

Study on the Role of Extracurricular Activities in Student Life Adaptation



Ion-Sebastian Enache^{1,*} , and Carmen Enache² 

^{1,2} Department of Physical Education and Sport, Polytechnic University of Bucharest, Pitești University Center

* Corresponding Author: enachecest@yahoo.com

Citation:

Enache, I.-S., Enache, C. 2026. Study on the Role of Extracurricular Activities in Student Life Adaptation, *Journal of Advanced Research in Sports: Interdisciplinary Approach*, Volume I, Spring, 1(1): 42 – 50. DOI: [10.14505/jarsia.v1.1\(1\).05](https://doi.org/10.14505/jarsia.v1.1(1).05).

Available from:

<http://journals.aserspublishing.eu/jarsia/index>

Article's History:

Received 1st of December 2025;
Received in revised form 10th of January 2026; Accepted 25th of February 2026; Published 31th of March 2026.

Copyright© 2026 The Author(s). Published by ASERS Publishing 2026. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of CC-BY 4.0 license.

Abstract:

Background: The importance of first-year students' participation in activities for adapting to student life is analyzed.

Methods: The study includes 30 prospective students from different specializations who have been admitted to faculty and 15 current students from different years. We aimed to conduct a study that demonstrates the efficiency of adaptation programs for student life through motor activities, knowledge and self-knowledge activities, lodge games, and team-building activities. At the end of the activities, we applied a 10-item questionnaire to obtain feedback on our proposed program.

Results: The results confirm the specialized literature, highlighting the positive role of extracurricular involvement.

Conclusions: Following participation in the adaptation program for student life, after analyzing the questionnaire results, we observe that extracurricular activities play an important role in adapting to student life, contributing to social integration and personal development.

Keywords:

students; motor activities; adaptation; extracurricular activities; integration; university life;

Introduction

Adaptation to student life represents a complex process, influenced by academic, social, and psychological factors. Extracurricular activities play an essential role in facilitating student integration, contributing to the development of social skills, stress reduction, and increased satisfaction with the university environment. Extracurricular activities are defined as activities organized outside the formal teaching schedule that contribute to the personal and professional development of students (Kuh, 2008). These include volunteering, sports, student organizations, cultural events, or academic projects.

Studies show that involvement in such activities is associated with better integration into the university community and superior academic results (Astin, 1999). However, not all students participate actively, and the real impact on adaptation differs depending on the context.

1. Research Background

The transition from pre-university to university education involves major changes on academic, social, and personal levels. Students face new requirements, increased autonomy, and the necessity of integrating into a different social environment. In this context, adaptation to student life becomes an essential factor for academic success and well-being. Adaptation to student life represents a complex process, influenced by academic, social, and psychological factors. Efficient integration into the university environment involves not only academic performance but also the development of social relationships and personal competencies.

Extracurricular activities are considered an essential instrument in this process. Studies show that participation in such activities contributes to the development of socio-emotional skills and increased satisfaction with the educational experience. For example, research conducted by Feraco and collaborators highlights that

extracurricular activities are positively associated with motivation, self-regulated learning, and overall student satisfaction (Feraco et al., 2023).

In the same sense, the study conducted by Balaguer and collaborators shows that participation in extracurricular activities contributes to the improvement of academic performance, though the impact differs based on individual factors such as age or socio-economic background (Balaguer et al., 2020). This observation indicates that the effects of activities are not uniform and depend on each student's context.

From the perspective of personal development, extracurricular activities contribute to the formation of social and professional competencies. Studies show that involvement in such activities develops skills such as leadership, communication, and initiative, which are essential for integration into the labor market (Assante and Lişman, 2023).

Furthermore, there is evidence regarding the impact on psychological health. Extracurricular activities can contribute to stress reduction and the maintenance of a balance between academic and personal life (Zarazaga-Peláez et al., 2024). This dimension is relevant in the context of student adaptation, where stress represents a major factor.

Regarding academic efficiency, research indicates a positive relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and school performance. However, this relationship is moderated by factors such as consistent involvement and the type of activities performed (Carbonaro and Maloney, 2019).

In the university environment, extracurricular activities are also associated with the development of self-efficacy. Students involved in such activities manifest a higher level of confidence in their own abilities and better adaptation to academic and social demands (Griffiths and Dickinson, 2021).

Additionally, recent research highlights that involvement in extracurricular activities is correlated with autonomous motivation and cognitive engagement, suggesting that extra-curricular active students are, in general, more involved in the educational process as well (Assante and Lişman, 2023).

