

PINK CLAW®

PINK CLAW - 101090089
D5 - Longitudinal study -
Country report - ROMANIA



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INTRODUCTION

Summary of the project / objectives of the PINK CLAW project

PINK CLAW is a project funded in the framework of the ERASMUS+ SPORT programme of the European Union aiming at the promotion of the practice of physical activity among women aged 18 - 35 who have never exercised or have not exercised regularly for at least 2 years.

By means of its activities, the project wants to promote their physical, psychological, and social well-being, and to create an inclusive environment in which participants feel comfortable and supported. In particular, the project aims to engage women in regular and sustained sports practice, stimulating their motivation through the innovativeness of the proposed activities and the support offered by the coaches, who are role models and mentors for the participants.

Moreover, PINK CLAW is part of a broader European campaign to promote sport and physical activity as tools for disease prevention and promoting a healthy and ecologically sustainable lifestyle. Finally, the project also aims to raise awareness of gender equality and diversity by promoting the inclusion of all women, including those from discriminated or marginalized groups.

PINK CLAW is a multidisciplinary project that combines a range of physical and mental practices, each structured in individual and group modalities.

Its exercise programme is based on five (5) selected disciplines that are considered particularly effective in stimulating motor activity among women:

1. Obstacle Course Racing,
2. Self-defence,
3. Tactical fitness,
4. Mindfulness and
5. First Aid.

PINK CLAW involves only female coaches because they could become role models for the participants. As said, women are more likely to identify with a female coach who also acts as a mentor and helps them counter stereotypes by increasing girls' confidence, self-efficacy and sense of belonging.

The rationale behind the project is that we want to create and support relationships among the project participants because only in this way, we can engage and retain girls and women in sport.

Thanks to the well-functioning of the relations among the participants and between the participants and the female coaches, the project will achieve its objective to promote sport and physical activity, to stimulate women's and girls' desire to practice sport and physical activity not only for their health and wellbeing but also for their self-empowerment.

To achieve such goal, the PINK CLAW project is divided in two main phases:

1. Engaging women in regular physical activity through an innovative multidisciplinary outdoor sports program, shared across Europe, that encourages participants to have fun and challenge themselves.
2. Training female coaches in the project program (of which this manual is integral part of). PINK CLAW female instructors will be experts in the different disciplines and have natural relationship-building skills to support the group, particularly in sports settings. The training has a “Train the Training” approach in order to be sustainable and be replicable in all EU countries and contexts.

To know more about the project, its consortium and results please visit <https://www.pinkclaw-europe.eu>

Specific purposes of the survey

The survey presented in this report stems from the partnership's desire to listen directly to European women about their experience and perception of the world of sport. This is an initiative promoted by the Alice Milliat Association, partner of the PINK CLAW project, with the aim of collecting qualitative and quantitative data that help build concrete proposals that adhere to reality.

The main purpose of the survey is to identify the real needs, motivations and barriers that affect women's participation in sport. In particular, the questionnaire was designed to include:

- The level of physical activity actually practiced by women in different age groups and territorial contexts.
- Previous experience in sport, including any episodes of abandonment, and the reasons behind it.
- Expectations, desires and interests in new sports proposals.
- The logistical, organizational and relational conditions that can facilitate or hinder women's sports participation.
- The role of social representation and female sports models in the construction of interest and self-efficacy.

The questionnaire has also been designed to collect practical suggestions and ideas directly from the participants, which may influence the future planning of the activities planned by PINK CLAW. The objective is twofold: on the one hand to collect a database useful for research and design reflection, on the other hand to activate a process of empowerment also through the simple action of "telling oneself", of actively participating in a survey that recognizes the value and importance of the voice of women.

Survey target and geographical area involved

The target of the survey is women who self-identify as such, without any limitation with respect to age, occupation, marital status or cultural background. The questionnaire has been designed to be inclusive and accessible, with simple language and intuitive questions, which can be used online via the Google Forms platform. Dissemination took place through the channels of the project partners, who used mailing lists, social media, local networks and direct contacts to promote their compilation.

The survey was conducted on an European scale, involving PINK CLAW's partner countries. Each partner independently took care of the dissemination of the questionnaire in its own national context, also taking care of the collection, analysis and production of a local report. This approach made it possible to collect country-specific data, while maintaining a common and consistent structure, useful for subsequent comparative analysis.

The aim of this document is therefore to offer an in-depth and contextualized snapshot of the French sample, useful for guiding the actions that will be carried out in Italy within the framework of the activities envisaged by the PINK CLAW project. The analysis focuses on the trends, needs, barriers and motivations expressed by Italian women, to ensure targeted, realistic and culturally appropriate interventions.

NATIONAL CONTEXT ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND THE USE OF SPORT FOR HEALTH

The Use of Sport for Health in ROMANIA

Today, the attention of both developed and developing nations is increasingly focused on the physical and mental health of their populations. Romania is no exception. Experts in public health and education have outlined various strategies to address these issues, one of which is the promotion of regular physical activity for all citizens. The World Health Organization continues to emphasize that people of all abilities and ages should engage in physical activity regularly to maintain health and prevent disease. This message is echoed by the European Union, the United Nations, and international sports organizations like the International Olympic Committee, which all support inclusive policies that promote well-being through physical exercise.

In Romania, these principles have been adopted and reinforced through national initiatives. The “Healthy Living – Healthy Eating” National Program, coordinated by the Ministry of Health, aims to reduce the incidence of obesity and related diseases by encouraging healthier lifestyle habits, particularly among young people. Initiated in the 2010s and updated regularly, this program has led to cross-sector collaboration between education, healthcare, and youth services.

As Dr. Alexandru Rafila, Minister of Health, stated:

“Promoting physical activity is just as important as access to medical services. It is one of the pillars of public health and disease prevention.”

In parallel, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has launched several national programs that aim to increase participation in physical activities for people of all ages and abilities.

These include:

- Sport for All Campaign
- Move for Health Romania
- National Sports Week
- Active School Days (in collaboration with the Ministry of Education)
- Play and Move Together – Family Sports Days
- Sports Caravan (reaching rural and underserved areas)
- Inclusive Sports for Youth with Disabilities

One notable program is the National Talent Identification and Development Program, jointly operated by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Each year, thousands of students from grades 2–4 are assessed for physical aptitude. Those with high potential are directed into sports academies, while others benefit from general fitness and motor skills development.

