

LEISURE TRENDS

AMONG

YOUNG PEOPLE IN MALTA



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Foreword

This study, *Leisure trends among young people in Malta*, was carried out for the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ by Prof. Marilyn Clark and Dr. Joanne Cassar of the University of Malta using data collected by the National Statistics Office. The quantitative study involved 3,000 young people, aged between 13 and 31, and presents the most common types of leisure activities older children and young people engage in, as well as the amount of time they spend on such activities. The study also identifies barriers that hinder wider participation in leisure activities and how the issue of greater accessibility could be addressed.

Leisure time is an important part of young people's lives. Leisure time, well spent, helps young people discover new aspects of their personality and develop their talents. Such leisure time also helps to foster confidence in the transition from childhood to adulthood. The socialization of children and adolescents, and how they behave and interact with others, is shaped in particular by how they spend their leisure time.

Leisure time, therefore, is not just an opportunity for play, relaxation and recreation; but also for self-expression and self-control: a part of young people's lives in which significant amounts of learning and development occur. Leisure time can also afford young people the opportunity of contributing to society and facilitate social change and development.

The study was conducted as part of the Office of the Commissioner for Children's and Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ's ongoing work and commitment to strengthen and further develop the research base on young people in Malta. It is only through ongoing research, data collection and analysis that we can provide an accurate and up-to-date picture of the lives of young people in Malta today and a firm basis for evidence-based policy making. The study makes an invaluable contribution to achieve this and casts a clear and revealing light on this particular and significant aspect of young people's lives.

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Background

Young people's leisure time provides opportunities for recreation (including sports, art and cultural activities), personal growth and service to others. It is not simply time that is used by young people in any kind of way but a space in which young people can develop roles and identities for themselves. Leisure activities can also facilitate and enliven both non-formal and informal learning.

Concepts of leisure usually consider it in terms of three broad categories:

- Leisure as that which takes place in residual time as opposed to working time
- Leisure as being made up of activities, which people choose to participate in voluntarily
- Leisure as being functional and a useful means of achieving socially desired and personal approved goals

Leisure occurs during waking hours, when a young person is not at school and not at work. School-related activities such as homework, Saturday classes and summer school are often counted as extensions of school. Chores and required family responsibilities such as childcare are often counted as extensions of work. Leisure is an elusive concept because it involves a vast panorama of human activity and one person's idea of leisure may very well be seen as work or a chore by another. On a large scale, leisure is phenomenal in terms of values expressed, money spent and time invested.

On an individual level, leisure enriches people's lives by providing a context where the individual is recognised. Leisure constitutes an important part of young people's lives. It is a key factor in the development of young adults, as it is in the realm of leisure that young people learn to become themselves. It gives them the opportunity to discover new aspects of their personality and develop their talents. Through leisure, young people can develop a strong sense of self and identity. Leisure can provide a context for establishing self-esteem and self-worth. The socialisation of children and adolescents is partially shaped by how they spend their leisure time. Leisure practices foster teamwork and cooperation. Leisure activities contribute to young people's well being and life satisfaction. Such activities enable them to choose and define their own modes of representation. All cultures and societies recognize to some extent, the right to rest and leisure. This is consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations General Assembly 1948, Article 24) and with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989, Article 31).

Leisure provides various opportunities of growth for young people. Leisure time is therefore viewed: as an opportunity for play and recreation; for self-expression and relaxation; and for young people to exercise their emerging self-control. During leisure activities, a significant amount of learning and development occurs. Leisure also provides an opportunity for the development of communities and societies. Leisure time provides a context in which young people may contribute to society and facilitate social change, as participants in the development of their communities and societies.

Young people's discretionary time is worth a significant amount of attention, mainly because it presents endless possibilities for constructive development. It is critical that a positive vision of leisure time activities be put forward and defined, and that time and care be given to specifying how such time should be used and why it should be protected.

Ideally, young people should have some control to choose to do things that interest them with individuals or organisations. Leisure time is discretionary: it facilitates potential for enhanced individual growth and community benefit.

Overview of the Study's Aims

Identifying young people's leisure practices is an important task. This study, *Leisure trends among young people in Malta*, brings young people's opinions, perspectives and experiences to the fore. All respondents were provided with the following definition of leisure:

Leisure refers to those activities, which you engage in for fun. Leisure entails activities, which you enjoy doing when and how you want for recreational purposes, without being forced by anyone. Leisure activities are not regarded as fulfilling some kind of duty.

Within this understanding of leisure, this study explores young people's leisure trends and practices. Specifically, the research examines aspects of:

- Leisure patterns among Maltese young people between the ages of 13-31
- The amount of time they spend engaging in leisure
- Gender influence on leisure preferences
- The ways that leisure is lived out by young people across different age groups
- Leisure trends of young people according to their locality

This research agenda also lends itself to a variety of more specific research questions.

1. How are young people in Malta spending their leisure time?
2. How much time do they allocate for leisure activities?
3. With whom do they engage in leisure?
4. What barriers hinder them from engaging in leisure activities?
5. What suggestions do they have for counteracting these barriers?
6. How does age influence leisure participation?
7. How do districts influence leisure participation?
8. How does gender influence leisure participation?



Methodology

The target population for this study consisted of 98,356 young people, aged between 13 and 30, residing in private households. All other residential establishments (e.g. hotels, hospitals, convents, prisons, etc.) in which people reside collectively, were excluded in the selection of the sample.

A gross sample of 3,000 individuals was selected by means of a stratified random strategy to ensure a representative count of the sample by gender, age and district of residence. This sample was drawn out of the population register maintained by the NSO, which was based on the 2005 Census of Population and Housing with regular annual updates being performed to ensure a comprehensive coverage of the sampling frame.

Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the distribution of the sample by gender, age group and district of residence:

Table 1. Sample distribution by age and gender

	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Age group						
13-16 years	350	22.6	345	23.8	695	23.2
17-21 years	447	28.9	441	30.4	888	29.6
22-26 years	434	28.0	380	26.2	814	27.1
27-31 years	318	20.5	285	19.6	603	20.1
Total	1,549	100.0	1,451	100.0	3,000	100.0

Table 2. Sample distribution by district and gender

	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
District						
Southern Harbour	310	20.0	274	18.9	584	19.5
Northern Harbour	467	30.1	428	29.5	895	29.8
South Eastern	228	14.7	225	15.5	453	15.1
Western	208	13.4	196	13.5	404	13.5
Northern	223	14.4	224	15.4	447	14.9
Gozo and Comino	113	7.3	104	7.2	217	7.2
Total	1,549	100.0	1,451	100.0	3,000	100.0

Of the individuals selected for the survey, 1,024 participated in the survey, yielding a net effective response rate of 77.8 per cent. Table 3 illustrates the breakdown of responses for the survey:

Table 3. Responses to survey

Description	Number	%	% Effectiv
Accepted	1,024	34.1	77.8
Refused	293	9.8	22.2
No reply (incl. engaged, call backs)	1,193	39.8	-
Never contacted	12	0.4	-
Ineligible (incl. wrong telephone numbers, does not live at home etc)	478	15.9	-
Total	3,000	100.0	100.0

Data was collected by means of Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) between 5 July and 13 July 2012. Parental consent through the telephone was requested for the minors, aged 13-17 years, to participate in the study.

A series of measures were implemented to certify that optimum quality was achieved throughout the survey. These consisted of quality checks and in-built validation rules in the CATI programme. Constant supervision during the data collection stage ensured a harmonised data collection process.

Training of interviewers was carried out through a briefing session that was held prior to the data collection phase. Random audits were also taken to cater for biases that could have occurred due to typing errors and to ensure that all interviewers followed the instructions given to them during the briefing session. The dataset was further subject to a series of other checks during the data-editing stage in order to identify any remaining incorrect or logically misleading data.

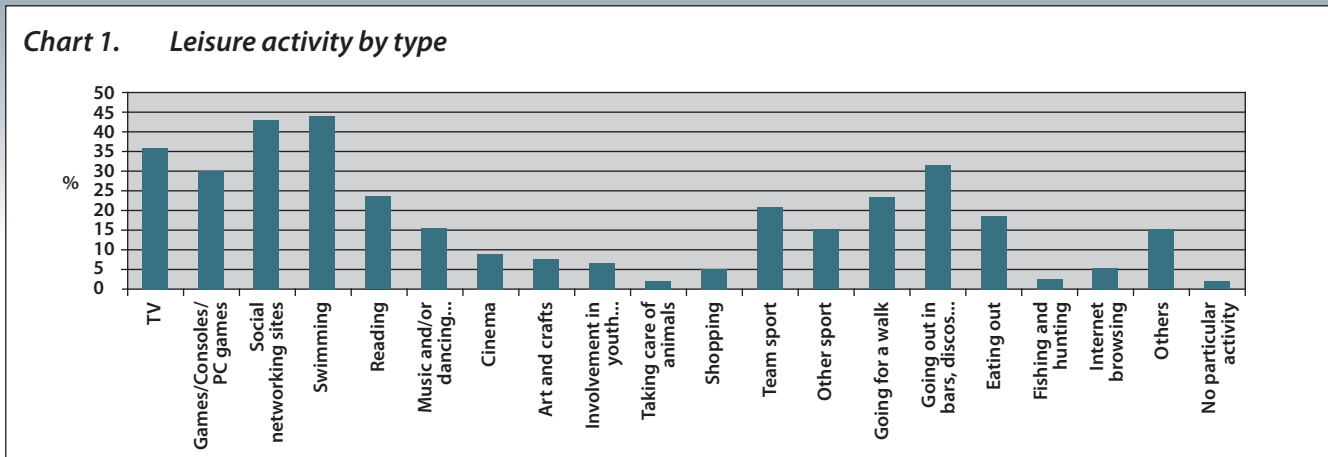
Normally, sample based surveys are weighted to correct for any biases present in the final sample of participating units arising from different response rates observed in different categories. In this case, the weighting procedure served to improve the representativeness of the sample estimates in relation to their different characteristics.

Results of the Study

The most common type of leisure activity cited by the respondents was 'swimming'. Given that the survey took place during the summer months when the Maltese spend a significant amount of time by the sea, this was an expected response. This was closely followed by engagement in social networking sites, television viewing, going out to bars, discos and parties and the use of PC games. Table 4 and Chart 1 refer.

Table 4. *Type of leisure activity*

	Count	Column N %
TV	364	35.5
Games/Consoles/PC games	305	29.8
Social networking sites e.g. MSN, Facebook, Twitter	435	42.5
Swimming	448	43.8
Reading	235	22.9
Music and/or dancing and/or acting	159	15.5
Cinema	88	8.6
Art and crafts	75	7.3
Involvement in youth organisations and volunteering	65	6.3
Taking care of animals	22	2.1
Shopping	49	4.8
Team sport e.g. volleyball, football	210	20.5
Other sport e.g. gym, cycling, skateboarding, trekking	147	14.4
Going for a walk	237	23.1
Going out in bars, discos, parties	319	31.2
Eating out	189	18.5
Fishing and hunting	23	2.2
Internet browsing	50	4.9
Others	147	14.4
No particular activity	14	1.4
Total	1024	100.0



Leisure time is most commonly spent with friends, followed by time spent with boyfriend/girlfriend and family members.

