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Probable solutions to manage leisure time of school children

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Abstract

Marking almost all areas of social life, leisure time is unavoidably of interest to many fields of science. It has existed in all historical epochs and will continue to exist as long as the human civilization exists. It is important in the life of every individual, especially for school children, for whom when free time is well managed it contributes to socialization, individualization and personality cultivation i.e. the realization of the basic processes of upbringing. With the development of society the concept and the scope of free time has changed. In the past the battle for the increase of free time has been prominent, while now the main problem is to manage it well. This research has been conducted on a research sample of 100 students aged 18. Starting from the premise that free time is an important factor for the development of broad-minded and emancipated individuals the research problem was defined and reflected in the question: How do young people spend their free time and what is offered? Results show that school children have plenty of free time in which self-managed passive activities are the most common. As the schools and relevant institutions do not have adequate programs, school children wish for improved opportunities quality free time. The statistical evaluation of the acquired results was done using the statistic packet (SPSS for Windows).

Keywords: school children, leisure time, leisure time activities, organization of leisure time.

Introduction

The development of technology brought with it more leisure time therefore a comprehensive study of this phenomenon is needed. Especially if we are aware of the fact that it is one of the factors which influence personality development, its humanization and emancipation as well as the fact that no other generation had it to such an extent as we have it today. Leisure time activities are numerous and represent a rich system which influences personality and enables its development and nurturing. In leisure time individuals find the most freedom, they immerse themselves in a variety of activities which enable them to get to know themselves, to affirm and assert themselves, sometimes however in a negative sense. We should take into account their need for entertainment and friendship but also activities which entail physical activity and mental strain, all of this in accordance with their free choice. Hence great attention should be given to the essential factors of free time organization, which are becoming more prominent in our everyday lives. The concept of leisure time for the youth represents the time when the individual is free from school and possible family obligations. This time we spend how we wish, without any obligations, therefore it is characterized by freedom, goodwill and lightheartedness. Rojek, C. (2009) [3] writes that the youth prioritize determinants for leisure time in the following way: the favorite location for spending leisure time, the dearest person as companionship for spending leisure time, and the length of time devoted to socializing. A specific pedagogical problem is found in the understanding of the youth's leisure time, and the way in which they spend it along with the variety of activities that they have. A question is posed whether school children have enough leisure time for rest, cultural and entertainment activities, or whether they are overburdened by curriculum of certain subjects and the number of classes in school. Many scientists agree that students are overburdened by the number of classes and studying in school and at home, that they do not have enough leisure time which is necessary for rest and recreational activities, hence for normal development and socialization, for the realization of their need for friendship, play and fun, the need to prove themselves and self-affirmation. It is important that disharmony does not occur during the organization of the

educational work and leisure time of school children, since if it does it can cause psychological problems (anxiety, asocial behavior, the feeling of low self-worth) and lead to school children resorting to socially unaccepted forms of behavior. The way of spending leisure time can be seen as “a long term investment in the overall maturity and mental health” (Larson & Verma 1999, 702) [2], the choices the youth make, regarding the type of activity, have a major influence on their personality.

Methodology

In the pedagogical theory and work, leisure time is often discussed from the standpoint of its role in the development of school children. Every society should take care of its young, and therefore of the opportunities and ways in which they are able to spend their leisure time. School children can have unmanaged leisure time, where they themselves decide what to do in accordance with their wishes and needs. Spending time with friends, as one form of unmanaged leisure time is important, because when they spend time together, young people practice their communication skills, form relationships, develop thinking and form opinions. Therefore it is very important for them to have a wide and quality offer of managed leisure time which consists of managed activities (sport, educational, creative) which are supposed to develop the interests of school children. Today it is clear that the increase of leisure time is becoming an important factor in the integration of a person’s total time and a condition for the development of a broad-minded character. Because on this conflicting opinions immerge on the question of how to manage school children’s leisure time while avoiding boredom and commercialized fun. The problem is expressed in the following question: How do school children spend their leisure time and what is offered?

Objectives

Examine whether school children have enough adequate possibilities and opportunities provided by the community and society for spending quality leisure time.

Research Questions

Based on the goals of the research the following tasks were chosen:

1. Determine how much leisure time school children have a day;
2. Determine whether there is a relevant difference between the amount of leisure time and gender;
3. Determine how school children spend their leisure time;
4. Determine whether there is a connection between way in which leisure time is spent and gender;
5. Determine which type of activity (self-managed or managed) prevails in the way in which school children spend their leisure time;
6. Determine whether there exist any differences between the predominant activity and gender;
7. Find out what school children are missing the most in school and social environment to be content with the way in which they spend their leisure time;
8. Find out how interested school children are in better offers and choice of leisure time activities.

Research hypothesis

General hypothesis: School children do not have adequate offers and opportunities from the community and society to optimally spend their leisure time.

