

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATIONAL  
CONSUMPTION HABITS OF DISABLED CHILDREN LIVING IN THE NORTHERN  
GREAT PLAIN REGION**

**Authors:**

Nóra Laoues-Czimbalmos  
University of Debrecen (Hungary)

Anetta Müller (PhD.)  
University of Debrecen (Hungary)

Éva Bácsné Bába (PhD.)  
University of Debrecen (Hungary)

E-mail adress of the first author:  
laoues.nora@ped.unideb.hu

**Reviewers:**

Krisztina Dajnoki (PhD.)  
University of Debrecen (Hungary)

György Szabados (PhD.)  
University of Debrecen (Hungary)

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**Abstract**

In our research, we studied the leisure habits of students with disabilities (8-18 years, n = 289) living in the North Great Plain region using a questionnaire method. The aim of the research was to examine the leisure habits of children with disabilities in the region, their main characteristics and their recreational attitudes. Our goal was also the gender test to see whether there was a significant difference between the sexes and how this correlated with the results of the study of leisure habits in the wild. We sought to find out what the most common leisure time activities for general and high school students with disabilities are, how does this affect genders? What is their attitude towards spending time on leisure? What are their sporting habits and sporting consumption? We have found that recreational consumption of young people with disabilities is similar to the results of surveys carried among normal children as passive leisure time is dominant (listening to music, watching TV). In girls' leisure time, the preference for listening and reading is more dominant while watching TV, especially popular sports channels, is more characteristic of boys. For leisure-time activities, staying fit, trying out new things, and community experience is crucial for young people with disabilities. Recreational sports prove to be popular, as more than 50% of both girls and boys say they are engaged in recreational sports.

**Keywords:** disabled students, leisure consumption, sports, attitudes

**Disciplines:** economics, sociology, special education

**Absztrakt**

AZ ÉSZAK-ALFÖLDI RÉGIÓBAN ÉLŐ FOGYATÉKOS GYEREKEK AKTÍV ÉS PASSZÍV

A kutatásunkban az észak-alföldi régióban élő fogyatékos tanulók (8-18 év, n= 283) szabadidős fogyasztási szokásait vizsgáltuk kérdőíves módszerrel. A kutatás során célunk volt megvizsgálni a régióban élő fogyatékos gyerekek szabadidős fogyasztási szokásait, annak főbb jellemzőit, a szabadidős attitűdjüket. Célunk volt a gender vizsgálat is, hogy a nemek tekintetében tapasztalunk-e szignifikáns eltérést és ez az eredmény hogyan viszonyul az épek körében végzett szabadidőfogyasztási szokások vizsgálati eredményeihez. Választ kerestünk arra, hogy mik a fogyatékossgal élő általános és középiskolás tanulók leggyakoribb szabadidő tevékenységei, ez hogyan alakul a nemek viszonylatában? Mi jellemzi a szabadidő eltöltéshez kapcsolódó attitűdjüket? Mi jellemzi a sportolási szokásaikat, sportfogyasztásukat? Megállapítottuk, hogy a fogyatékossgal élő fiatalok szabadidős fogyasztása hasonlóan alakul, mint azt az épek körében végzett vizsgálatok eredményei is mutatnak, azaz a passzív szabadidő-eltöltés dominál (zenehallgatás, tv nézés). A lányok szabadidős fogyasztásában a zenehallgatás és olvasás preferenciája

dominánsabban jelenik meg, míg a TV-nézésben a sportcsatorna népszerűsége a fiúk körében nagyobb, mint a lányokéban. A szabadidős tevékenységek esetében a fitnek maradni, az új dolgok kipróbálása, a közösségi élmény meghatározó a fogyatékossgal élő fiatalok esetében. A szabadidősport népszerűnek bizonyul, hiszen mind a lányok, mind a fiúk több mint 50%-a nyilatkozta, hogy végez szabadidős sportot.

