



STUDENTS' MOTIVATIONS AND OPTIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED BY THE SCHOOL

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Abstract: The study investigates students' motivations and expectations regarding participation in extracurricular activities organized by educational institutions. The research was attended by 702 secondary school (61.1%) and high school (38.9%) students from Romania. Quantitative data were collected using a Google Forms and analyzed using the SPSS program. The results show that for the respondents the most important motivation is intrinsic, the opportunity to get to know their colleagues better, for which there are no statistically significant differences depending on the residence environment, the gender of the students and the education cycle. The next two choices indicate the interest of the secondary school students to capitalize in new contexts the accumulated knowledge, respectively self-knowledge, in the case of high school students. The data show a positive relationship, with a medium to strong value, in terms of the frequency with which the school organizes extracurricular activities, respectively the frequency with which the students participate in them. The offer of schools coincides with the respondents' expectations for excursions or hikes, charitable actions and religious activities, with significant differences between different categories of respondents. In extracurricular activities, which involve pedagogical, scientific, artistic skills, the school's offer statistically significantly exceeds the participation of students.

Key words: motivation; learning; non-formal education; urban-rural environment; secondary school; high school

1. Introduction

The contribution of non-formal educational contexts to the development of students' personality is currently recognized for the potential they have in completing and supporting formal education (Boncu & Ceobanu, 2013; Kravchenko & Nygård, 2022), especially by offering activities that contribute to the development of participants' inclinations and skills, to increase confidence in themselves and others (Muntean, 2009), to the efficient and qualitative organization of leisure time, to the enrichment of social experience and to the exchange of opinions or ideas (Griffiths et al., 2021).

Extracurricular activities take into account the scientific, social, artistic, sports goals, which leads to a very wide range of activities that can be carried out under the guidance of teachers, outside the school program (Bryzhak et al., 2024). Research shows their importance in the development of social skills (prosocial and group sports activities), organizational skills (disciplinary activities or those organized by the school), communication or creativity skills (artistic activities), so the school's interest in organizing them should be a priority (Barber et al., 2001; Bodovski et al., 2017).

One of the most important challenges in carrying out extracurricular activities is to find a balance between the offer of the school and the real possibilities of achieving them, dependent both on the preference and aptitudes of the students (Yeo et al., 2023), as well as their available temporal resources and the financial support from the parents (Décarpentrie et al., 2024).

2. Theoretical framework

Numerous research provide data on the goals pursued, the type of actions, the frequency and the persons involved in the organization of extracurricular activities (Eccles et al., 2003; Ruvalcaba et al.,

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2017). The need to organize such activities is also underlined by the effects they have on the student's personality formation: development of creativity, increased motivation for learning, active participation in the learning process (Farb & Matjasko, 2012). The main role, according to the students, is that of opening new opportunities for knowledge, development and learning, with all the difficulties that this process entails (Fântână & Opriș, 2022; Vrabie, 2021). The types of extracurricular activities preferred by students are often sports activities, followed by social, artistic and volunteer activities (Kim & Bastedo, 2016). However, the differences in social and economic status represent an important mediator factor for access to basic training, and regarding the possibility of participation in extracurricular activities, the discrepancies are even greater (Matěakejů & Straková, 2005).

Research analyzing the motivations underlying participation in these activities highlights four types of motivations: extrinsic and intrinsic, social and prosocial, with different impact depending on a number of factors or economic contexts (Heath et al., 2018) or sociocultural (Décarpentrie et al., 2024). The data also show a relationship between motivation and the type of activity: extrinsic motivation, related to the acquisition of experience in a certain field, is related to academic, disciplinary activities; intrinsic motivation, based on passion for a certain type of activity, respectively the well-being associated with involvement in its achievement (Boelens et al., 2022), is especially associated with sports activities (Sasayama et al., 2024); social motivation, which consists in the opportunity to meet new people and to make friends, is related to involvement in groups or societies, and prosocial motivation, supported by the need to help others, mainly considers voluntary activities and religious activities (Chapman et al., 2023). Also, extracurricular activities are considered true chances for a personalized journey in learning, which offers new and diverse possibilities of knowledge and involvement in society, with a development strongly complementary to the formal one (Baggen et al., 2024).

