

The Opportunities of Contemporary Society in the Organization and Use of Childrens' Leisure Time

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Abstract

The rapid development undertaken in science, technique and technology, has strongly influenced the radical change of the pace of human existence, and therefore as a very important part in the everyday life of society along with mandatory time is regarded leisure time, also. Given the fact that free time as a pedagogical and sociological issue is of interest to pupils or children, it requires planning, organization and meaningful use. Therefore, special attention should be taken regarding the content, purpose and duties of leisure time activities. For the organization and quality use of leisure time, of great importance are the conditions or opportunities offered to children by society and the environment where they live, grow and develop. The organization and use of leisure time has different, diverse forms, but we should be careful that children rationally and in a positive manner use leisure time, in order to acquire and develop their talent and cultural trends. The management of pupils' leisure time is a serious pedagogical, sociological and social problem, because the same pupils that are now found in school desks are those pupils that in the near future will be the protagonists of society, so accordingly to how pupils are today, is their reflection of the future. Therefore, I regard as reasonable to observe, analyze and infer how elementary school children today spend their leisure time. In order to achieve the expected results and to further compare the organization and leisure time spent between children / pupils (urban and rural ones) in the research we have included both urban and rural primary schools. The subject of our research was to study the organization and use of leisure time by children and also the opportunities made available to children from the social circle for the organization of leisure time. The aim of our research was to verify how children, particularly primary school pupils organize and use leisure time. Do they have special and adequate places, offered to them by the environment where they live, grow and develop in order to perfect their talents and abilities or not? Therefore, we posed the hypothesis: "Children, pupils do not organize and properly use their free time". Our research has a theoretical and empirical character and the following instruments were used: survey and evaluation scale. The research included parents, children and teachers of the both city and village. The results obtained from the research clearly indicate that parents, schools and municipalities as state institutions should pay even more attention to this issue. This will enable children / pupils to organize and more rationally use their leisure time.

Keywords: leisure time, children/pupils, organization, usage, opportunities, contemporary society.

Introduction

The rapid development of science, techniques and technology have significantly affected the lifestyle of people in different times and places. All these changes occur as a result of various factors that affect human life, among which I would emphasize factors such as: social, economic, political, etc. In human life, one very important dimension is the phenomenon of leisure time (free time), which also has undergone many changes in how people plan, organize and spend it.

Therefore, during the last decade the problem concerning leisure time has drawn the attention of scientists in different profiles from all over the world. Alongside other scientists, much interest have shown many pedagogues, psychologists and sociologists, for example: M.Kaplan, Zh.Dimazdie, Zh.Fridman, V.Jankoviç etc.

Referring to studies from various authors of scientific literature, as a theoretical approach on one hand, and on the other hand as a practical approach, by surveying people, pupils in the organization of leisure time, my experience as a teacher and the results of the different surveys dealing with leisure time, it was clearly observed that the phenomenon of leisure time is a wide social problem which must be treated with caution and must not be underestimated; perhaps due to the fact that young people nowadays need to be educated and trained on how to organize and use their leisure time in a rational way. Having roles, duties and genuine functions, free time is beneficial both for adults and for children. Perhaps, leisure time meets an individuals practical needs, intellectual needs, creative needs etc. In fact what pupils do during their leisure time serves them to fulfill their needs, desires and their personal interests.

In order for leisure time to be used in a rational manner by children/ pupils, it is more than necessary and undeniable that modern society helps and provides numerous and diverse forms of activities that children/ pupils can use in order to spend leisure time creatively, which will normally bring benefits to the pupils themselves and to the entire society.

1. Defining the notion “leisure time”

“Leisure time” is an integral part of the human activity, the time out of professional obligations and duties, of family and social, in which the individual chooses according to his own interest the form and content of leisure, entertainment and creativity. (Pedagogic encyclopedia, 2. Pg. 353).

Leisure time is the part when the individual deals with various activities, chosen by his own will and according to ones personal need.

By carefully analyzing the notion leisure time, we can conclude the following:

Firstly, the notion leisure time is used contrary to work time. All activities that take part during leisure time are creations i.e. free activities.

Secondly, the notion leisure time is used for characterizing the aspect and level of comprehension in practice of what is created by pupils when they are free.

Thirdly, the notion leisure time is used in order to differentiate some activities, which are named as activities without obligation.

Fourthly, the notion leisure time is used to distinguish the freedom of expression of specific skills affirmation of the personal desires that pupils face.

2. The classification of leisure time in the cultural aspect

The organization and use of leisure time can take different forms and variations, but in order for leisure time to be used rationally and in a positive manner, the cultural aspect should also be regarded.