**Kulcsszavak:** fogyatékos diákok, szabadidős fogyasztás, sportolás, attitűd

**Diszciplina:** gazdaságtudomány, szociológia, gyógypedagógia

According to a survey conducted by the WHO and the World Bank (2011) there are more and more people living with disabilities. The proportion of people with disabilities is on the rise accounting for 15% of the world's population today. According to the Central Statistical Office (2014), the number of persons with disabilities in Hungary was 577 thousand in 2001, representing 5.7% of the country's population, however, some estimates suggest that their number could be one million in Hungary. The right of people with disabilities appeared in the 1998 Equal Opportunities Act, and then in 1999 in the Disability Program regulations concerning leisure and sport were issued. The issue of disability had appeared earlier in sports sciences, utilizing the preventive, recreational and rehabilitative effects of sport and its social integration function. Recreational activities, including sports, received special attention in the social integration of persons with disabilities, in exercising their human rights in their therapeutic treatment or even in improving their quality of life.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Recreation is the culture of spending leisure time, including leisure activities, whether they are mental or physical activities. Its meaning embraces notions such as regeneration, recovery or reintegration. It means the reproduction or extended reproduction of energies of a person tired of work (Dobozy & Jakabházy, 1992, Kovács, 2003). Its purpose is threefold, as both its relaxing and developmental role can be observed (Borbély and Müller, 2008), supplemented nowadays with its entertainment function (Révész et al., 2015).

In leisure activities, trends in the field of sport and fitness demonstrate that the entertainment and experiential functions are increasingly important motivations in consumer habits (Müller, 2009a, Müller et al., 2017). The role of leisure and recreational activities is gaining increasing attention, as many Hungarian (Michalko, 2012, Mosonyi et al.,

2013, Boda et al., 2015) and international (Dobay, Bánhidi & Simonek, 2018) scholars place these themes in the focus of their research.

Leisure activities are playing an increasingly important role in tourism, as guests need the development of recreational offerings, making it a factor of competitiveness. The role and importance of leisure supply in tourism are also being studied by several Hungarian (Borbély & Müller, 2015, Bánhidi, 2016) and international (Shaww & Coles, 2004, Bullock, Mahon and Killingsworth, 2010) researchers. A health tourism research (Müller et al., 2018) reports that asthmatic patients on a 3-week rehabilitation also require and use different leisure-time offerings during their treatment (tours, other sports programs, massages, wellness) aimed at improving their condition and health, that is, their quality of life.

In Hidvégi and Honfi's (2008) research, it is stated that although recreation would be of great importance to persons with disabilities as it could improve their quality of life and condition, they have few opportunities to use it in Hungary. Leisure and recreation have been shown to contribute to the mental and physical health of non-disabled and disabled people (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993; Coyle et al., 1991; Roberts et al., 1989, Schreyer, 1984).

Nowadays, numerous researches underline that various recreational activities can be used for therapeutic purposes proving that patients' condition and quality of life are improved after the therapeutic use of the different recreational programs (Bedini, 2000; Hodges, Luken & Zook, 2001; Broach & Dattilo, 2003; Funderburk & Callis, 2010; Iwasaki, Coyle & Shank, 2010; McCornic, Snethen & Smith, 2012; Lawson, Foster & Harrington, 2014; Gaskell & Janssen, 2014; Davis & Nelson 2015; Alysha, Walter & Bryan, 2017). Several international studies have examined the national economic aspects of the physical activity of persons with disabilities (Johnson, 2009), the factors supporting and inhibiting physical activity (Block, Taliaferro & Moran, 2013), the role of in-

clusive sport for mentally disabled in their socialization (Bota, Teodorescu & Serbanoiu, 2014), physical activity, lifestyle and daily life of disabled people, (Kisow, 2015) or the labour market opportunities of people with disabilities (Balázs-Földi & Dajnoki, 2016; Móri & Mező, 2016).

The importance of regular sports for people with disabilities, among the leisure activities, is emphasized by several authors (Sáringerné, 2014; Gombás, 2016; Laoues, 2017), as they can help them improve their condition and quality of life, socialization and gaining of community experiences.

## METHOD

The research was carried out in the three counties of the Northern Great Plain Region (Hajdú-Bihar, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg), among the students who participate in special and integrated education. respondents' study at institutions of primary and secondary education. An online questionnaire was applied in the research. The questionnaires were completed by 283 students. The students completed the questionnaires with the help and guidance of interviewers (teachers). The aim of the research was to examine the recreational habits of children with disabilities living in the region, the main characteristics of these habits and their leisure attitudes. In addition, our goal was to examine whether there is a

significant difference between the sexes and how our results compare to the results of research leisure habits of normal children.

