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ANALYSIS OF THE LEISURE SPORT ACTIVITIES IN UNIVERSITY OF DEBRECEN

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Abstract: *The sports program of the professional higher education focusing on the leisure sports opportunities. New needs, change in taste and new leisure habits of the young generation should be taken into account to design the University's leisure sports program. In my study I was dealing with a questionnaire survey investigating the attitude of the students of the University of Debrecen to leisure sports, and the students' opinions about their own physical status. Data collection was completed on a paper based questionnaire, 42 closed-type questions were included and a total of 213 students completed it. In conclusion I found that the students are satisfied with their physical states although not many of them do sport on a regular basis. I revealed the primary excuses for neglecting sports: lack of time, laziness and timetable discrepancies. These findings make it imperative that by avoiding the existing discrepancies the students be provided the widest range of time in their time tables available for physical activities.*

Keywords: *leisure sport, university, sport habits, leisure sport possibilities (*JEL code: Z20*)*

INTRODUCTION

The Sport XXI. National Sports Strategy lays a special emphasis on the issues of leisure sports, and has the enhancement of public health by involving people in sports activities among its strategic objectives.

Numbers of literature sources agree that sports in the life of the young people are becoming out-competed by activities not typical of a physically active mode of life. While activities like watching TV, browsing the Internet are becoming increasingly popular, leisure time sport activities are loosing popularity. Physical inactivity contributes significantly to poor health indicators of population (Bauer-Szabó 2005, Kopp-Kovács 2006).A distinguished priority of the higher education is to increase the number of students engaged in leisure sports and to make them aware of the health benefits of sports.

Not more than fifty percent of the secondary school students and only one third of the university students are involved in regular sporting activities (Fábri, 2002). This suggests that there are differences between sporting habits, and also, that the differences are influenced by the societal background of the individuals. People in explaining differences in health status of candidate get a prominent role in education (Bourdieu, 1991). It is, therefore, very important that higher education provide the formal frames of organized sports and lifestyle consultancy, and that students become aware of the preventive function of sports. Yet, sports do not seem to fulfill an integral and leading part in the life of higher educational institutions in general. Obviously, the scarcity of resources in the higher education does affect the sports sector too.

There have been identified significant changes in the attitudes of the students in relation to sports recently, mainly in terms of motivation and the conditions of access. When planning leisure sport programs, these actual requirements and preferences of the young people and the associated facilities availabilities must be taken into consideration. The National Higher Education Act of 2012 makes it mandatory for the higher educational institutions to ensure the conditions of regular sport for the students, which is to complete the everyday physical education introduced in the public education. Also, students learning in the publicly funded programs must be provided free or low cost access to the sports facilities. Meanwhile, the importance of the leisure sports within the institutions has also grown, which is a contribution to raising the publicity and consolidating the market position of the universities. The university associations play a decisive role in the life of the university as well as selective support is more readily available (Bácsné,2015).

LEISURE SPORT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF DEBRECEN

The new sports concept of the University of Debrecen is focused at developing sport related incentives to motivate the students to live healthier lives, to meet their curriculum requirements, to participate in leisure sport programs and to join the university's competitive sports programs (Bács and Bácsné, 2014).

The organizational scheme of the program is based on three pillars: curriculum tasks (PE lessons), leisure sports and

***Table 1*:** Characteristics of the survey population (in percentages)

Gender(1)		Age(year)2)		Faculty3)		Course(4)	
man	53,6%	<20 years	21,1%	FE*	60,6%	I. years BSc	28,6%
woman	46,4%	20-21 years	41,8%	FAF**	39,4%	II. years BSc	30,5%
		22-24 years	32,8%			III. years BSc	26,8%
		>24 years	4,3%			I. years MSc	9,9%
						II. years MSc	4,2%

Source: Own development (n=213) * Faculty of Economics ** Faculty of Agriculture and Food Science

competitive sport possibilities for the top-level sportspersons. The leisure sport programs are organized by the Sport Center and the Students' Sport Bureau of the Debrecen University. The leisure sport programs offer the students regular sport programs on a weekly basis, championships and other sport events. The championships are organized twice a year for the faculties and individual participants and are very popular among the students, especially those of football and basketball. These events are meant to provide access for the students to the most popular and most preferred sports. Thus, aerobic programs and football championships proved to be the most popular programs over the past few years – aerobic events were mainly visited by women, and football championships mostly attracted men students. The Sport Center and the Students' Sport Bureau organized more than 20 programs and championships every year that are visited by nearly five thousand students. The students of the Böszörményi Street Campus could take part in competitions in ten sports with aerobic for women and football for men leading the list in terms of publicity (Neulinger, 2007).