Other research links extracurricular activities with career choice: each type of activity provides opportunities to identify students' preferences and possible occupations they may have in the future (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). Moreover, the school plays an essential role in tracing the development trajectory of students, including through the offer of extracurricular activities it proposes. Another analysis goes further and points out that consistent participation in extracurricular activities especially during the high school period predicts professional performance and prosocial behaviors in young adulthood (Zaff et al., 2003). In terms of volunteering, associated with extracurricular activities, research data show that one can speak especially of an extrinsic motivation, in relation to the need to acquire some necessary skills later in the integration on the labor market, especially communication, teamwork or problem solving, but also of an intrinsic motivation, respectively the development of self-confidence as a result of interpersonal interaction and confrontation with new situations (Chirkov et al., 2003), to which the development of the sense of utility is added (Holdsworth, 2010).

3. Research methodology

3.1. Research questions

For this study, the research questions were as follows:

Q1. Are there significant differences between the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of secondary and high school students in Romania for participating in extracurricular activities?

Q2. Are there significant differences between the extracurricular activities organized by the school and the participation of students in them?

Q3. Are there significant differences between the types of extracurricular activities offered by the school and the expectations that students have?

3.2. Study approach

A quantitative approach was used in this study.

3.3. The instrument

To answer the questions of the research, a questionnaire consisting of two parts was designed. The first part included 4 demographic items, three of which became variables in the data analysis.

Out of the 18 items of opinion of the questionnaire, in this study we capitalized on the 5 in relation to the research questions regarding the motivations, frequency and type of extracurricular activities organized by the school or in which the respondents participate or can participate. The first item asked to choose a motivation, from five variants of answer regarding participation in extracurricular activities. The next two items asked to choose the frequency with which extracurricular activities are organized in the school, respectively the frequency with which the respondents participate in them, on a five-step Likert scale. The last two items asked the respondents to choose from a list the extracurricular activities organized in the school, respectively the ones they prefer.

The questionnaire was made through the Google Forms application and was intended for students from secondary and high school education in Romania. The parents' consent for the students' participation in the research was requested through their social networks, through which the questionnaire was then accessed and the answers to its items were offered. There were no promises and no rewards for participating in the research, at each stage the research was carried out in compliance with research ethics.

3.3.1. Validity of the instrument

Prior to the application of the questionnaire, in order to verify its validity, items were analyzed within the Guidance Commission of the Doctoral School "Didactics. Tradition, Development, Innovation", from the "Babes-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca (Romania), applied on a small sample, and later modified according to the suggestions received.

3.3.2. Instrument's reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire was analyzed by means of SPSS, which generated the value of 0.775 for Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which demonstrates good internal consistency, being above the commonly accepted value.

3.4. Participants

In our research, we administered the questionnaire to a number of 702 students, 47.3% male and 52.7% female. 69.8% of the total respondents live in urban areas and 30.2% in rural areas. For the education cycle profile, the distribution of respondents includes two groups: 61.1% of secondary education and 38.9% of high school education.

4. Data analysis

The data was analyzed using the SPSS program. In the analysis of the data, we used basic statistical indicators (frequencies, averages), Spearman's correlation coefficient, Mann-Whitney U nonparametric test for two independent samples, McNemar nonparametric test for two dichotomous pair samples/ variables, Cochran Q nonparametric test for more than two dichotomous pair samples/ variables.

4.1. Results and discussion

4.1.1. Students motivation to participate in extracurricular activities

The optional status of extracurricular activities requires the existence of strong motivations for the participation of students in them, carried out outside the compulsory school program. For the five motivations proposed by us, the research data show much higher frequencies in the case of intrinsic motivations (the first three), as can be seen from Table 1, compared to extrinsic motivations, which especially target the visibility of the school and the teachers who organize them.