Table 5. Those with whom leisure time is spent

Valid	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Not applicable	14	1.4	1.4	1.4
Spouse/Partner	47	4.6	4.6	6.0
Other family members	205	20.0	20.0	26.0
Boyfriend/Girlfriend	202	19.7	19.7	45.7
Friends	488	47.7	47.7	93.4
Alone	59	5.8	5.8	99.1
Other persons	9	.9	.9	100.0
Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

23.9% of the sample reported spending between 16 to 20 hours during the week in summer time on leisure, followed closely by 23.2% reporting spending 6 to 10 hours on discretionary time. Young people have more time for leisure in the weekend during the summer time with 24.6 % reporting between 11 and 15 hours of free time, 21.2 % reporting 6 to 10 hours and 20% reporting spending between 21 to 30 hours on leisure. Leisure during winter time is notably less than in the summer months with 35.3% reporting 1 to 5 hours and 31.8% reporting 6 to 10 hours per week. During the weekends in winter time, 32% of young people report having 6 to 10 hours per week and 25.5% having 11 to 15 hours per week. These results are presented in more detail in tables 6-9.

Table 6. Hours in summer (Monday to Thursday)

Valid	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Not applicable	14	1.4	1.4	1.4
0 hrs	32	3.1	3.1	4.5
1-5 hrs	143	14.0	14.0	18.5
6-10 hrs	238	23.2	23.2	41.7
11-15 hrs	150	14.6	14.6	56.3
16-20 hrs	245	23.9	23.9	80.3
21-30 hrs	97	9.5	9.5	89.7
More than 30 hrs	105	10.3	10.3	100.0
Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

Table 7. Hours in summer (Friday to Sunday)

Valid	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Not applicable	14	1.4	1.4	1.4
0 hrs	21	2.1	2.1	3.4
1-5 hrs	112	10.9	10.9	14.4
6-10 hrs	217	21.2	21.2	35.5
11-15 hrs	252	24.6	24.6	60.2
16-20 hrs	157	15.3	15.3	75.5
21-30 hrs	205	20.0	20.0	95.5
More than 30 hrs	46	4.5	4.5	100.0
Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

Table 8. Hours in winter (Monday to Thursday)

Valid	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Not applicable	14	1.4	1.4	1.4
0 hrs	52	5.1	5.1	6.4
1-5 hrs	361	35.3	35.3	41.7
6-10 hrs	326	31.8	31.8	73.5
11-15 hrs	144	14.1	14.1	87.6
16-20 hrs	88	8.6	8.6	96.2
21-30 hrs	30	2.9	2.9	99.1
More than 30 hrs	9	.9	.9	100.0
Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

Table 9. Hours in winter (Friday to Sunday)

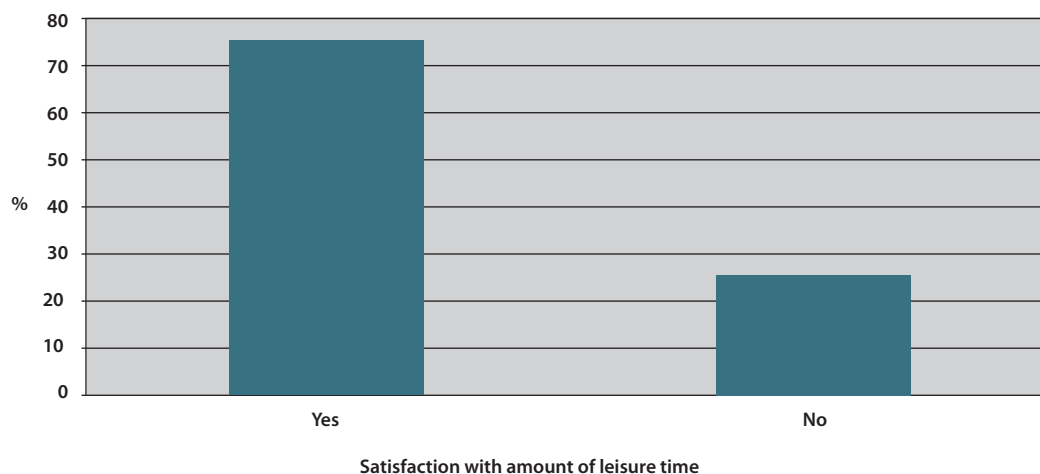
Valid	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Not applicable	14	1.4	1.4	1.4
0 hrs	26	2.5	2.5	3.9
1-5 hrs	202	19.7	19.7	23.6
6-10 hrs	328	32.0	32.0	55.7
11-15 hrs	261	25.5	25.5	81.2
16-20 hrs	110	10.7	10.7	91.9
21-30 hrs	70	6.8	6.8	98.7
More than 30 hrs	13	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

Table 10 and Chart 2 show that a majority of young people are satisfied with the amount of leisure time they experience.

Table 10. Satisfaction with amount of leisure time

Valid	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Yes	765	74.7	74.7	74.7
No	259	25.3	25.3	100.0
Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

Chart 2. Satisfaction with amount of leisure time



The most commonly cited obstacles young people encounter in relation to doing those leisure activities they aspire to, were ‘work’ with 33% of respondents choosing this answer and ‘school’ with 28.5 % of respondents reporting this as an obstacle. Time constraints and money featured as less important obstacles.

Table 11. What hinders spending leisure time

What hinders spending leisure time	Count	Column N %
Age and parental consent	13	1.3
Money	65	6.3
Transport availability	16	1.6
Taking care of other family members	32	3.1
Time constraints	80	7.8
Work	338	33.0
School	292	28.5
Housework	24	2.3
Other reasons	60	5.9
Nothing stops me from doing leisure activities	308	30.1
Total	1024	100.0

The most common suggestions to improve access to leisure were a reduction in homework and working hours. The provision of a wider range of leisure activities was also a popular suggestion.

Table 12. Suggestions

Suggestions	Count	Column N %
Be given less homework	121	16.9
Work less hours	114	15.9
Cheaper leisure activities	28	3.9
Be offered a wider range of leisure activities	60	8.4
Have more leisure facilities in the vicinity	25	3.5
Less hours at school	28	3.9
Better time management	57	7.9
Increase in salary	23	3.2
Others	96	13.4
No suggestions	235	32.8
Total	717	100.0

Leisure was mostly viewed as an important means of relieving stress and many young people also viewed it as a necessity (37.6%) and also as a means of socialising (25.1%).

Table 13. Significance of leisure time

Significance of leisure time	Count	Column N %
A necessity	385	37.6
An important means to de-stress oneself	718	70.1
A way of developing one's talents	113	11.0
A means of socializing	257	25.1
Important as you can do the activities you like to do	43	4.2
A waste of time/A problem	8	.8
Others	47	4.6
Don't know	41	4.0
Total	1024	100.0

Leisure and Age Group

(i) Types of Leisure Activities

The study explored the leisure patterns and experiences of four age groups: 13-16; 17-21; 22-26; 27-31. The National Youth Policy (2010) defines a young person as falling between the ages of 12 and 30. This is a very wide span of years and youth researchers have consistently identified different groups who are transitioning to adulthood. The years between 13 and 30 may therefore be conceptualised as encompassing:

- Early and middle adolescence (13 to 16)
- Late adolescence (17 to 21)
- Youth (22 to 26) and
- Emerging adulthood (late twenties)

Youth researchers have identified how the transition to adulthood is commencing earlier (with puberty being reached as early as 12 years of age) and ending later with emerging adults not making the full transition to adulthood in terms of full entry to the labour market and establishing independent households until their late twenties. The present study attempts to address this issue by considering the different age groups who experience very different realities.

For all age groups the most popular activities were:

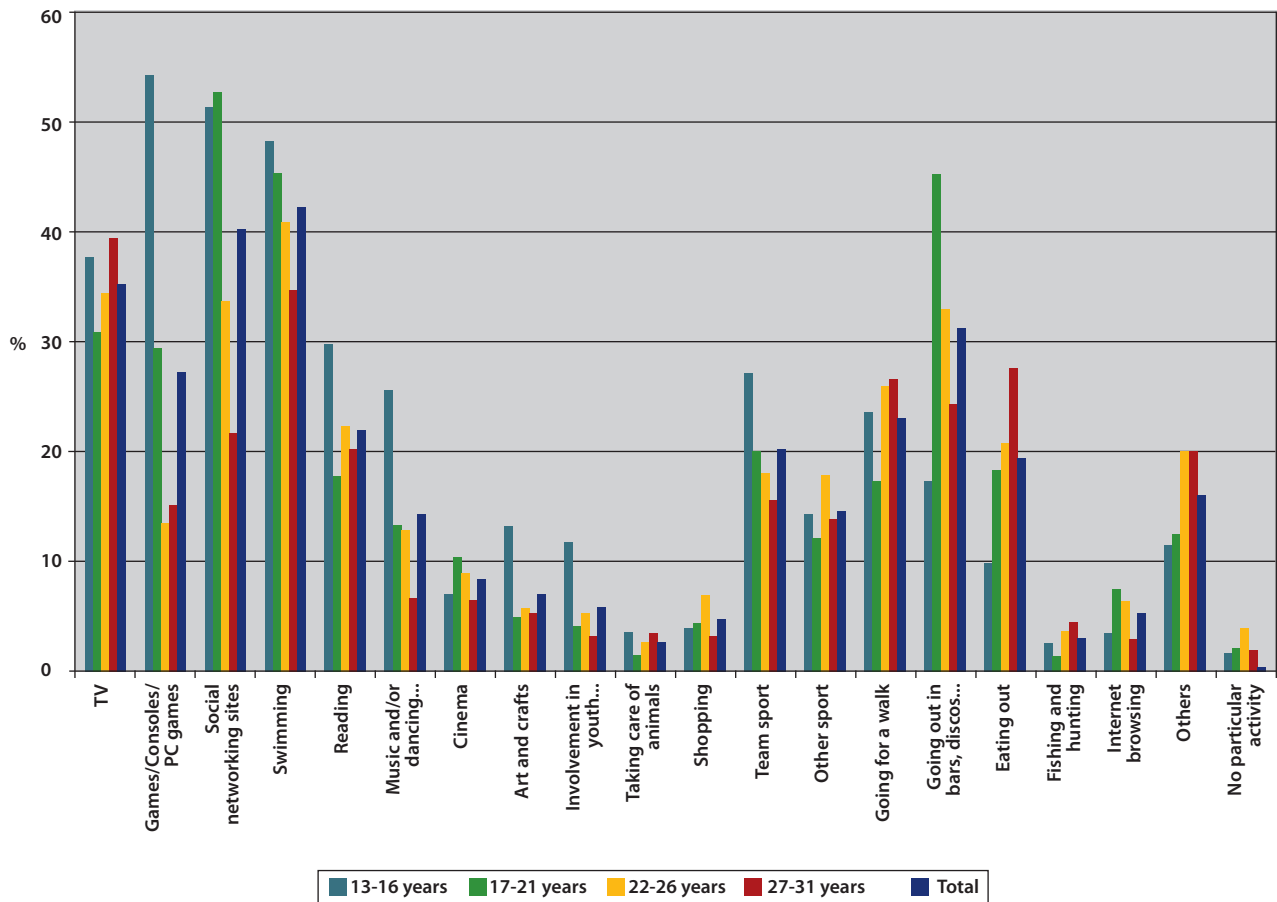
- Watching TV
- Playing games on consoles and PCs
- Spending time on social networking sites
- Swimming
- Going out to bars, discos and parties