“Through these screenings, we not only discover athletic talent, but we also foster a culture of movement among children,” said Eduard Novak, former Olympic champion and current Minister of Youth and Sports. “Early physical activity translates into long-term mental and physical resilience.”

Moreover, Romania celebrates public engagement in movement through events like the “Let’s Move Romania!” campaign, which encourages citizens to walk, cycle, or engage in sports at public events organized in towns and cities across the country.

These integrated national programs reflect Romania’s commitment to building a healthier, more active society, reducing the burden of chronic diseases, and promoting lifelong well-being among all its citizens.

Women’s Participation in Sport in Romania

Sports play a significant role in the social, physical, and mental empowerment of women and girls. Globally, sports transcend national, social, and cultural boundaries and serve as powerful tools for inclusion, empowerment, and societal change. Romania, like many other EU member states, recognizes the importance of advancing gender equality in sport as both a human rights issue and a means to create more dynamic, diverse, and inclusive sports institutions.

Although considerable progress has been made in recent years, disparities remain. Many international and national sports organizations continue to seek structural solutions to promote equal access and representation of women across all levels of sport—whether as athletes, coaches, decision-makers, or administrators.

As the European Commission affirms: “Gender equality is not only a matter of fairness, it’s also a matter of maximizing the potential of our societies.”

In Romania, women’s participation in sport has seen noticeable improvements, particularly in the last decade. Driven by EU-backed initiatives, national sports development strategies, and civil society advocacy, new opportunities have emerged for girls and women to engage in sport, both recreationally and competitively. According to the Romanian Ministry of Sport, programs such as “Sportul pentru Toți” (Sport for All) and “Fetele Joacă Fotbal” (Girls Play Football) aim to eliminate barriers and encourage girls’ involvement from a young age.

Still, there are gaps in representation. A 2023 report by the Romanian Olympic and Sports Committee (COSR) and the Ministry of Family, Youth, and Equal Opportunities revealed the following:

- Of all licensed athletes, 36% were female and 64% male.
- Among athletes with disabilities, women made up only 28% of total participants.
- Of the national sport federations, only 4 out of 70 were led by women presidents.
- In the boards of these federations, women represent just 10.5% of decision-making members.
- Among the federally recognized coaches, 68% were men and 32% women, with female coaches most active in gymnastics, figure skating, swimming, handball, and rhythmic sports.

- Within the Ministry of Sport and affiliated national agencies, only 12% of top management positions were held by women.

As stated by Eduard Novak, Romania's Minister of Sport and a Paralympic gold medalist: "We must actively promote women's leadership in sport. Encouraging girls and women to take on roles not only on the field, but also in coaching, management, and governance, is vital to ensuring equality of opportunity."

In 2022, the Ministry launched a pilot initiative called "Equal Chances in Romanian Sports", targeting high schools and sports clubs to promote inclusive participation and challenge gender stereotypes in youth training programs. It also included awareness campaigns in collaboration with NGOs and local governments.

Despite the progress, studies by academic researchers from institutions like the National University of Physical Education and Sport (UNEFIS) show that societal and cultural norms, lack of access to facilities, and the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles still hinder progress toward true gender equity.

The general conclusion remains: although women's participation in Romanian sports has increased significantly in the past decade, their representation—particularly in leadership, coaching, and governance—continues to lag behind. Sustained investment, policy reform, and targeted empowerment initiatives are essential for achieving a balanced, inclusive, and equitable sports landscape for all.

Barriers to Sport for Women in ROMANIA

Despite growing recognition of the importance of sport and physical activity for women's physical, mental, and social well-being, women in Romania continue to face significant obstacles to their active participation. These barriers are shaped by complex intersections of gender norms, socio-economic conditions, institutional structures, and cultural attitudes. They are typically categorized into four major domains: practical, psychosocial, financial, and institutional barriers.

Practical Barriers

Practical constraints are among the most immediate and observable factors impeding women's engagement in sport. Romanian women often encounter time poverty due to dual responsibilities in the workforce and domestic sphere, including childcare and eldercare. According to Eurostat (2021), Romanian women spend on average 2.5 times more hours per week on unpaid care and domestic work than men, limiting their opportunities for leisure activities such as sport (Eurostat, 2021).

Moreover, limited access to sport facilities, particularly in rural areas, further impedes participation. Data from the Romanian Ministry of Sport indicates that over 65% of rural localities lack public sports infrastructure, and the available facilities are often poorly maintained or inaccessible due to cost or scheduling (Ministerul Sportului, 2022).

Personal safety concerns, especially when traveling after dark or to isolated facilities, also discourage women's participation, particularly in small towns or peri-urban zones.

Seasonal climate challenges (e.g., harsh winters, heatwaves) without access to adequate indoor alternatives compound these logistical issues.

Psychosocial and Cultural Barriers

Internalized cultural norms and gender stereotypes contribute significantly to women's reduced confidence and sense of belonging in sport spaces. In a national survey by Cult Research (2022), 75% of Romanians believed that women could not perform at the same level as men in sports, and 60% viewed football as an exclusively male activity (Cult Research, 2022). Such attitudes perpetuate exclusionary perceptions and discourage women from participating in a wide range of sports, particularly those perceived as "masculine."

Many women also experience negative body image, low self-esteem, and fear of judgment, especially when engaging in physical activity in public or male-dominated environments. The lack of visible female role models in sport media and leadership exacerbates the issue, offering few counter-narratives to inspire confidence and engagement (European Commission, 2020).

In many Romanian households, there is also limited support for women's participation in sport. The inactive lifestyle of family members, including spouses, often acts as a social disincentive for women to engage in sport. Moreover, cultural and religious norms, particularly in some ethnic minority communities, further restrict women's opportunities for physical activity due to expectations around modesty or gender-segregated spaces.

Financial Barriers

Economic constraints continue to be a pervasive obstacle. The average net monthly salary in Romania (approx. €950 in 2024), coupled with rising inflation, makes it difficult for many women—especially mothers or single-income earners—to allocate funds for sport-related expenses. Gym memberships, sports clothing, equipment, and transportation costs add up significantly.

A study conducted by the Romanian Olympic and Sports Committee (COSR, 2022) found that 47% of women who had discontinued regular sport participation cited cost as a primary barrier, with long-term subscription fees and expensive gear cited most often (COSR, 2022). In some rural areas, sport programs are virtually non-existent unless families can afford private lessons or transportation to nearby towns.