Table 1. Frequency of motivations for participation in extracurricular activities

Motivations	Frequency (%)
1. It gives me the opportunity to get to know my colleagues better.	38.9
2. It gives me the opportunity to get to know myself better.	17.8
3. It gives me the opportunity to better value my knowledge.	28.5
4. It gives the school better visibility in the local community.	5.6
5. They lead to the appreciation of the organizing teacher by the school management/ colleagues.	5.1
6. Other motivations. Which ones: ...	4.1

The data from Table 1 place the first (38.9%) the opportunity students have to get to know their colleagues better in these activities, motivation with social connotation. Highlighting knowledge outside the school environment and in disciplinary settings is the motivation chosen by 28.5% of students. Self-knowledge as a very important intrinsic motivation follows, preferred by 17.8% of the respondents. At differences of more than 10 percentage points are placed two extrinsic motivations, with very close percentages, which consider increasing the visibility of the school in the community (5.6%), respectively the appreciation of the teacher who organizes them by the school management (5.1%). In addition, 4.1% of respondents consider various other motivations more important.

The Cochran Q test shows the existence of statistical differences between these motivations: $\chi^2(4) = 314,897$, $p = 0.000$. In order to find out whether between the three intrinsic motivations and between the two extrinsic motivations we have statistically significant differences, we made pair comparisons by means of the McNemar nonparametric test for two dichotomous pair variables and adjusted the significance threshold to the number of possible pairs (10 in our case): $\alpha = p/10 = 0.05/10 = 0.005$. The data were presented in Table 2, where we presented the results for the comparative situations of interest for this study.

Table 2. McNemar test for intrinsic/ extrinsic motivation pairs (Statistics^a)

	Motivation 1 & Motivation 2	Motivation 1 & Motivation 3	Motivation 2 & Motivation 3	Motivation 4 & Motivation 5
N	702	702	702	702
Chi-Square ^b	54.294	10.960	16.849	,053
Asymp. Sig.	,000	,001	,000	,817

a. McNamara Test

b. Continuity Corrected

In the case of intrinsic motivations, for all three comparison situations (1-2; 1-3; 2-3) there are statistically significant differences, in favor of motivations with higher frequencies. From the students' point of view, extrinsic motivations (4-5) are less important than intrinsic ones, and there are no statistically significant differences between the two, $\chi^2 = 0.053$, $p = 0.817$, $p > 0.005$. These results show that students attach great importance to intrinsic motivations and almost equal importance to extrinsic motivations, but significantly inferior to intrinsic ones.

In the case of intrinsic motivations, we proposed to analyze whether their choice is influenced by variables such as the residence environment, the gender of the students and the cycle of education at which they learn. We applied the Mann Whitney U test and summarized the results in Table 3.

Table 3. Mann-Whitney U Test for intrinsic motivations, depending on different variables

The Mann-Whitney Test Variables	Intrinsic motivations		
	Motivation 1	Motivation 2	Motivation 3
Residence environment	U ₁ = 49990,000; z = -,936 p = ,349; p > 0.05 MR _{urban} = 347,52; MR _{rural} = 360,70	U ₂ = 50097,000; z = -1,127 p = ,260; p > 0.05 MR _{urban} = 347,74; MR _{rural} = 360,19	U ₃ = 49694,000; z = -1,165 p = ,244; p > 0.05 MR _{urban} = 356,08; MR _{rural} = 340,91

