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RESEARCH ON CADETS’ PREFERENCES AND REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE GUIDED PHYSICAL TRAINING AND SPORT ACTIVITY

Mădălin Slăniceanu*

*Faculty of Aeronautic Management, „Henri Condă” Air Force Academy, Braşov, Romania

Abstract: *As a result of my cadets’ reluctance to attend practical sessions of military physical training, a situation generated by the content of the imposed curriculum, I have taken the decision to carry out some research on their preferences regarding physical training activities. The only way to engage them in an active and continuous manner whilst at the same time ensuring that they enjoy such activities is to adapt the requirements to the cadets’ needs. This can be achieved by pursuing the graduate’ s model from the physical development point of view, by cultivating physical abilities and by developing motor abilities specific to the military field. The present paper identifies the purposes of physical training, adapted to the requirements of the end product’s beneficiary, namely “the graduate from the higher military institution”, and to the cadets’ needs in accordance with the educational ideal. Based on the information processed from the questionnaires, the research results indicated a greater need for collective rather than individual sports activities, in spite of the fact that participants are fully aware that it is only by training individually, as well as by getting at least satisfactory scores in the topic areas of the discipline that one can pass physical fitness tests, and achieve the minimum.*

Keywords: *physical training, sport for everyone, guided activity, individual training*

1. INTRODUCTION

Just as J.J. Rousseau used to ask his generation „to make in such a way that the exercises for the mind and the body become relaxing activities one for the other”, a widely acknowledged fact even nowadays, the entire teaching staff, ranging from participants to the those guiding the newer generations, should analyze and recognize the importance of doing physical training as an instrument to educate and train the young military man as a future organization leader, specialist, fighter, educator and citizen.

Regardless of their background, cadets should actively and consciously commit to their continuous training by carrying out guided group or individual training.

It is due to the fact that the cadets’ preferences have never been taken into account before, not even when approaching the topic areas imposed by the rules and regulations in effect, that we are now confronted with a serious situation: practice sessions of military physical training have become an issue for the cadets, who have responded to this by going absent with or without leave, resorting to medical certificates especially during those sessions regarded as

irrelevant by the cadets, or by going on leave for reasons such as completing term papers for basic or specialized disciplines.

2. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Using as a starting point the hypothesis that physical training is an inherent part of the educational process, being compulsory for the entire military personnel [1], and therefore for the military cadets, I intend to prove that by wisely combining “business with pleasure” not only will the cadets’ level of training increase, but the teaching staff will also feel rewarded for their efforts.

Given the principles, characteristics, and objectives of the military physical training, as listed in the rules and regulations [2], yet less frequently applied in practice, my intention was to outline that my research hypothesis, namely that by applying the specific topics to the topic areas, as presented in the documents governing the organization of the military physical training, yet adapted to the cadets’ requirements and preferences, the rate “of active and conscious participation” [3,4] in physical training sessions will be superior to the mandatory participation rate due to the fact that any activity guided by specialized personnel is always more efficient than the one carried out using empirical methods by the personnel that is trained unilaterally and is less specialized in the military field [5].

3. THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

Our research sets out to present the cadets’ preferences and, based on them, how to approach the educational process based on the pedagogical principles currently in effect, adapted to the cadets’ preferences and following the general and specific objectives of the military education.

4. RATIONALE FOR SELECTING THE TOPIC

The main reason for approaching this research topic is my personal observation that satisfactory general training and inadequate

specific training constitute a serious drawback that the military high school graduate is faced with when enrolling a higher education military institution. Regardless of their training environment or methods as used throughout the 4 years preceding their university studies, it has been noted that young cadets are not used to “physical combat”, only to virtual combat as experienced in front of a screen; what is more, most of them have not even developed their physical and motor abilities, which are rather specific to gymnasium education level [6, 7].

5. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Subjects: 60 cadets in the 1st year, of various backgrounds, (46 from the military system and 14 from the civilian one).

Research protocol

The entire activity was carried out at the „Henri Coandă” Air Force Academy, the drill square, between 01-30.09.2014. Taking advantage of the initial basic training the subjects were undergoing, I wanted to identify their motor ability training level before they actually entered their first year of military education.

For starter, a questionnaire was administered regarding general personal, anthropometric, pathological, and physiological information specific to physical training and sports (disciplines/ branches / physical fitness tests as part of the PT sessions in secondary school and organized sports competitions at high school level). Also, I have presented sports and PT activities organized within the academy [8].

Individual questionnaire

Student

Military high school / civilian high school:

Identification data: BI / CI

Information: - personal:

- date of birth:

- anthropometric:

- height:

- weight:

- physiological:

- blood pressure

- heart rate

- respiratory rate



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Do you practice any performance sport?
Which subject/branch/ type?
Name of the Sports Club/Association.
Do you have any medical recommendations/
restrictions?
For what type of effort?