Special hypothesis

- X₁. School children have a lot of leisure time in a day.
- X₂. A statistically significant difference does not exist between the amount of leisure time and gender;
- X₃. School children spend their leisure time in a passive way;
- X₄. There does not exist a statistically significant difference between gender and the way in which leisure time is spent;
- X₅. Self-managed activities prevail in the way in which school children spend their leisure time;
- X₆. A statistically significant difference does not exist between the practiced type of activity and gender;
- X₇. School children mostly lack sports activities and sections in which their creativity is expressed;
- X₈. School children want better offers and opportunities for spending leisure time.

Research methods and techniques, results analysis method

The descriptive method was used in this research which was chosen in accordance to the nature of the problem, the subject, goal and tasks of the research as well as the set hypothesis. The descriptive method strives to faithfully describe facts and this is why it is reliable for describing pedagogical phenomena. The technique is a survey and the instrument is a combined type questionnaire which was made for the needs of this research. The statistical evaluation of the acquired results was done using the statistic packet (SPSS for Windows) and accent was put on the descriptive statistics, nonparametric Chi-square test and charts.

Research population

The research population for this study consisted of primary school students in Bharatpur of Chitwan. The characteristics of the sample are shown in Chart 1.

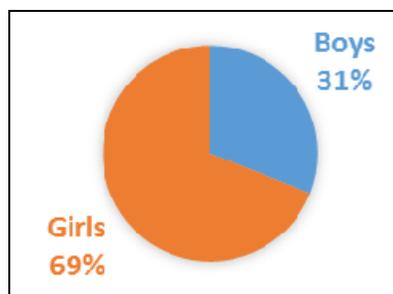


Chart 1: Graphical display of the gender frequency variable

The sample contained 100 participants, from which 69 participants were girls (69%) and 31 boys (31%).

Research results and their interpretation

With the goal of determining the amount of leisure time that school children have on a daily basis, through descriptive analysis we came to the following results:

When we view the acquired results we can conclude that school children have ample leisure time on a day. Viewed in accordance to gender 87% of boys have 3 and more hours of leisure time a day and for the girls that data is 86.9%. Whether there exists a difference in the amount of leisure time between the genders was also of interest. The acquired results and frequencies in the table show that there is a statistically significant difference in accordance to the viewed variables $X^2(3) = 10.167$. $p < 0.05$. Chi-square independency test shows that boys have more leisure time a day (4 hours a day) in comparison to girls (here the most frequent answer is 3 to 4 hours a day).

Table 1: Average amount of leisure time on a daily level presented in accordance to gender

			Gender		Total
			Boys	Girls	
Amount of leisure time	Does not have leisure time at all	% for gender	0	3	3
			0.0%	4.3%	3.0%
	Up to 2 hours a day		4	6	10
		% for gender	12.9%	8.7%	10.0%
	3 to 4 hours a day		5	31	36
		% for gender	16.1%	44.9%	36.0%
Over 4 hours a day	%for gender	22	31	51	
		71.0%	42.0%	53.0%	
Total			31	69	100
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2: Activities in the leisure time of school children

			Gender		Total
			Boys	Girls	
In leisure time:	Watch TV		4	10	14
		% for gender	12.9%	14.5%	14.0%
	I visit social networks (Facebook. Twitter...)		13	28	41
		% for gender	41.9%	40.6%	41.0%
	Lie in bed and relax		3	9	12
		% for gender	9.7%	13.0%	12.0%
	Do sports		6	7	13
		% for gender	19.4%	10.1%	13.0%
	Spend time with friends		4	14	18
		% for gender	12.9%	20.3%	18.0%
	Volunteer		1	1	2
		% for gender	3.2%	1.4%	2.0%
Total			31	69	100
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In the leisure time of 67% of participants passive activities predominate. Activities such as watching TV, visiting social networks, lying in bed and resting while volunteering represents the least frequent leisure time activity (2%). Boys and girls most frequently (41%) spend their leisure time on the internet visiting social networks which would imply that they are sitting in front of their computers or are using their mobile phones. If we compare the analysis results from this research with the results of the research conducted by the Institute for psychology of the Philosophical Faculty in Belgrade by the name “ Daily habits of school children in Serbia” conducted in 2008 on a high school sample, we see that the results are similar. In this research they came to a result that school children often use the computer, for chatting And playing video games. Using the computer for educational

Purposes is very rare: 80% of school children almost never use educational software; 70% do not use the computer for writing, drawing nor graphic presentation. When it comes to activities which are not passive, the boys mention that they do sports (19.4%), while the girls state that they spend time with friends (20.3%). The calculated Chi-factor ($X^2(5) = 2.632 \pi = 0.757$) shows that a statistically significant difference in the leisure time activities of boys and girls. The development of technology has brought with it numerous innovations in all segments of human life, and so it brought a change in the interaction between boys and girls. The internet is increasingly being used for interpersonal communication and branch structure enables communication between any two computers or mobile phones regardless the distance.

