

STUDY REGARDING THE PRACTICE OF AIR SPORTS IN THE COUNTIES OF MOLDAVIA

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Abstract

The main aim of this study is to highlight the correlation between the means of flight currently existing in the counties of Moldavia, and the desire to practice air sports expressed by the young people in these counties.

The goals were to: know the pupils' opinion in regards to the practice of air sports in their leisure time; know the pupils' opinion in regards to the practice of these sports in relation to other sports that are more present in the media; determine the objective and subjective causes regarding the necessary equipment for practicing the air sports. We believe that the investments made for the practice of these sports can help increase the number of practitioners, and, why not, make them go from "leisure" to professional.

Key words: practice, air sports, Moldavia

INTRODUCTION

Icarus' dream belongs to every person, no matter where they are from, or what age.

By choosing this theme, we set out to bring to the readers' attention the beginnings and the practice of air sports. In most cases, the young people are fans of soccer, handball, volleyball, or any other sport that is highly present in the media.

There are, however, persons who love adrenaline, and who want to test and educate their courage, attention, dexterity, endurance, quick problem-solving skills, and, not in the least, their strength, by practicing air sports. They are the ones we see at the flight demonstrations, and not only, trying to fly small airplanes or the hot air balloon, sky-diving, experimenting a bird's free flight using sailplanes, or paragliders. For them, flying is not anymore fighting against the forces of nature, but playing with them, having a dialog that is directly mediated by the air.

If in the past such sports were practiced mostly by men, today they are joined by brave women, who are willing to experience new sensations. The number of air sports fans has grown significantly lately, no matter whether the ones who perform them do it only once, or constantly, no matter if training is needed or not. Flight can be a recreational and relaxing activity, beneficial for the body, for the mind, and for one's social life, being a great way to communicate, and to meet new friends among the people who share the same passion. More than that, this activity can be performed by friends and family, together.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The school, the teachers, and the family are the pillars of education, and between them and the extracurricular or extra-familial environment is the pupil, the object and subject of education.

The collaboration of the school with the family must be focused naturally on the quality of education, but also on the efficient organization of the pupils' leisure time

The research was conducted between October 2011 - March 2012 at the:

1. "PETRU RARES" NATIONAL COLLEGE - SUCEAVA
2. DARABANI HIGH-SCHOOL - BOTOSANI
3. "CALISTRAT HOGAS" NATIONAL COLLEGE - NEAMT
4. "COSTACHE NEGRUZZI" NATIONAL COLLEGE - IASI
5. "VASILE ALECSANDRI" NATIONAL COLLEGE - BACAU
6. "MIHAIL KOGALNICEANU" THEORETICAL HIGH-SCHOOL - VASLUI
7. "DUNAREA" THEORETICAL HIGH-SCHOOL - GALATI

We set out to know the pupils' opinions in regards to the practice of the main air sports: parachuting; gliding; paragliding; hang gliding; powered paragliding; powered hang gliding; hot air ballooning; aviation; ultralight aviation.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

In conducting our research, we established the following hypotheses:

- a. Whether the pupils like these sports or not;
 - b. Whether the pupils have the time and means necessary to practice air sports, and whether they prefer them in place of other sports;
 - c. Whether there is an infrastructure and means necessary for the practice of these sports.
- Through testing, and observing the real conditions, these hypotheses can be confirmed or not.

The research methodology was focused on the sociological inquiry method (the questionnaire), the group interview, the case study, the observation

and the starbursting method, the statistical-mathematical method, and the graphical representation method.

The subjects of this research consisted of a representative group of 220 pupils, 121 boys, and 99 girls, in their senior years of high-school, of the 7 counties of Moldavia. To them we have applied the following questionnaire:

1. What is your gender?
2. Do you live in an urban or rural area?
3. What do you mean when you say "leisure time"?
4. What significations do you give to leisure time?
5. Do you think there is a link between stress, low productivity, and an insufficiency of leisure time?
6. Do you think there is a link between school productivity, and the necessity for the existence of leisure time?
7. Do you like to go to parties, clubbing, or practice a sport?
8. What are your favorite hobbies that you practice in your leisure time?
9. Do you think that sports and hobbies are a waste of time?
10. Do you think that these activities could contribute to the education of the personality?
11. What is your main flaw?
12. What is your main trait?
13. What do you cherish the most in your friends?
14. What are your favorite real-life heroes?
15. What do you cherish the most in your colleagues?
16. Do you like to compare yourself to your other colleagues?
17. What contributes the most to build self-esteem?
18. Are you interested in other colleagues' opinion?
19. Do you feel liked by the majority of your colleagues?
20. Do you worry about what impression are you making in front of the others?
21. Do you think dreams play a role in a person's life?
22. Have you ever dreamed you were flying?
23. What is your favorite bird?
- 24. Do you have time for sports?**
25. How much spare time do you have in a week?