It is a general tendency observed in a number of universities that those of the students who have completed their curriculum requirements can continue attending the PE lessons only on a fee paying basis. This is not the case in Debrecen where every student has access to the PE lessons and leisure sport programs free of charge. This means free access to 15 types of sports: football, basketball, volleyball, fitness, spinal exercises, step aerobic, figure shaping aerobic, wellness, table tennis, badminton, floor ball, footstall, ball games, women's footstall, women's football.

Free access by students to the leisure sports is provided by – among other sources – contributions allocated from the student union budget.

In this year, the Sport Center organized a Sport Fair within the frames of the current TÁMOP project. The event was visited by some 700 students and university staff members who could join in entertaining PE lessons and team games.

This paper attempts to answers to the following questions:

a. How much are the students satisfied with their own physical status?
b. Are they familiar with the leisure sport possibilities offered by the university?
c. For what reasons do they quit pursuing sports?
d. What motives influence their leisure sporting activities and habits?
e. What are the causes of neglecting sports?
f. What is the students' general attitude to sports?

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The survey was carried out among the student population of the Böszörményi Street Campus, focusing on students attending curricular PE lessons. Data collection took one week and was carried out during the PE lessons in the Sports Hall in October month.

All of the students present in the class with no exception were interviewed. Fulfillment of the curriculum requirements by the students was not examined in this survey. A total of 231 students completed the questioner; the sample population characteristics are shown in *Table 1.*

The query was administered by paper based questioners containing 42 closed questions structured in four blocks. The first block of questions was enquiring about the sporting habits and sport preferences of the students, the second block asked them about the sport services and facilities provided by the university, and the third one collected data about the demographic characteristics of the students. Data were provided by the students on a voluntary basis. In this paper I am dealing with analysis of the first block of questions with reference to demographic particulars.

The tables show the data in percentages. The comparison of the distribution of the measured indicators was completed by the khi-square test. For comparing the averages of the preference indicators of the sporting site we used the method of the analysis of variance (ANOVA). The comparison of the two indicators' average values in relevance with the gender and with the site preferences was completed by the two-sample t-test. The processing of the data was supported by the 13.0 version of the SPSS statistics software program (SPSS, Chicago, IL).

RESEARCH RESULTS

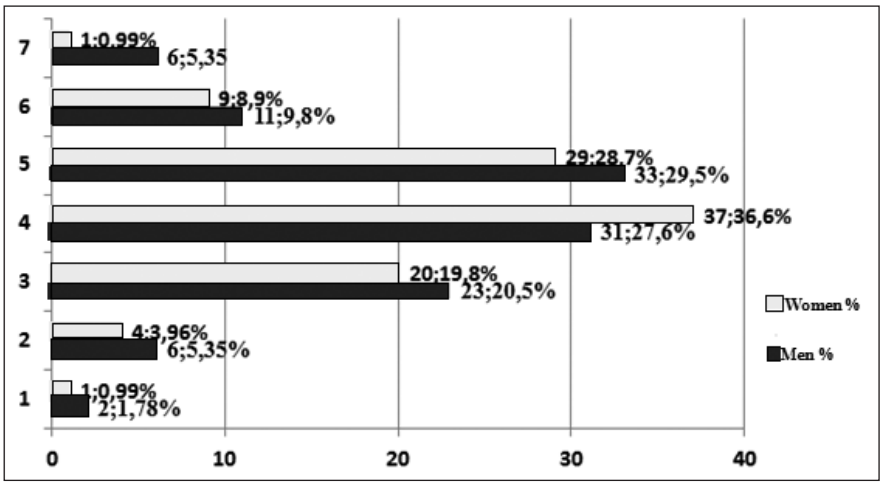
I wanted to know how much the students are satisfied with their own physical status. To measure this, I used the instrument of the 1-7 Likert scale (1= not satisfied; 7=absolutely satisfied) to be filled by the respondents. The results of the measurement (Figure 1) show that the students

tend to have positive opinions of their own physical states, most of them assessed it level 4.

