3%
Running	4.9%
Yoga	2.1%
Cycling	2.1%
Athletics	1.4%
Swimming	1.4%
Dance	0.7%
Aerobic	0.7%

The most of students who play sports, are playing sports most period of their life (29.6%) or for a few years (26.8%), while there is 10.6% of them who just started to play some sports, 9.2% of students play sports for a 3-6 months, and 5.6% of them play sports for a 6-12 months.

Table 4. How long do you play sports?

Most period of my life	29.6%
A few years	26.8%
I just started	10.6%
3-6 months	9.2%
6-12 months	5.6%

Students who play sports usually play sports for 2-3 times a week (30.3%), 4 times a week and more (29.6%), and once a week (21.1%), (table 5.), and they spend 90 minutes in one sports activity (41.5%), 60 minutes (19%), 120 minutes (16.2%), or 30 minutes (9.2%), (table 6.).

Table 5. How many times a week do you play sports?

2-3 times a week	30.3%
4 times a week and more	29.6%
1 time a week	21.1%

Table 6. How much time do you spend in one sports activity?

90 minutes	41.5%
60 minutes	19%
120 minutes	16.2%
30 minutes	9.2%

In the table 7. we can see some reasons which students respond as an answer why do they play sports. 29.6% of them play sports because of health care, 21.1% because they love sports, for 21.1% of them sport playing sports is satisfaction, 13.4% play sports because of physical look, 9.2% to improve fitness, and 5.6% to reduce body weight.

In the table 8. as a last question student responded do they think that sports have positive impact on students life quality. 95.8% of total respondents gave the answer yes.

Table 7. Why do you play sports?

Health care	29.6%
I love sports	21.1%
Satisfaction	21.1%
Physical look	13.4%
To improve fitness	9.2%
To reduce body weight	5.6%

Table 8. Do you think that sport have positive impact on students life quality?

Yes	95.8%
I don't know	4.2%

## DISCUSSION

University is a very competitive environment in which students undergo physical and mental changes (Robazzi et. al. 2019). Some researchers have reported that starting college and university, particularly the first year, is associated with weight gain, unhealthy eating, sleep problems, and lack of physical activity (Fedewa et. al. 2014., Vadeboncoeur et. al. 2015., Memon et. al. 2021). Better quality of life was observed for students with higher physical activity level (Pavlova et. al. 2017). In the research of Kljajević et. al. (2021), from systematic review of total of 21 studies with a total of 7306 participants, it could be concluded that university students show a satisfactory level of physical activity and physical fitness. However, the results vary due to different factors involved, mostly related to the cultural differences and educational systems in different countries. In other systematic review it's concluded that the main barriers identified in high school and university students were lack of time, lack of motivation, and lack of accessible places (Ferreira Silva et. al. 2022). In the research of Breslauer, et. al. (2013), 70% of respondents were involved in some sports and recreational activity. Study of Clemente et. al. (2016) showed a high incidence of sedentary time in Portuguese university students. Mamani-Jilaja et. al. (2024) in their reseearch showed that mobile phone has an 86% impact on the low rate of physical activity, on the sample of Peruvian university students. From total number of students in our research 76.8% of them are involved in sports activity (63.4% recreational and 13.4% competitive), which is decline in comparing to the research of Alić Dž. et. al. (2021) on the sample of students from same University (81% of students were involved in sports activities, 71.6% recreational and 9.4% competitive). Most of students who play sports are playing sports for

a few years (26.8%) or most of their life (29.6%). Students play sports 2-3 times a week (30.3%), 4 times a week and more (29.6%), once a week (21.1%), and they mostly spend 90 minutes in one activity (41.5%). From the question why do you play sports, we can conclude that students usually play sports because of health care (29.6%), and because of loving sport and satisfaction (21.1%). Also, as in our research, in research of Alić et. al. (2021) most of students were playing team sports with ball (23.9%), and doing gym (28.8%), and they are playing sports most period of their life, mostly 2-3 or 4 times a week, for 60 to 90 minutes, because of health care, loving sports and satisfaction. 95.8% of students of Džemal Bijedić University think that sports have positive impact on students life quality, and 76.8% of them are active in sports, so we can confirm our statement from introduction that despite the growing knowledge about the importance of physical activity, there is a great gap between what we know and what we do than when it comes to way of behaving.

## CONCLUSION

We can conclude that students of Džemal Bijedić University are mostly active in sport and physical activity (76.8%), and they have positive attitude about positive impact of sports on life quality (95.8%), but they can still make an effort to be more physically active. The conclusion is that from the point of view of "useful" spending of leisure time, kinesiological activity is without an alternative (Prskalo, 2007). People who are less active (below 150 minutes of physical activity per week) have mild positive effects on health. People who are moderately active (participate in 150 to 300 minutes of activity per week) have significant positive effects on health, while people we consider highly physically active (more than 300 minutes of activity per week) have additional positive effects on health (Ostojić, 2017). Despite the well-documented health benefits of physical activity, there is a lot of young pepople who don't meet the physical activity recommendations. Universities should promote physical activity to keep their students healthy and capable of performing well in academic study. Universities through students associations can organize various sports events, extracurricular sports activities, build accessible playgrounds for sports activities to promote physical activity and increase the level of students physical activity on a weekly basis. Being physically active is probably one of the most important decisions that any person can make in order to improve their own health, regardless of gender or age.

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### Conflict of Interest

The authors do not have any conflicts of interest to disclose. All co-authors have reviewed and concurred with the manuscript's content, and no financial interests need to be reported.