2. Materials and Methods

The purpose of this article is to analyze the extent to which extracurricular activities contribute to students' adaptation to university life.

Adaptation to student life is a multidimensional process that involves academic, social, and emotional integration. According to Vincent Tinto's model, student success depends on the degree of integration into the university environment.

Extracurricular activities contribute to this integration through:

- The development of social relationships;
- Increasing the sense of belonging;
- The development of transversal skills.

According to Alexander Astin's theory of student involvement, the level of involvement in educational and social activities directly influences personal development and academic performance.

Additionally, George Kuh's research highlights that participation in extracurricular activities increases the degree of satisfaction with the university experience and reduces the risk of dropout.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of participation in extracurricular activities on the student adaptation process. To implement this program, we sought the most effective means and methods of structuring a team-building program that leads to the adaptation of freshmen to student life.

Working Hypothesis

We considered that by having freshmen participate alongside upperclassmen in shared activities—including motor activities, team building, knowledge and self-knowledge, and socialization—we will facilitate the process of freshmen adapting to student life.

Research Approach

The methodology used includes the application of a questionnaire to a sample of students, and the results highlight a positive correlation between extracurricular involvement and the level of adaptation. The study was conducted based on quantitative research, utilizing the questionnaire method. The questionnaire was administered to all participants at the end of the activities. The sample consisted of 45 students: 30 from the 1st year, 10 from the 2nd year, and 5 from the 3rd year of study.

Instruments

Questionnaire titled: *Questionnaire regarding the impact of extracurricular activities on adaptation to student life*

Instruction: Please check the option that applies to you.

1. Year of study
 - Year I
 - Year II
 - Year III / IV
2. How do you evaluate the experience of the activities conducted at Bughea de Sus?
 - Very good
 - Good
 - Satisfactory
 - Poor
3. Did the activities help you integrate better into the group?
 - Yes, a lot
 - To some extent
 - No
4. What type of activities did you like the most?
 - Sports activities
 - Lodge games
 - Group/socialization activities
5. Do you consider that these activities reduce student stress?
 - Yes
 - Partially
 - No
6. Did you interact with new classmates as a result of these activities?
 - Yes
 - No
7. Would you like to participate in such activities in the future?
 - Yes
 - No
8. What do you consider to be the main benefit?
 - Socialization
 - Relaxation
 - Personal development

3. Results and Discussions

Item 1 (Table 1)

Total: 45 students

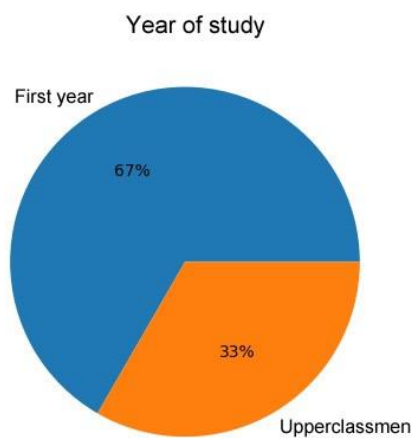
Table 1. Year of study

Category	No.	%
First-year students	30	67%
Upperclassmen	15	33%

Source: Compiled by Author.

The high percentage of first-year students, as seen in Figure 1, indicates the relevance of activities for initial integration.

Figure 1. Item 1 responses



Source: Compiled by Author.

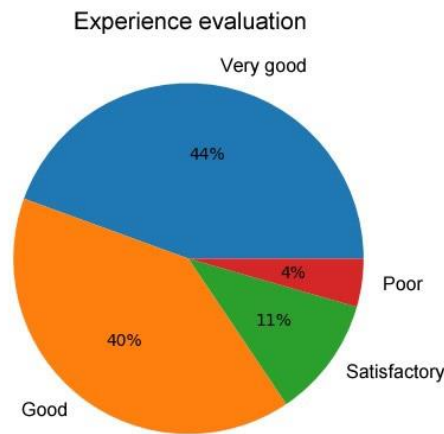
Table 2. Experience Evaluation

Answer	No.	%
Very good	20	44%
Good	18	40%
Satisfactory	5	11%
Poor	2	5%

Source: Compiled by Author.

The majority (84%) evaluate the experience positively. This result indicates a favorable impact of the activity organization.

Figure 2. Item 2 responses



Source: Compiled by Author.