Gender	$U_1 = 60679,000$; $z = -,327$ $p = ,744$; $p > 0.05$ $MR_{female} = 353.50$; $MR_{male} = 349,27$	$U_2 = 60326,000$; $z = -,615$ $p = ,538$; $p > 0.05$ $MR_{female} = 354.46$; $MR_{male} = 348,20$	$U_r = 59810,000$; $z = -,768$ $p = ,443$; $p > 0.05$ $MR_{female} = 355.85$; $MR_{male} = 346,65$
Education cycle	$U_1 = 56160,000$; $z = -1,084$ $p = ,278$; $p > 0.05$ $MR_{secondary\ school} = 345,91$; $MR_{high\ school} = 360,29$	$U_2 = 52,455,000$; $z = -3,517$ $p = ,000$; $p < 0.05$ $MR_{secondary\ school} = 337,27$; $MR_{high\ school} = 373,86$	$U_r = 53020,500$; $z = -2,704$ $p = ,007$; $p < 0.05$ $MR_{secondary\ school} = 364,41$; $MR_{high\ school} = 331,21$

In the case of the first motivation, which takes into account the opportunity offered by extracurricular activities to favor intercommunication between students, the results of the Mann Whitney U test show that this choice is not influenced by any of the independent variables analyzed. In all three analyses, even if differences in the mean ranks in favor of rural students are observed, of those of female gender, respectively of those who study at high school, they are not statistically significant.

Motivation in relation to the opportunity of self-knowledge through extracurricular activities is also preferred by rural and female respondents, but the differences are statistically insignificant. The analysis of the data shows that this motivation is preferred by high school students, at statistically significant differences compared to secondary school ($U_2 = 52455,000$; $z = -3,517$, $p = 0,000$; $p < 0,05$).

For the third intrinsic motivation, which considers the opportunity students may have to better value their knowledge by engaging in extracurricular activities, the data show a number of notable differences. In this case, the motivation is stronger in favor of those from urban areas and girls (statistically insignificant) and those from secondary school, at statistically significant differences from high school peers ($U_2 = 53020,500$; $z = -2,704$, $p = 0,007$; $p < 0,05$).

4.1.2. Frequency of organization of extracurricular activities and participation of students in them

Through the next two items, we asked the students to specify the frequency with which extracurricular activities are organized in their school, as well as the frequency with which they participate in these activities. In the analysis of the data, we encoded the steps of the Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1 – very rarely; 5 – very often), and the results were summarized by us in Table 4.

Table 4. Comparative analysis of frequencies (%) for the organization and participation of students in extracurricular activities

Frequency	Organized (O)	Participation (P)	Difference O-P
Very rarely (1-2 times a year)	40.9	48.7	-7.8
Rarely (3-4 times a year)	30.6	28.2	1.8
Medium (once a month)	12.0	15.0	- 3
Often (2-3 times a month)	10.4	0	10.4
Very often (weekly)	6.1	8.1	- 2

The data show that in both situations, the highest percentage values are found for the frequency "very rarely", meaning 1-2 activities per year. At the opposite pole, we find values below 10% for the frequency "Very often", which we explain by the need for consistency and significant determination for weekly participation in such activities. The percentage of about 30% for the frequency of "Rarely" (3-4 times a year) both for organizing and participating in such activities constitutes, from our point of view, a certain "normality", a state of fact found in the last decades at the level of Romanian education. The calculation of the average for the two compared situations shows differences in favor of organized activities ($D = m_O - m_P = 2.10 - 1.91 = 0.19$), which indicates that participation is inferior to the organization or offer of extracurricular activities, although there is a positive correlation between them, as follows from the value of Spearman's correlation coefficient (Table 5). This coefficient ($\rho(700) = ,686$, $p = ,000$) being also an effect magnitude, by referring to Cohen's criteria, we can say that the relationship between organization and participation in extracurricular activities is medium to strong.

Table 5. *Spearman's ρ correlation between organizing and participating in extracurricular activities*

Spearman's rho	Organization	Coefficient Correlation	Organization	Participation
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,686**
		N	702	702
	Participation	Coefficient Correlation	,686**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.
		N	702	702

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Complementary, we also conducted comparative analyses through the Mann-Whitney U test, depending on different independent variables: the residence environment, the gender of the students and the educational cycle in which the students study, the data being summarized by us in Table 6.