The following are organized by the Academy:

- military training lessons/sessions on topics related to these areas:

- a. Running in diverse terrain, fast running, throwing hand grenades for training purposes
- b. Self-defense – judo, karate, tae kwon do and close combat with individual gear
- c. Gymnastics
- d. Obstacle course for military men belonging to all services
- e. Ski training
- f. Swimming and swimming across rivers.

- training sessions for military summer and winter sports competitions, military judo championships, pentathlon, tae kwon do, orienteering

- sports clubs (mass sports activities /sport for everyone): aerobic tae bo, aikido, climbing, air trekkers, athletics, basketball, mountain cycling, hiking, football, handball, swimming, karate (Shito-ryu, Shotokan), kiting, sports orienteering, paragliding, cross-country skiing, extreme skiing, snowboard, table tennis, tennis, volleyball.

- disciplines, branches, physical fitness tests that one has carried out during PT sessions and of which one has participated in sports competitions (athletics, combat disciplines, gymnastics, swimming, winter sports, sports games).

Results have revealed the subjects' preferences regarding compulsory topic areas within the military physical training, sports disciplines and branches for which national competitions are organized and in which military institutions participate, mass sports

activities such as sports for everyone, and the set-up of a pool of candidates from which to select candidates for performance sports.

6. CADETS' PREFERENCES

In order to identify the cadets' training level, their motor abilities were tested by repeating the same physical fitness tests that are required for admission to academy (physical skills track and 2 km long distance race) (Fig. 1, 2, and 3).

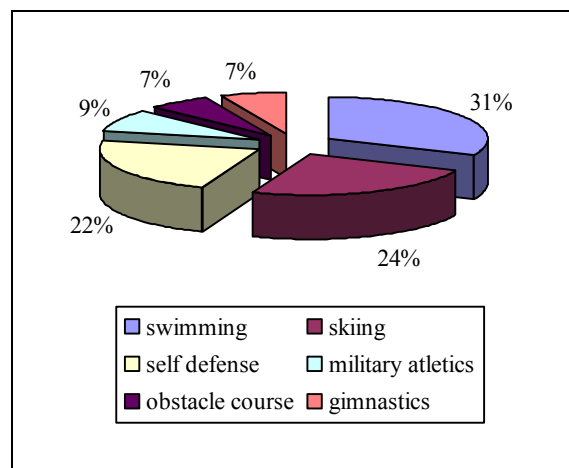


Fig. 1 Compulsory topic areas

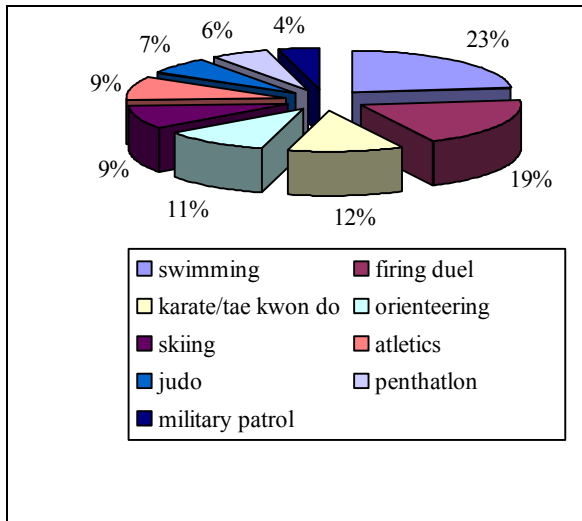


Fig. 2 Performance sports

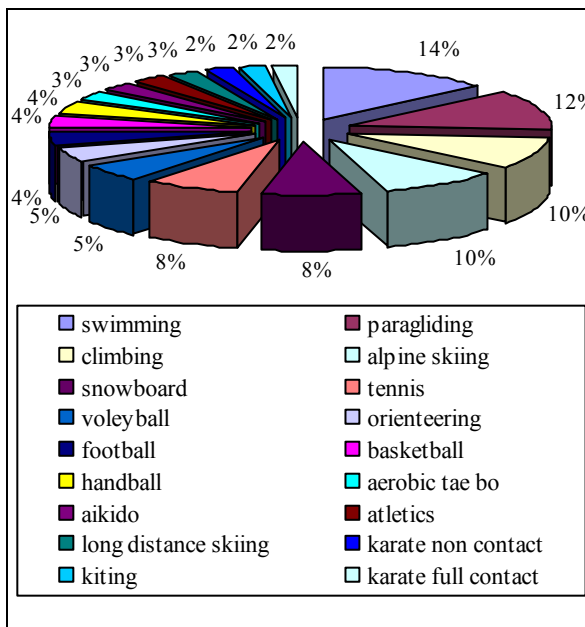


Fig. 3 Sports clubs

After cadets were divided into two groups, military and civilian, depending on the type of secondary education, in order to have a clear image of the quality of the training undergone before, I organized the above mentioned tests, and the results obtained are shown in figures 4 and 5.