26. How often do you practice a sport?
- 27. Do you think sports are important in the development of young people?**
- 28. Are you or were you ever a member of a sports team?**
- 29. What is the main reason why you practice sports?**
- 30. What sports do you practice?**
- 31. Do you watch sports activities on TV?**
- 32. Have you ever been to a sports game, or an athletic competition?**
- 33. Were you influenced by your friends in practicing a certain sport?**
- 34. Do you prefer individual, or team sports?**
- 35. Do sports make you feel better?**
36. Do you practice sports to control your weight?
- 37. Are the athletic activities important in maintaining your health?**
38. Do you like air sports?
39. Would you like to participate in such activities?
40. If you had to choose between an activity that you like, and one you don't like, but which brings you money and fame, do you choose the first one?
- 41. Did you ever fly? With what?**
42. Which one of the following sports can be a leisure time hobby?
43. When you find yourself in a difficult situation, how do you react, do you remain calm, and keep your ability to think clearly, or do you act on impulse?
44. Would you like to enroll in a pilot training course?
45. Grade, on a scale from 1 to 10, the air sports, taking into account the opportunities you have to practice them

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

The questionnaire applied to the senior year pupils tried to capture their openness regarding the air sports that can be performed in air clubs and pilot schools that exist in the Moldavia area.

At question 8, one can see that the young people, regardless of their gender, have as main hobby their computer, and only a small percentage, 21.5%, have a sport as hobby.

8. What are your favorite hobbies that you practice in your leisure time?

	No. of pupils	Percentage
Computer	90	40.9%
Reading	26	11.8%
Sports	47	21.3%
Activities with friends	34	15.4%
Others	23	10.6%

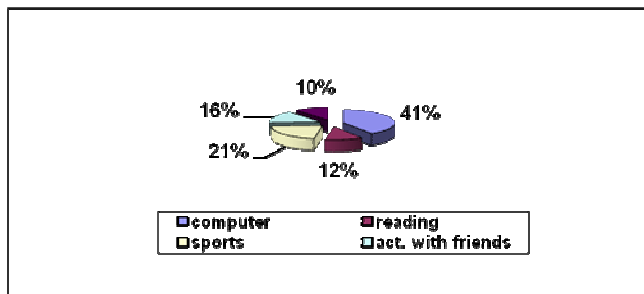
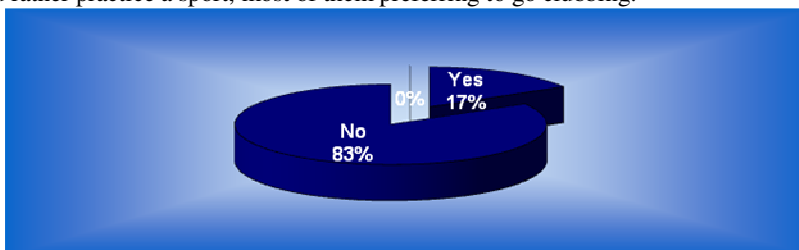


Fig. 1 The percentage of activities conducted in their leisure time

9. Do you think that sports and hobbies are a waste of time?

No. of questioned subjects	Yes	No
220	37	183
	17%	83%

Fig. 2 83% of the total questioned subjects think that sports and hobbies are not a waste of time
Only 26.5% would rather practice a sport, most of them preferring to go clubbing.