Table 6. *Mann-Whitney U Test for organizing and participating in extracurricular actions, depending on different variables*

Methods Variables	The Mann-Whitney Test	
	Organization	Participation
Residence environment	$U_O = 35085,500$; $z = -,455$ $p = ,649$; $p > 0.05$ $MR_{urban} = 353.67$; $MR_{rural} = 346,48$	$U_P = 50956,000$; $z = -,431$ $p = ,667$; $p > 0.05$ $MR_{urban} = 349.49$; $MR_{rural} = 356,14$
Gender	$U_O = 55288,000$; $z = -2,410$ $p = ,016$; $p < 0.05$ $MR_{female} = 368.07$; $MR_{male} = 333,03$	$U_P = 56725,000$; $z = -1,889$ $p = ,059$; $p > 0.05$ $MR_{female} = 364.19$; $MR_{male} = 337,36$
Education cycle	$U_O = 49491,500$; $z = -3,649$ $p = ,000$; $p < 0.05$ $MR_{secondary\ school} = 330.36$; $MR_{high\ school} = 384,71$	$U_P = 56091,000$; $z = -1,017$ $p = ,309$; $p > 0.05$ $MR_{secondary\ school} = 357.25$; $MR_{high\ school} = 342,46$

The research data according to the residence environment of the students show that the mean ranks has a higher value for organizing the activity in the case of children from urban areas, respectively the mean ranks in the case of participation in activities is in favor of students from rural areas. In both cases, however, the differences are not statistically significant ($U_O = 35085,500$; $z = -,455$, $p = ,649$, $p > 0.05$; $U_P = 50956,000$; $z = -,431$, $p = ,667$, $p > 0.05$). Previous results are thus confirmed, results that show the trend of equalization between urban and rural areas, on different educational aspects, which ensure equal opportunities in education (Popovici & Opreș, 2024).

For analyzes according to the gender of students, the data show that girls are more informed than boys regarding the organization of extracurricular activities in their school, at statistically significant differences ($U_O = 55288,000$; $z = -2,410$, $p = ,016$; $p < 0,05$), but in terms of participation in these activities, the differences (higher for girls) are statistically insignificant ($U_P = 56725,000$; $z = -1,889$, $p = ,059$; $p > 0.05$). This fact can also be a consequence of the participation or non-participation of classmates in the actions organized by the school.

The greatest difference depending on the analyzed variables is recorded in relation to the frequency of organizing extracurricular activities in the case of high school students ($U_O = 49491,500$; $z = -3,649$, $p = ,000$, $p < 0.05$). Research data shows that high school students are very interested in personal development opportunities (Opreș & Opreș, 2015), so we are not surprised by the statistically significant differences compared to their peers in secondary school. Participation in these activities is not influenced by the education cycle, but a higher frequency is observed in the case of secondary school students, where the mean ranks are higher, but the differences are not statistically significant ($U_P = 56091,000$; $z = -1,017$, $p = ,309$, $p > 0.05$).

4.1.3. Types of activities organized in the school and the participation of students in them

The next two items of the questionnaire asked the respondents' opinion regarding the types of extracurricular activities organized by the school, respectively the activities in which they participated. The data show the respondents' preference for trips/ hikes, debates, charitable actions. In Table 7 we

summarized the list of activities in order of frequency (%) with which students participate, as well as the differences between them.

Table 7. *Comparative analysis of the frequency of the types of extracurricular activities organized and in which students participate*

Types of extracurricular activities	Organized (O)	Participation (P)	Difference (O-P)
Excursions / hikes	67.2	67.2	0
Debates / discussions / meetings with specialists	43.9	37.0	6.9
Charitable actions	28.1	28.2	0.1
Religious activities	18.9	18.9	0
Theatre	20.7	15.8	4.9
Choir	19.1	13.0	6
Informatics Club	17.9	12.0	5
Dance	8.1	5.0	3.1
Another answer: volunteering	5.6	2.6	3

The research data show very close values between the activities organized and those attended by the students, for three of the types of activities, where the differences between the percentage values are null or almost null: trips/hikes (67.2%), charitable actions (approximate 28%) and religious activities (18.9%). The first activity involves physical and social actions, and the other two concern aspects involving moral and religious values (Opriş & Popovici, 2025). The results are encouraging for the school environment and suggest the need for new research to provide new data on the relationship between school supply and student involvement in extracurricular activities.