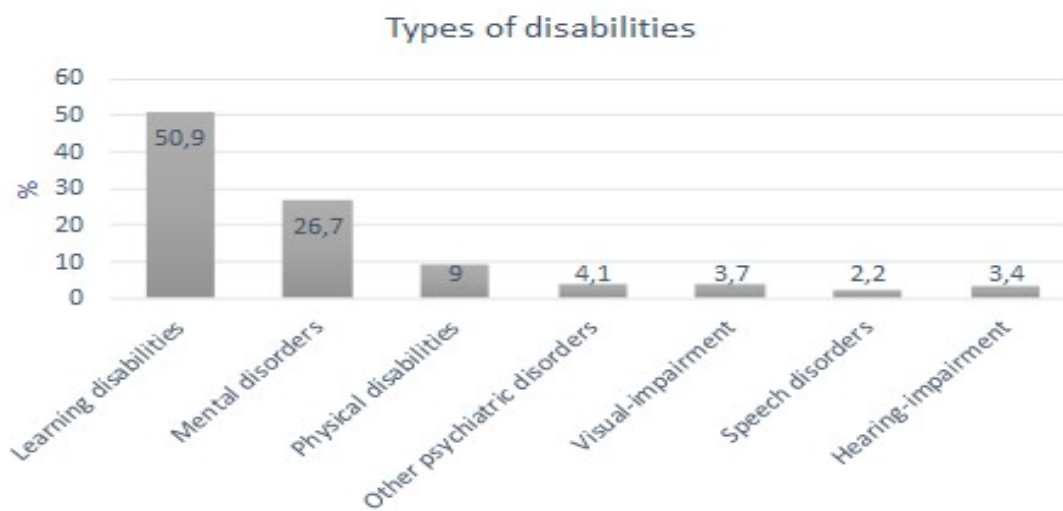
In our research we were looking for the answer to the following questions: What are the most common leisure activities of primary and secondary school students with disabilities and are there any gender differences? What characterizes their leisure time attitude? What characterizes their sports habits and sports consumption?

Before the research, we assumed that passive (TV, listening to music) and active (sports) recreational activities are dominant in leisure consumption. We also assumed that sports and active leisure are more popular among boys with disabilities than among girls.

## Sample

In the questionnaire respondents were asked to specify what type of disability they had. 50.9% of the respondents had some disability in learning, 26.7% were mentally handicapped and 9% were physically disabled. The pupils of disabilities participated in the research in almost the same proportion: Pupils with other psychiatric disorders accounted for 4.1%, visually impaired 3.7%, pupils with impaired hearing 3.4% and pupils with speech disabilities 2.2%. The disability-specific distribution of respondents is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1.: Disability-specific distribution of respondents (Source: Authors' editing)



*Distribution of respondents by school type*

54% (n = 153) of students participating in the research were upper graders, 39.2% (n = 111) of high school students, 6.8% (n = 19) of them lower-graders. Figure 2. shows the number and percentage of elementary and secondary school students participating in the measurement.

*Distribution of sample by county:*

38.9% of the respondents are from Hajdú-Bihar county, 33.8% live in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg

county and 27.3% in Jász-Nagykun Szolnok county (see Figure 3).

*Settlement type distribution by gender*

A higher proportion, 50.9%, of the surveyed students are urban residents, of which boys account for 58.9% and girls 41.7%. This is followed by 38.1% of respondents living in a village, 35.1% of them being boys and 41.7% girls., 11% live in a county seats, 6% of whom are boys and 16.7% girls. Figure 4 shows the distribution of settlement type by gender.

Figure 2.: Distribution of respondents by school type (Source: Authors' editing)

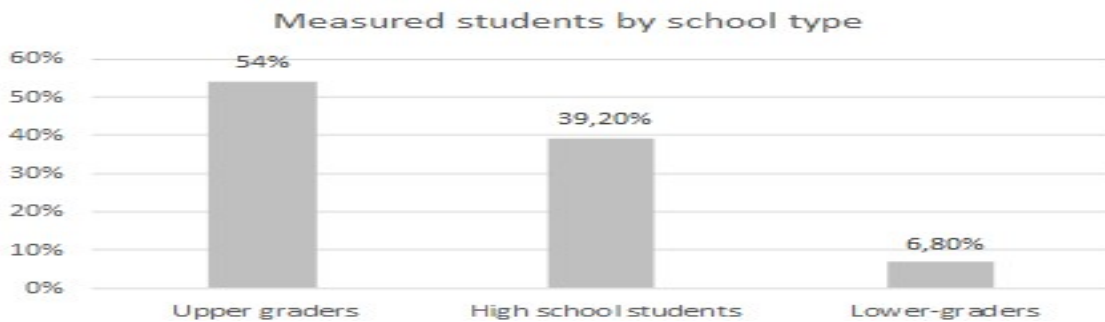


Figure 3.: Distribution of respondents by county (Source: Authors' editing)