Institutional Barriers

Institutional factors contribute to the systemic exclusion of women from key decision-making positions in sport governance, management, and coaching. A comprehensive analysis of Romanian national sports federations revealed that women hold only 20% of executive leadership positions, and that only 6% of head coaches in national-level teams are women (Moldovan & Bota, 2019).

This underrepresentation leads to a lack of gender-sensitive policies, fewer inclusive training environments, and minimal institutional advocacy for female athletes and participants. Furthermore, schools often fail to deliver gender-equitable physical education programs, with many girls reporting negative early experiences in sport due to poor teaching practices or gendered curricula (UNEFS, 2021).

At the European level, the "All In Plus" project found that across EU countries, only 12% of presidents of national sport federations are women, and that women represent just 23% of accredited coaches (Council of Europe & EU, 2023). Romania aligns with these trends, demonstrating that its challenges reflect both local and continental structural inequalities.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Understanding physical activity habits is essential to improving public health strategies and promoting inclusive access to sport. This study focuses on women aged between 18 and 35, a key demographic often navigating work, studies, family responsibilities, and identity building.

The main research question was: “What are the motor activity habits of women aged 18 to 35?”

For this questionnaire, the Alice Milliat Association chose to consult directly with women in Europe.

The terms “women” and “female” are aimed at individuals who self-identify as such.

To address this, a mixed-method questionnaire was developed, combining the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) with custom questions designed by project partners. This combination enables a comprehensive understanding of both quantitative activity levels and qualitative elements such as motivation, perceived barriers, and openness to community-based initiatives.

The hybrid structure of the questionnaire combines scientific validity (IPAQ) with a contextual and gendered-approach lens, taking into account the specific needs of each woman, tailored by the project partners. This approach acknowledges the complex reality of women's daily lives and explores what facilitates or hinders access to sport practices.

Structure and Methodology of the Questionnaire

The full questionnaire (in English) is available here <https://forms.gle/s8og2qcdDTAX73q69>

The questionnaire is structured into **6 main sections**:

1. Personal and personal information section (age, occupation, marital status, children, place of residence)

The first section gathered basic data on age, job status, residence, marital status, and presence of children. These variables enabled a socio-demographic profile and showed how personal circumstances influence sport participation. Occupation and family status were recoded for clarity. Territorial information helped assess accessibility to sports based on urban or rural areas. This section also served to ease participants into the survey and support an intersectional reading of the results.

2. Physical activity section (levels, frequencies and types)

This section examined the participants' current involvement in sport, including type of activity, frequency, and setting (e.g. at home, in a gym). Responses were categorized (e.g. fitness, dance, martial arts). Based on the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ), it measured intensity and duration of weekly activity, and included sitting time to assess sedentary behavior. It provided a clear picture of the physical activity levels of women in the sample.

3. Section past experience in sport and reasons for dropping out

Focused on previous engagement in sport, this section explored reasons for stopping (e.g. cost, lack of time, health, maternity, insecurity), and asked if participants would like to resume. It identified key drop-out phases and potential target groups for reactivation—like those needing flexible sessions or safe environments. These insights are key for understanding the emotional and structural barriers to continuity in sport.

4. Section motivations and perceived barriers in sports practice

This part addressed motivating factors (e.g. health, well-being, fun, challenge, socialization) and obstacles (e.g. economic, time constraints, cultural stereotypes). It included a question on the impact of low female visibility in sport, and whether a women-only environment would increase participation. This helped define both enablers and blockers and emphasized the need for non-competitive, inclusive contexts.

5. Interest and preferences for future activities of the PINK CLAW project section

Participants indicated their interest in PINK CLAW sessions, preferred sports (from yoga to boxing), and suggested additional ideas like wellness workshops and group walks. Preferences reflected a desire for non-judgmental spaces, female trainers, and accessible formats compatible with daily life. These responses are crucial to align project offerings with real interests.

6. conditions and factors facilitating sports practice

This section explored the practical needs for consistent participation: affordability, flexible hours, proximity to home/work, transport options, emotional support, and female staff presence. It also gathered data on preferred time slots and acceptable travel times, providing operational insights to design realistic and inclusive activities.

Tool used

Google Forms was used for data collection, a free platform accessible online that allows you to create personalized questionnaires and collect responses in real time. The choice of this tool was dictated by several factors: firstly, its accessibility on any device connected to the internet (computer, tablet, smartphone), which facilitated participation even by less digitally savvy users. Secondly, Google Forms allows an automated and secure management of responses, providing data in exportable and easily analysable format, a fundamental condition for subsequent statistical processing work.

The questionnaire was created anonymously, without requiring identification data, to ensure the confidentiality of respondents and encourage greater freedom of expression. The structure of the questions included both single- or multiple-choice closed-ended questions, and open-ended questions, to allow participants to freely express their opinions and proposals.

The Google Forms interface has made it possible to clearly manage even questions with articulated options or with specific display conditions, avoiding confusion or cognitive overload. Finally, the tool provided a first automatic representation of the results through summary graphs, useful in the preliminary phase of exploratory reading of the data before the in-depth analysis on SPSS.

Period and duration of data collection

The collection of responses took place over an extended period of time, between 3 May 2023 and 26 March 2025. This long period of opening of the questionnaire made it possible to reach a large number of participants, ensuring a progressive and diversified data collection over time. The extended duration allowed the partners in each country

involved in the PINK CLAW project to plan and adapt their dissemination strategies according to their own timing and territorial availability.

Methods of dissemination of the questionnaire in Romania

In Romania, the PINK CLAW team employed a grassroots and community-based approach to promote the survey. Team members actively leveraged their personal communication networks—such as WhatsApp, social media platforms, and email—to reach a broader audience.

The survey link was also distributed during the Catchball association coaching training sessions, enhancing visibility among professionals already engaged in physical education and wellness initiatives.

Additionally, we collaborated with university lecturers—friends and contacts of our team—who shared the survey during class sessions with their students, particularly those studying sports science and physical education. In many instances, our team members took on the role of facilitators, assisting participants directly in completing the survey. This hands-on approach proved essential, especially when individuals were hesitant to participate—despite the fact that completion time was relatively short. Nonetheless, reluctance to engage was a recurring challenge.

Initially, we faced a discouraging environment marked by skepticism and low response rates. As a team, we recognized the need to adapt and diversify our outreach strategy.