There were however very important differences in the preference of the four age groups studied. Early and middle adolescents preferred spending time on a computer with 54.4% playing games on PCs or consoles and 51.4% spending time on social networking sites, while only 17.1% enjoyed going out to bars and discos. This last statistic is expected given that legislation prohibits entry into places of adult entertainment that serve alcohol for those under the age of 17. Among those aged 17 to 21 one sees a decrease in popularity of playing computer games but an equally popular involvement in social networking sites. Among this age group, going out to bars and discos increases significantly in popularity with 45.2% reporting this as a preferred leisure activity. Among the 22 to 26 year olds, playing computer games decreases even further in popularity as does social networking involvement. For this age group going out remains important, with 32.9% stating they went out to bars and discos. This activity decreases even further in the 27 to 31 year age group, as does playing computer games and social networking. TV viewing remains consistent across the age groups as does swimming. Table 14 and Chart 3 refer.

Table 14. Type of leisure activity by age group

Type of leisure activity by age group	Age groups									
	13-16 years		17-21 years		22-26 years		27-31 years		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Not applicable	20822	100.0	28298	100.0	26897	100.0	22339	100.0	98356	100.0
Missing	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0
TV	7833	37.6	8699	30.7	9238	34.3	8772	39.3	34542	35.1
Games/Consoles /PC games	11320	54.4	8326	29.4	3582	13.3	3347	15.0	26574	27.0
Social networking sites e.g. MSN, Facebook, Twitter	10694	51.4	14907	52.7	9044	33.6	4819	21.6	39464	40.1
Swimming	10027	48.2	12821	45.3	10983	40.8	7715	34.5	41546	42.2
Reading	6154	29.6	4953	17.5	5945	22.1	4462	20.0	21514	21.9
Music and/or dancing and/or acting	5307	25.5	3704	13.1	3433	12.8	1434	6.4	13878	14.1
Cinema	1407	6.8	2881	10.2	2353	8.7	1401	6.3	8042	8.2
Art and crafts	2690	12.9	1343	4.7	1477	5.5	1136	5.1	6646	6.8
Involvement in youth organisations and volunteering	2395	11.5	1091	3.9	1384	5.1	645	2.9	5515	5.6
Taking care of animals	689	3.3	362	1.3	613	2.3	718	3.2	2381	2.4
Shopping	788	3.8	1193	4.2	1813	6.7	646	2.9	4439	4.5
Team sport e.g. volleyball, football	5634	27.1	5820	20.6	4822	17.9	3435	15.4	19711	20.0
Other sport e.g. gym, cycling, skateboarding, trekking	2940	14.1	3406	12.0	4745	17.6	3044	13.6	14135	14.4
Going for a walk	4867	23.4	4827	17.1	6969	25.9	5910	26.5	22573	22.9
Going out in bars, discos, parties	3569	17.1	12793	45.2	8847	32.9	5411	24.2	30620	31.1
Eating out	1998	9.6	5131	18.1	5543	20.6	6124	27.4	18797	19.1
Fishing and hunting	485	2.3	323	1.1	943	3.5	936	4.2	2686	2.7
Internet browsing	662	3.2	2088	7.4	1655	6.2	600	2.7	5004	5.1
Others	2360	11.3	3467	12.3	5383	20.0	4470	20.0	15681	15.9
No particular activity	0	.0	339	1.2	449	1.7	827	3.7	1615	1.6

Chart 3. Type of leisure activity by age group





(ii) Leisure Companions

Differences can be seen in terms of the four age groups in relation to whom they spend their leisure time with. Early and middle adolescents are most likely to spend their time with family members (33.4%) and friends (58.5%). With the later adolescent age group the preference is to spend time with either a boyfriend or girlfriend (22.5%). This increases even more in the 22 to 26 year age group (40.6%) only to decrease in importance among emerging adults in favour of a return to spending time with family members including one's spouse. Table 15 refers.

Table 15. Those with whom leisure time is spent by age group

Those with whom leisure time is spent by age group	District									
	13-16 years		17-21 years		22-26 years		27-31 years		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Spouse/Partner	0	.0	91	.3	1142	4.3	4379	20.4	5611	5.8
Other family members	6953	33.4	3550	12.7	3356	12.7	4949	23.0	18808	19.4
Boyfriend/Girlfriend	277	1.3	6293	22.5	10732	40.6	4178	19.4	21480	22.2
Friends	12177	58.5	16348	58.5	9609	36.3	6102	28.4	44234	45.7
Alone	1059	5.1	1470	5.3	1444	5.5	1735	8.1	5709	5.9
Other persons	357	1.7	207	.7	165	.6	170	.8	899	.9
Total	20822	100.0	27959	100.0	26449	100.0	21512	100.0	96741	100.0

(iii) Allocated Time for Leisure

The amount of leisure time reported for both summer and winter appears to decrease with age as does satisfaction with the amount of leisure time at one's disposal, although the latter did not reach statistical significance levels. Tables 16 to 19 refer.

Table 16. Hours allocated for leisure during summer (Monday to Thursday) by age group

Hours in summer (Mon - Thurs)	District									
	13-16 years		17-21 years		22-26 years		27-31years		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
0 hrs	0	.0	875	3.1	1344	5.1	1371	6.4	3590	3.7
1-5 hrs	1066	5.1	3121	11.2	5606	21.2	5564	25.9	15358	15.9
6-10 hrs	3291	15.8	5967	21.3	7139	27.0	8046	37.4	24443	25.3
11-15 hrs	3336	16.0	3360	12.0	5739	21.7	2232	10.4	14667	15.2
16-20 hrs	5983	28.7	8253	29.5	3755	14.2	3339	15.5	21330	22.0
21-30 hrs	2855	13.7	3008	10.8	2198	8.3	790	3.7	8850	9.1
More than 30 hrs	4289	20.6	3375	12.1	668	2.5	170	.8	8503	8.8
Total	20822	100.0	27959	100.0	26449	100.0	21512	100.0	96741	100.0

Table 17. Hours allocated for leisure during summer (Friday to Sunday) by age group

Hours in summer (Fri - Sun)	District									
	13-16 years		17-21 years		22-26 years		27-31years		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
0 hrs	557	2.7	1910	6.8	961	3.6	1507	7.0	4935	5.1
1-5 hrs	7870	37.8	9419	33.7	8891	33.6	8580	39.9	34761	35.9
6-10 hrs	6997	33.6	8337	29.8	9298	35.2	7037	32.7	31670	32.7
11-15 hrs	3549	17.0	3591	12.8	4257	16.1	1865	8.7	13262	13.7
16-20 hrs	1541	7.4	2980	10.7	1888	7.1	1937	9.0	8346	8.6
21-30 hrs	228	1.1	1376	4.9	767	2.9	585	2.7	2956	3.1
More than 30 hrs	80	.4	346	1.2	387	1.5	0	0.0	812	.8
Total	20822	100.0	27959	100.0	26449	100.0	21512	100.0	96741	100.0

Table 18. Hours allocated for leisure during summer (Friday to Sunday) by age group

Hours in summer (Fri - Sun)	District									
	13-16 years		17-21 years		22-26 years		27-31 years		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
0 hrs	0	.0	774	2.8	782	3.0	533	2.5	2089	2.2
1-5 hrs	2035	9.8	2367	8.5	2987	11.3	3447	16.0	10836	11.2
6-10 hrs	3586	17.2	4942	17.7	5583	21.1	7972	37.1	22082	22.8
11-15 hrs	4953	23.8	7182	25.7	7052	26.7	5634	26.2	24820	25.7
16-20 hrs	2812	13.5	5335	19.1	4170	15.8	2183	10.1	14500	15.0
21-30 hrs	6084	29.2	5814	20.8	4773	18.0	1573	7.3	18244	18.9
More than 30 hrs	1351	6.5	1546	5.5	1102	4.2	170	.8	4170	4.3
Total	20822	100.0	27959	100.0	26449	100.0	21512	100.0	96741	100.0

Table 19. Hours allocated for leisure during winter (Friday to Sunday) by age group

Hours in winter (Fri - Sun)	District									
	13-16 years		17-21 years		22-26 years		27-31 years		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
0 hrs	155	.7	729	2.6	617	2.3	1043	4.8	2544	2.6
1-5 hrs	4040	19.4	5189	18.6	4518	17.1	5555	25.8	19302	20.0
6-10 hrs	7656	36.8	8686	31.1	7386	27.9	7280	33.8	31008	32.1
11-15 hrs	5726	27.5	7705	27.6	6744	25.5	4876	22.7	25050	25.9
16-20 hrs	1777	8.5	3150	11.3	4062	15.4	1702	7.9	10691	11.1
21-30 hrs	1244	6.0	2252	8.1	2252	8.5	1055	4.9	6803	7.0
More than 30 hrs	225	1.1	248	.9	871	3.3	0	.0	1344	1.4
Total	20822	100.0	27959	100.0	26449	100.0	21512	100.0	96741	100.0

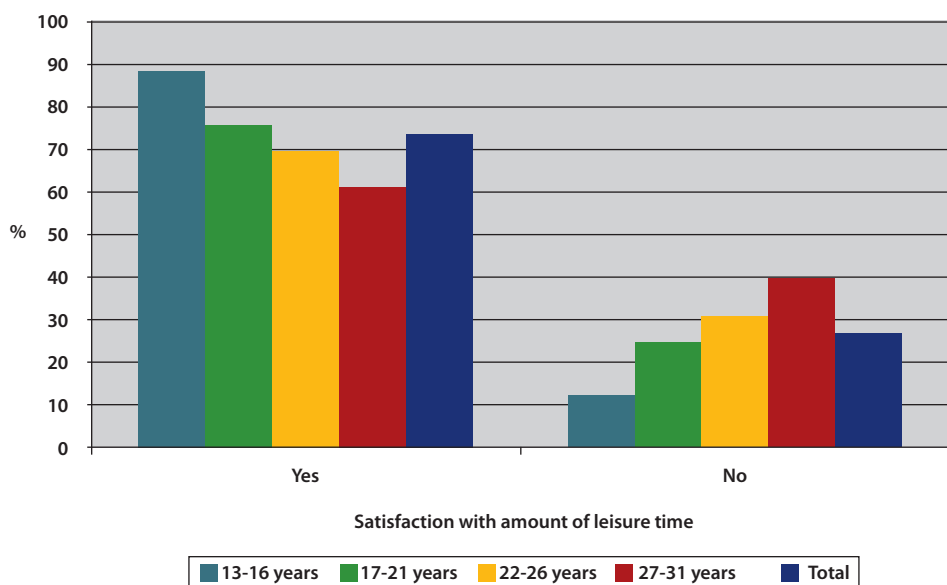
(iv) Satisfaction with Leisure Time

The amount of leisure time at one's disposal appears to decrease with age. Table 20 and Chart 4 refer.