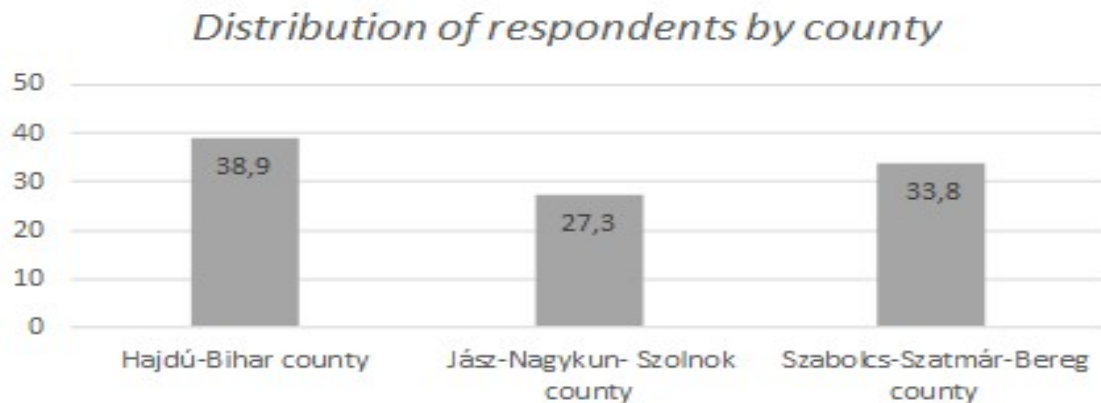
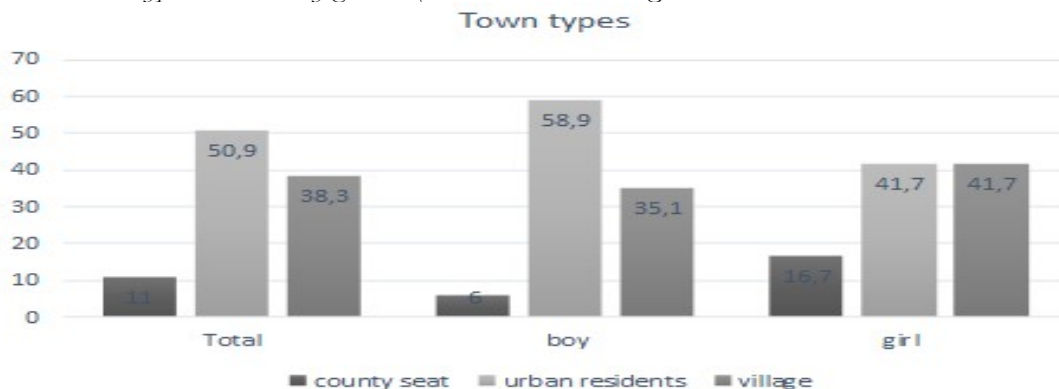


Figure 4.: Settlement type distribution by gender. (Source: Authors' editing)



## Methods

Data collection took place in June 2018. The questionnaires were completed anonymously, participation in data collection was voluntary. After data retrieval, results were analysed with the SPSS statistical program. In addition to the basic statistics  $\chi^2$  test was employed to test the relationships. The respondents studied in institutions of primary and secondary education, girls accounting for 46.5%, 132 people and boys for 53.5%, 151 people in the sample ( $n = 283$ ).

## Results

### *Habits of spending leisure time*

The percentage breakdown of leisure time habits of the interviewed students by gender is shown in Table 1.

In most of the students' leisure activities listening to music is the most frequent (71.6%). In the sample ( $n = 283$ ) there is a significant difference ( $\chi^2 = 20,666$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), 84.7% of girls had chosen listening to music as a leisure activity, while only 60.3% of boys had chosen it as a recreational activity. In addition to listening to music, TV viewing was also identified as an important intellectual leisure activity, with 52.8% of the respondents choosing it. In the case of television, there was no significant difference by gender, this is only a tendency (girls 49.6%, boys 55.6%). TV watching habits of the surveyed students revealed that there was a significant difference between the genders in watching the sports channel. The consumption of sports channels is more typical for boys (17.9%) than for girls (3.1%). In terms of reading activity of young people, a significant difference ( $\chi^2 = 14,871$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) was found by gender. Girls tend to read more in their leisure time (26.7%) than boys (9.3%).

