

Original Article

## Social Environment Selected Aspects Determination by School Children Leisure Time Movement Activities

Teplicancova Maria<sup>1</sup>

Almasiova Angela<sup>2</sup>

Krska Peter<sup>3</sup>

Sedlacek Jaromir<sup>4\*</sup>

<sup>1,3,4</sup>Catholic University, Hrabovska cesta 1,034 01 Ruzomberok, Slovakia

<sup>2</sup>Presov University, 080 01, Slovakia

DOI: 10.29081/gsjesh.2017.18.2.15

**Keywords:** *social environment, family, leisure time movement activities*

### Abstract

Social environment which the child comes from determines him in many spheres, including leisure activities. In the contribution we stressed on learning if school children differentiate in leisure time spending with regard on family size, parents' employment (eventually their grant parents) and family income. Basic sample was created by 618 respondents – children parents with average age 39.9 years. Data analyse showed us that significant difference was confirmed in case of family income. This forms the prerequisite for higher volume of children movement activities. Rather surprising was result in our research that children of employed parents engage in leisure activities less than the number of unemployed parents. Also the fact that family size is not an aspect that would make children attending elementary and secondary school differentiate when choosing leisure time activities.

### 1. Introduction

Social environment is created by everything that each man encloses. It is environment in which a man lives. Social environment defines who we are, our identity like a society member“ (Risse, 2004). According Gajdos (2002) the social environment represents sum of individuals, groups and other communities, which a man is in interaction with and which have influence on his behaviour. It is an entertainment which is a part of human being life at certain social context (community, culture, place to live etc.).

Entertainment which man lives in can his actions support or interfere it, can his acting directly shape up and can have even signal function (Kraus, &

---

\* E-mail: jaromir.sedlacek47@gmail.com;

Polackova, 2001). According Matousek (2008) each man satisfies his needs in various social systems like family, school, same age groups, employment, interest groups, religion communities etc. that on him at the same time, lay down certain specific requirements, which he must be subordinated, if he wants to belong to any of these groups.

As for the social entertainment we can meet with various classifications. For example Kraus and Polackova (2001) differentiate social entertainment by size to:

- Microenvironment, it deals with an immediate space, in which the individual dwells;

- Local environment is the space connected mainly with residence (city district, village, etc.), with your surroundings;

- Regional environment represents space in the life of a broader social group on a wider territory within society;

- Macro environment is the space that creates the conditions for the existence of the whole society;

- Global environment includes humanity as a whole, planet, cosmos.

In order the child could survive and would handle to function independently in the human society, it needs after birth relatively long time to care of other people. In each historical period and each culture it was and it is the most often social environment in which the child lives, the family that creates the fundament of society. The family is in the society still considered a common form of life for two people of the opposite sex (Koverova, 2003; Jandourek, 2003).

Sociologic dictionary considers family as a fundamental unit of social organization and it is very difficult to define it to capture all the typical features that this social phenomenon has (Geist, 1992).

Weidlichova (2008) understands the family as a small, primary social group that has an irreplaceable meaning for a child, because it gives him genetic equipment and has a decisive influence on the overall development of his personality (physical, mental and social), and in the family environment, the child is adapting to society.

Leisure time

Free time

The notion of leisure has a multidisciplinary character. It is a time of rest, recreation and entertainment, whose main features can be characterized as:

- A period of free choice of activity (a person performs an activity that he or she wants and does not have to);

- The activities selected are pleasurable for the person, bringing pleasure and joy;

- Activities that give people the opportunity to recreate, relax and develop personality (Kostelansky, 2013).

From the point of view of children and young people, they do not belong to their leisure activities, such as teaching and related activities, self-service activities, home-based duties or obligations in educational facilities and activities ensuring the biological existence of man (food, sleep, hygiene, health care) in Hajek,

---

Hofbauer, and Pavkova, (2008). On the contrary, the concept of leisure includes a number of activities such as rest, recreation, entertainment, interest activities, interest education, voluntary socially beneficial activity and time losses associated with these activities (Hajek et al., 2008).

Children's free time is multifaceted by several factors. Because children do not yet have enough experience and do not know the whole sphere of interest, they need leadership and help in choosing an appropriate activity from the beginning (help with professional guidance).

The condition of this help by parents or professionals is that this leadership is non-violent, that the participation and activity of the children was voluntary and based on self-satisfaction of the needs associated with the compensation and regeneration of psychic and physical forces. Activities should be attractive, interesting and developing for all children's personalities (Hajek et al., 2008). One of the areas that have a positive impact on human personality development is physical activity.