For the other types of extracurricular activities (Debates, Choir, Theater, Informatics Club, Dances, Other Activities) there are differences that show that participation in them is low, research data suggest a surplus in the school supply and organization, compared to the participation of students. The highest value of the difference is recorded in the case of debates (D = 6.9%), and for another answer (where the majority of respondents passed volunteering), the difference has the value D = 3. To see if the differences in the case of the six examples of comparisons of the type *organization & participation* are statistically significant, we applied the McNemar test, the results are listed in Table 8.

Table 8. *McNemar test for pairs of organized activities & activities in which students participate (Statistics^a)*

Activities - organized & Activities - participation	Debate o. & Debate p.	Choir o. & Choir p.	Theatre o. & Theatre p.	Club info o. & Club info p.	Dances o. & dances p.	Other activities o. & other activities p.
N	702	702	702	702	702	702
Chi-Square ^b	22.541	17.818	11.585	17.510	7.875	8.163
Asymp. Sig.	,000	,000	,001	,000	,005	,004

The research data show statistically significant differences in the case of the six analysis situations, in favor of the organization of extracurricular activities. Thus, although it is organized in schools, the participation in debates, choir, theater, Informatics clubs, dances, respectively other activities register participants in a smaller percentage, the data being statistically significant. One of the explanations could be that, unlike the first three extracurricular activities, which are aimed at the whole group, their practice depends on a set of pedagogical, scientific, artistic etc. skills of the students, as well as the need for rhythmicity of achievement, their organization with a greater frequency, in order to observe progress.

For the extracurricular activities in which the students participate, which are at statistically insignificant differences compared to the frequency of which these activities are organized in school (trips/hikes, charitable actions, religious activities), we conducted analyses through the Mann-Whitney U test according to different variables (students' residence environment, their gender and education cycle), the data being summarized by us in Table 9.

Table 9. Mann-Whitney U Test for student participation in trips / hikes, charitable actions and religious activities, depending on different variables

The Mann-Whitney Test Variables	Participation activities		
	Excursions / Hikes	Charitable actions	Religious activities
Residence environment	$U_e = 49751,000$; $z = -1,087$ $p = ,277$; $p > 0.05$ $MR_{urban} = 347,03$; $MR_{rural} = 361,83$	$U_c = 46,252,000$; $z = -2,958$ $p = ,003$; $p < 0.05$ $MR_{urban} = 339,89$; $MR_{rural} = 378,33$	$U_r = 51647,000$; $z = -,175$ $p = ,861$; $p > 0.05$ $MR_{urban} = 350,90$; $MR_{rural} = 352,88$
Gender	$U_e = 57437,000$; $z = -1,818$ $p = ,069$; $p > 0.05$ $MR_{female} = 339,50$; $MR_{male} = 362,26$	$U_c = 56632,000$; $z = -2,290$ $p = ,022$; $p < 0.05$ $MR_{female} = 364,44$; $MR_{male} = 337,08$	$U_r = 61104,000$; $z = -,174$ $p = ,862$; $p > 0.05$ $MR_{female} = 352,35$; $MR_{male} = 350,55$
Education cycle	$U_e = 51510,500$; $z = -3,295$ $p = ,001$; $p < 0.05$ $MR_{secondary\ school} = 367,93$; $MR_{high\ school} = 325,68$	$U_c = 51187,500$; $z = -3,610$ $p = ,000$; $p < 0.05$ $MR_{secondary\ school} = 334,32$; $MR_{high\ school} = 378,50$	$U_r = 52689,000$; $z = -3,301$ $p = ,001$; $p < 0.05$ $MR_{secondary\ school} = 365,18$; $MR_{high\ school} = 330,00$