To extend our reach, we began circulating the survey's QR code and Google Form link at regular intervals on flyers distributed in the universities and public places. It was also actively shared within the Catchball community WhatsApp group, which includes 354 members from various relevant sectors in many cities of Romania

We also reached out to student communities across Romanian universities, especially those within sports science faculties at institutions such as Sport universities in Brasov and Arad, where we have organized communication sessions previously.

Despite these multi-channel efforts, the overall engagement remained lower than expected, and qualitative feedback from participants revealed barriers such as disinterest or survey fatigue.

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Number of participants reached and responses obtained in Romania

In the Country Report of ROMANIA, the total number of responses collected was 347. To contextualize these findings, it's useful to consider the broader demographic landscape of Romania.

As of 2024, Romania's total population is estimated to be approximately 19 million people. The gender distribution is relatively balanced, with 51.2% women and 48.8% men, according to national statistics. In terms of age demographics, Romania faces a notable trend of population aging.

The breakdown is approximately:

- 14% of the population is aged 0–18 years
- 63% is aged 18–64 years
- 23% is aged 65 and over

These figures highlight the importance of tailoring national surveys and initiatives to reflect the needs and perspectives of various demographic groups, particularly as the country grapples with challenges such as declining birth rates, youth emigration, and an aging population.

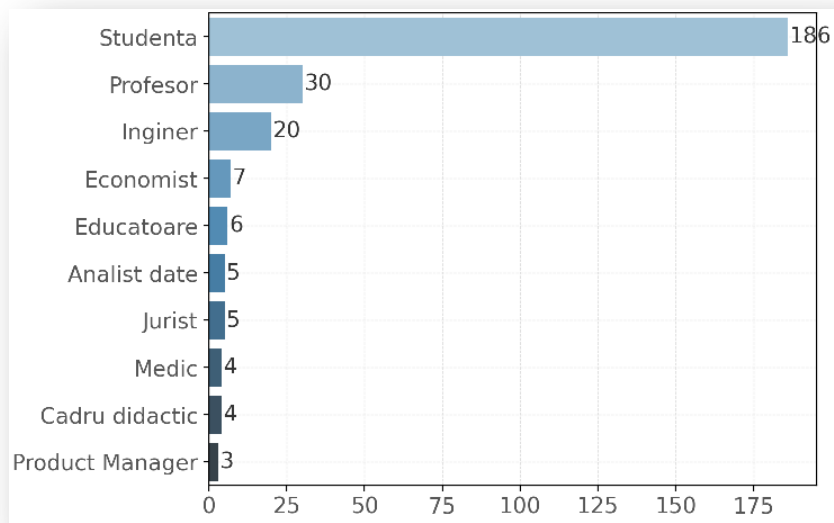
The 347 responses in the country report provide a valuable—though relatively small—snapshot of public sentiment and social trends, offering insights that can contribute to more targeted and inclusive policy development and program design.

Profile of respondents

Profession

When we look at the occupational distribution of the respondents, the most common occupational group is students (186 people), followed by teachers (30 people) and engineers (20 people). This shows that students and educators are actively involved in the process in terms of the target audience of the project. It can be said that the biggest reason for this active participation is the implementation of the PINK CLAW workout program on the university campus. At the same time, public sector employees (civil servants - 29 people) and athletes directly related to sports (17 people) and sports trainers (14 people) also provided significant participation.

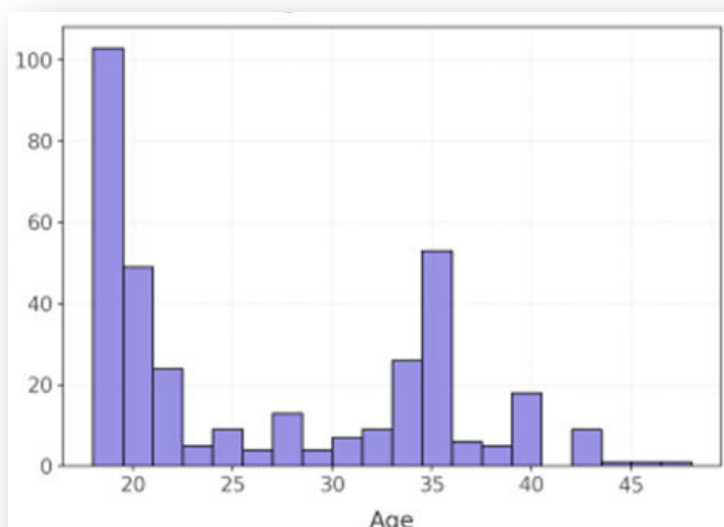
It is also useful to state that the participants (for example, students) came from different departments.



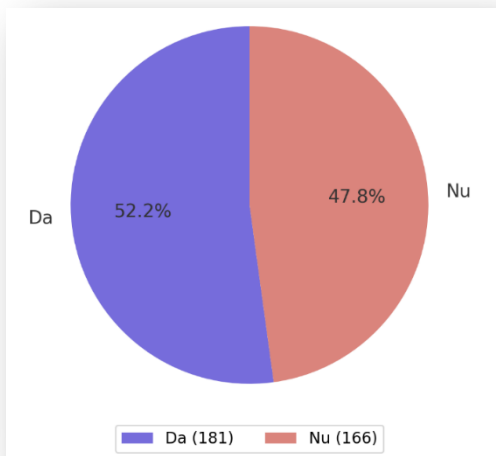
Age

There's a relatively uniform distribution from 18 to 48 with spikes at ages 19 and 20 then 35, reflecting the fact that majority of participants were students and teachers

This data clearly demonstrates that the Pink Claw project has been particularly effective in engaging young women who are university students, active in the workforce, or of potential parental age. These demographic groups are often at a pivotal stage in life, where participation in sport and physical activity may be significantly influenced by external factors such as limited free time, professional obligations, and family responsibilities. By successfully reaching these central cohorts, the project addresses a critical gap in sport engagement and highlights its capacity to overcome structural barriers that traditionally hinder women's sustained involvement in physical activity.