The least preferred activities in the leisure time were learning (13.1%), board games (13.5%), and

competitive sports, however, we could not show a statistically verifiable difference by gender. Our gender-based comparison confirmed the tendency that girls prefer listening to music and reading in their leisure time. As for watching TV, the popularity of the sports channel among boys is greater than among girls. If we look at research done among normal children, in many cases similar results are found in the field of leisure consumption.

Murányi's (2010) recreational research among normal young people ( $N = 1570$ ) concludes that young people prefer individual and passive activities in their leisure time: they mostly use the Internet, listen to music, watch television or videos (DVD) These findings are supported by Szabó (2006) who found that for young people in Budapest the most frequent leisure activity was listening to music, reading newspapers and watching TV. Leisure habits amongst normal youth are similar to the leisure-time results of the disabled youngsters in our research.

In the case of the normal students, Müller's (2009b) research showed different results. She examined 260 college sports majors' leisure time activities and found that career orientation highly influenced the results as 65.6% of the students (172 people) do sport in their leisure time and 59, 2% (155 persons) attends a sports event as a spectator (passively) or as an athlete (actively).

However, in addition to an active lifestyle, leisure activities typical for "relaxation" can be observed in their case as well, for example 58.4% of the students also marked "TV, DVD, watching movies" as a frequent leisure activity. Szabó (2006) showed a difference in the preference system of normal women and men: men prefer to be engaged with computer, sports and sporting events, while women prefer cultural programs such as going to classical music concerts, the cinema and the theatre.

Table 1.: Leisure time spending habits of respondents by (Source: Authors' editing)

Leisure time spending habits	Boy yes	Girl yes	Boy no	Girl no	p based on $\chi^2$ test
TV	84 (55,6%)	56 (49,6%)	67(44,4%)	66 (50,4%)	,313
Competitive sport	22 (14,6%)	12 (9,2%)	129 (85,4%)	119 (90,8%)	,164
Reading	14 (9,3%)	35 (26,7%)	137 (90,7%)	96 (73,3%)	,000
Listening to music	91( 60,3%)	111 (84,7%)	60 (39,7%)	20 (15,3%)	,000
Watching sport channel	27(17,9%)	4(3,1%)	124 (82,1%)	127 (96,9%)	,000
Board games	21(13,9%)	17(13,1%)	130 (86,1%)	113 (86,9%)	,839
Learning	16 (10,6%)	21(16,0%)	135(89,4%)	110 (84,0%)	,178

*Attitudes connected with leisure time spending*

In addition to mapping leisure time habits, the survey also tested how much importance was given to the following factors: acquiring new skills (45.6%), staying fit (71.4%), trying new things (58.3%), meeting new people (54.4%), shopping / fashion (36.7%), hobby (60.1%). 48.3% of the boys consider the "acquiring new skills" important while the majority of girls (49.6%) opted for the "neutral" answer. On the other hand, the question of how important shopping and fashion was reversed the response rate as in the case of girls, 47.3% considered it important whereas 43% of boys rated it as neutral. The importance of health and fitness viewed as something positive for young people, boys (73.5%) and girls (69.5%). As for "hobby", "meeting new people" and "trying new things", the results show that they play a major role in leisure activities and it is also apparent that motivation is more prevalent among boys (see Table 2). In the study of leisure-time attitudes (acquiring

new skills, fitness, new things, meeting new people, fashion, hobbies) responses showed significant differences by gender ( $p < 0.05$ ).