In the case of excursions / hikes, we note that the only statistically significant differences appear depending on the education cycle ($U_e = 51510,500$; $z = -3,295$, $p = ,001$; $p < 0.05$), in favor of middle school students, where the mean ranks are higher compared to the mean ranks for high school students. We can thus say that the research data indicate a greater participation in excursions/hikes of secondary school students. Even if differences also occur according to the residence environment of students (in favor of those from rural areas) and according to gender (in favor of boys), the differences are not statistically significant according to these variables.

The preference for participation in charitable actions is observable at statistically significant differences depending on all three variables. Thus, rural students indicate more developed prosocial attitudes than their urban peers ($U_c = 46252,000$; $z = -2,958$, $p = ,003$; $p < 0.05$), girls are more involved in helping others than boys ($U_c = 56632,000$; $z = -2,290$, $p = ,022$; $p < 0.05$), and high school students participate in a greater number than their middle school peers in charitable actions ($U_c = 51187,500$; $z = -3,610$, $p = ,000$; $p < 0.05$).

Religious extracurricular activities are constantly encountered in the Romanian school, starting from the finalities of the discipline Religion, which is studied at all levels of education and at all classes (Opriș & Opriș, 2013; Sebu et al. 2017). In the case of these activities, the residence environment and the gender of the students do not statistically influence the results, the mean ranks between the groups of students (rural/urban; girls/boys) being almost equal, and the differences are not statistically significant. If we relate the data to the education cycle, we notice that the students from the secondary school environment have a more active participation in religious extracurricular activities, at statistically significant differences, compared to their peers from the high school cycle ($U_r = 52689,000$; $z = -3,301$, $p = ,001$; $p < 0.05$).

4.2 Conclusions

Through this study, we proposed to analyze the motivations and expectations of Romanian students regarding participation in extracurricular activities organized by the school, based on the opinions expressed after completing an opinion questionnaire.

Most students expressed their choice for intrinsic motivations, but on different levels of choice, at statistically significant differences between them. The most important motivation is the opportunity offered by these activities to get to know their colleagues better, for which there are no statistically significant differences depending on the residence environment, the gender of the students and the education cycle. The next two choices, both statistically significantly influenced by the education

cycle, refer to the opportunity to capitalize in other contexts the knowledge gained (stronger motivation in secondary school students), respectively to self-knowledge (statistically significant differences in favor of high school students). The fact that by organizing and participating in such activities the school and the organizing teacher are highlighted in front of the community represent motivations for a low number of students.

Regarding the frequency with which the school organizes extracurricular activities, respectively the frequency with which the students participate in such activities the data show a positive relationship, with a medium to strong value. However, it is noted that the offer on increasing the frequency of organization is higher than that desired by the students, the frequency of participation is not influenced by the residence environment, the gender of the students or the cycle of education. High school students and female respondents observe with greater acuity and are more informed about the organization of these activities in their school.

Regarding the types of activities organized and those in which the students participate, the school offer coincides with almost total student participation for three of them: excursions/hikes, charitable actions and religious activities, the common denominator being that they all have a social component, by involving large groups of participants. The placement of excursions/hikes in the first place confirms the research that shows that extracurricular activities that contain a movement component, physical activity, are preferred by students at the highest level.

Secondary school students participate in excursions/hiking and religious activities more than their high school classmates. In rural students, high school students and girls there is a stronger involvement in charitable activities. In extracurricular activities, which involve pedagogical, scientific, artistic skills, the school's offer statistically significantly exceeds the participation of students. We note that students prefer those types of extracurricular activities that do not imply a very precise rhythmicity, giving them greater freedom in organizing their free time.

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