The number of students assuming they are in excellent shape exceeds the number of those unsatisfied with their physical status. Also, men tend to think higher of themselves in this respect than women do: five times more men than women are absolutely satisfied with it. In contrast to literature findings i.e. that lower and lower numbers of students pursue leisure sports regularly; our findings show that they are satisfied with their physical status. Only three of the respondents say they are absolutely dissatisfied.

An earlier survey of mine conducted in the two faculties last year revealed that when students quit competition sport, they will take to doing leisure sports parallel with their studies (Pfau, 2013).

Figure 1: Students satisfaction with their physical status



Source: Own development (2014) n=213

5.6% of the interviewed students are engaged in competition sports, 74.2% have sports as a hobby, and 20.2% are not doing any sports while studying at the university.

I also wanted to find out whether the students are familiar with the leisure sport possibilities and programs on the campus; I looked into this in relevance with gender, too; I investigated whether familiarity depends on the site where the student is pursuing sport. I could conclude that those doing sport outside the campus are less informed of the leisure sport possibilities and facilities at the university. Since they spend their free time mostly outside the campus, they have less access to related information, or the information they have is of no importance for them. In relevance with gender distribution, I found that in comparison with women, men tend to be more informed of the sport events, cups or other programs. One reason for this difference can be that of the team sports football is the most popular sport among the students (Neulinger, 2007) with higher numbers of events and programs, and commonly saying, football is more popular among men than among women.

I looked into the students' reasons for neglecting sport. The students were asked to place their responses on a 1-4 scale Likert scale (1= disagree; 4=absolutely agree). A survey conducted in the University of Debrecen revealed that 19% percent of the students were engaged in perusing some kind of sport regularly. This finding is similar to those measured at other higher education institutions (Szabó, 2006; Neulinger, 2007). The results of my analysis of the whole sample shed light on three particular reasons for the negligence of sports: lack of time, laziness, and academic time table discrepancies. These results are similar to those found by Laki and Nyerges (2004), where the interviewed students and staff members specified lack of time as the major cause of their not doing sports.

The analysis of the responses with relevance to gender also specified lack of time as the primary cause of negligence. Those pursuing sport outside the campus also agree that it is lack of time that prevents them from doing sport more regularly. The second cause of negligence with men is laziness, which is paired with distance and timetable discrepancies in the case of women. Specifying laziness instead of external factors as the major cause implies a touch of self criticism, though.

Unlike the rest of the sample, with those doing sport on the campus laziness has the highest average values, and lack of time comes second on the list of causes.

The students mostly tend to disagree with the opinion option "it does me no good", which shows that they are aware of the importance of sport, yet they do not care to integrate it in their daily routine. Unlike the findings of a survey conducted among the students in Budapest (Szabó, 2013), lack of company does not appear among the most frequent excuses.

I examined the incentives that may drive students to do sports in their free time. The whole-sample analysis shows

Table 2: Familiarity with the on-campus leisure sports possibilities among the students (n=213)

Are you familiar with the on-campus sport possibilities?	Men (head) %	women (head) %	Do sports on campus (head) %	Do sports out of campus (head) %
Yes	81(72%)	64(63%)	47(77%)	75(66%)
No	31(28%)	37(37%)	14(23%)	38(34%)

Source: Own development (n=213)

