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## **Leisure time in different aspects of social interaction**

### **Introduction**

Leisure time occurs in everybody's life no matter how old they are. It is generally known that some people have it more while others less. It can be defined according to one's own preferences, yet, leisure time is always perceived as time for repose, relaxation or enjoyment.

Each age group has its own typical characteristics and forms of developing their free time. Age groups differ from one another and have their distinct targets and ways of enjoying spare time. Starting with the youngest children whose parents interfere in their lives a lot we can notice differences in interests between them and, for example, adolescents. Age difference between them is not too wide while pastimes differ significantly. Early school children have much more free time than adolescents who are on the verge of sitting exams or choosing a university, which involves increasing the amount of time devoted to studying and reducing the amount of spare time. Obviously, it is not the only reason. Factors which affect leisure time character include juvenescence and defiance stages.

As for the adults, who always complain about lack of free time, it is the financial standing that affects ways of spending leisure time. On the other hand, old age pensioners stand the opposite to the above mentioned age group – the adults. Senior citizens enjoy almost unlimited amount of idle time and spend it in

accord with their own preferences either more or less actively. It depends on an individual.

The whole society covers a considerable number of predilections and individual pastimes. Undeniably, each person's external factors as well as a significant number of internal factors, such as financial standing, health, family and work affect them.

## 1. Leisure time – definitions

The term leisure time is quite popular in everybody's life regardless of how old they are. Nowadays people more often complain about its lack than excess. It comprises a variety of definitions depending on individual preferences, yet it is always associated with pleasant moments.

In literature leisure time is defined multifariously depending on various opinions, reflections and views. "The term leisure time is always accompanied by the contradictory term such as work understood as an obligatory activity"<sup>1</sup>.

Etymologically leisure time means the time when a person performs activities he fancies and which he cannot do at another time because of professional activity, studying or other duties"<sup>2</sup>.

According to Czajkowski "leisure time is a social value, developed by an individual and society to regenerate physical and mental strength after professional work, to educate, to develop individual passions and interests, to ensure cultural relaxation and shape a richer personality of an individual"<sup>3</sup>.

Bańka defines leisure time as "a break between work periods. These days leisure time can be defined as a period of set time, an activity, inclination or a combination of these possibilities"<sup>4</sup>.

Another author presents another approach to the issue under discussion citing some literature "free time stands for any activities which a person can willingly enjoy either to relax or entertain themselves or to develop one's knowledge or for selfless education, voluntary participation in social life after releasing themselves from professional, family and social duties"<sup>5</sup>.

Analysing the above mentioned definitions we can conclude that leisure time is part of human existence. Various pastimes conducted at this time are done vol-

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<sup>1</sup> A. Martyka, *Czas wolny dzieci we współczesnych polskich miastach. Wprowadzenie do poszukiwań optymalnych rozwiązań przestrzennych*, "Czasopismo Techniczne" R. 109, z. 7-A, Politechnika Krakowska 2012, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> M. Ostrowska, J. Błęszyński, *Czas wolny jako środowisko życia. Perspektywa pedagogiczna*, Warszawa 2016, p. 452.

<sup>3</sup> K. Czajkowski, *Wychowanie do rekreacji*, Warszawa 1979, p. 14–15.

<sup>4</sup> A. Bańka, *Spoleczna psychologia środowiska*, Warszawa 2002, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> B. Kolny, *Czas wolny w świetle zrównoważonego rozwoju*, Kraków 2014, p. 29.

untarily and are supposed to bring joy and satisfaction. Pleasure derived from these activities is to develop and shape one's personality and benefit both physical and mental relaxation.

We can conclude that there are numerous definitions of leisure time, however, most of us would say that it is moments of joy devoted to realising our dreams and targets.

## 2. Children's leisure time

How people spend their spare time depends mostly on an individual's age but also on how attractive offered events are, available patterns, accessibility and variety of equipment and the natural environment. Despite parental control children also have a chance to choose what they want to do in their idle time. Everything depends on individual preferences and on how much time is left after fulfilling school, household and other duties<sup>6</sup>. Children's leisure time differs from adolescents' or adults'. What effects it is the amount of spare time as youngsters have it incomparable more than the other groups. The truth is it is not as varied and comprises much more passive relaxation. It is also an important educational factor since the results of pedagogical work to a large degree depend on how and with whom a child spends time. Its proper arrangement benefits the increase in the quality of pedagogical work<sup>7</sup>.