Table 20. Satisfaction with amount of leisure time by age group

Hours in summer (Mon - Thurs)	District									
	13-16 years		17-21 years		22-26 years		27-31 years		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Yes	18320	88.0	21425	75.7	18732	69.6	13548	60.6	72026	73.2
No	2501	12.0	6873	24.3	8165	30.4	8791	39.4	26330	26.8
Total	20822	100.0	28298	100.0	26897	100.0	22339	100.0	98356	100.0

Chart 4. Satisfaction with amount of leisure time by age group



(v) Barriers to Leisure

The study also found statistical differences between the four age cohorts in relation to the obstacles experienced in terms of involvement in their preferred leisure activities. The early and middle adolescents were most likely to cite school as mostly hindering their involvement in leisure. The 17 to 21 year olds were equally likely to cite both school and work as hindering their involvement in leisure activities. Among both the 22 to 26 and 27 to 31 age groups, work is most likely to be cited as an obstacle to leisure activities (56.4% and 52.4% respectively). Table 21 refers.

Table 21. What hinders engagement in leisure activities by age group

What hinders engagement in leisure activities by group	District									
	13-16 years		17-21 years		22-26 years		27-31 years		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Age and parental consent	728	3.5	130	.5	0	.0	124	.6	982	1.0
Money	543	2.6	1775	6.3	2235	8.3	2166	9.7	6719	6.8
Transport availability	395	1.9	732	2.6	175	.6	0	.0	1301	1.3
Taking care of other family members	150	.7	515	1.8	590	2.2	2069	9.3	3325	3.4
Time constraints	943	4.5	1362	4.8	3051	11.3	2505	11.2	7861	8.0
Work	712	3.4	9168	32.4	15176	56.4	11701	52.4	36756	37.4
School	8948	43.0	11269	39.8	3216	12.0	1216	5.4	24648	25.1
Housework	356	1.7	376	1.3	352	1.3	1529	6.8	2614	2.7
Other reasons	1178	5.7	1779	6.3	1121	4.2	1852	8.3	5931	6.0
Nothing stops me from doing leisure activities	8963	43.0	8130	28.7	6657	24.7	4913	22.0	28662	29.1

(vi) Suggestions to Overcome Barriers to Leisure

While the majority of individuals had no suggestions to make in terms of leisure opportunities and provision, among those who did make suggestions differences in age groups were evident. The younger age groups opted for a reduction in the amount of home work, while the older age groups opted for a reduction in the number of working hours. All age groups commented on how being offered a wider range of leisure activities would be beneficial. Better time management was also a preferred option for the older age groups. Table 22 refers.

Table 22. Suggestions by age group

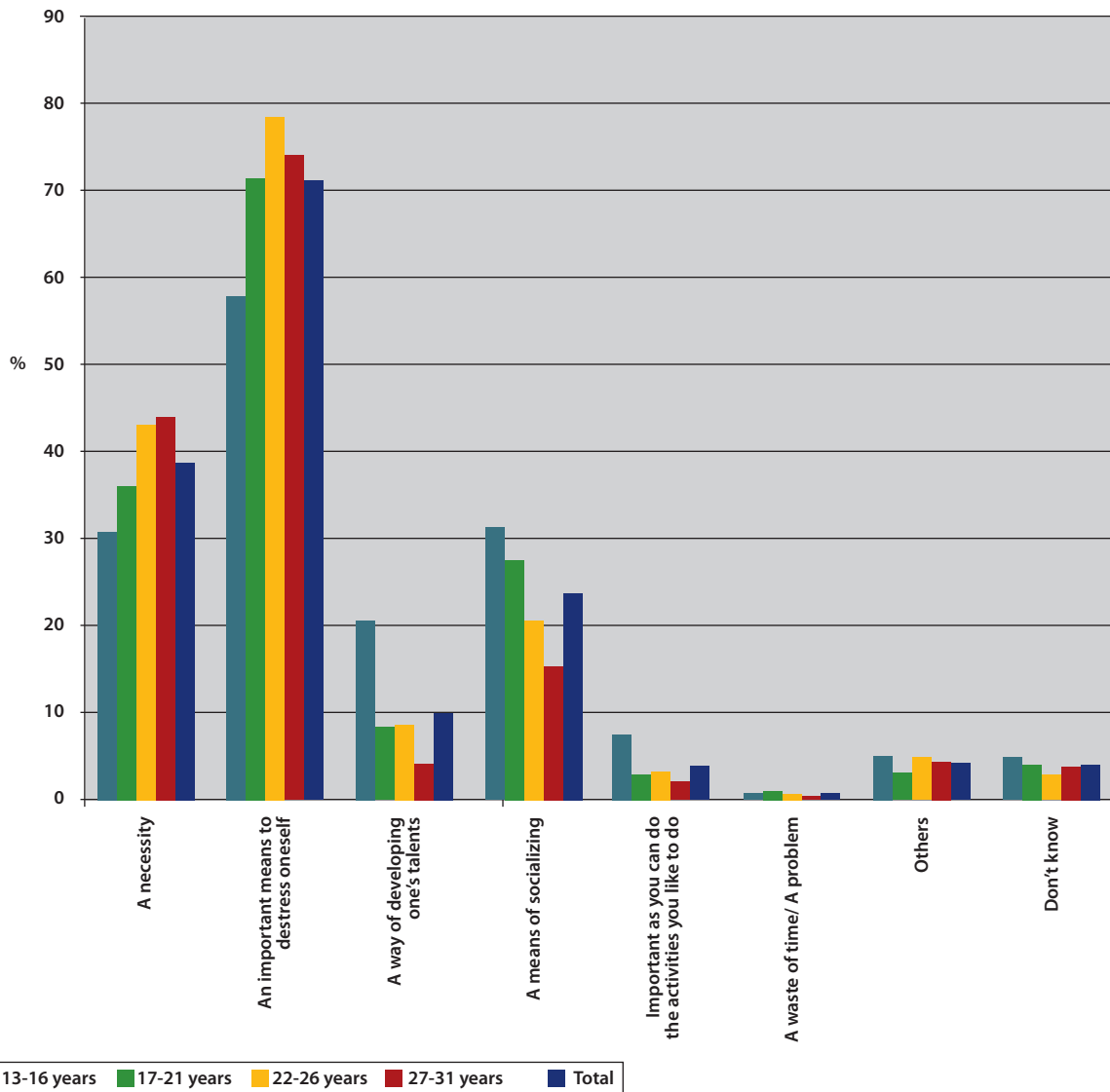
What hinders engagement in leisure activities by group	District									
	13-16 years		17-21 years		22-26 years		27-31 years		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Be given less homework	5652	47.7	3458	17.1	313	1.5	109	.6	9533	13.7
Work less hours	81	.7	2591	12.8	5961	29.5	3808	21.9	12442	17.8
Cheaper leisure activities	382	3.2	856	4.2	1415	7.0	210	1.2	2863	4.1
Be offered a wider range of leisure activities	1032	8.7	1932	9.5	1766	8.7	1144	6.6	5873	8.4
Have more leisure facilities in the vicinity	625	5.3	743	3.7	539	2.7	196	1.1	2103	3.0
Less hours at school	572	4.8	1517	7.5	84	.4	124	.7	2296	3.3
Better time management	963	8.1	1350	6.7	1663	8.2	1657	9.5	5633	8.1
Increase in salary	0	.0	78	.4	1183	5.8	1288	7.4	2549	3.7
Others	1636	13.8	2389	11.8	2877	14.2	2270	13.0	9172	13.1
No suggestions	2617	22.1	7610	37.6	6060	29.9	7408	42.5	23694	34.0

(vii) Significance of Leisure Time

In relation to the significance of leisure time by age group, there were some important differences between age groups. While all four age groups believed that leisure is a necessity, serves to relieve stress, enhances their abilities and talents and also serves as an important means of socialising, the younger age groups were less likely to see it as a necessity and as a means of relieving stress.

For the younger age groups the socialising effects of leisure and its developmental capacity was of greater significance. Chart 5 refers.

Chart 5. Significance of leisure time by age group



Leisure and Gender

(i) Types of Leisure Activities

Table 23 shows that participation in leisure is high for both males and females, with only 1% of the former and 2.3% of the latter claiming that they do not practice any leisure activity at all.

Table 23. *Type of leisure activity by gender*

Type of leisure activity	Gender of respondent					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
TV	15042	29.8	19500	40.7	34542	35.1
Games/Consoles/ PC games	17956	35.6	8618	18.0	26574	27.0
Social networking sites e.g. MSN, Facebook, Twitter	17769	35.2	21694	45.3	39464	40.1
Swimming	19738	39.1	21808	45.5	41546	42.2
Reading	7078	14.0	14436	30.1	21514	21.9
Music and/or dancing and/or acting	5737	11.4	8141	17.0	13878	14.1
Cinema	3575	7.1	4467	9.3	8042	8.2
Art and crafts	2157	4.3	4489	9.4	6646	6.8
Involvement in youth organisations and volunteering	3279	6.5	2237	4.7	5515	5.6
Taking care of animals	1485	2.9	896	1.9	2381	2.4
Shopping	566	1.1	3874	8.1	4439	4.5
Team sport e.g. volleyball, football	16440	32.6	3271	6.8	19711	20.0
Other sport e.g. gym, cycling, skateboarding, trekking	9526	18.9	4609	9.6	14135	14.4
Going for a walk	7502	14.9	15070	31.5	22573	22.9
Going out in bars, discos, parties	17328	34.3	13292	27.8	30620	31.1
Eating out	7735	15.3	11061	23.1	18797	19.1
Fishing and hunting	2447	4.8	239	.5	2686	2.7
Internet browsing	2589	5.1	2415	5.0	5004	5.1
Others	8904	17.6	6777	14.1	15681	15.9
No particular activity	498	1.0	1116	2.3	1615	1.6

Differences in leisure activity attributed to gender are also evident from the study. Table 23 shows that more females than males watch TV and more males play computer games than females. Table 23 also shows that social networking sites are more popular with females than with males. No difference however was found as regards internet browsing.