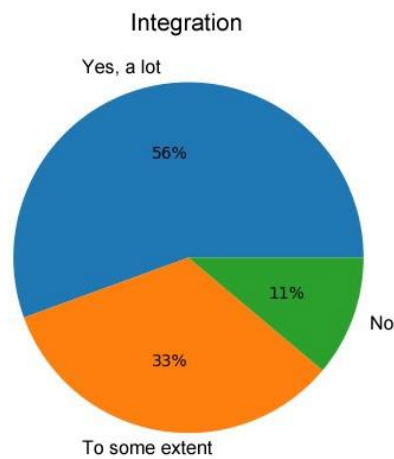
Table 3. Group Integration

Answer	No.	%
Yes, a lot	25	56%
To some extent	15	33%
No	5	11%

Source: Compiled by Author.

Over half of the students consider that the activities contributed significantly to their integration.

Figure 3. Item 3 responses



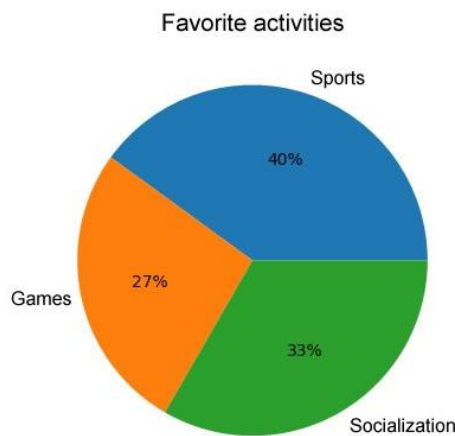
Source: Compiled by Author.

Table 4. Preferred Types of Activities

Answer	No.	%
Sports activities	18	40%
Lodge games	12	27%
Group/socialization activities	15	33%

Source: Compiled by Author.

Figure 4. Item 4 responses



Source: Compiled by Author.

Sports activities are dominant, but the social component remains important.

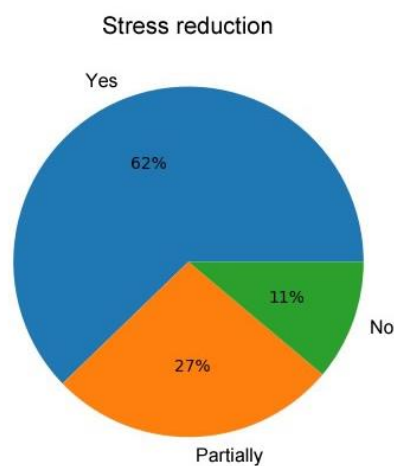
Table 5. Stress Reduction

Answer	No.	%
Yes	28	62%
Partially	12	27%
No	5	11%

Source: Compiled by Author.

The majority of students perceive the activities as an effective method for stress reduction.

Figure 5. Item 5 responses



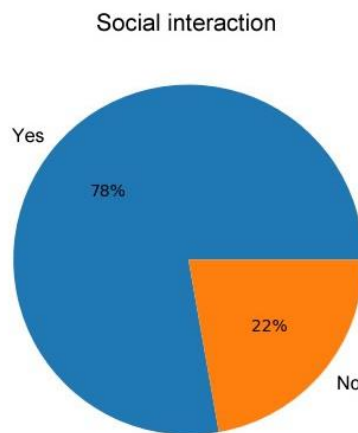
Source: Compiled by Author.

Table 6. Social Interaction

Answer	No.	%
Yes	35	78%
No	10	22%

Source: Compiled by Author.

Figure 6. Item 6 responses



Source: Compiled by Author.

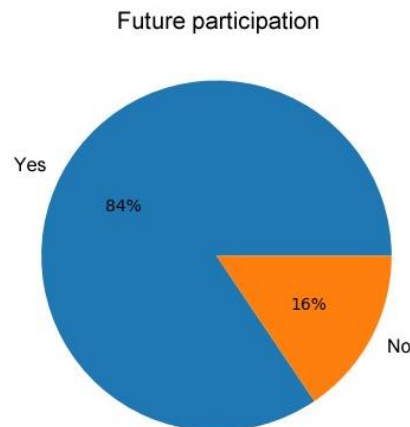
The high level of socialization is essential for student adaptation.

Table 7. Future Participation Intent

Answer	No	%
Yes	38	84%
No	7	16%

Source: Compiled by Author.

Figure 7. Item 7 responses



Source: Compiled by Author.

Interest is high for the continuation of these activities, which demonstrates a key indicator of success.