The cultural aspect of leisure time usage depends on:

- The quality and value of contents of leisure time;
- The positive aspect, the optimal of leisure time usage;
- The amount, the influence and content of leisure time.¹

Observed from the cultural aspect of leisure time, we have the following classifications of time:

- Time for critical thinking
- Time for creations
- Time for education and learning
- Time for perfection/ personal achievement
- Time for cultural contributions
- Time for promoting the culture of living²

Leisure time in general can be spent in different forms by people, children or pupils. However, in order for children/ pupils to be provided with cultural values and to have such attitudes, it is very important above all that they are careful in the choice of qualitative content, by which they will spend their leisure time and also by choosing activities according to the cultural aspect. Therefore, we can freely state that the more children/ pupils use and organize their leisure time and spend it based on cultural activities, the higher their cultural and educational level will be, but also the entire societies, of course, if this is for most children/ pupils.

For this reason, school, family and society should therefore be careful and jointly contribute in orienting, advising, and suggesting pupils and children in the selection and implementation of leisure activities, offering the opportunity to different implementation.

3. Leisure time and qualifying youth for activities

The act of creation during leisure time is displayed in different manners. In some kinds, for example, in art, it has a utilitarian character, whereas in other types such as literature, technique, sports, it reflects the reality the pupil encounters in his school life, family, society.

The aspirations of leisure time are that pupils are made qualified to create what they feel in their souls and minds.

The element of creating is not the same in the different forms and in the activities with which the pupil “fills in” the leisure time.

Knowing that so many creative activities which we can accomplish during leisure time are available, the following questions arise: Why is it necessary for people to get upset by not having or not knowing what to do during their leisure time? Is this due to the lack of motivation?

Of all the different activities that young people can achieve, it is clear that the problem lies not in the

¹<https://www.google.com/webhp?tab=ww&ei=h3jtUtPDGaqmyAOR4IDoBQ&ved=0CBQQ1S4#q=uloga+slobodnog+vremena+u+suvremenom+drustvu>

²<http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCMQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.mathos.unios.hr%2F~mjudic%2Fseminari%2FUloga%2520slobodnog%2520vremena%2520u%2520suvremenom%2520drustvu.ppt&ei=3UD9Uo21HorI4AS4-oDYCA&usg=AFQjCNGtSt9TXUkIFBNwfcYKAAtbf-tNVFA&bvm=bv.61190604,d.bGQ>

lack of opportunities for the realization of desired activities, but I think that the problem lies in the lack of recognition of these opportunities. Therefore, the individual must possess knowledge about the opportunities offered by life, family, school and society, in order to use them maximally.

In order for the individual and the pupil to become aware of the various options offered to them and to know how to use them rationally and creatively during leisure time, a solid education on the use and organization of leisure time is more than necessary.

At school itself, the family and society, there is an endless variety of activities through which children and pupils can express their interests and articulate their desires and latent skills during leisure time.

School specifically is the main institution which should affirm activities for the usage of leisure time.

Schools in this context play important roles, among which we emphasize:

- the preparation of pupils for their usage of leisure time;
- making them capable of expressing their aspirations and interests;
- stimulating pupils for the participation and organization of leisure time;
- the affirmation of activities which fill leisure time;
- planification of free activities;
- Supporting pupils interests and similar roles.

The creative element is not the same in all activities. It differs from the intensity, because the school with its activities and with the organization of its pedagogical approach definitely enables elements and positive access for making students capable of organizing their leisure time. Therefore, we can conclude that the school has an obligation to create opportunities for students to experience the joyful life in it.

4. The role of bearers for leisure time

Free time is not a process or separated aspect of the educational process which takes place at school. It is the immanence of the process, so its bearers are numerous.

Because schools use different ways to affirm students' as creative subjects, leisure time is an important aspect for the bearer.

The bearers of leisure time are:

- the principal of the school,
- class councils,
- teachers activities,
- bearers of free activities,
- the organization of children at school.

Their role is multidimensional: planning, organizing, implementing and supporting.

Obviously we should not think that the realization of leisure time is done only when the bearers plan. This requires the preparation for concrete realization of the purpose, duties and functions of leisure time.

Preparation means training them (the bearers) with theoretical and practical knowledge of the phenomenon of leisure time, with content, work methodology and concrete approach.

Other carriers for childrens leisure time are family members also: parents, brother, sister, grandparents, uncle, aunt etc.

Their role is organizational, advisory, intermediary and initiator for various activities. Other carriers except school and family include also: leaders of associations, clubs, summer and winter centers, NGO' s etc.

Their role is: planning, organizing, implementing, advisory and supportive.

5. Institutions for the realization of leisure time

For the implementation and organization of leisure time an important part play various insitutions, which directly or indirectly support both children and pupils free time.

All insitutions reflect in the realization of leisure time with three basic elements:

- The pedagogical and social dynamics;
- The educative force they possess;
- The practical action.