Table 23 shows that a difference in gender is related to the practice of sports. Whereas 32.6% of males practice team sports, such as football, only 6.8% of females do so. With regards to other types of sports such as cycling and trekking only 9.6% of females practice such sports, compared with 18.9% of males. Sport has been traditionally associated with masculinity. The reverse pattern is evident for arts, music and dance. Table 23 shows that only 4.3% of males do arts and crafts, as compared to 9.4% of females. Whereas 17% of females listen to music or dance or act, only 11.4% of males do so. With regard to the clubbing scene, males favour this type of leisure activity more than females, whereas more females like to eat out than males. Shopping as a recreational activity is preferred by 8.1% of females and by only 1.1% of males.

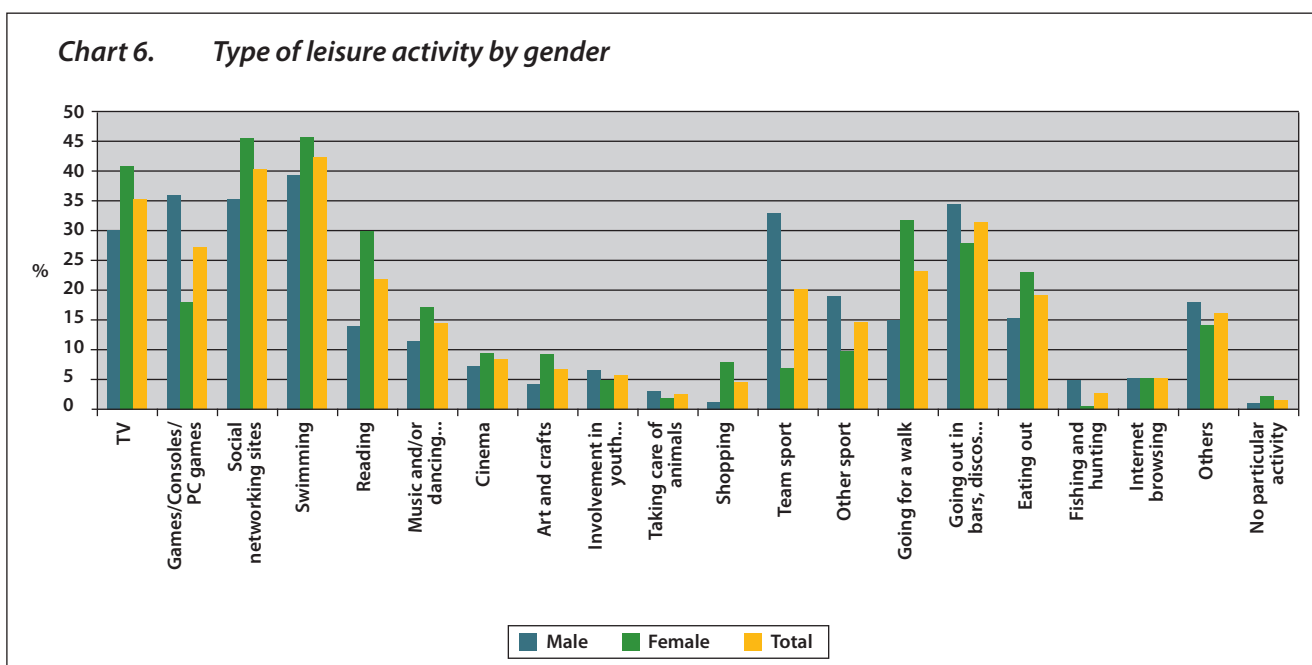


Chart 6 shows that most leisure activities are organised around gender. The types of leisure activities considered appropriate for males and females are often based on stereotyped notions of femininity and masculinity. Although both males and females have equal access to leisure facilities, gender differences in terms of leisure preferences still permeate Maltese society.



(ii) Leisure Companions

Spending leisure time with friends is the most common type of preference for male and females. Spending leisure time alone was the least preferred option and the findings do not differ significantly with respect to gender composition in this respect. During adolescence peer groups and friendships acquire paramount importance for young people. Peer influence characterises adolescence and peer group involvement can be quite intense. During adolescence there is an emotional shift from reliance on parents to peers.

Table 24. *Those with whom leisure time is spent by gender*

Those with whom leisure time is spent by	Gender of respondent					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Spouse/Partner	2336	4.7	3275	7.0	5611	5.8
Other family members	7230	14.5	11578	24.8	18808	19.4
Boyfriend/Girlfriend	10287	20.6	11193	23.9	21480	22.2
Friends	26696	53.4	17538	37.5	44234	45.7
Alone	3132	6.3	2576	5.5	5709	5.9
Other persons	280	.6	618	1.3	899	.9
Total	49963	100.0	46779	100.0	96741	100.0

Table 24 shows that more males than females enjoy leisure in the company of friends, as 53.4% of the former and 37.5% of the latter claimed that they spend their leisure time with friends. On the other hand, more females than males prefer to spend their leisure time with family members. Couple-based leisure with a girlfriend/boyfriend is a preferred option for 20.6% of males and 23.9% of females.

(iii) Allocated Time for Leisure

Free time is clearly a key to accessing leisure. With regards to the number of hours available/allotted for leisure time in summer, during weekdays and the weekend, there are no significant differences between males and females. More males than females however stated that they have absolutely no time at all during summer, both during weekdays and the weekend. Tables 25 and 26 refer.

Table 25. Hours allocated for leisure during summer (Monday to Thursday) by gender

Hours in summer (Mon - Thurs)	Gender of respondent					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
0 hrs	2287	4.6	1302	2.8	3590	3.7
1-5 hrs	7046	14.1	8312	17.8	15358	15.9
6-10 hrs	12431	24.9	12012	25.7	24443	25.3
11-15 hrs	8377	16.8	6290	13.4	14667	15.2
16-20 hrs	10259	20.5	11072	23.7	21330	22.0
21-30 hrs	4615	9.2	4236	9.1	8850	9.1
More than 30 hrs	4948	9.9	3555	7.6	8503	8.8
Total	49963	100.0	46779	100.0	96741	100.0

Table 26. Hours allocated for leisure during summer (Friday to Sunday) by gender

Hours in summer (Fri - Sun)	Gender of respondent					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
0 hrs	1237	2.5	852	1.8	2089	2.2
1-5 hrs	5497	11.0	5338	11.4	10836	11.2
6-10 hrs	11056	22.1	11026	23.6	22082	22.8
11-15 hrs	13063	26.1	11757	25.1	24820	25.7
16-20 hrs	7316	14.6	7185	15.4	14500	15.0
21-30 hrs	9860	19.7	8384	17.9	18244	18.9
More than 30 hrs	1933	3.9	2237	4.8	4170	4.3
Total	49963	100.0	46779	100.0	96741	100.0

Responses regarding the number of hours available/allotted for leisure in winter during weekdays, show that whereas 40.6% of females and 31.6% of males spend 1-5 hours, 30.1% of females and 35.2% of males spend 6 - 10 hours. In winter, during weekends, 30.5% of males and 33.7% of females spend 6-10 hours, while 23.2% of females and 28.4% of males spend 11-15 hours. The discrepancy between males and females is negligible in terms of responses, which state that absolutely no time at all in winter during weekdays and weekends is available/allocated to leisure. Tables 27 and 28 refer.

Table 27. Hours allocated for leisure during winter (Monday to Thursday) by gender

Hours in winter (Mon - Thurs)	Gender of respondent					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
0 hrs	2512	5.0	2423	5.2	4935	5.1
1-5 hrs	15780	31.6	18981	40.6	34761	35.9
6-10 hrs	17583	35.2	14087	30.1	31670	32.7
11-15 hrs	6783	13.6	6479	13.9	13262	13.7
16-20 hrs	5182	10.4	3163	6.8	8346	8.6
21-30 hrs	1659	3.3	1296	2.8	2956	3.1
More than 30 hrs	463	.9	349	.7	812	.8
Total	49963	100.0	46779	100.0	96741	100.0

Table 28. Hours allocated for leisure during winter (Friday to Sunday) by gender

Hours in winter (Fri - Sun)	Gender of respondent					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
0 hrs	1309	2.6	1235	2.6	2544	2.6
1-5 hrs	9518	19.0	9784	20.9	19302	20.0
6-10 hrs	15236	30.5	15772	33.7	31008	32.1
11-15 hrs	14204	28.4	10847	23.2	25050	25.9
16-20 hrs	4959	9.9	5732	12.3	10691	11.1
21-30 hrs	3845	7.7	2958	6.3	6803	7.0
More than 30 hrs	892	1.8	451	1.0	1344	1.4
Total	49963	100.0	46779	100.0	96741	100.0

(iv) Satisfaction with Leisure Time

Chart 7. Satisfaction with amount of leisure time by gender

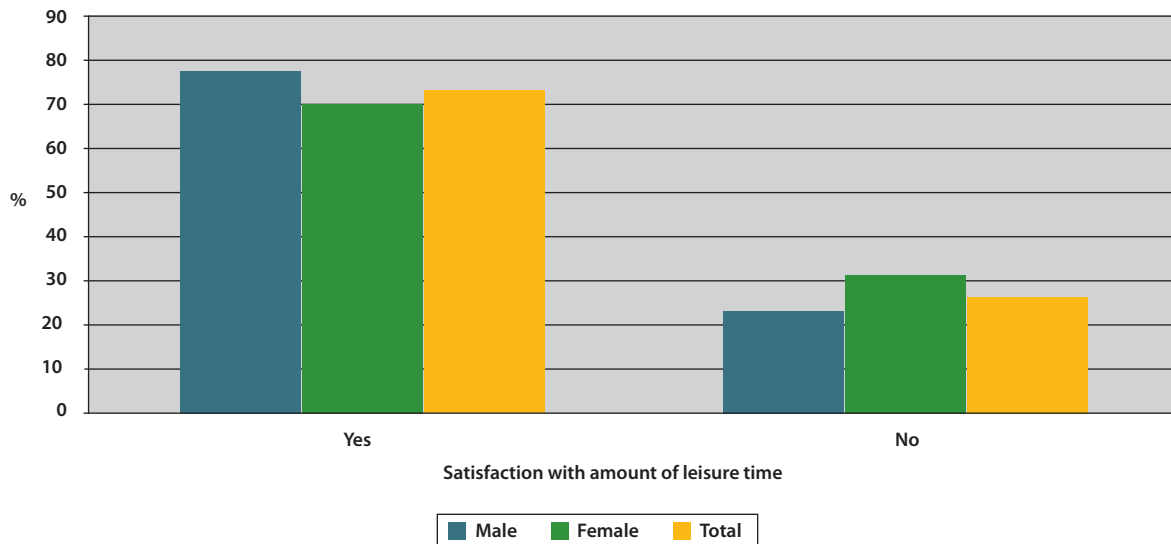


Chart 7 shows that slightly more males than females stated that they are satisfied with the amount of leisure time available to them.

