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Physical activity and sport practice in relation to gender and ethnic origin among young people: The case of Rennes (France)

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Introduction

The statistics of Physical Activity and Sport (PAS) practice in France show that 90% of young people between 15 to 19 years old practice at least one PAS (INSE, 2003). However, girls usually leave PAS practice more often than boys after the age of 15 (Ministère des Sports, 2002). Regarding ethnic origin, there is no official statistical data in France due to legal issues. This situation contrasts with other European countries (e.g., Germany, United Kingdom, Spain, etc.) where it can be found data on this matter (Dirección General de Deportes, 2009).

The interest to know PAS practice among young people is due to the fact that many authors have noted it as a key factor to understand the social dimension of the immigrant population (Llopis, 2009) and even as a potential tool for integration (Kennet, 2006).

Objectives and Methodology

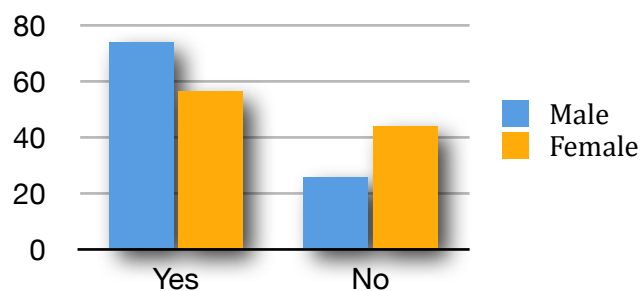
The purpose of this study is to show PAS practice of young people in the city of Rennes (France) concerning gender and ethnic origin. A specific questionnaire was created for this study with 81 items. This questionnaire was tested in the field before starting data collection in order to improve its reliability.

21 high schools of Rennes and its metropolitan area (i.e., 15 general and 6 technical) were potentially involved in this study with a total of 21,476 students aged 16 to 20 years. Finally, 16 high schools participated (i.e., 11 general and 5 technical), and 4,771 questionnaires were collected and analyzed with Sphinx Lexica®. Chi2 test was conducted in order to find differences between gender and ethnic origin ($p \Rightarrow 0.05$).

Results

As shown in Figure 1, there were significant differences related to gender ($\chi^2=169.13$, $1-p \Rightarrow 99.99\%$) among high school students of Rennes. Concretely, 74.3% of male students ($n = 1,661$) practice at least one PAS as compared to 56.2% of female students ($n = 1,398$) who do not. On the other hand, 43.8% of female students ($n = 1,089$) do not practice any PAS and only 25.7% of male students ($n = 574$) are inactive.

Figure 1. Practice of at least one PAS besides physical education by gender

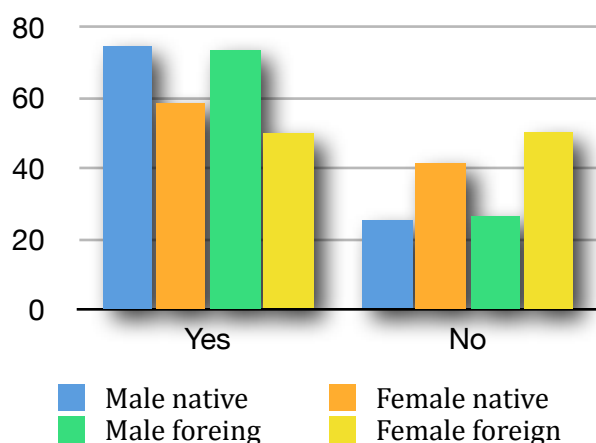


Regarding to ethnic origin, Figure 2 shows no significant differences between native male students (born in Metropolitan France and their parents as well), and foreign origin students (born out of Metropolitan France or at least one of their parents) related to PAS practice. Concretely, 74.8% of native male students ($n = 1,070$) and 73.5% of foreign origin students ($n = 598$) practice at least one sport besides physical education. Similar results are found for non-practicing, where 25.2% of native male students ($n =$

361) and 26,5% of foreign origin students (n = 216) reported non practice any PAS.

However, significant differences were found according to origin among female students ($\chi^2=94.46$, $1-p=>99.99\%$). Specifically, 58,5% of native female students (n = 1,082) do any PAS as compared to 49,8% of foreign origin female students (n = 323). As regards non-practicing females students, differences are also remarkable because 41,5% of native students (n = 767) do not practice PAS as compared to 50,2% of foreign students (n = 326) who keep inactive.

Figure 2. Practice of at least one PAS besides physical education by gender and origin



Discussion and Conclusions

As results show, less PAS practice among female students in Rennes' high schools is evident and it confirms the trend results obtained from both, statistical official data and sport and gender studies (Combaz & Hoibian, 2008).

Nevertheless, the significant difference between non-practicing female students according to origin leads to the need of deepening the reasons for dropping out PAS practice in female students from different cultural background.

It is hoped that reference studies as the current research will be developed not only to allow greater visibility to part of the population that is ignored in official french statistics (i.e., people from different origin), but also to provide a better understanding of

this reality and permit to fight against vulnerability and inequality related to ethnic origin and gender.

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