Physical activity can be characterized as a multifaceted physical activity of a person characterized by typically human attributes such as purpose, social determination, communication between people and others. It represents a summary of all movements important to achieving a defined goal and to achieve adequate physical and psychological development. Physical activity is a multi-faceted movement activity of a person, realized by his / her loco-motoric organs and characterized by typically human attributes such as purpose, social determination and backwardness to the process of communication between people (Liba, 2007; Sykora et al., 1995).

Since birth, man has a natural need for movement, but nowadays more and more people come to the forefront of a sedentary way of life. In our research, we focused on the issue of the social environment and leisure time activities of children attending elementary school.

### **3. Material and methods**

The aim of the paper is to point out whether children's leisure time activities may vary due to selected aspects of the social environment - family size, parents' employment and family income.

In view of the goal set as a method, a questionnaire was selected containing 22 questions and evaluated in the quantitative strategy using descriptive and inferential statistics.

The survey sample consisted of 618 respondents - parents or old parents of pupils attending elementary schools in Ruzomberok, of which 19.9% were males and 80.1% were females.

The average age of respondents was 39.9 years, the oldest respondent was 83 years old the youngest was 25 years old. Regarding the education of respondents, the respondents with secondary education with GCE - 40.5% predominated, followed by university graduates - 36.7%, respondents with secondary education without maturity - 19.9% and respondents with elementary education. 75.4% of

respondents live in a married couple, 6.0% are single, 12.1% are divorced, and the other respondents are either widows (widow), or living as a kind and companion. In the question of family size, the respondents should indicate the number of children attending elementary school, the number of children attending secondary and tertiary education and the number of children with completed education (table 1).

**Table 1.** *Education and number of children in the family*

<b>Number of children in the family</b>	<b>Children attending elementary and secondary schools</b>		<b>Children attending high schools and universities</b>		<b>Children with completed education</b>	
1	346	56.0%	115	74.2%	36	64.3%
2	221	35.8%	30	19.4%	16	28.6%
3	42	6.8%	7	4.5%	4	7.1%
4	5	0.8%	3	1.9%	-	-
5	3	0.5%	-	-	-	-
6	1	0,2%	-	-	-	-

In the case of economic activity, the respondents were employed - 72.5%, the unemployed respondents were 4.5%.

Other respondents said they were either businessman, on maternity leave, on retirement, or other. Because the respondent was one of the parents (old parents) of the child, we were also interested in the economic activity of the partner.

Also, 72.5% are employed, 5.7% are unemployed, others either business, maternity leave, retirement or otherwise. Family income is illustrated in table 2.

**Table 2.** *Family monthly incomes*

<b>Less than 300 €</b>	2.3%
301 – 600 €	13.1%
601 – 1000 €	34.3%
1001 – 2000 €	43.9%
Over 2001 €	6.4%

To learn mutual relations or differences among groups we used Pearsons correlative coefficient and Man-Whitney U-test. Statistical significance was evaluated on \*5 % level. In pedagogical interpretations we use fundamental logical methods, mainly analysis and synthesis, comparison and generalisation.

### **3. Results and discussions**

When exploring leisure activities, we were concerned not only with leisure activities, but also with spending leisure time in general. Table 3 shows the frequency of digestion of selected leisure activities.

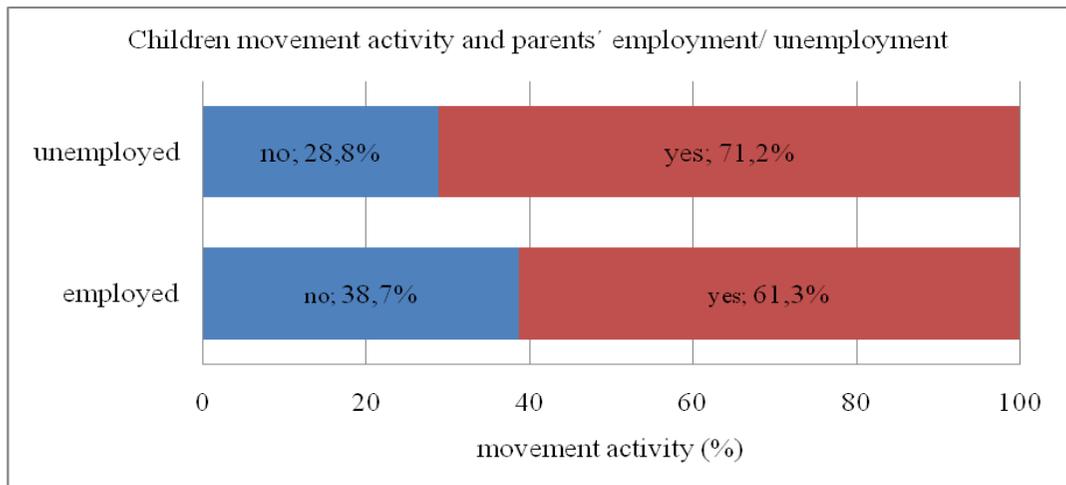
On a more detailed analysis of the research results, we found that family size is not an aspect on which children in elementary and secondary school would

differ, and the assumption of the effect of family size on leisure time activities was rejected (Pearson's correlation coefficient was used for testing).