Sport practice (yes/no, which, where, with who)

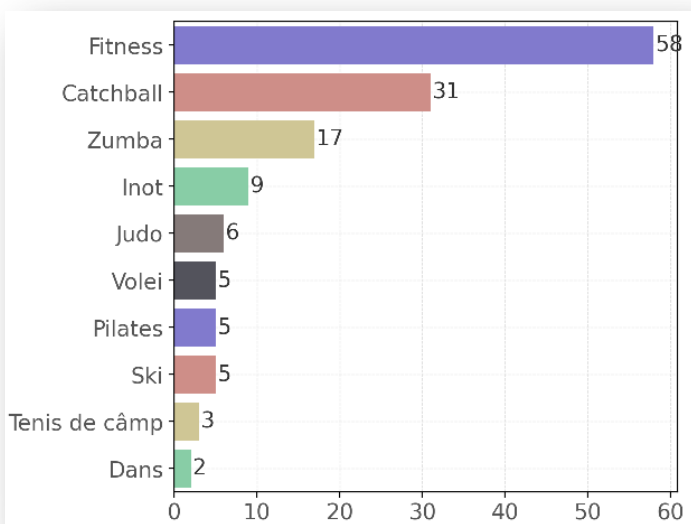


Yes or No ?

According to the responses obtained from the survey, there is an even split between participants that are practicing sport and the ones that do not.

This is in line with EU stats where Romania has a very high rate of non sport people, sedentary and basically without an active life. PINK CLAW project is a great tool to tackle this weaknesses.

Which sports ?



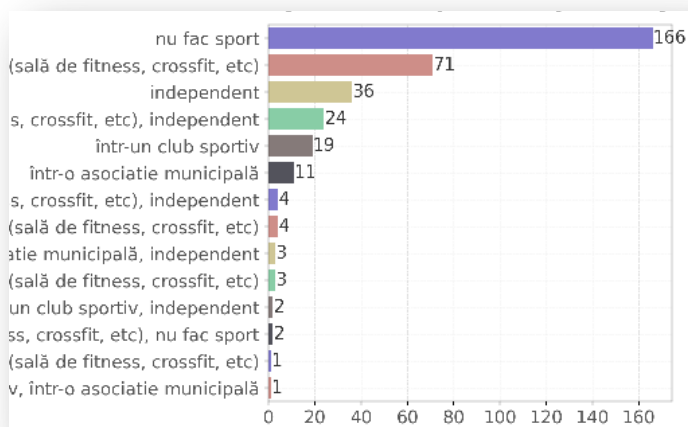
The data reveal a diverse range of sports activities mentioned by the participants. The analysis of open-ended responses indicates that while some respondents explicitly identified clear and popular sports such as judo, fitness, and badminton, a substantial number of answers were either missing or unspecified. The initial descriptive statistics suggest that only a fraction of the sample provided detailed information regarding the type of sport they practice.

According to the responses obtained from the survey,

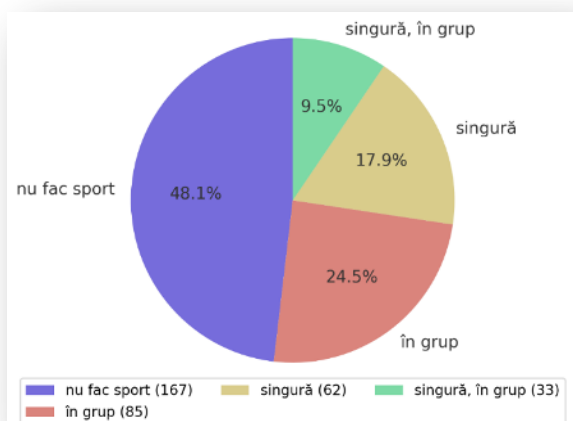
the most preferred sport was "fitness". A total of 58 participants stated that they do fitness. Fitness is followed by "catchball" with 31 participants and "zumba" with 17 participants. This data shows that the participants largely prefer sports that can be done individually but also as a team, and indoors. On the other hand, more physical, outdoor activities such as "swimming" and "volleyball" also attracted attention. This situation shows that sports are done for both health and relaxation purposes and that there is a variety of preferences depending on the environmental conditions. This shows that the participants mostly tend to do exercises that focus on both mental relaxation and physical strength.

Where ?

Nearly half of the participants (47.6%) indicated that they do not practice any sport. The next most popular response, by 32.3% of participants, was that they practice their sport in a specially equipped gym (e.g., a fitness or crossfit center). Other locations include practicing at home (2.6%), in public spaces (such as a public area or a specially arranged outdoor zone), and several mixed-location options (with percentages ranging from 0.3% to 5.5%). These results indicate that a significant portion of the respondents are inactive when it comes to sport practice, while those who are active tend to favor the structured environment of specialized gyms. Minor response groups show a variety of combinations regarding practicing at home, outdoors, or in public spaces.



With whom ?



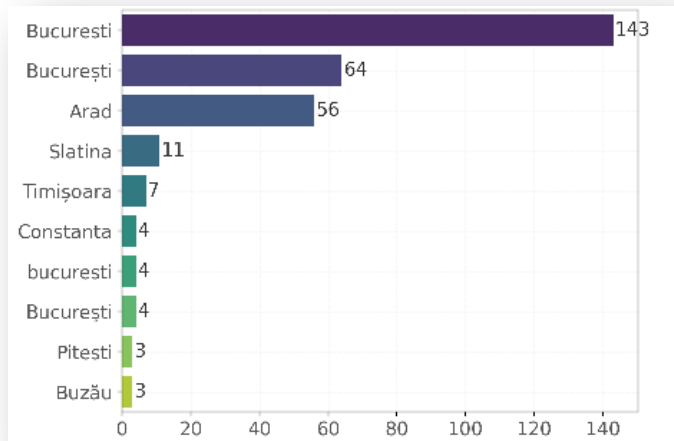
48.1% of respondents reported not engaging in any sport, while 24.5% participate in sports in a group setting, 17.9% practice individually, and 9.5% do both. Regarding the location of practice, 47.6% do not practice sport, 32.3% exercise in specialized gyms, with remaining responses divided among home settings and outdoor areas. Among those specifying a sport type (n = 183), 31.7% reported Fitness, followed by 13.7% for Catchball and 9.3% for Zumba.