Table 29. Satisfaction with amount of leisure time by gender

Satisfaction with amount of leisure time by gender	Gender of respondent					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Yes	38872	77.0	33154	69.2	72026	73.2
No	11589	23.0	14741	30.8	26330	26.8
Total	50461	100.0	47895	100.0	98356	100.0

Table 29 shows that gender difference is slight in terms of satisfaction with the amount of leisure time. With rapid social changes and higher status being accorded to women, the trend towards gender equality is on the increase in all spheres of life, leading to a blurring of gender difference. This impacts considerably on the amount of time females spend on leisure.

(v) Barriers to Leisure

Table 30. What hinders engagement in leisure activities by gender

What hinders leisure activities by gender	Gender of respondent					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Age and parental consent	342	.7	640	1.3	982	1.0
Money	3692	7.3	3027	6.3	6719	6.8
Transport availability	455	.9	846	1.8	1301	1.3
Taking care of other family members	668	1.3	2656	5.5	3325	3.4
Time constraints	3451	6.8	4410	9.2	7861	8.0
Work	19229	38.1	17528	36.6	36756	37.4
School	11694	23.2	12954	27.0	24648	25.1
Housework	220	.4	2394	5.0	2614	2.7
Other reasons	3749	7.4	2182	4.6	5931	6.0
Nothing stops me from doing leisure activities	16516	32.7	12146	25.4	28662	29.1

Table 30 shows that for both females and males duties related to employment and work are the main hindrances to leisure activities. For both females and males, age and parental consent are not considered a barrier to leisure, as only 0.7% of males and 1.3% of females mentioned it. This suggests that conflict with parents arising from disagreements about leisure, might be minimal.

More females than males feel constrained as regards their leisure practices, with 25.4% of females claiming that nothing hinders them from doing leisure activities compared to 32.7% of males. Access to leisure time is constrained by housework for only 0.4% of males but for 5% of females. The unequal distribution of domestic labour within the household could be a significant constraint on females' leisure activities. Females are relatively more constrained by familial responsibilities, as 5.5% stated that this hinders them from participating in leisure, compared with 1.3% of males.

(vi) Suggestions to Overcome Barriers to Leisure

Leisure constraints tend to limit the formation of leisure preferences and curb participation and enjoyment in leisure. However 34.3% of males and 34% of females had no suggestions about how to address the barriers which hinder them from doing leisure activities. This was the most common response to this question, followed by 'a decrease in working hours' and 'be given less homework.' These responses did not differ substantially with respect to gender. Financial constraints were not viewed by either gender as significant. Only 4.4% of males and 3.8% of females suggested 'cheaper leisure activities.' This implies that the respondents do not appear to be burdened or financially affected by the commercialisation of the leisure industry. Table 31 refers.

Table 31. Suggestions by gender

Suggestions by gender	Gender of respondent					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Be given less homework	3796	11.2	5737	16.0	9533	13.7
Work less hours	6326	18.6	6116	17.1	12442	17.8
Cheaper leisure activities	1507	4.4	1357	3.8	2863	4.1
Be offered a wider range of leisure activities	2554	7.5	3319	9.3	5873	8.4
Have more leisure facilities in the vicinity	845	2.5	1258	3.5	2103	3.0
Less hours at school	1434	4.2	861	2.4	2296	3.3
Better time management	2669	7.8	2965	8.3	5633	8.1
Increase in salary	1319	3.9	1231	3.4	2549	3.7
Others	4562	13.4	4610	12.9	9172	13.1
No suggestions	11677	34.3	12017	33.6	23694	34.0



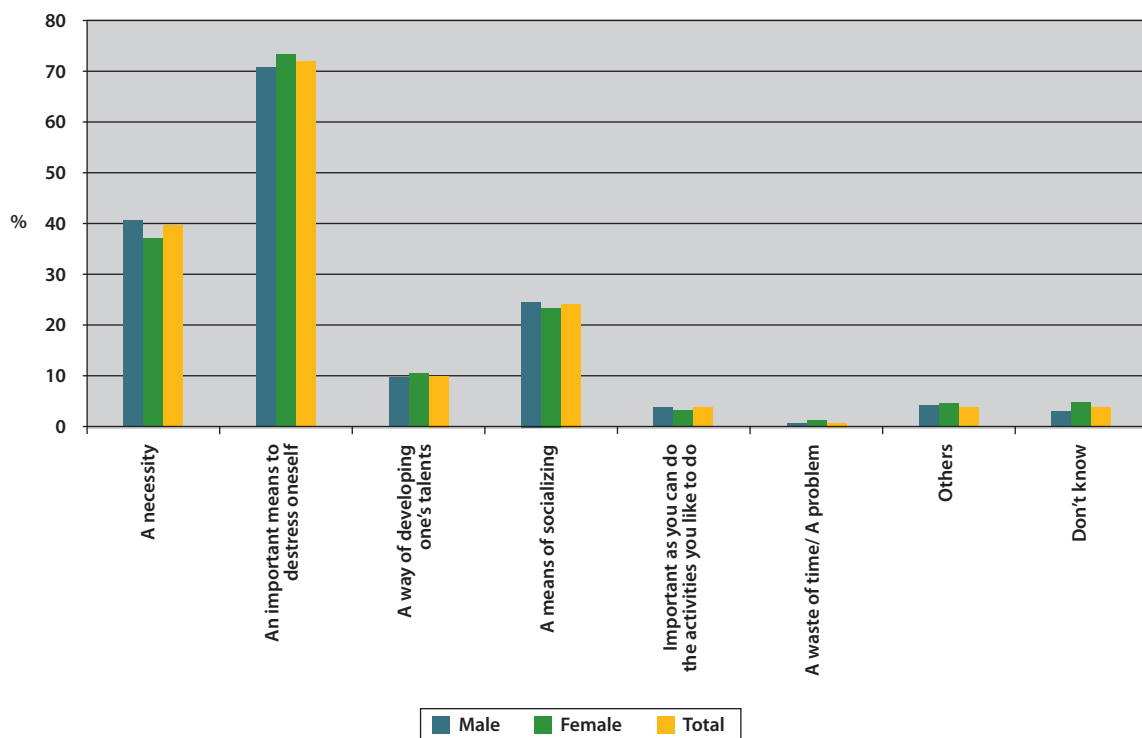
(vii) Significance of Leisure Time

Table 32. Significance of leisure time by gender

Significance of leisure time by gender	Gender of respondent					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
A necessity	20569	40.8	17779	37.1	38348	39.0
An important means to de-stress oneself	35440	70.2	34819	72.7	70259	71.4
A way of developing one's talents	4913	9.7	5029	10.5	9942	10.1
A means of socializing	12350	24.5	11107	23.2	23457	23.8
Important as you can do the activities you like to do	1994	4.0	1791	3.7	3785	3.8
A waste of time/ A problem	147	.3	535	1.1	682	.7
Others	2104	4.2	2204	4.6	4308	4.4
Don't know	1448	2.9	2392	5.0	3840	3.9

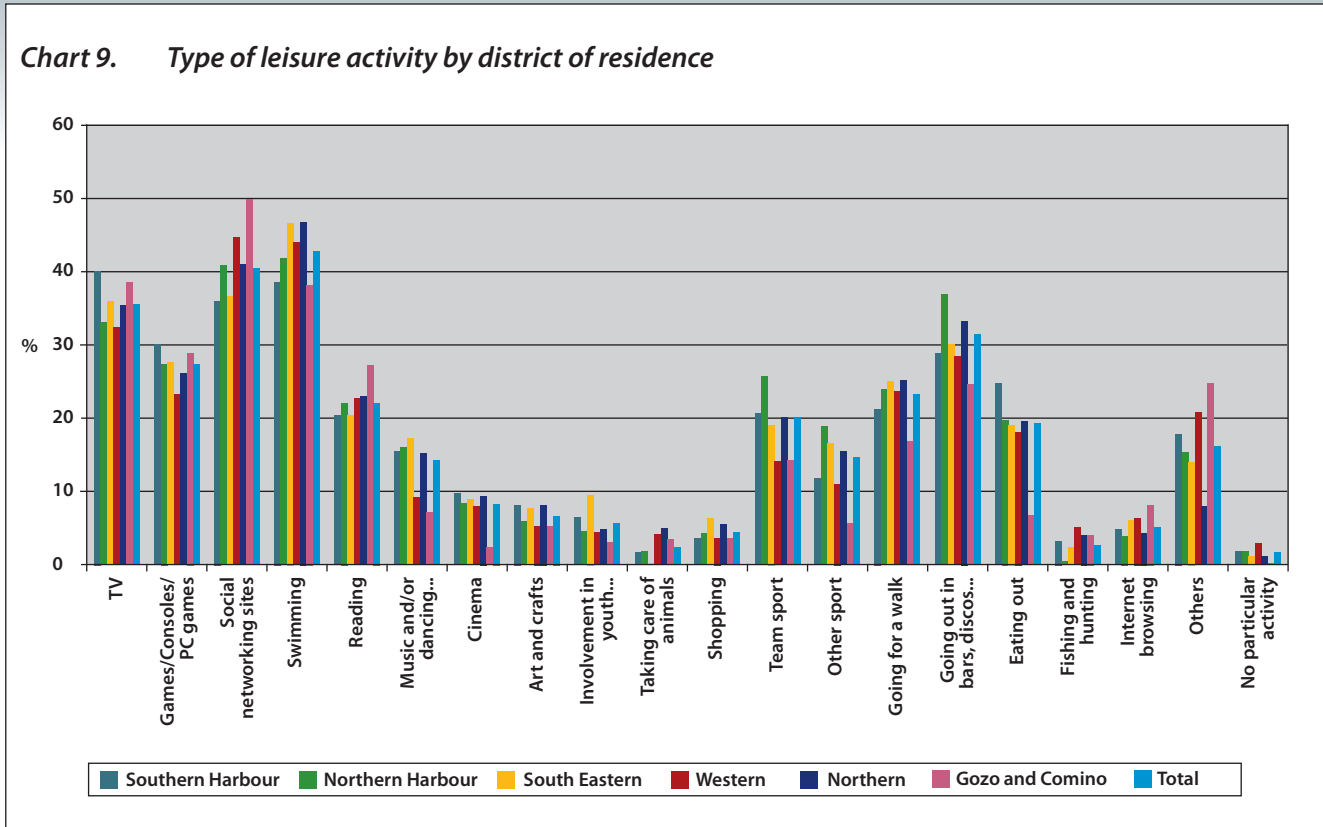
Leisure can have different meanings for men and for women. The significance they attach to leisure is derived from their identity as females and males. Chart 8 however, shows few significant affects by gender in terms of the significance leisure has for the respondents. For both males and females, leisure functions primarily as an important means of relieving stress. This suggests that for most respondents life in general might be stressful for both genders. Leisure is also considered a necessity by both genders to the same degree.