Table 3: The actions which prevail in the leisure time organization of school children.

			Gender		Total
			Boys	Girls	
Type of activity	Self- managed	% for gender	20 64.5%	54 78.3%	74 74.0%
	Managed		11	15	26
		% for gender	35.5%	21.7%	26.0%
Total			31	69	100
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The acquired results show that in both genders self-managed activities, which they manage themselves according to their needs and wishes, are more common (74%). These activities are important because through them school children practice their communicative skills, form connections, develop thinking and form opinions. Of equal importance is that they have a good offer of managed leisure time activities which include sports, educational and creative content. In our research 26% of the participants stated that managed leisure

time prevailed. And even though the Chi-square shows that there is no significant difference between the type of leisure time activity and gender ($X^2(1) = 2.1000 \pi = 0.147$), the boys stated that they have more managed leisure time activities (35.5%) than girls (21.7%), which is in congruence with the results acquired in table 2 where they stated that they like to do sports more than girls. However the girls stated that in their leisure time self-managed activities prevail (78.3%) more than in the boy’s leisure time (64.5%) which is in

congruence with the results which indicate that girls prefer to spend time with friends more than boys. Leisure time activities in real life intertwine and supplement each other. Sometimes the activities for relaxation prevail, sometimes the ones for entertainment and fun and in the end the ones which

are for personality development. No doubt that it is best when they are diverse and dynamic, rich, when they influence the mood, when they simultaneously entertain, enrich and emancipate an individual.

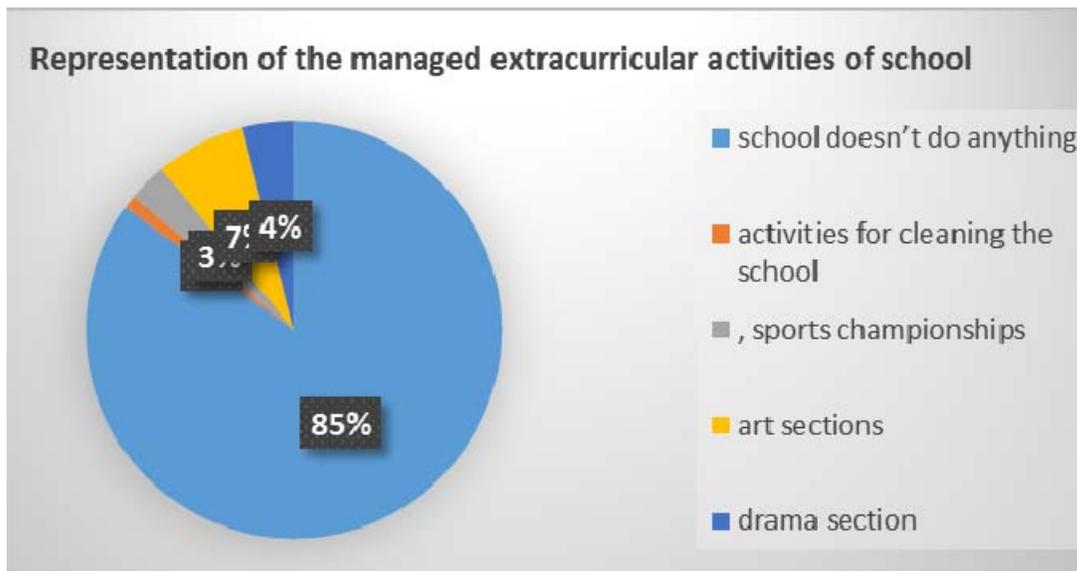


Chart 2: Representation of the managed extracurricular activities of school

Table 4: The school is missing

		Gender		Total
		Boys	Girls	
Managed trips to museums, galleries, theatre	H	2	6	8
	%	6.5%	8.7%	8.0%
School club	H	7	11	18
	%	22.6%	15.9%	18.0%
Public forums on current issues of school children	H	2	21	23
	%	6.5%	30.4%	23.0%
More sports activities	H	12	17	29
	%	38.7%	24.6%	29.0%
Music section	H	4	11	15
	%	12.9%	15.9%	15.0%
Humanitarian actions	H	4	3	7
	%	12.9%	4.3%	7.0%
Total	H	31	69	100
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

All of the answers to the question “What is the school doing to enable you to have variety of opportunities and activities for spending leisure time?” we grouped into 5 categories on the basis of which we could see the variety of extracurricular activities and sections. The frequency of the answers in the first category (*school doesn't do anything*) 85% shows that the school doesn't provide enough leisure time opportunities for its students. The other four categories (*activities for cleaning the school, sports championships, art sections, drama section*) have a total frequency of 15%. In addition to the usual tasks the school needs to offer to students' leisure time spending opportunities and familiarize school children with the importance of leisure time. This is why it is important that the school adapts to social changes, to help with the organization of leisure time activities and leisure time organization.