Countries

All participants in the survey are living in Romania

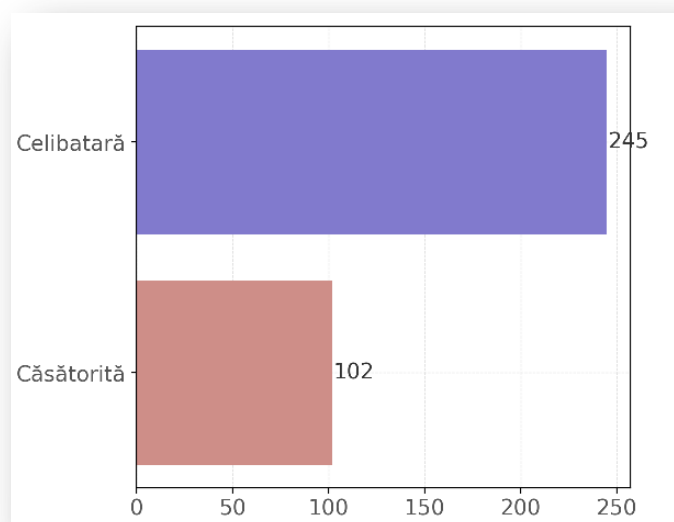
Cities

The highest participation rate in the survey came from Bucharest with 52,6 % (207 participants), indicating that awareness and access are high in the capital Bucharest is followed by Arad with 11,2% (56 participants) The population density, access to sports venues and strong communication networks in these metropolitan cities may have increased interest in the project.

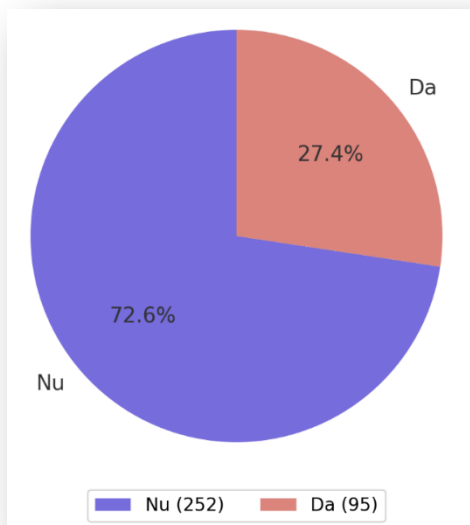


Marital status

The majority of respondents (43.8%) are single without children, while 28.8% are married without children. Single individuals with children represent 26.8% of the sample, showing a significant proportion of single parents. Notably, only 0.6% of respondents are married with children. Overall, 70.6% of participants identify as single and 29.4% as married, while 72.6% report having no children and 27.4% have children. This distribution suggests a sample predominantly composed of single individuals without children, with single parents forming the second largest family structure.



Children : yes or no



In the analyzed sample of 347 respondents, 72.6% indicated they do not have children, while 27.4% reported having children. This split shows that nearly three out of four participants are childless, whereas just over one in four has children. These percentages serve as a key indicator of the familial patterns within the study population and may have implications for further demographic or social research. Such a distribution could influence decisions regarding policy-making, social services, or targeted marketing strategies, highlighting the predominance of individuals without children in the sample.

Correlations

Sport practice : yes/no : if yes, how many hours ?

Analysis of 274 respondents reveals a counterintuitive relationship between sport practice and intense physical activity duration. Those who do not practice sports report slightly longer periods of intense physical activity (2.88 hours) compared to those who do (2.48 hours). The correlation coefficient of -0.078 indicates a weak negative relationship between these variables. This suggests that formal sport participation may not be the primary driver of intense physical activity in this population. Alternative explanations could include occupational physical demands, different interpretations of "intense activity," or varying definitions of sport practice versus general physical activity.

Marital status and sport practice

In analyzing the correlation between sport practice and family status, the data suggest varying patterns across relationship categories. Respondents who practice sports appear slightly more balanced between being single and married compared to those who do not engage in sports. Specifically, a higher proportion of non-practitioners are single, while practitioners include a modest yet noticeable share of married individuals. This variation implies that participation in sports might be associated with certain family responsibilities or lifestyle choices. Overall, while family status does not solely drive sport practice, the interplay between relationship status and physical activity highlights the importance of considering demographic factors in behavioral research.

Children and sport practice

Respondents without children appear slightly more likely to engage in sports compared to those with children. This suggests that parental responsibilities may constrain time available for sport activities. However, the correlation is not strong, indicating that having children is just one of many factors influencing sport participation. The findings highlight

the complex interplay between family structure and physical activity patterns. Further research could explore how specific types of support systems might enable parents to maintain regular sport practice despite the time constraints associated with childcare responsibilities.

Children and duration of sport practice

The data shows a slightly negative correlation between having children and participation in sports, indicating that individuals with children are somewhat less likely to engage in physical activity. This aligns with the expectation that childcare responsibilities may limit time and energy for sports. A moderately positive correlation was observed between weekly exercise hours and sports participation, suggesting that active individuals tend to maintain regular exercise routines. Furthermore, a strong positive relationship was found between marital status and having children. These findings suggest that family roles influence sports habits, and supportive policies could help remove barriers for parents, especially married individuals, to stay active.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

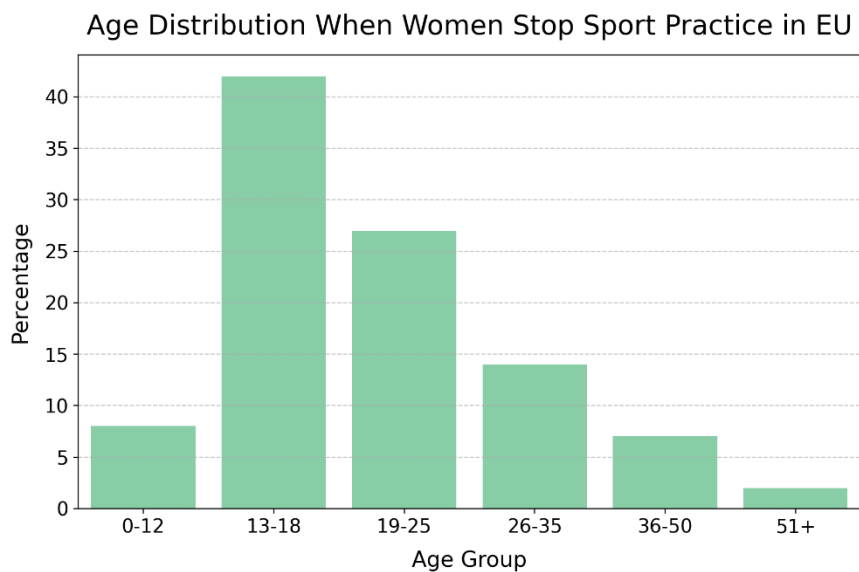
Factors Affecting Sports Participation in Romania