7. Do you like to go to parties, clubbing, or practice a sport, in your leisure time?

Parties	Clubbing	Practice a sport
145	167	54
65.9%	80%	26.5%

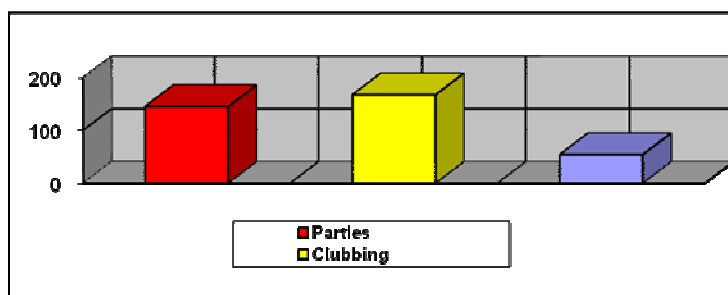


Fig.3 The young people's preferences regarding their leisure time

Only 28.5% practice sports every day, 11.5% twice a week, and, what is more serious, 41% never practice any sports.

26. How often do you practice a sport?

Every day	Once/twice a week	Several times per month	Very rarely	Never
47	25	23	15	90
28.5%	11.5%	10.5%	6.8%	40.9%

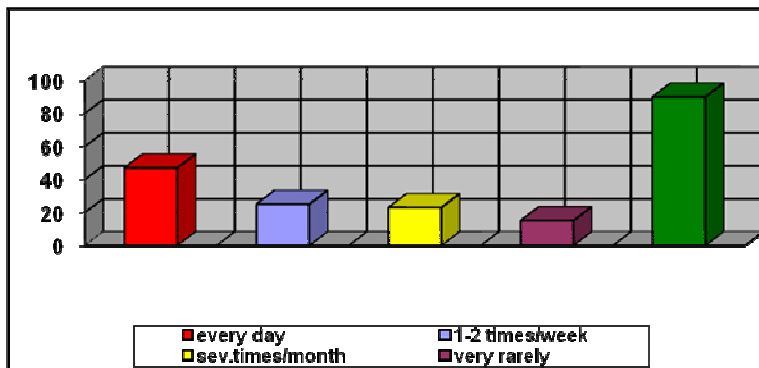


Fig.4 Graphical representation of the periodicity of sports practicing

27. Do you think sports are important in the development of young people?

Very important	Important enough	Not very important
70	90	40
35.9%	43.9%	20%

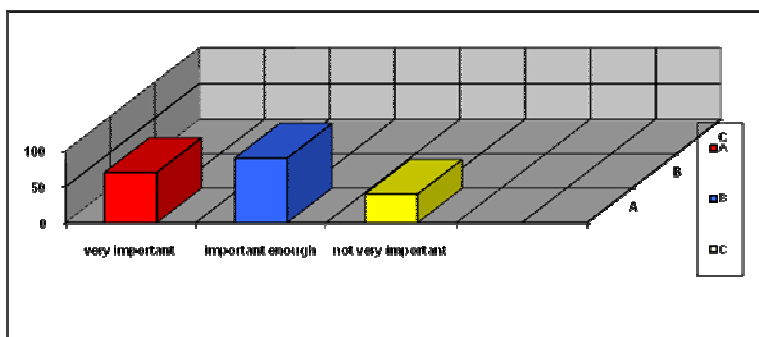


Fig. 4 The importance of sports for the young people

28. Are you or were you ever a member of a sports team?

I am a member of a team	I was a member of a team	Just during sports classes	I do not practice a team sport
25	60	196	5
11.5%	27.5%	90%	2.1%

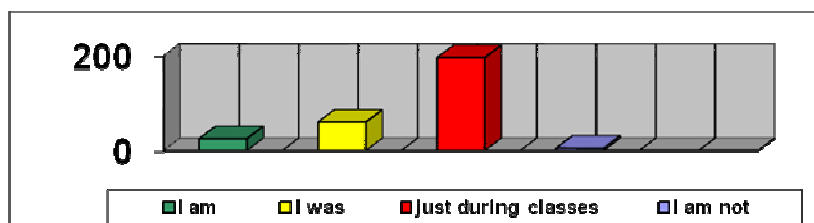


Fig.5 Percentage of the pupils who practice a team sport

29. What is the main reason why you practice sports?

I want to keep in shape	I want to lose weight	I want to have fun	I want to win as many medals as possible
120	50	30	18