Speaking of children's free time we can differentiate three aspects, such as psychological, pedagogical and sociological ones. The psychological aspects means a child is provided with the adequate amount of play and entertainment. It promotes relaxation and allows relieving stress after schoolwork, homework and acquiring a great amount of knowledge. The psychological aspect is also expected to be a source of becoming familiar with new things, a source of challenges and pursuing passions. The pedagogical aspect involves a child undertaking an initiative on how they want to spend their spare time and it is vital that they are not denied the right to do it. It is generally known that a child who is forced to perform an activity soon becomes bored with it and quickly gets discouraged from it. The last aspect is the sociological one. In other words, it is the need to be with peers and spend time with them. Playing in a group a child learns to cooperate and assimilate its norms, which enables the socialising process<sup>8</sup>.

It is easy to notice that at present children live in a completely different world from the previous generation. Obviously, it is due to the mass media. The Internet

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<sup>6</sup> A. Martyka, op. cit., p. 109.

<sup>7</sup> U. Ordon, *Organizacja i formy czasu wolnego uczniów w młodszym wieku szkolnym*, "Edukacja Elementarna w Teorii i Praktyce" 2007, nr 3, pp. 5–11.

<sup>8</sup> K. Kasprzak, *Czas wolny dzieci i młodzieży z terenów wiejskich*, "Studia z Teorii Wychowania" 2014, 5/1 (8), pp. 196–198.

or television arouse huge interest in youngsters, which certainly affects them. Sitting in front of TV or a computer screen for a long time influences both their health and change of their passions or plans for the future. Also, it considerably limits interpersonal relationship<sup>9</sup>. Parents have their say as they mostly decide how a child spends their leisure time. An individual attitude of an adult person is important. Some parents have great ambitions and impose demanding requirements on their children which often do not comply with a child's interests or capabilities. They want to devote their children's free time to extra language lessons, practising sports or a playing a musical instrument. Still, other parents prefer to spend time with children and go with them to the cinema, a zoo or a circus. Spending time together strengthens family bonds<sup>10</sup>.

A significant percentage of early school children spend their free time outdoors. They mostly devote it to playing with peers and what prevails is playing football. Other physical activities are also practised but they depend on individual preferences and a place of residence as pastimes of children from urban agglomeration differ from those of children from rural agglomeration. For instance, children who live in the country choose cycling while their peers from cities prefer rollerblading or skateboarding<sup>11</sup>. As for a city, it is known that a child has more opportunities and a bigger choice of pastimes. Huge, modern playgrounds are taken for granted while their peers living in rural areas can only dream of them. Also, children spend time after school in school common rooms waiting for their parents or they sign up for extracurricular classes organised by schools. We cannot underestimate the fact that the next activity to spending free time outdoors is playing computer games or watching television as it is the sign of our times which has both positive and negative consequences. It is commonly believed that the less time a child spends in front of a computer the better<sup>12</sup>. Further choices are reading books and magazines, the cinema, doing homework, taking trips.

It is worth noticing that youngsters enjoy spending their leisure time outdoors, mostly engaging themselves in some physical activities. What plays an important role is the mass media, primarily the Internet, which is considered indispensable these days. Spare time depends on parents and they frequently arrange it. However, children's passions and interests must be taken into consideration instead of achieving personal ambitions at the cost of children.

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<sup>9</sup> K. Szewczuk, *Formy spędzania czasu wolnego przez dzieci klas trzecich szkoły podstawowej: raport z badań*, "Edukacja Elementarna w Teorii i Praktyce" 2015, nr 1, p. 50.

<sup>10</sup> M. Urbańska, *Sposoby spędzania czasu wolnego przez dziecko w wieku przedszkolnym i wczesnoszkolnym*, "Edukacja Elementarna w Teorii i Praktyce" 2007, nr 3, pp. 61–62.

<sup>11</sup> K. Szewczuk, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>12</sup> A. Martyka, op. cit., p. 111–112.

### 3. Adolescents' leisure time

Analysing the issue of adolescents' leisure time one can encounter the following opinion: "in a society adolescents are the category of people situated in the transitory stage between childhood and adulthood, do not require adults' direct care but do not shoulder full responsibility. At the same time young people undergo intensive physical, intellectual and emotional development"<sup>13</sup>. An adolescent begins to pay attention to what is fashionable in the environment he is part of. Parent's opinion is becoming less important. Teenagers believe that they can decide on their lives themselves and they know what is the best for them. Obviously, a situation when a parent does not know what is happening to their child should never take place. A parent needs to have some control over their child particularly at the time as difficult as adolescence is<sup>14</sup>.