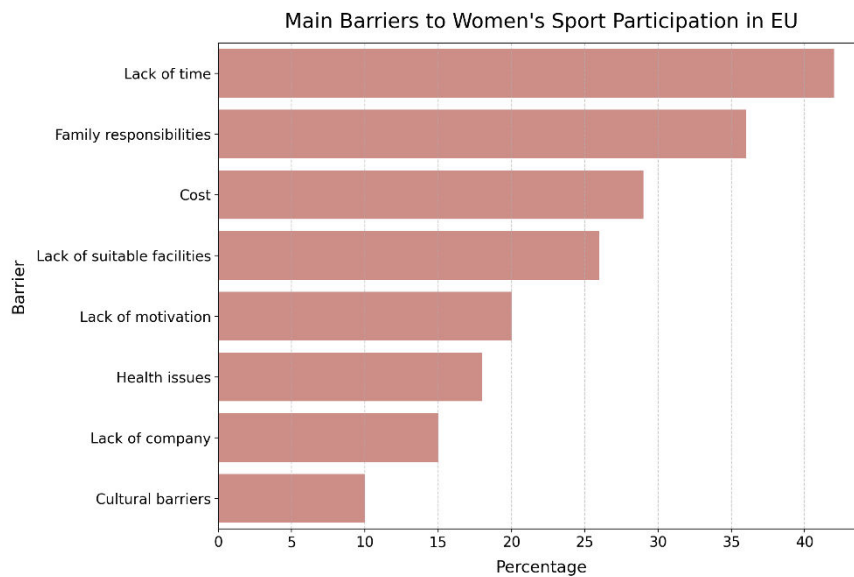
The data reveal that a significant majority of respondents—73.5%—had participated in sports at some point. However, robust challenges remain regarding sustained participation.

A primary finding is the high prevalence of sport cessation among participants, with 42.9% citing a lack of time as the leading reason. Other notable reasons include life changes, which account for 13.4% of responses, along with health-related concerns and limited motivation. These factors suggest that both external commitments and personal circumstances act as significant barriers.

Examining the age at which sports participation typically ends, the analysis finds a mean cessation age of 16.5 years, with the highest drop-out occurring during adolescence (13-18 years). This trend indicates a critical period where early engagement might be improved to support sustained participation.

When compared with EU benchmarks, Romania's overall participation and retention figures appear significantly lower. The EU average for women's sports participation stands at 36%, with countries like Finland reporting rates as high as 67%. The findings stress the urgent need for targeted policy interventions and support mechanisms to promote long-term engagement in sports among women.





The results obtained are grouped under the following headings:

Social

- Gender Stereotypes and Cultural Norms

Traditional beliefs about femininity and societal expectations often discourage women from participating in sports, especially in competitive or physically intense activities. These stereotypes can lead to a lack of encouragement from family, peers, or communities.

Family and Caregiving Responsibilities

Women are often primary caregivers in families, which can limit the time and energy they have for personal activities like sports. Balancing work, childcare, and household duties can leave little room for consistent sports engagement.

- Lack of Female Role Models and Representation

Limited visibility of women in sports leadership, media coverage, and coaching roles can reduce motivation and aspiration among young girls and women to pursue or continue participation in sports.

- Safety and Accessibility Concerns

Inadequate access to safe, inclusive, and female-friendly sports facilities—especially in rural or underserved areas—can discourage women from participating. Issues like harassment, poor lighting, and lack of women-only spaces also contribute to reduced involvement

Economic

- Cost of Participation

Expenses related to sports—such as membership fees, equipment, uniforms, and travel—can be a significant barrier for women, especially those from low-income backgrounds or single-income households.

- Income Inequality

Women often earn less than men due to wage gaps and limited access to high-paying jobs. This economic disparity can lead women to prioritize basic needs and family expenses over leisure activities like sports.

- Limited Funding for Women's Sports

Female sports programs often receive less financial support compared to male counterparts, leading to fewer opportunities, lower-quality facilities, and reduced access to coaching and development resources.

- Work Schedule and Job Insecurity

Irregular or demanding work hours, often seen in lower-wage or part-time jobs typically held by women, can make it difficult to commit time to regular sports participation. Job insecurity may also discourage spending on non-essential activities like sports.

Psychological

- Low Self-Confidence and Body Image Issues

Many women experience self-consciousness about their bodies, especially in public or competitive sports settings. Negative body image can reduce confidence and discourage participation in physical activities.

- Fear of Judgment or Failure

Concerns about being judged for athletic ability, appearance, or performance—especially in male-dominated environments—can create anxiety and reduce motivation to engage in sports.

- Lack of Motivation or Internal Drive

Without strong internal motivation or supportive external encouragement, women may struggle to prioritize sports, particularly when facing competing demands from work or family life.

- Past Negative Experiences

Previous exposure to discrimination, harassment, or exclusion in sports settings can lead to long-lasting psychological barriers, making women less likely to re-engage with sports or physical activity.

Other

- Media Representation and Visibility

Limited coverage of women's sports in mainstream media reduces awareness and inspiration. When female athletes and sporting events are underrepresented, it diminishes role modeling and public interest.

- Lack of Female Coaches and Mentors

The scarcity of women in coaching, mentoring, and leadership roles can make sports environments feel less inclusive or relatable, discouraging female participation and progression.

- Peer Influence and Social Support

A supportive network of friends and peers can greatly influence participation. If a woman's social circle is not active or supportive of sports, she may be less inclined to participate.

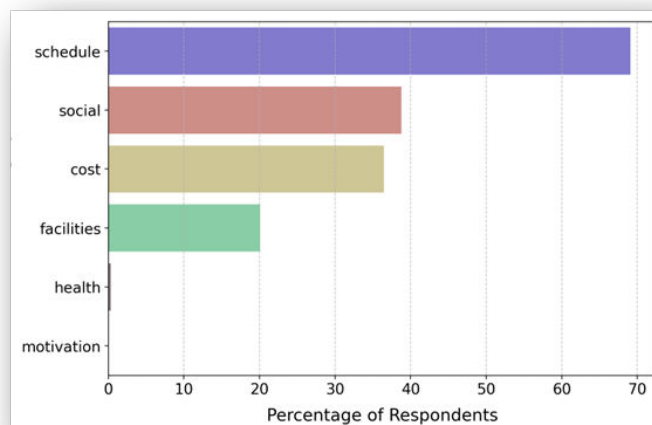
- Religious or Cultural Restrictions

In some communities, religious or cultural norms may restrict women's participation in sports, particularly if attire or mixed-gender settings conflict with traditional beliefs.