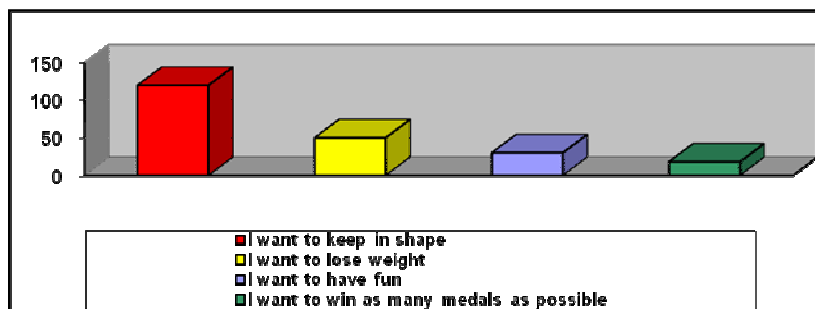


Fig.6 Reasons for which the pupils practice a sport

30. What sports do you practice?

Jogging	Cycling	Tennis	Volleyball	Basketball	Handball	Soccer	Swimming	Gymnastics	Aerobics	Martial arts
35	5	11	15	26	21	39	24	20	3	21
15.9%	2.2%	5%	6.8%	11.8%	9.5%	17.7%	10.9%	9%	1.3%	9.5%

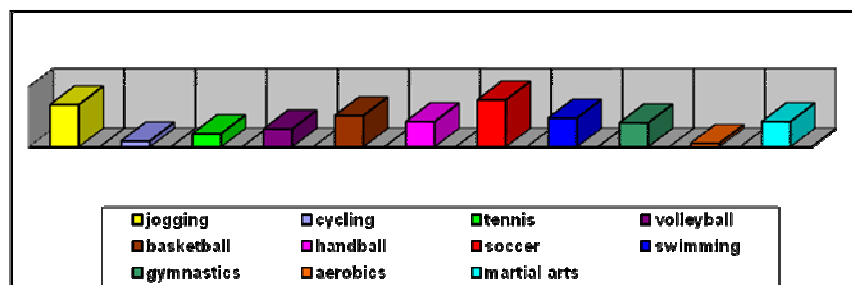


Fig.7 Sports practiced by the questioned subjects

Over 61% of the young people who were questioned prefer team sports.

34. Do you prefer individual, or team sports?

Individual sports	Team sports
85	135
39%	61%

Fig. 8 The pupils' preferences for team sports

Although they do not practice a sport in their leisure time, over 84% of the subjects love the air sports.

38. Do you like air sports?

Yes	No	I don't know
185	20	15
84%	0.9%	6.8%

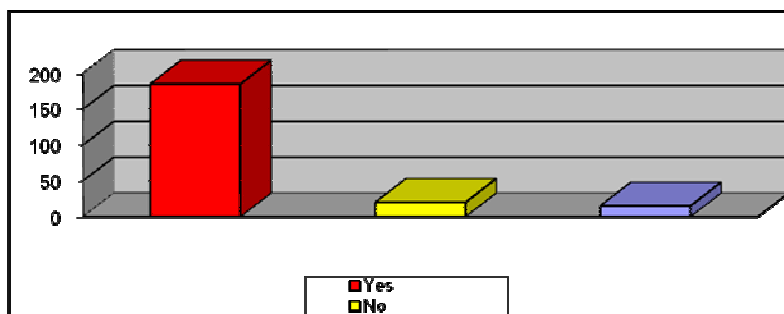


Fig.9 The pupils' preferences for the air sports

After expressing their options for air sports, over 88.6% of the subjects would be interested in performing them.

39. Would you like to participate in such activities?

Yes	No	I don't know
195	15	10
88.6%	6.8%	4.5%

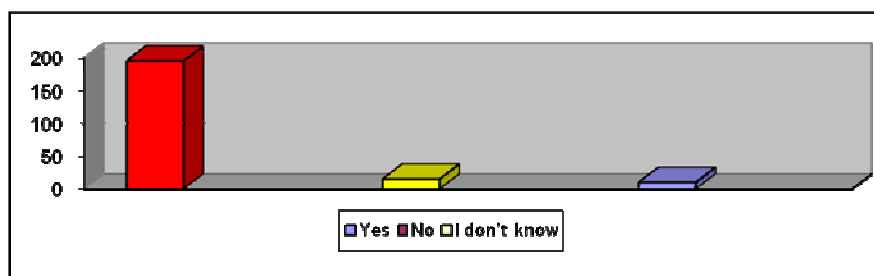


Fig.10 Percentage of the subjects willing to participate in such activities

After presenting the air sports and the means used for their practice, it turned out that 27.9% of the subjects would prefer the paraglider,

11.8% the sailplane, 22.7% the hang glider, 4.5% the hot air balloon, and 11.8% the parachute.