Another aspect examined was the economic activity of parents - we assumed that the children employed and the children of the unemployed parents will be distinguished in engaging in leisure time activities. The assumption has not been confirmed and as can be seen in fig 1, children of employed parents engage in leisure activities less than the number of unemployed parents.

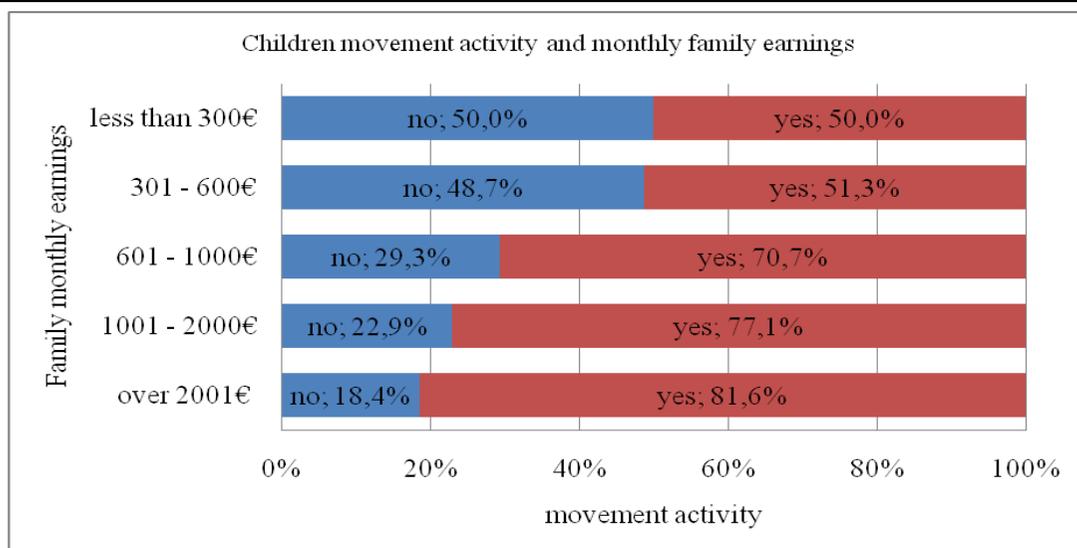
**Table 3.** *Frequency of spending selected leisure activities by children*

Activities	Daily	Several times weekly	1x weekly	1 - 3x weekly	Not at all
Reading books, magazines	15.7%	33.9%	20.6%	17.9%	11.9%
Sports	21.8%	48.4%	15.3%	6.3%	8.3%
Walking in nature	6.7%	24.7%	29.9%	28.7%	10.1%
Lying in bed	19.3%	11.0%	9.6%	6.6%	53.5%
Watching TV	46.6%	41.6%	5.8%	1.9%	4.1%
Going out with friends	27.2%	47.4%	15.1%	6.5%	3.7%
Computer	25.5%	39.0%	18.0%	7.8%	9.7%
Leisure time ring	8.6%	50.6%	21.0%	3.3%	16.6%



**Figure 1.** *Children movement activity and parents' employment/ unemployment*

The last examined aspect was family intake. To verify the assumption that leisure time activities can determine family income, we used Mann-Whitney in the test, dividing families into low-income and higher-income families. The statistical test revealed a significant difference between children, as can be seen in fig 2.



**Figure 2.** Children movement activity and monthly family earnings

### Discussions

In the case of sports, up to 48.4% of respondents said their child was sporting more than once a week. Daily 21.8% of children are engaged in sports activities. Daily with friends, according to parents, meet 27.2% of children. 47.4% meet with friends several times per week. 25.5% of children sit at the computer every day. 39% of children spend computer games several times a week. Regarding watching TV, 46.6% of respondents said that their child spends their free time each day watching TV. More than once a week, 41.6% of children watch TV. Only 1.9% of respondents said that their child is watching TV 1 - 3 times a month, and at least 4.1% of children do not watch TV at all, said parents. As a result, television watching becomes the main leisure activity of children, because of all offered free time leisure options, the majority of respondents said their child was watching TV daily. The most watched fact comparing the former researches is that leisure time is mostly devoted to watching TV and to computer games. This time volume is approximately three times higher, like it was 20 years ago. On the opposite significantly decreased activities like sports, walking in nature and going out with friends (Liba, 1999; Kratochvilova, 2004; Koverova, 2003).