Chart 8. Significance of leisure by gender



Leisure and Locality

(i) Types of Leisure Activities



Social networking sites and internet browsing are significantly the most popular with Gozitans. Chart 9 above shows that while this is confirmed in the case of respondents from the Southern Harbour areas, who resort to social networking sites the least, the findings with regards to Gozitans differ from it. Chart 9 also shows that reading is more common with Gozitans, who also scored the second highest as regards watching TV and computer games. This suggests that leisure activities for Gozitans are more likely to occur within the household than outside it. Gozitans scored the least in 'going for a walk', 'eating out' and 'sports', as well as the second lowest in 'swimming'.

Going out to bars, discos and parties is preferred most by respondents from the Northern Harbour area (Qormi, Birkirkara, Gżira, Hamrun, Msida, Pembroke, Pietà, San Ġiljan, San Ġwann, Santa Venera, Sliema, Swieqi, Ta' Xbiex). The hub of discos and clubs is largely located in Saint Julians. This suggests that close spatial proximity could be a contributing factor in accessing leisure.

(ii) Leisure Companions

All the respondents, irrespective of the district they live in, stated that they enjoy leisure with their friends most. Young people from the Northern District are the ones who like to stay with friends the most (51.7%). Participants from the Northern Harbour area are the ones who enjoy staying alone the most. Gozitans like to stay with family members the most. This suggests that family ties in Gozo are closer than those in Malta, in terms of sharing leisure time as a family.

Table 33. *Those with whom leisure time is spent by district of residence*

Those with whom leisure time is spent by district of residence	District						
	Southern Harbour District	Northern Harbour District	South Eastern District	Western District	Northern District	Gozo and Comino	Total
	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Spouse/Partner	983	1559	872	1079	692	427	5611
Other family members	4293	5177	2418	2074	2754	2093	18808
Boyfriend/Girlfriend	4359	6227	3577	3364	2453	1500	21480
Friends	7221	12981	7002	6220	7532	3279	44234
Alone	1400	973	1093	765	1084	393	5709
Other persons	83	150	70	238	69	289	899

(iii) Allocated Time for Leisure

With regards to the number of hours available/allotted for leisure time in summer between Monday and Thursday, all the respondents from all districts, except those from the Northern District, stated that they spend 6-10 hours per week on leisure activities.

Table 34. Hours allocated for leisure during summer (Monday to Thursday) by district of residence

Hours in summer (Mon - Thurs)	District						Total
	Southern Harbour District	Northern Harbour District	South Eastern District	Western District	Northern District	Gozo and Comino	
	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	
0 hrs	598	519	388	834	868	384	3590
1-5 hrs	2615	3763	2008	3221	2370	1381	15358
6-10 hrs	5163	7080	3292	3507	3452	1949	24443
11-15 hrs	3225	4538	3212	1337	970	1384	14667
16-20 hrs	3683	6139	3261	2566	4093	1587	21330
21-30 hrs	1599	2551	1235	1051	1764	651	8850
More than 30 hrs	1455	2478	1635	1223	1066	646	8503
Total	18338	27066	15032	13739	14583	7982	96741

Table 34 shows that during the summer weekends, the majority of respondents from the Northern District spend the most amount of time engaged in leisure, with 26.3% claiming that they spend 21-30 hours per week.

Table 35. Hours allocated for leisure during summer (Friday to Sunday) by district of residence

Hours in summer (Fri - Sun)	District						Total
	Southern Harbour District	Northern Harbour District	South Eastern District	Western District	Northern District	Gozo and Comino	
	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	
0 hrs	711	286	524	220	178	170	2089
1-5 hrs	1491	2688	2090	1615	2051	900	10836
6-10 hrs	4003	6560	3397	2476	2561	3085	22082
11-15 hrs	5567	6290	3178	4227	3543	2015	24820
16-20 hrs	2406	4641	2911	1753	2078	711	14500
21-30 hrs	3421	5294	2513	2490	3835	692	18244
More than 30 hrs	739	1308	420	959	336	408	4170
Total	18338	27066	15032	13739	14583	7982	96741

During weekdays in winter, 1-5 hours is spent on leisure activities by 51.6% of Gozitans while 6-10 hours is spent by 35.8% of those from the Northern Harbour District. Table 36 refers.

Table 36. Hours allocated for leisure during winter (Monday to Thursday) by district of residence

Hours in winter (Mon - Thurs)	District						Total
	Southern Harbour District	Northern Harbour District	South Eastern District	Western District	Northern District	Gozo and Comino	
	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	
0 hrs	886	1250	848	767	1184	0	4935
1-5 hrs	6150	8509	5624	5342	5015	4121	34761
6-10 hrs	5892	9685	4283	5231	4058	2520	31670
11-15 hrs	2649	3952	2568	1415	1909	770	13262
16-20 hrs	1683	2709	1339	615	1548	452	8346
21-30 hrs	983	698	283	296	695	0	2956
More than 30 hrs	96	263	87	73	174	119	812
Total	18338	27066	15032	13739	14583	7982	96741

Responses regarding the number of hours available/allotted for leisure in winter during the weekend show that the majority of respondents from all the districts stated that they spend 6-10 hours. Participants from Gozo scored the highest percentage (38.1%). Table 37 refers.

Table 37. Hours allocated for leisure during winter (Friday to Sunday) by district of residence

Hours in winter (Fri - Sun)	District						Total
	Southern Harbour District	Northern Harbour District	South Eastern District	Western District	Northern District	Gozo and Comino	
	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	
0 hrs	633	465	562	622	262	0	2544
1-5 hrs	3761	5048	3479	2243	2981	1788	19302
6-10 hrs	5305	9421	4504	4157	4576	3044	31008
11-15 hrs	4922	6303	3395	4140	3763	2528	25050
16-20 hrs	2119	3656	1712	1193	1678	333	10691
21-30 hrs	1344	1817	1227	1146	980	289	6803
More than 30 hrs	255	357	152	238	342	0	1344
Total	18338	27066	15032	13739	14583	7982	96741

(iv) Satisfaction with Leisure Time

Chart 10. Satisfaction with amount of leisure time by district of residence

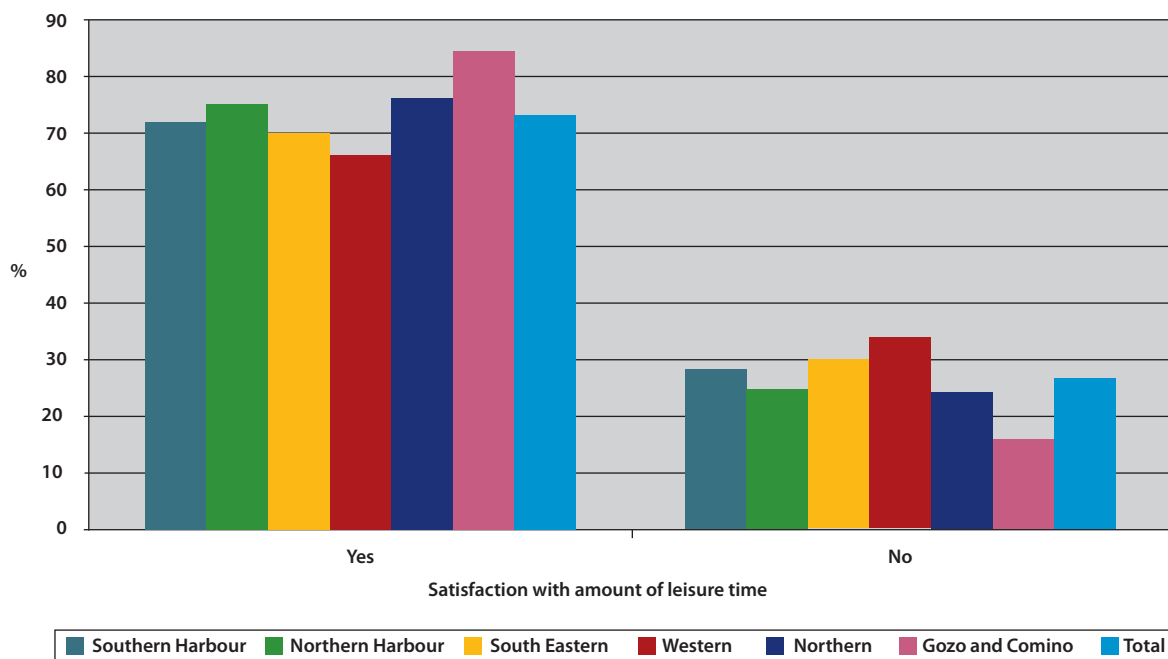


Chart 10 shows that young people from Gozo and Comino are the most satisfied with the amount of leisure time they have. Those from the Western area (Żebbuġ, Siġġiewi, Attard, Balzan, Dingli, Iklin, Lija, Rabat, Mtarfa) are the least satisfied. Young people living in these areas might feel cut off geographically from the areas where the entertainment industry operates. Since it is more time consuming to reach these places, their time for leisure could be considered limited.

Table 38. Satisfaction with amount of leisure time by district of residence

Hours in winter (Fri - Sun)	District						
	Southern Harbour District	Northern Harbour District	South Eastern District	Western District	Northern District	Gozo and Comino	Total
	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Yes	13412	20685	10599	9352	11252	6727	72026
No	5278	6910	4600	4783	3503	1255	26330
Total	18690	27595	15199	14135	14755	7982	98356

(v) Barriers to Leisure

Gozitans have the highest %age of those who claimed that nothing hinders them from doing leisure activities (36.1%). For all the other districts, work and school were cited as the main barriers to leisure.