Adolescence is the time where the division between sexes in the field of interests and pastimes is clearly visible. The main example is the fact that girls at this age start to avoid physical exercise both these compulsory at school and these practised after school. They pay more attention to their appearance and they, first and foremost, focus on it. They see physical activities as connected with excessive sweating, spoilt make-up or the whole look. It is completely the other way round with boys who place sport highly as their pastime.

According to the study conducted by Murawska, Rozenbaum and Włodarczyk adolescents devote their free time to:

- studying,
- looking after younger siblings,
- walking a dog,
- earning money,
- clubbing,
- home partying,
- movie nights,
- meeting friends<sup>15</sup>.

To become familiar with another author's findings we can refer to the study by M. Dragan which reveals that adolescents spend their spare time: surfing the Internet (62%), going to the cinema (49%), watching television (35%), fewer students spend time reading books or practising sport<sup>16</sup>. The study conducted by M. Dragan proves that teenagers prefer to spend their leisure time passively,

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<sup>13</sup> A. Latos, *Czas wolny tarnowskiej młodzieży*, Tarnów 2007, p. 24.

<sup>14</sup> E. Przygońska, *Jak dzieciom i młodzieży rodzina powinna organizować czas wolny?*, "Pedagogika Rodziny" 2011, nr 1(3/4), p. 123.

<sup>15</sup> K. Murawska, J. Rozenbaum, Z. Włodarczyk, *Młodzi i ich czas wolny, podsumowanie badań wśród licealistów z Targówka*, Warszawa 2014, pp. 4–12.

<sup>16</sup> M. Dragan, *Czas wolny młodzieży gimnazjalnej*, [in:] *Formy spędzania czasu wolnego*, ed. M. Banach, T.W. Gierat, Kraków 2013, p. 292.

which is the consequence of using the Internet. Young people do not feel like going out to see friends. The net substitutes everything. Also, they prefer watching films online, so watching TV is becoming less popular<sup>17</sup>.

Taking into consideration the study findings we can assume that they differ significantly from one another. The reasons vary as young people's responses could have been influenced by external environmental factors and individual needs for spending leisure time. It cannot be denied that the Internet is a popular pastime and an agglomeration also affects the number of possible pastimes.

Adolescents' pastimes also involve abusing various substances. Teenagers do not deny they smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol or, more and more frequently, smoke marihuana. They post pictures with various drugs and do not seem to hide it. At weekends a significant percentage of teenager go to clubs to dance or meet friends. It happens that such discotheques are a good excuse for drinking alcohol or using other drugs. Even selection at a club entrance does not discourage adolescents from quitting a discotheque and it is uncommon that even the underage enter the place despite a set age threshold. Discotheques are not synonymous to the evil since many teenagers go there to dance and meet friends<sup>18</sup>.

All in all, considering adolescents' leisure time we can conclude that the age group is rather troublesome and their pastimes are diversified. It is mostly attributed to the stage of adolescence, the time of rebellion or simple a difficult age. Young people show inclination towards experiencing new things, infrequently the banned ones. Of course, it negatively affects their behaviour, mood and sometimes health. A large group of people can spend time actively with friends, in a gym or at the cinema. It is influenced by the environment an individual lives in and also fashion and new trends.

#### 4. Adults' leisure time

These days many adult people complain that they lack free time. Adults pursue their careers, aim at earning a satisfactory amount of cash and, consequently, they are busy and on the move all the time. Each second of their time is arranged to avoid wasting any minute. Adult people want to get the maximum possible of their lives<sup>19</sup>. Pastimes of this age group change together with a society becoming

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<sup>17</sup> U. Solińska, *Sposoby spędzania czasu preferowane przez młodzież gimnazjalną a ich środowisko rodzinne*, G.S. Kostuik Institute of Psychology at the National Academy of Pedagogical Science of Ukraine 2015, p. 603.

<sup>18</sup> L. Mellibruda, *Młodzieżowa dyskoteka – miejsce zabawy, wyżycia czy spotkania*, "Remedium" 1998, nr 3/61, p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> N. Bojarska, *Czas wolny dzieci i młodzieży we współczesnym świecie*, [in:] *Kultura czasu wolnego we współczesnym świecie*, ed. V. Tanaś, W. Welskop, Łódź 2016, pp. 11–20; E. Brzyszczyk, *Internet w czasie wolnym dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym – ujęcie teoretyczne i empiryczne*, [in:] *Kultura czasu wolnego...*, pp. 21–29.

more affluent. What is also important is the fact that professional work greatly influences the amount of leisure time<sup>20</sup>. Being a parent occupies much time as adults devote it to their offspring neglecting their own needs. Yet, the time spent with one's family is considered a good way of spending free time.