Cadets from military high schools

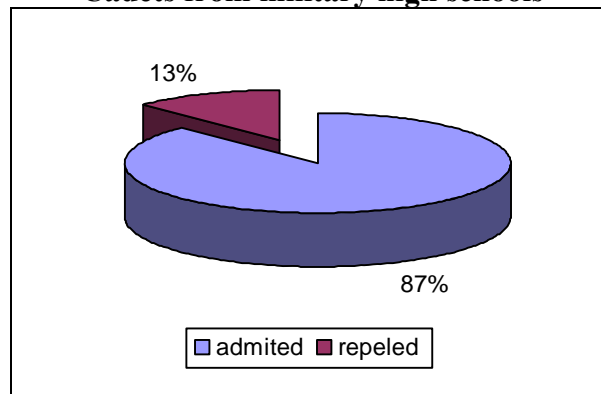


Fig. 4 Results of tests preceding the initial test

Cadets from civilian high schools

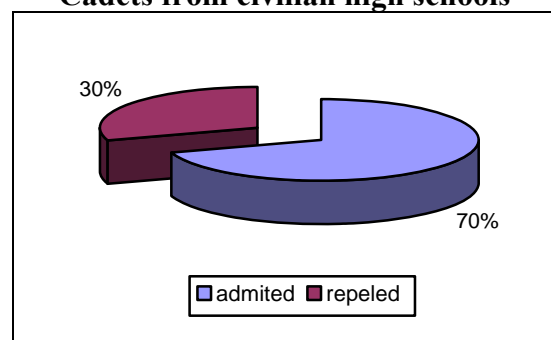


Fig. 5 Results of tests preceding the initial test

A week after the physical fitness tests, the entire group was challenged to achieve the minimum performance standard required for the entire military personnel within the Romanian Armed Forces (push-ups, sit-ups, running in diverse terrain for 3km – the boys - and 2km – the girls), in accordance to the age groups (Fig. 6).



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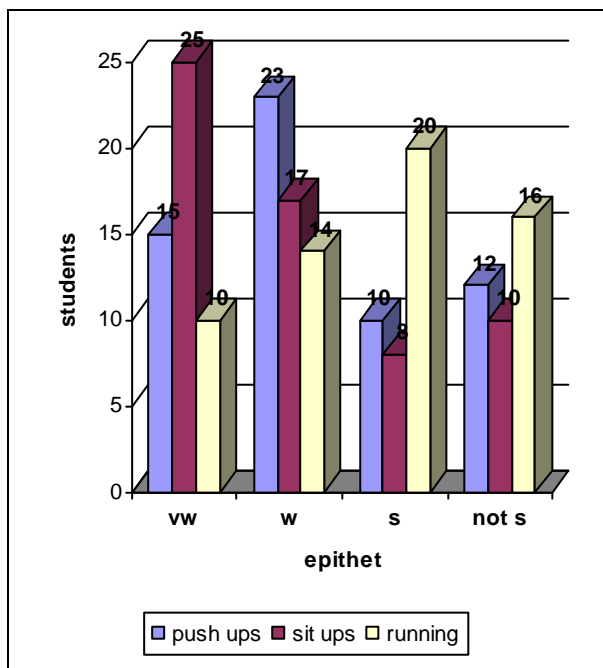


Fig. 6 Results of tests for the minimum performance standard

Results were then centralized and analyzed, and a situation regarding their current level of training as well as their needs in terms of motor abilities was drafted (Fig. 7). The latter were compared to the physical training requirements and the vision of the physical training and sports commission within the academy.

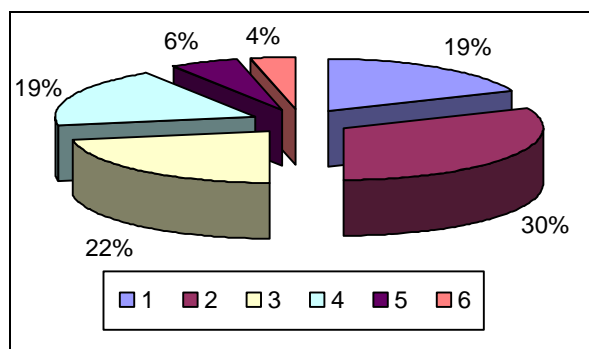


Fig. 7 Cadets' physical training level

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the level of training and the preferences, the physical training and sports teaching board together with the sports council, and in accordance with the documents that govern the organization of physical training and sports both in general, and in the army, have decided to modify the curriculum for the military physical training by attaching a greater importance to cadets' preferences, whilst also complying with the rules and regulations of the military physical training.

Cadets are recruited to practice performance sports based on their personal decision/option and not because it is compulsory. Sports activities in the form of sport for everyone should aim at improving the required set physical and motor abilities both in formal and informal settings (as free time activities).

8. CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

Nothing to declare

9. COMMENTS

The present paper capitalizes on the results revealed by the author's preliminary research as part of his PhD thesis.

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