In order for insitutions to be functional in the realization and organization of leisure time they must include some requirements:

- Professional resources (artists, musicians, literary, painter, educator, psychologist, pedagogue and other creators);
- Equipment needed (various tools);
- Area (space) required for the realization of various activities; and
- Diverse programs that meet the aspirations of pupils.

Cultural institutions (libraries, historical-national museums, ethnological, the theatre especially children and youth theatres etc.) are factors that have a great impact in the formation of opinions, the education of the new

generations and of the individual in general. (Emërllahu D., 1998 : 180).

From the aspect of insitutions we can name the following:

1. School and pre schools
2. Childrens cultural centers
3. Cultural centers
4. Houses of culture
5. Cultural monuments, artistic galleries
6. Childrens houses
7. Children’s theaters and puppets
8. Libraries
9. Centers for free time, for children whose parents are employed in the afternoon or til late at night.
10. Houses for technical culture
11. Centers for childrens creations. (M urati Xh., 2005 : 115).

One of the essential elements in the implementation of leisure time are not only institutions but also the professional people which are in contact with the pupils, organizers and leaders (artistic, technical, literary, etc.) who have professional qualifications to meet the objectives, aims and tasks of leisure time.

6. Research methodology

In the empirical part which follows, in order to obtain the most accurate results of the real situation, we included: 113 pupils from 5 til 8 grade; 40 parents and 35 teachers, a total of 188 participants from the town and the village also. Our main aim was to conclude the manner of which children, specifically pupils of primary education in the district of Kercova organize and use their leisure time. Do they have specific, adequate places that is offered to them by the place or environment they live in, grow and develop in order to perfectly enhance their trends, talents, and skills or not?

To prove how children / pupils organize and use their leisure time, based on the opportunities offered to them by modern society, in our research we posed the key hypothesis: "Children/ pupils do not organize and fairly use their leisure time."

The definition of our research variables is as follows:

- The more opportunities that are offered to children/ pupils regarding the organization of free time (cause), the better children/ pupils will organize it (effect).
- The more there are differences in the opportunities made possible to urban and rural pupils for the organization of free time (cause), the more differences there will be between urban and rural pupils in the manner they organize their free (leisure) time (effect).

The measuring instruments used during the research are: a survey and evaluation scale.

From the obtained results, their elaboration and interpretation, it was made easier for us to conclude the real condition of the problem which we had as object of the study.

7. Obtained results

In order to ascertain realistically how pupils / children of primary schools organize and use their free time, we also tried to find answers to the opportunities offered to children by society, i.e. the place where they live, because there is dependency and a reciprocal link between: the organization, exploitation and the opportunities children have for leisure time.

7.1. The organization and usage of leisure time

Pupils respectively children make permant effort for the usage and organization of leisure time. However, the question that arises is: How successful are they in this direction? Our results illustrate this process.

a) Results obtained from two primary schools

Table nr. 1: Children fairly organize their leisure time

	I fully disagree		I do not agree		I partially agree		I agree		I fully agree		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Urban teacher	-	-	8	40,0	9	45,0	2	10,0	1	5,0	20	100,0
Rural teacher	-	-	-	-	15	100,0	-	-	-	-	15	100,0
Urban parents	2	8,3	2	8,3	12	50,0	5	20,8	3	12,5	24	100,0
Rural parents	1	6,25	5	31,25	6	37,5	2	12,5	2	12,5	16	100,0
Total	3	4,0	15	20,0	42	56,0	9	12,0	6	8,0	75	100,0

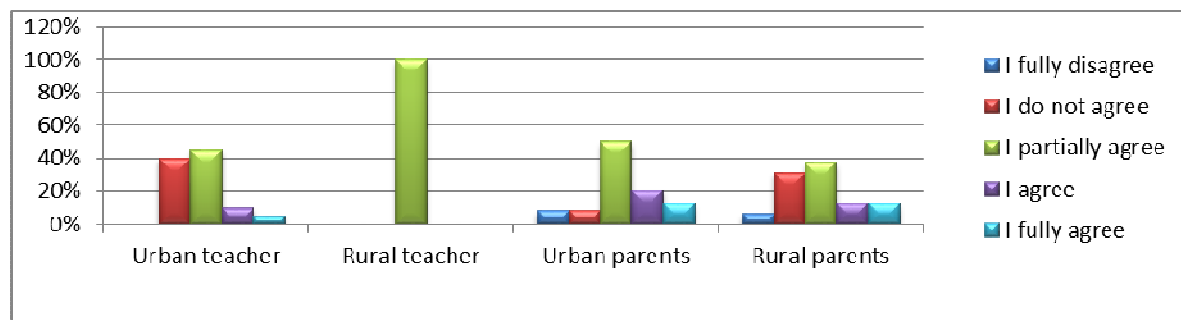


Chart nr.1

During our research, among other assertions we emphasized the statement: *Children fairly organize their leisure time*. This assertion was supported by 20%, restrained are 56%, whereas 24% of teacher and parent participants in the research do not agree. What is most noticeable is the fact that rural teachers 100% restrained this claim, whereas urban teachers were as follows: 45% were restrained, 40% do not support this claim, and only 15% support and agree with the assertion.