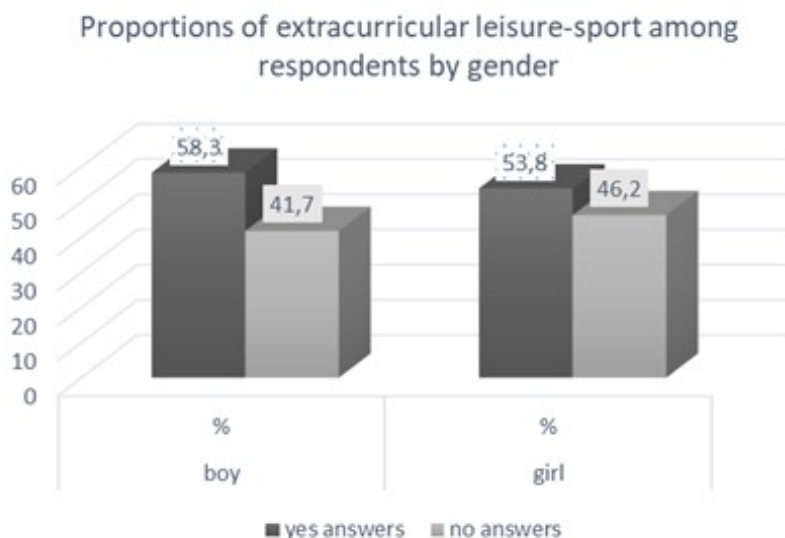
*Leisure-sport preferences*

Out of the recreational activities of young people, competitive sport was one of the least popular (12.1%). Competitive athletes are those who have sports club membership and have trainings at least two to three times a week out of school. If we look at the proportion of extracurricular leisure-time sports among students, it is as follows: 58,3% of the boys are involved in extracurricular leisure-sport activities while for the girls it is 53,8%. 57,8% of boys do sport regularly in their leisure time (once a week, 2-3 times a week, daily) while for the girls it is only 50,4%. In summary it can be stated that over half of the students do not do sport competitively, however, they do sport regularly on the hobby level, the main motivations being the good company, fun and relaxation (figure 5).

Table 2.: Leisure time spending attitudes of respondents by gender (Source: Authors' editing)

Attitudes connected to leisure time spending	Acquiring new skills		Staying fit		Trying new things		Meeting new people		Shopping/ Fashion		Hobby	
	Boy %	Girl %	Boy %	Girl %	Boy %	Girl %	Boy %	Girl %	Boy %	Girl %	Boy %	Girl %
Important	48,3	42,7	73,5	69,5	66,2	49,6	57,0	51,9	27,8	47,3	66,2	53,4
Not important	7,9	7,6	5,3	6,1	6,0	8,4	6,6	9,2	29,1	17,6	6,0	6,1
Neutral	43,7	49,6	21,2	24,4	27,8	42,0	36,4	38,9	43,0	35,1	27,8	40,5

Figure 5.: Proportions of extracurricular leisure-sport among respondents by gender (Source: Authors' editing)



### *The importance of spending time with the family*

The importance of leisure time spent with the family was examined through the following question: "How much do you consider it important to spend time with the family?" 76.3% of the respondents think that family time is important, of whom 80.9% are boys 72.8% are girls. For girls, leisure time sports with the family are more important than for boys. Thus, there is a significant difference ( $\chi^2 = 285.568$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) in the answers of the two sexes. In women, the family appears as a dominant value category. Szabó (2006) also found differences in the value orientation of normal young people: For women health, friendship, honesty, family, inner peace, while for men money and material goods are more important. Thus, Szabó (2006) also emphasized the importance of the family in the value preferences of women based on the results of his research.

### **Discussion**

In the life of children with disabilities, recreational activities are of paramount importance as they can contribute to skills development, improving their health, helping the process of socialization and integration. Experience and skills developed during leisure activities can also help them in the learning process. In our survey, we found that passive options (reading, listening to music, watching TV) are predominant in the recreational activities of children with disabilities. In the case of leisure activities, for young people with disabilities, staying fit, trying out new things, and communal experience are the dominant motivating factors. Recreational sport proved to be popular as more than 50% of both girls and boys say they regularly do some kind of recreational sport.

### *Limitations*

26,7% of our respondents were mentally handicapped and in spite of the fact that they were assisted by teachers while completing the questionnaire it had to be taken into account when analysing the answers. Results were, thus, assessed in the awareness of this limitation.

### **Conclusions**

Disabled students' leisure consumption is dominated by spending leisure passively, with listening to music and watching TV being the most frequent recreational activities. Based on secondary research this recreational consumption pattern of young people with disabilities was similar to that of normal youth. Our gender-based comparison con-

firmed the tendency for girls to prefer listening to music and reading while boys showed higher interest in watching sport channels. For leisure activities, staying fit, trying out new things, and community experiences are essential for disabled students. Competitive sports are not the most popular leisure activities for young people with disabilities, but leisure sports were found to be popular as more than 50% of girls and boys say they do leisure sports. For disabled students, it is necessary to further promote leisure-sports and to expand the range of leisure sports opportunities offered to them. In marketing communication, fitness, health, new forms of movement and friendly communities can be the buzzwords for increasing their participation in leisure-sports. It can help maintain and improve their quality of life and health.

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