Table 3: Causes of neglecting sports

	men	women	t-test	On-campus sporting activity	Out of-campus sporting activity	t-test
Lack of time	2,49(1,03)	2,80 (1,03)	-1,56	2,60(1,09)	2,66(1,01)	-0,27
Timetable	2,01(0,95)	2,39 (1,02)	-1,97	2,13(1,01)	2,23(0,99)	-0,46
Distance	2,05(0,97)	2,41(1,13)	-1,77	2,00(1,00)	2,36(1,08)	-1,78
It is wearisome	1,77(0,77)	1,62(0,84)	0,92	1,48(0,73)	1,84(0,83)	-2,28
Could not find a favorites	1,96(0,80)	1,96(1,01)	0,02	1,81(0,90)	2,06(0,89)	-1,39
Injury	1,80(1,07)	1,68(1,00)	0,59	1,72(1,05)	1,76(1,04)	-0,23
Lack of friends	1,77(0,82)	1,47(0,85)	1,86	1,60(0,84)	1,64(0,85)	-0,24
Do not enjoy	1,71(0,81)	1,68(0,96)	0,19	1,74(0,92)	1,67(0,86)	0,38
Other preferences	2,05(0,83)	1,96(1,01)	0,51	1,97(0,98)	2,03(0,88)	-0,29
Laziness	2,19(1,24)	2,39(1,05)	-0,89	2,69(1,12)	2,01(1,11)	3,11
Does no good	1,35(0,69)	1,26(0,72)	0,66	1,30(0,59)	1,31(0,77)	-0,07

Source: Own development (2014) N=156

that it is health concerns that tend to motivate them the most (average score: 3.6). This proves that they are aware of the health benefits of sports. The second and third most important incentives are "it is entertaining" (average score: 3.52), and "it is refreshing" (average score: 3.49).

I looked into the differences between men and women respondents concerning the incentives, and the relationship between the incentives and the site of sporting activity. The overall results of the two sample independent t-test highlight health concern as the topmost important one of the incentives. Similarly to the secondary sources reviewed (Szabó, 2012; 2013), women rank figure shaping and entertainment first of their incentives, whereas men find relaxation as the primary incentive for doing sports regularly. The importance of the incentive of figure shaping is significantly different with men and women ($F=18.700$ $p<0.05$). For women figure shaping is high on their priority list, they are ready to do sport in their free time in order to keep their figure in a good shape. There is no difference in this respect between individual respondents should they be doing sport on or out of the campus, and there is no decisive difference between the groups, either. It is worth of note that will-to-win is the least important of the incentives with all of the groups. It is also common of the four groups that company sharing is not of primary importance for the students, individual sports tend to be more attractive for them (Szabó, 2006; Kovács, 2011). The speed of their lifestyles drives them to such sports that can be exercised individually, and do not require special facilities and organization.

I used the 1-4 Likert scale (1=disagree; 4=absolutely agree) to identify the reasons why students neglect leisure sport albeit they are well aware of its health benefits. The respondents were offered twelve options of reasons for their negligence. The results of the T-test applied revealed that men students explain their inactivity by two major reasons: doing sport is time consuming, and secondly, they can choose more attractive leisure time activities than sports. Other earlier surveys (Kovács, 2011) also confirm that young people would watch TV and play with their computers in their leisure rather than get down to sports. Kovács defined three types

Table 3: Incentives to do sports

	men	women	t-test	On-campus sporting activity	Out of-campus sporting activity	t-test
Relaxation	3,52(0,57)	3,49 (0,61)	0,33	3,59(0,53)	3,46(0,61)	1,18
Pleasure	3,31(0,64)	3,36 (0,65)	-0,52	3,32(0,62)	3,34 (0,66)	-0,15
Figure shaping	3,27(0,67)	3,73(0,44)	-4,76	3,51(0,61)	3,46(0,63)	0,37
Health	3,50(0,63)	3,75(0,50)	-2,62	3,67(0,55)	3,58(0,60)	0,86
Will to win	2,61(0,90)	2,40(1,05)	1,30	2,51(1,06)	2,52(0,94)	-0,06
Company	2,98(0,89)	3,00(0,88)	-0,84	3,06(0,94)	2,95(0,85)	0,66
Feeling better	3,31(0,64)	3,53(0,61)	-2,13	3,44(0,61)	3,39(0,65)	0,47
Refreshment	3,42(0,67)	3,56(0,61)	-1,33	3,46(0,64)	3,50(0,64)	-0,26
Self confidence	3,26(0,75)	3,35(0,81)	-0,69	3,36(0,66)	3,27(0,83)	0,69
Success	3,15(0,73)	3,27(0,73)	-1,03	3,16(0,79)	3,22(0,70)	-0,50
Stress relief	3,20(0,87)	3,49(0,68)	-2,19	3,40(0,70)	3,29(0,85)	0,82

Source: Own development (2014) N=156

of individuals with respect to their attitude to leisure time activities: those who are absolutely non-receptive, those who are amusement and consumption oriented, and those who are sportive and sociable.