Table 39. *What hinders engagement in leisure activities by district of residence*

What hinders leisure activities by district of residence	District						
	Southern Harbour District	Northern Harbour District	South Eastern District	Western District	Northern District	Gozo and Comino	Total
	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Age and parental consent	328	186	136	73	138	121	982
Money	1688	1483	1539	1015	764	231	6719
Transport availability	166	470	149	300	95	121	1301
Taking care of other family members	337	1401	356	316	744	170	3325
Time constraints	1348	2154	1472	1368	1459	61	7861
Work	7022	10321	5833	6232	4945	2403	36756
School	3513	6192	4201	4008	4003	2731	24648
Housework	607	1000	206	318	84	400	2614
Other reasons	991	2104	703	649	1244	240	5931
Nothing stops me from doing leisure activities	6369	8291	3817	3151	4154	2880	28662
Total	18338	27066	15032	13739	14583	7982	96741

(vi) Suggestions to Overcome Barriers to Leisure

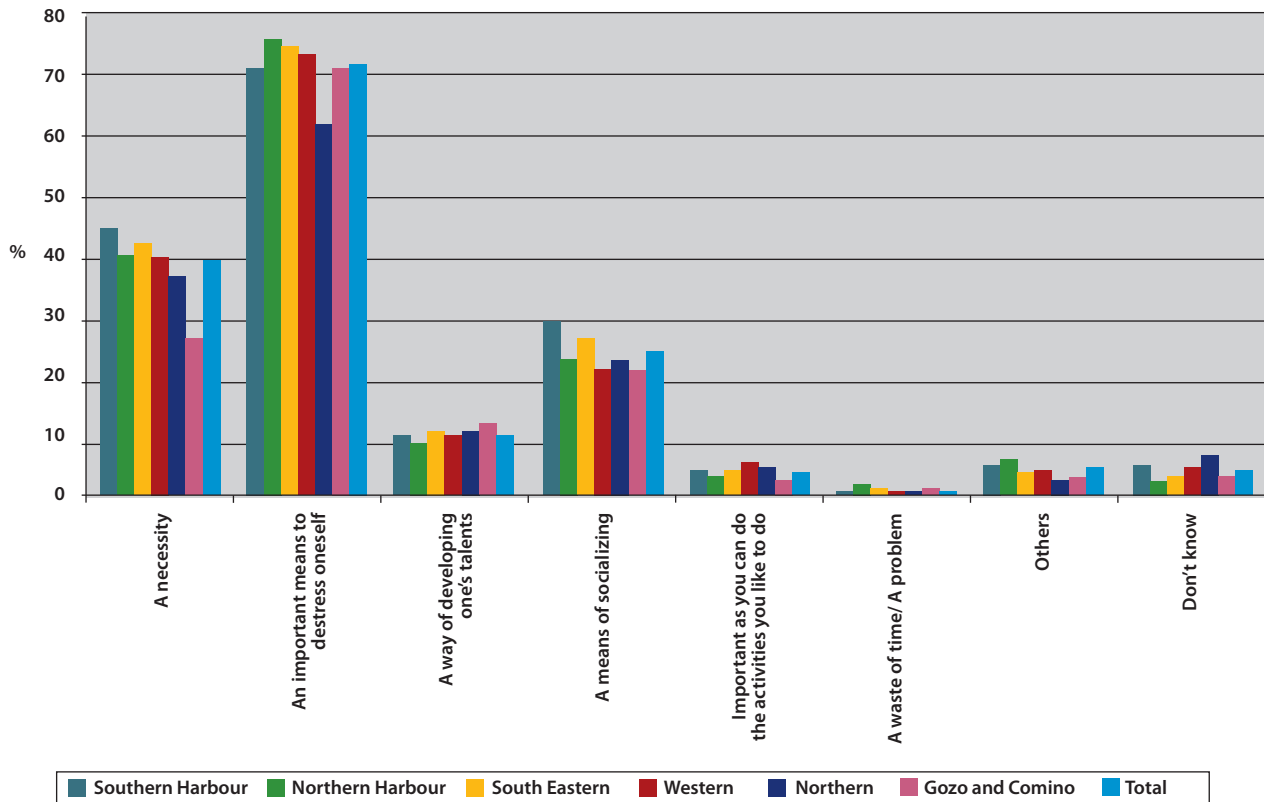
In all the districts the most common response was 'no suggestions' with the highest score being for Gozo (42.4%). The lack of suggestions might either mean that the respondents are quite satisfied with the leisure time available (as the results of Table 40 show) or else they find it difficult to come up with ideas and articulate them.

Table 40. Suggestions by district of residence

Suggestions	District						
	Southern Harbour District	Northern Harbour District	South Eastern District	Western District	Northern District	Gozo and Comino	Total
	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Be given less homework	1110	2270	1593	1281	1881	1398	9533
Work less hours	2749	3931	1509	1826	2257	170	12442
Cheaper leisure activities	531	783	324	660	566	0	2863
Be offered a wider range of leisure activities	644	1620	1291	637	887	794	5873
Have more leisure facilities in the vicinity	162	384	843	132	342	240	2103
Less hours at school	175	933	520	234	433	0	2296
Better time management	781	1835	718	1176	609	515	5633
Increase in salary	724	525	715	329	255	0	2549
Others	1928	2384	1889	898	1628	444	9172

(vii) Significance of Leisure Time

Chart 11. Significance of leisure time by district of residence



Respondents from the Northern area (Mdina, Għargħur, Mellieħa, Mġarr, Mosta, Naxxar, San Pawl il-Baħar) least regard leisure as ‘an important means to de-stress oneself’. From the respondents who answered ‘a means of socialising’, those from the Southern Harbour area (Valletta, Birgu, Isla, Bormla, Żabbar, Fgura, Floriana, Kalkara, Luqa, Marsa, Paola, Santa Luċija, Tarxien, Xgħajra) rated it highest. Chart 11 and Table 41 refer.

Table 41. Significance of leisure time by district of residence

Significance of leisure time	District						
	Southern Harbour District	Northern Harbour District	South Eastern District	Western District	Northern District	Gozo and Comino	Total
	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
A necessity	8187	10840	6329	5569	5326	2097	38348
An important means to de-stress oneself	13090	20928	11266	10290	9056	5630	70259
A way of developing one's talents	1897	2452	1621	1439	1567	966	9942
A means of socializing	5423	6215	3884	2951	3308	1676	23457
Important as you can do the activities you like to do	730	881	571	751	672	180	3785
A waste of time/ A problem	0	465	66	0	91	61	682
Others	951	1610	562	585	370	231	4308
Don't know	999	643	406	571	981	240	3840

Conclusion and Policy Implications

The study demonstrates that Maltese young people are involved in a wide variety of leisure pursuits. This suggests that they are willing to explore new dimensions in their lifestyles through the experience of a myriad of leisure activities. A wide variety of leisure activities are available to them and in general they possess a certain degree of personal freedom in their choice of leisure pursuits.

The period of development from childhood to adulthood is becoming increasingly extended and protracted. Social scientists and theorists have conceptualised several sub-stages of this transitional process to adulthood. Reflecting this, the study has outlined the leisure experiences of different age groups of young people in Malta.

Leisure plays an important role in young people's lives, across all the different age groups. The type of leisure activities most preferred are however characterised by particular age groups. Games/Consoles/PC games are mostly popular with 13 to 16 year olds. Reflecting the decrease in adult supervision with increasing age, as well as more disposable income, those between 17 and 21 prefer going out to bars, clubs and discos, while swimming is the most common preference among the 22 to 26 age group. The importance of the group is reduced in the period of emerging adulthood, where watching TV is the most common option among the 27 to 31 age group. Friendships are the priority for early and middle adolescents as well as for emerging adults. For the 22 to 26 age group, spending leisure time with a boyfriend/girlfriend is the preferred choice.

A decline in the amount of leisure time reported for both summer and winter occurs as the age profile increases. The same is true for the level of satisfaction with the amount of leisure time at one's disposal, although this did not reach statistical significance levels across the different age groups. As regards the obstacles experienced in terms of involvement in preferred leisure pursuits, early and middle adolescents as well as those between 17 and 21 were most likely to mention school as the major obstacle. The older age groups cited work as the main obstacle. Consequently the older age groups suggested a decrease in the number of working hours. Better time management was also a preferred option for the older age groups. The younger age groups preferred option was for a reduction in the amount of home work. All age groups were in favour of being offered a wider range of leisure activities.

For the older age groups, leisure is regarded as a necessity and a way of relieving stress. This suggests that increased work/life commitments, associated with the onset of emerging adulthood, lead to a greater need for leisure activities to counteract the stress of everyday life. For the younger age groups, the focus is more on the socialising aspects of leisure and its role in the development and enhancement of their abilities and talents. This suggests that during early adolescence socialisation and the development of young people's abilities and talents are regarded as important means of personal growth.

The findings of the study show that leisure does not constitute a gender neutral aspect of young people's social lives, as males and females engage in different kinds of leisure activities. While females are more likely than males to select walking as a favourite activity, males still demonstrate a desire to take part in activities that include a competitive element. The findings show that males tend to favour leisure activities that emphasise masculinity, such as sports, whereas females tend to favour leisure activities that emphasise femininity, such as craft-making and dance. Leisure involves cultural processes, in which social constructions of masculinity and femininity play a key role. Although the source of companionship for both females and males revolves around friends, more females prefer to spend their leisure time with family members and with their girlfriend/boyfriend than males do.

Both males and females identified work and school as the two major factors which hinder them from doing leisure activities. A significant number however stated that nothing constrains them from doing the leisure activities they want. More males than females stated that they have no time at all during summer, both during weekdays and the weekend, for engaging in leisure activities. It is more likely for males than females to be engaged in summer jobs, as males are expected to earn money more than females are. These constraints are related to gender-based role expectations, such as sacrificing personal leisure time for time spent caring for others. Barriers to leisure for females often hinge on maternity, caring and domesticity. This can result in reproducing and maintaining traditional dominant gender roles. Both male and female access to and experiences of leisure are an expression of the reinforcement of traditional gender stereotypes and social processes, which could stem from norms, cultural expectations, education and the mass media.

Young people in Gozo tend to do most of their leisure activities inside the home. Commercialised leisure outlets and attractions as well as public transport facilities are relatively limited in Gozo and this might explain the reason for this. However, Gozitans are the most satisfied with the amount of leisure time available. Respondents from the Northern District spend more time on leisure activities and do not regard leisure as playing a significant role in relieving stress.

In general, lack of time, transport and money do not appear to be inhibiting factors for the majority of young people. As to suggestions for overcoming barriers to leisure activities, the majority of respondents, regardless of gender, age groups and district, did not produce any significant ideas or proposals. The majority of respondents might not be aware of culture based constraints, which can be related to social regulations and cultural expectations.

The study has a number of possible policy implications for the implementation, support and regulation of leisure time activities for young people. Of particular note in this regard are the complex transitions from childhood to adulthood. In the context of this study four transition phases have been identified: early and middle adolescence (13 to 16 year olds); late adolescence (17 to 21 year olds); youth (22 to 26 year olds) and emerging adulthood (27 to 31 year olds). These age groups can have different preferences, priorities, needs as well as shifting patterns of need as they progress from one phase of development to the next. Leisure activities need to take account of and be commensurate with these shifting patterns of need.

Another factor is the impact of family, school and work commitments on young people's lives and the implications they have for their free and leisure time. The concept of work-life balance and the various supports and measures that are being put in place to achieve this also need to take into account the importance of free and leisure time in the lives of young people.

Leisure is not gender neutral. Many of the leisure activities pursued by young people tend to conform to traditional patterns and perceptions of masculinity and femininity. In promoting and supporting leisure activities, a more gender neutral approach could possibly facilitate greater access and diversity of leisure pursuits.

The study also points to the important role that leisure plays in relieving stress, particularly as young people face the challenges and transitions to further education, work and independent living. It is yet another indicator of the positive role that leisure can play in achieving a fulfilling work-life balance.

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