Among the activities which school children miss the most are: *more sport activities* (29%), *public forums on current issues of school children* (23%), *school club* (18%). In addition to

these there are *music section* (15%) and *trips to museums* (8%). Extracurricular activities should not be focused only on the gifted students, but also managed to attract a larger number of students, for this to be possible school children need to be offered a large variety of activities and clubs. As we can see school children are missing extracurricular activity which is not connected to the curriculum. These are different clubs, additional courses, sports and art activities. The main goal of school extracurricular activities is to enrich the social life of the school, in which students and professors need to actively participate.

Table 5: I wish for a wider array of possibilities for leisure time activities form the community

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentages
I completely disagree	1	1.0	1.0
I disagree	4	4.0	5.0
I neither agree, nor disagree	17	17.0	22.0
I agree	49	49.0	71.0
I completely agree	29	29.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

Table 6: Representation and rank of wanted activities

Activities	Rank						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Concerts and other musical content	24	31	14	9	2	7	13
Film content	11	18	31	14	14	11	1
Dance content	0	11	18	17	16	12	26
Literature content	3	8	10	27	14	19	19
Galleries and other forms of art	4	10	16	10	26	18	16
Peer education and other forms of experience exchange	7	20	8	14	21	24	7
Sports activities	51	2	3	9	7	9	19

The results show that a larger frequency is shown on the right side of the picture (79% answers), 49% of the participants agree and 29% completely agree with the statement which refers to wanting better offers for managed leisure time activities by the community, 5% of answers are on the left side, which indicates that only 5 students disagree or completely disagree with this statement. The most desirable activities are:

1. Sport
2. Concerts and other music content
3. Film content
4. Literature content
5. Galleries and other art forms
7. Peer education and other forms of experience exchange
8. Dance content

Conclusion

School children are a special age group, which possesses certain psychophysical characteristics which significantly differ from adults and their social roles are less demanding and rigorous. However this certainly does not mean that they do not have them. When school children finish their school and other obligation they are left with time which is only theirs. By researching our sample we found out that school children have ample leisure time. More than half of the subjects 51 (51%) stated that they have more than 4 hours of leisure time a day. In the research all of the hypotheses have been proven, except for X2 because the data showed that there exists a statistically significant difference between the amount of leisure time and gender, boys have more leisure time. In their leisure time school children do different activities, some are passive and some are dynamic. We do not undermine the importance of either, because the passive are sometimes needed for the individual to get some rest and relax, but if they predominate that is not good. Too much time spent in front of the television or the computer will negatively affect school children. Viewed in the long run too much watching television and using the computer can have negative consequences both physical and psychological. People are then passive, they do not blink, do not think, and programs are usually full of bad diction and aggression. People then lie in an inadequate body position and bluntly said become lazy. While questioning the subjects we came to the conclusion that predominantly spend their leisure time passively (67%) doing activities such as lying, watching TV, sitting in front of the computer and chatting over the social networks. In life leisure time activities intertwine and supplement each other. Sometimes the ones which are for rest predominate, sometimes the ones for fun and entertainment, and in the end the ones for personality development. They are best when they are diverse and dynamic, rich, when they influence the mood, when they enrich, entertain and emancipate. The school and the community help in the process of growing up; from them we can learn many good and useful things but unfortunately sometimes also bad things. From the students it is primarily expected to acquire adequate knowledge, and for the teachers to implement programs which are usually unproportioned with the amount of time and the number of students. All of this indicates that little time is spent on leisure time activities by the school. In order to do everything which is demanded in school leisure time is often sacrificed. Through the research we discovered that a large number of school children (85%) does nothing to provide adequate and interesting leisure time activities, and those which are especially desired are sports activities. Because of the lack of creative, cultural, and sports content school children mostly spend their leisure time by watching TV or spending time in cafes. In their opinion, the responsible institutions do not have

adequate programs which meet their needs. There are no single places where they would gather all organizations and institutions which offer quality leisure time activities. Well managed and spent leisure time can be an ally for the youth in developing their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the intellectual and emotional spheres of life. Desires, interests, and needs of young men and women must be taken into account when considering probable solutions to manage their leisure time. The lack of support in this segment of human life can be one of the reasons young people go astray. Providing for school children an environment which enables them to develop into adults which the society needs to develop is an imperative. For this to be achieved many conditions need to be fulfilled, connect and involve many organizations, institutions and programs in all sectors. The community needs to recognize the possibilities of leisure time, in which a lot of attention can be given to questions of public health and disease prevention, lowering risky behavior, education. These questions are the pillars of the youth's politics which needs to be directed towards the enhancement of school children's position. As we can see, here lies a challenge for society.

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