In the research is shown that unemployment does not influence negatively children movement activities. It is surprising that these children practice more often sport activities like children where parents are employed. On the other side is obvious that family income positively influence movement activities of children. With declining monthly household incomes, the percentage of children exercising leisure-time exercise is also declining. An interesting finding is that the exact half of the respondents (50%), whose monthly household income is less than 300 €, stated that their child either performs or does not exercise leisure-time physical activity. On the contrary, the higher the monthly income of the household, the more

often children are involved in free-time physical activities. This tendency is the same like it are results from former researches in Czech Republic and Slovakia, too (Kraus, & Polackova, 2001; Koverova, 2003; Kulacsova, 2004; Hambalek, 2005).

## 5. Conclusions

In the paper, we focused on finding out if children attending elementary school in leisure time are different in terms of family size, employment of parents (or old parents) and family income. The basic sample consisted of 618 respondents - parents of children with an average age of 39.9 years.

1. On the basis of data analysis, we have concluded that a significant difference has been demonstrated only in the case of family income. Higher intake of parents is a prerequisite for greater volume and higher frequency of children movement activity.

2. We found that family size is not an aspect that would make children attending elementary and secondary school differentiate when choosing leisure time activities.

3. Another aspect examined was the economic activity of parents - we assumed that the children employed and the children of the unemployed parents will be distinguished in engaging in leisure time activities. Our assumption has not been confirmed. Children of employed parents engage in leisure activities less than the number of unemployed parents.

## References

1. GAJDOS, P. (2002). *Človek Spoločnosť Prostredie (Man Company Environment)*. Bratislava: Sociologický ústav SAV.
2. GEIST, B. (1992). *Sociologický slovník (Sociological Dictionary)*. Praha: Victoria Publishing.
3. JANDOUREK, J. (2003). *Úvod do sociologie (Introduction to Sociology)*. Praha: Portál
4. HAMBÁLEK, M. (2005). *Uvod do voľnočasových aktivít s klientskymi skupinami sociálnej práce (Introduction to leisure activities with client groups of social work)*. 1.vyd. Bratislava: Občianske združenie Sociálna práca.
5. KOSTELANSKY, A. (2013). *Pedagogika voľného času. Súčasnosť a perspektívy (Leisure Education. Current and Perspectives)*. Ružomberok: Verbum.
6. KOVEROVA, S. (2003). *Sociológia životného cyklu (Life cycle sociology)*. Bratislava: Občianske združenie Sociálna práca.
7. KRATOCHVILOVA, E. (2004). *Pedagogika voľného času. Výchova v čase mimo vyučovania v pedagogickej teórii a praxi (Leisure time education. Education in time outside teaching in pedagogical theory and practice)*. Bratislava: UK.

8. KRAUS, B., & POLACKOVA, V. (2001). *Člověk - prostředí - výchova: k otázkám sociální pedagogiky (Man - environment - education: on issues of social pedagogy)*. Brno: Paido.
9. LIBA, J. (1999). *Potenciál školy v prevencii svalovej nerovnováhy a chybného držania tela. In Zdravotne orientovaná telesná výchova na základní škole. Sborník prací pedagogické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity (School Potential in Preventing Muscle Imbalance and Mistaken Body Hold. In Health-Oriented Physical Education at Elementary School. Proceedings of the Pedagogical Faculty of Masaryk University)*.
10. LIBA, J. (2007). *Zdravie v kontexte edukácie (Health in the context of education)*. Prešov: PF PU.
11. MATOUSEK, O. (2008). *Slovník sociální práce (Dictionary of Social Work)*. Praha: Portál.
12. HAJEK, B., HOFBAUER, B., & PAVKOVA, J. (2008). *Pedagogika volného času: teorie, praxe a perspektivy výchovy mimo vyučování a zařízení volného času (Free time pedagogy: theory, practice and perspectives of out-of-school education and leisure time facilities)*. Praha: Portál.
13. RISSE, T. (2004). *Social Constructivism and European Integration. In: Wiener, A., Diez, T. European Integration Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
14. SYKORA, F. et al. (1995). *Telesná výchova a šport: Terminologický a výkladový slovník (Physical Education and Sport: Terminology and Explanatory Dictionary)*, Bratislava: F. R. a G. spol.
15. WEIDLICHOVA, I. (2008). *Socializace a emoční vývoj dítěte (Socialization and emotional development of the child)*. Bratislava: STU.