42. Which one of the following sports can be a leisure time hobby?

Paraglider	Sailplane	Hang glider	Hot air balloon	Parachute	Others
60	25	50	10	29	25
27.9%	11.8%	22.7%	4.5%	13.8%	11%

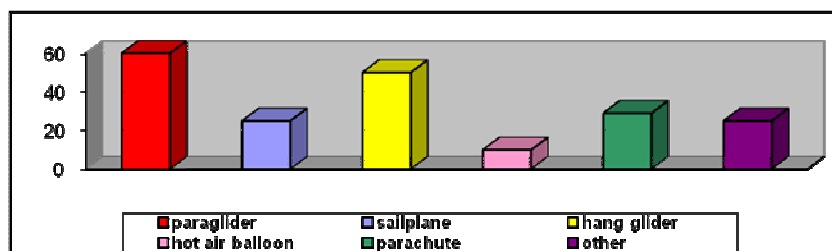


Fig.11 Air sports that can become a hobby

From the discussions we had with the questioned subjects, we found out that they are caught in many school activities, but also in

studying, being close to their final graduation examination, so there was little time for them to practice these sports that aroused their interest.

The practice of air sports

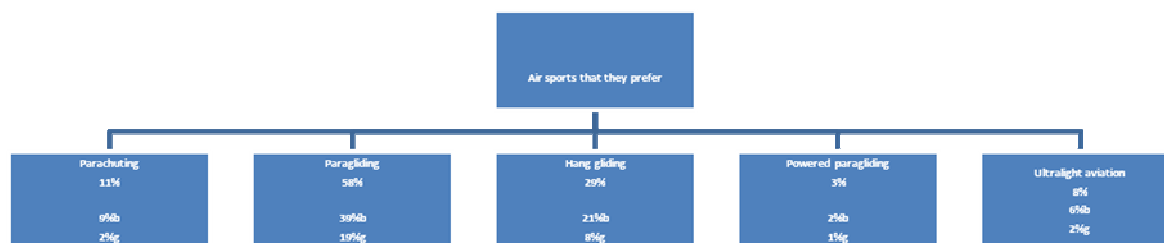


Fig.13 The subjects' preference for the air sports

From the answers recorded for question 44, we found out that 16.8% of the girls, and 33.2% of the boys would like to enroll in a pilot training course.

44. Would you like to enroll in a pilot training course?

	Yes	No
girls	37	62
boys	73	48

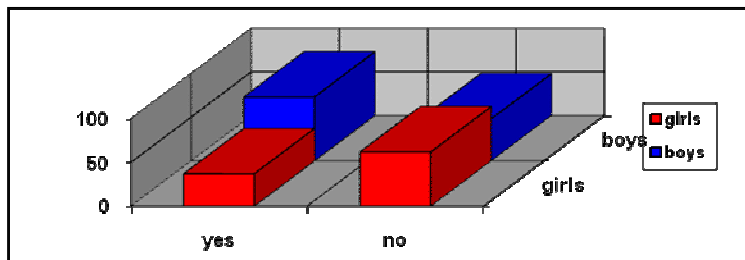


Fig.14 Percentage of the subjects who want to take a pilot training course

Over 45.9% of the subjects gave grades of 10 to paragliding, and 24.4% gave a grade of 9 to parachuting.