Table 5: Reasons for inactive attitudes to sport

	men	women	t-test
It is costly	1,55(0,99)	2,06(1,01)	-1,77
It is time consuming	2,60(1,04)	2,73(0,78)	-0,51
It is no use	2,15(0,87)	1,70(0,70)	2,01
It is boring	2,00(0,91)	1,66(0,88)	1,28
It is dangerous (injuries)	1,40(0,59)	1,76(0,81)	-1,72
Have other preference	2,80(1,15)	2,53(0,97)	0,88
Aggression	1,35(0,58)	1,33(0,54)	0,10
Lack of company	2,45(1,09)	2,36(1,15)	0,25
I am not good enough	2,55(0,99)	1,96(0,96)	2,06
It is wearisome	2,20(0,89)	2,23(0,93)	-0,12
Conditions are not good	1,65(0,81)	2,06(0,86)	-1,70
I was discouraged when I was a child	1,45(0,68)	1,43(0,67)	0,85

Source: Own development (2014) N=50

Szabó (2006) also concluded that young people tend to spend most of their free time in passive ways. This is typical also of the students investigated in our survey. The majority of the students of the University of Debrecen fall in the group of the "non-receptive" type who do not think that the company of friends and doing sports are important values of life.

Women respondents name the lack of company as the third most important cause of their inactivity, which contradicts to earlier findings. Szabó (2013) found that it was men who needed a company of friends to share sport with. It is surprising that not many students say they were discouraged to do sports in their childhood, and not many complain of suffering aggression either.

The students also evaluated their own attitudes to sport on the 1-4 Likert scale (1=disagree; 4=absolutely agree). Their answers were grouped in two types: those reflecting positive, and those reflecting negative attitudes to sport. I considered positive the following answers: sports are useful; it is important for our health; it has benefits for people. The answers like: I do not think sporting activity is important; other activities are just as good as sport; sport is a harmful rather than a useful activity were considered negative.

The average values produced by the two sample independent t-tests were similar for the two groups. Sport as a positive value was ranked higher by women students and by those doing sport outside the campus. These differences, however, are immaterial, and we can conclude that the attitudes of the groups are similar.

SUMMARY

In this paper I was dealing with a questionnaire survey investigating the attitude of the students of the University of Debrecen to leisure sports, and the students' opinions about their own physical status. In particular, the paper summarizes the results of the analysis of the responses to the first block of the questions enquiring about the sporting activities of the students. I was looking into the factors influencing sporting activities, the reasons and causes of neglecting sport, and wanted to know whether there are differences between the attitudes of men and women. Simultaneously, I was interested to know whether the attitudes of those doing sport on or out of the campus are different from the relevant results of the bulk sample.

In conclusion I found that the students are satisfied with their physical states although not many of them do sport on a regular basis.

I revealed the primary excuses for neglecting sports: lack of time, laziness and timetable discrepancies. These findings make it imperative that by avoiding the existing discrepancies the students be provided the widest range of time in their time tables available for physical activities.

Those students who pursue sport consider it an outstanding component of a healthy life. This indicates that the students are conscious of their health, and are aware of the health benefits of sports. Women students rather then men tend to see sport as a tool of preserving and shaping their figure, too.

Beside the assumption that sport is a time consuming activity, the commonest excuse of men students for neglecting sport is that they can find better pastime than sports. As a

Table 6: Positive and negative attitudes to sport

	men	women	t-test	On-campus sporting activity	Out of-campus sporting activity	t-test
positive	3,67(0,43)	3,72(0,41)	-0,86	3,69(0,41)	3,74(0,41)	-0,7
negative	1,50(0,55)	1,46(0,58)	-0,55	1,52(0,65)	1,43(0,55)	-0,89

Source: Own development (2014)

third excuse, women say they cannot find a company to share, which assumption contradicts to available survey findings. The students voiced opinions in common concerning the positive and negative values of sports.

It is imperative that we provide such leisure sport possibilities for the students that meet their expectations, and that motivate the inactive ones to take up leisure time sport on a regular basis.

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