Motivations to start again

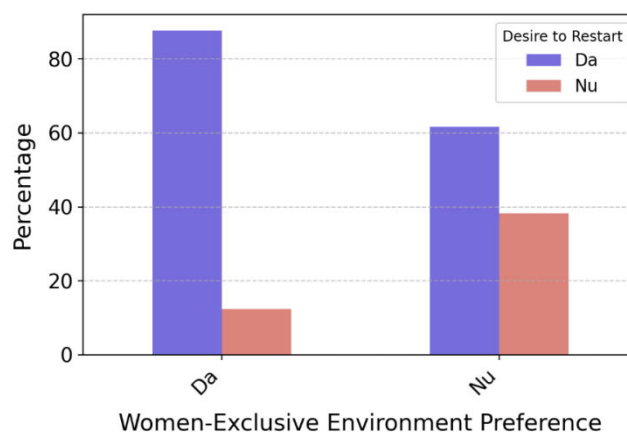
- Adaptable schedule

Based on the analysis, schedule flexibility is a key motivator for individuals considering resuming physical activities. Respondents highlighted that an adaptable schedule enables them to integrate exercise into their busy lives and manage other personal or professional commitments effectively. Approximately 69.1% mentioned schedule-related factors as significant motivators for engaging in weekly exercise. The finding underscores that flexible timing options could facilitate regular participation by reducing time conflicts and stress. This insight aligns with broader trends where busy lifestyles represent a major barrier to exercise, making adaptable schedules essential for encouraging more consistent and sustained involvement in physical activity.



- Women's groups

A significant 86.5% of respondents indicated that a women-exclusive environment would encourage them to participate more actively in physical activities. This highlights the importance of safe, inclusive, and supportive spaces tailored specifically for women. Additionally, 84.1% of all respondents expressed a desire to begin or resume physical activities in the upcoming months—demonstrating a strong overall interest in improving personal health and fitness. Notably, among those who preferred a women-only setting, this intention was even higher, with 87.7% indicating a clear motivation to restart physical activity. These findings suggest that creating female-focused programs and environments could significantly boost women's sports participation and help remove psychological and social barriers to engagement.



- Quality of infrastructures

The longitudinal study reveals that infrastructure quality plays a significant role in motivating individuals to resume physical activities. Analysis shows that 20.1% of respondents specifically mentioned infrastructure quality as a key motivating factor for weekly exercise participation.

Among those who cited infrastructure quality, an overwhelming 91.3% expressed a desire to restart physical or athletic activities in the coming months, indicating a strong correlation between quality facilities and willingness to engage in exercise.

Equipment availability emerged as the dominant infrastructure concern, mentioned by 100% of those who cited facility quality as important. This singular focus highlights how critical proper equipment access is to potential participants.

The data demonstrates that while infrastructure quality (20.1%) ranks behind schedule flexibility (69.1%) as a motivating factor, it represents a distinct segment of participants for whom quality facilities are essential to their decision to resume physical activities.

- Adapted economic offer

The analysis reveals that economic considerations are a significant motivating factor for individuals considering resumption of physical activities in Romania. 36.4% of respondents specifically mentioned economic factors as important motivators for weekly exercise participation.

Low cost emerged as the dominant economic concern, mentioned by 100% of those who cited financial factors as important. This singular focus highlights how critical affordable pricing is to potential participants.

Among those who mentioned economic factors, an impressive 89.6% expressed a desire to restart physical or athletic activities in the coming months, indicating a strong correlation between affordable pricing and willingness to engage in exercise.

Economic factors rank fourth among all motivating factors, behind schedule flexibility (69.1%), social aspects (38.8%), and women-only groups (38.8%), but ahead of facility quality (20.1%).

- Other

The analysis reveals that beyond economic factors and infrastructure quality, several interrelated motivations drive individuals to resume physical activities. In particular, schedule flexibility stands out as the most crucial factor, with 69.1% of respondents highlighting the importance of accommodating their personal timetables. Social interactions also play a significant role; 38.8% of participants value activities that foster group engagement and community bonding. Additionally, the appeal of women-only groups, cited by another 38.8% of respondents, emphasizes the importance of a supportive, gender-specific environment. These factors collectively underscore the multifaceted drivers behind the decision to restart physical or athletic activities.

CONCLUSION OF RESULTS OF THE STUDY IN ROMANIA

This longitudinal study conducted in Romania provides valuable insights into the factors motivating individuals to engage in physical activities. The research reveals a strong interest in physical activity resumption, with 84.1% of respondents expressing a desire to begin or restart athletic activities in the coming months.

The study identified several interconnected motivational factors that influence Romanians' participation in physical activities:

Schedule Flexibility (69.1%): The predominant motivator across all demographics, reflecting the challenges of work-life balance in Romanian society. Interestingly, this factor was even more important for those not planning to restart activities (74.5%) than those who were (67.1%).

Social Aspects (38.8%): Group activities and community engagement emerged as powerful motivators, with a striking 26.1% difference between those wanting to restart activities (42.5%) and those not interested (16.4%).

Women-Only Groups (38.8%): Gender-specific exercise environments showed equal importance to social factors, with the same 26.1% difference between those planning to restart (42.5%) and those not planning to (16.4%), highlighting distinct gender preferences in Romanian exercise culture.

Economic Considerations (36.4%): Financial accessibility ranked fourth among motivators, with a 14.7% higher prevalence among those wanting to restart activities (38.4% vs. 23.6%), reflecting Romania's socioeconomic context.

Safety Concerns (23.9%): Environmental security was mentioned by nearly a quarter of respondents, with a 6.5% higher importance for those planning to restart activities.

Facility Quality (20.1%): Access to proper equipment and spaces was cited by one-fifth of participants, with a 10.7% difference favoring those planning to restart activities

The analysis reveals that social factors and women-only environments have the strongest correlation with the intention to restart physical activities, both showing a 26.1% difference between those planning to restart and those not interested. This suggests that community-based and gender-specific approaches may be particularly effective in promoting physical activity in Romania

The findings reflect Romania's unique cultural and socioeconomic landscape. The high importance of schedule flexibility indicates challenges with time management and work-life balance in Romanian society. The prominence of women-only groups suggests gender-specific preferences and potential cultural considerations regarding mixed-gender exercise environments. Economic factors rank notably high, reflecting the importance of affordable options in the Romanian context.

This comprehensive analysis provides valuable guidance for developing targeted interventions to increase physical activity participation in Romania, emphasizing the need for flexible scheduling, social engagement opportunities, gender-specific options, and economically accessible programs.

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