45. Grade, on a scale from 1 to 10, the air sports, taking into account the opportunities you have to practice them

Air sports	Grades
Parachuting	54 grades - 9
Gliding	3 grades - 2
Hang gliding	18 grades - 7
Ultralight aviation	36 grades - 8
Powered hang gliding	2 grades - 5
Powered paragliding	1 grade - 4
Paragliding	101 grade - 10
Hot air ballooning	5 grades - 2

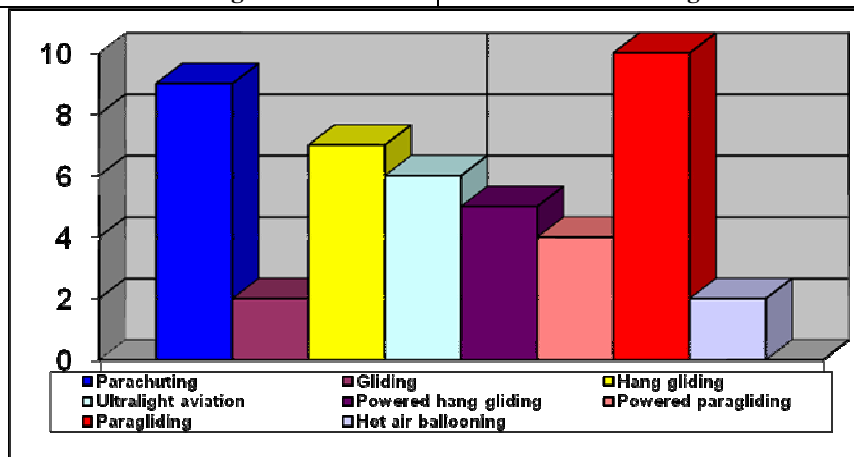


Fig.15 Graph regarding the grades given to air sports

Starbursting

The aim of this method is to obtain as many answers to the questions, and to make as many connections between concepts as possible.

Who?

- young people;

- people who love flight;

Where?

- to air shows;
- to aviation competitions;

- people passionate about extreme sports;
- in air clubs and pilot schools.
- people who want to experience strong sensations;
- people who want more diversity and new things in their lives.

Why?

- because I love flying;

When?

- in my leisure time;

- because I am fascinated by the sky;
 - on vacations
- because I love strong sensations.

What?

- parachuting; - paragliding; - gliding;
- hang gliding; - powered hang gliding; - ultralight aviation.

CONCLUSIONS

The attraction of flight, the people's desire to overcome their limitations, to compete with themselves, and to test their limits in an unconventional way were just a few of the particularities of certain activities that involve a high degree of risk. The specialized trainers, the rules, and the equipment have made these sports to be less and less dangerous. Today, the air sports have an increasing number of fans, becoming even quite a trend. **Unlike the traditional sports, they focus more on our ability to concentrate, to react in tight situations, and, why not, to anticipate.** When you practice such a sport, you compete with your own limitations, trying to model your mind, while you strengthen your body.

Promoting and practicing these sports comes as a reaction to the development of society, the development of modern life, of the courage to approach other sports than the popular ones, the desire to try something new, to test your courage and quench your thirst for adrenaline, feelings usually felt by young people. Many of these young people have focused their attention on the air sports, due to the fact that these sports combine the skills and techniques that were learned with physical abilities and concentration required in tight situations.

However, the air sports amateurs must recognize the physical limitations of their equipment. The participants must have a minimal knowledge and experience in any air sports activity in order to know what to do in case of an emergency.

Some of the air sports that can be a little extreme are: paragliding, hang gliding, parachuting, and ultralight aviation. Some of the air sports combine the techniques and physical abilities from two or more extreme sports.

There is no doubt that they model the temperament, the adaptability to stress conditions, and increase the ability to analyze, and focus. The technical equipment of flight clubs in the researched area is insufficient, and, for the most part, worn-out; the air sports that can be available to the public are limited, despite the fact that the theoretical-practical training should be state-funded.

The salvation of the air sports can come only from private investors, flying passionates who have financial means. An argument for this can be the large number of paragliders bought by private individuals, and the ultralight aircrafts increasing their number with 28% over the last decade.

A top 10 of the most popular air sports, in the opinion of the young people who have participated in this study, shows that paragliding and hang gliding are in first places, being preferred due to their low costs and because the equipment and instruments can be procured relatively easy, but also because these sports are relatively accessible.

The results of the study allow us to say that air sports are in full ascension in the counties of Moldavia, despite the economic crisis.

The hypotheses were confirmed.

Of the group of subjects that participated in the research, over 45% of the boys, and 18% of the girls are tempted to practice air sports. A great part of the pupils focus their attention on air sports because they have family or friends who are tied to these sports.

We believe that the investments made for the practice of these sports can help increase the number of practitioners, and, why not, make them go from "leisure" to professional.

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