The parents have more or less different attitudes. Urban parents support this claim with 33,3%, whereas the rural parents 25%; restrained from urban parents were 50%, whereas 37,5% rural parents; that do not agree are 16,6% urban parents, whereas 37,5% rural parents. This concludes that urban parents support the claim that children fairly organize their leisure time more than rural parents.

Results obtained conclude the main hypothesis that: *Pupils/ children do not fairly organize their leisure time*.

7.2. The opportunities for the organization of leisure time

The need for special places that allow students to better organize leisure time is inevitable and various. On one hand it depends on the trends, talents and abilities of the pupils, and on the other hand it depends on the opportunities and specific, adequate locations that are offered to them by the place or environment where they live, grow and develop.

In order for children, namely pupils to organize and use their free time fairly and in order for them to have opportunities for enhancing their talent and skills, they need assistance from: their family, their school and the Municipality (as a state institution). In order to determine the real condition in the Municipality of Kercova concerning the opportunities that are offered to children for the organization of their free time, the surveyed were asked the following: *Are there specific places in the Municipality that enable children to fairly organize their free time?* The following results were obtained:

Table nr. 2: Are there specific places in the Municipality that enable children to fairly organize their free time?

	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Urban pupils	29	41,42	41	58,57	70	100,00
Rural pupils	14	32,55	29	67,44	43	100,00
Urban parents	3	12,5	21	87,5	24	100,00
Rural parents	1	6,25	15	93,75	16	100,00
Urban teachers	4	20,00	16	80,00	20	100,00
Rural teachers	4	26,66	11	73,33	15	100,00
Total	55	29,25	133	70,74	188	100,00

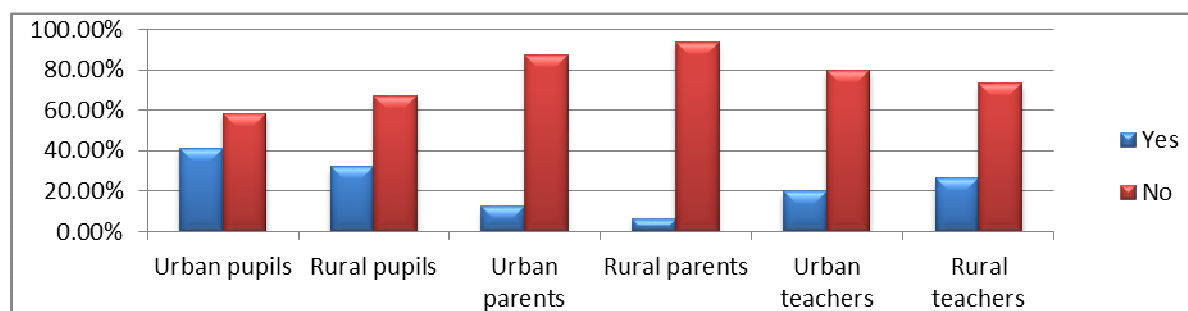


Chart nr.2

Rural parents, with 93,75% strongly state their opinion that in the region they live in, there are no specific places that enable children to fairly organize their free time. The same opinion is provided by urban parents, with 87,5%,

urban teachers with 80%, and rural teachers with 73,33%. Pupils supply the same opinion, with a lower average than their parents and the teachers, rural pupils 67, 44%, and urban pupils 58,57%. From the overall number of surveyed participants, the same opinion is shared by 70, 74%, whereas 29,25% share the opinion and believe that in the place that they live there are specific places where children can organize their leisure time.

As you may notice from the obtained results, most surveyed participants from all classes replied: *No, there are no such specific places that enable children to organize their leisure time.*

6. Conclusions and recommendations

From the obtained empirical results of the study, some conclusions may be achieved:

The obtained results prove the given hypothesis: Pupils/ children do not fairly organize their leisure time. Participants that do not share the same opinion are only 33,3% urban parents, 25% rural parents and 15% urban teachers.

In the district of Kercova, there are no specific places that enable children to fairly organize their free time.

According to the obtained results of the study and the conclusions, the following recommendations follow:

- It is highly recommended that the organization and realization of leisure time be presented and disseminated.
- It is recommended that specific places be created, which will enable children to organize and rationally use their leisure time.

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