

# Sport and Psychological Need Satisfaction – A Cross Sectional Study applied to children and adolescents with disabilities

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## Background

The relationship between sport participation and psychological need satisfaction was examined by an analysis of interest and involvement in sport of 937 children and adolescents with disabilities and their self-perceived need satisfaction. The data were collected in the course of the project “Inclusive Activity” by the Rhineland Regional Authority and the Ministry for Families, Children, Youth, Culture, and Sports of the state North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany, carried out by the Research Institute for Inclusion through Physical Activity and Sport, an affiliated institute of the German Sport University Cologne. The project also included an analysis of the network-conditions and environmental factors of the inclusion of children and adolescents with disabilities in sports. The main aim of the project was to gain access to different sport disciplines in the organized sport system for children and adolescents with disabilities.

## Method

- The study-design was a cross sectional study applied to children and adolescents with different disabilities.
- A total of 937 children and adolescents were questioned (603 male and 318; average age 14.2 years). The gender distribution of the total sample is predominantly 141 male with 65.5%; the gender for 16 participants was not noted (1.7%).
- The survey was conducted at 11 special needs schools of the Rhineland Regional Authority.
- The number of schools and their disability-focus were selected pursuant to their proportion of the total number of special schools of the school authority in the state North-Rhine-Westphalia.
- The Children’s intrinsic need-satisfaction Scale (CINSS) by Koestner and Veronneau (2001) has been used to measure sport-related need satisfaction.
- The three basic needs competence, autonomy and relatedness were operationalized through six items. Each need (subtest) is separately attributed to the aspects of life of school, friends and home.

Table 1: CINSS and attractiveness of sport

	n	r	p
CINSS/attractiveness of sport	920	.197**	.000
CINSS/frequency of sport	900	.086*	.010
CINSS/age	909	.069*	.039
Sport/age	905	-.131**	.000

Table 2: CINSS and no sport participation

	n	r	p
CINSS/having problems in making contact with others	258	-.310**	.000
CINSS/not feeling confident enough to participate in sport	270	-.198**	.001

Table 3: CINSS Sub-dimensions

	Total (n=842)	Boys (n=552)	Girls (n=290)
Autonomy	M=13.35 SD= 3.25	M=13.02 SD=3.25	M=14.0 SD=3.13
Competence	M=14.73 SD=2.62	M=14.51 SD=2.54	M=15.2 SD=2.71
Relatedness	M=14.63 SD=2.70	M=14.41 SD=2.72	M=15.08 SD=2.61



Picture: Rhineland Regional Authority (LVR) 2016

## Results

- The general need-satisfaction of the children and adolescents with disabilities is located in the higher scale range (M=2.36, SD=.38).
- 34.9% of the children and adolescents take part in sport once or twice per week, and 32.3% take part in sport three times per week. 17% of the children and adolescents do not take part in leisure sport at all.
- 72.4% of both boys and girls want to take part in leisure sport more frequently.

## Discussion

Participation in sport seems to be beneficial to children and adolescents with disabilities’ psychological need satisfaction. The competence-dimension displayed a particular relevance for an increased sport-related lifestyle in the CINSS-construct. Despite the general interest in sport and the wish to participate in another sporting activity, the participation of the questioned children and adolescents in organized sport is comparatively low and decreases with age. This research highlights the positive impact of sport on psychological need satisfaction of children and adolescents with disabilities and emphasizes the demand for greater participation in organized sport for children and adolescents with disabilities.

## Literature

Koestner, R. F., & Veronneau, M. H. (2001). *Children’s intrinsic needs satisfaction scale*. McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.  
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