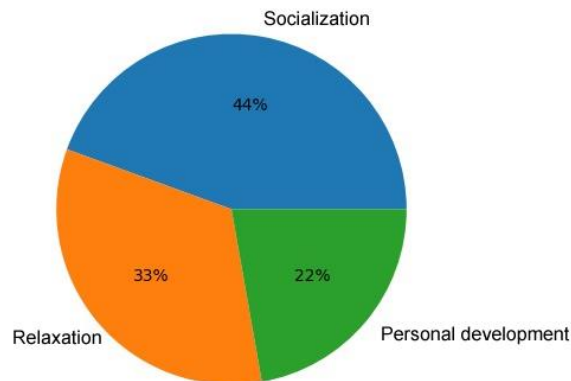
Table 8. Main Benefit

Answer	No	%
Socialization	20	44%
Relaxation	15	33%
Personal development	10	23%

Source: Compiled by Author.

Figure 8. Item 8 responses

The main perceived benefits of extracurricular activities



Source: Compiled by Author.

The results indicate that the primary benefit perceived by students is socialization (44%), followed by relaxation (33%), and personal development (23%). These data suggest that the social dimension of extracurricular activities plays a central role in the process of adapting to student life.

The high weight of socialization confirms the importance of interaction between students, especially for those in their first year who are in the integration stage. Relaxation is also a relevant benefit, indicating the role of these activities in reducing academic stress. Although personal development has a lower percentage, it remains a significant benefit, suggesting that extracurricular activities also contribute to the formation of individual skills.

The results show that the majority of students participate occasionally in extracurricular activities, while those frequently involved demonstrate a higher level of adaptation.

The main benefits identified:

- Development of social relationships;
- Stress reduction;
- Increased self-confidence.

Students who do not participate cite:

- Lack of time;
- Lack of interest;
- Lack of information.

The results confirm the specialized literature, highlighting the positive role of extracurricular involvement.

4. Conclusions

Extracurricular activities play an important role in adapting to student life, contributing to social integration and personal development.

Active involvement:

- increases satisfaction with the university experience;
- reduces adaptation difficulties;
- supports academic performance.

It is recommended to:

- promote activities within universities;
- facilitate student access;
- integrate these activities into educational strategies.

Credit Authorship Contribution Statement:

Ion-Sebastian Enache: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft, Data curation, Validation, Writing – review and editing.

Carmen Enache: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft, Data curation, Validation, Writing – review and editing.

Declaration of Competing Interest: The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Declaration of use of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies: During the preparation of this work, the author used AI-assisted technologies in order to improve the quality of the writing and corrections. After using this tool/service, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the published article.

References

- Assante, G.M., and Lişman, C.G. (2023). How to Increase Students' Involvement in Extracurricular Activities: A Structural Equation Model. *Education Sciences*, 13(11), 1121. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13111121>
- Astin, A.W. (1999). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40(5), 518–529.
- Balaguer, Á., Benitez, E., Albertos, A., and Lara Ros, S. (2020). The relevance of extracurricular activities for student development. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 7, Article 123. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-00573-0>
- Carbonaro, W., and Maloney, E. (2019). Extracurricular activities and student outcomes. *Socius*, 5, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023119845496>
- Daniel Roşu (Volume editor) Mihaela Diaconu (Volume editor) Teambuilding Instrument for Increasing Organizational Performance ©2025 Edited Collection, Law, Economics & Management, <https://www.peterlang.com/document/1516288>.
- Feraco, T., Resnati, D., Fregonese, D., Spoto, A., and Meneghetti, C. (2021). Soft Skills and Extracurricular Activities Sustain Motivation and Self-Regulated Learning at School. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 90(3), 550–569. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.2021.1873090>
- Griffiths, T.L., Dickinson, J., and Day, C.J. (2021). Exploring the relationship between extracurricular activities and student self-efficacy within university. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 45(9), 1294–1309. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2021.1951687>
- Kuh, G.D. (2008). *High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter*. Association of American Colleges and Universities. <https://navigate.utah.edu/resources/documents/hips-kuh-2008.pdf>
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition*. University of Chicago Press.
- Zarazaga-Peláez, J., Barrachina, V., Gutiérrez-Logroño, A., Villanueva-Guerrero, O., Roso-Moliner, A., and Mainer-Pardos, E. (2024). Impact of Extracurricular Physical Activity on Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and Academic Performance: Mediating Cognitive, Psychological, and Social Factors. *Sustainability*, 16(16), 7238. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16167238>.