Blurring the line between professional work and leisure time can result in exhaustion, decreased motivation, health problems and also deterioration of family relations [...] seeking promotion, work overload, desire to earn bigger and bigger salaries may lead to workaholism [...] nowadays it is vital that we should try to set a borderline between professional work and leisure time<sup>21</sup>.

**Table 1.** Pastimes

What do you usually do on free Saturdays and Sundays when you do not work professionally? (You can tick three answers)	Percentage
<b>Relaxation</b>	
I have a good sleep.	<b>22%</b>
I sit, lie, have a rest.	<b>27%</b>
<b>Reading</b>	
I read newspapers and magazines.	17%
I read books.	18%
<b>Listening to music or watching television</b>	
I listen to music on the radio, cassettes, records.	14 %
I watch TV.	<b>52%</b>
I watch video or DVD films.	5%
<b>Spending time with other people</b>	
I talk to children, my spouse, family – I am engaged in family life.	<b>36%</b>
I invite relatives, friends, close friends or I pay a visit.	21%
<b>Out of the house entertainment</b>	
I enjoy myself, go to a pub, cafe, restaurant or to a disco.	10%
I attend interesting events: the cinema, theatre, concerts, exhibitions, etc.	7%
<b>Physical activities, outings</b>	
I practise sport.	11%
I walk.	<b>24%</b>
I take a trip to the countryside.	13%
<b>Housework, DIY</b>	
I work in the garden.	19%
I make up overdue housework.	21%
I do some repair and renovation work at home.	7%
I do car maintenance work.	4%

<sup>20</sup> A. Stasik, *Czas wolny Polaków*, Warszawa 2010, pp. 7–10.

<sup>21</sup> V. Tanaš, W. Welskop, op. cit., pp. 11–29.

**Table 1.** Pastimes (cont.)

What do you usually do on free Saturdays and Sundays when you do not work professionally? (You can tick three answers)	Percentage
<b>Others</b>	
I play computer games, surf the Internet.	6%
I study, upgrade my professional qualifications.	4%
I go to church, pray.	19%
I devote time to my favourite pastimes (others than enumerated in the questionnaire).	10%
What I do on Saturdays and Sundays is not different from my weekday activities.	11%
I do something else.	3%

Source: A. Stasik, *Czas wolny Polaków*, Warszawa 2010, p. 8.

The table presents exemplary answers concerning adult people's pastimes. It is clearly visible that watching television takes the first place with the highest percentage (52%). It may appear quite common in the modern world influenced by the mass media. People who have really busy professional lives often lack strength to arrange anything other than watching TV in their spare time. Family is ranked two (36%), which seems to be an attempt at making up for the time away from the closest people. The third place is taken by trite activities, relaxation, a moment of peace and quiet, clearing one's mind. It is immediate and free pastime.

In general, adult people tend not to have a while for themselves, a little spare time. If they happen to have it they spend it in a rather simple way. Of course, there are cases of participation in the cultural life, for example, the theatre, opera or the cinema. The desire to meet friends, some kind of entertainment or even a sport also occur among the possible pastimes adults enjoy. Everything depends on one's willingness and a proper attitude since pursuing a career, achieving ambitions, increasing financial status often take away free time or the strength to benefit from it.

## 5. Leisure time of the elderly

The old age does not necessarily need to be associated with poor physical and mental condition, fecklessness – it is a really beautiful stage in human life, time for relaxation, reflexion over one's life so far, a chance to meet new people, develop interests<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> S. Klonowicz, *Oblicza starości*, Warszawa 1979, p. 34–36.



Most senior citizens do not complain they lack free time, on the contrary, a significant percentage of this age group maintain they have it a lot (the average age is 69). Younger pensioners complain they do not have too much spare time. The average age of the people who say so is 63<sup>23</sup>.

M. Halicka and J. Halicki divide old age pensioners' activities into the following groups:

- recreation and hobbies – walks, sports activities, gardening, so called fancy activities (painting, music, craftwork, going to the cinema, theatre, gallery, concerts),
- repetitive – activities done at home: watching television, listening to the radio, reading newspapers and books,
- public-oriented – social, political and parish activities,
- integrative – diverse meetings and actions, especially social, educational, charitable ones<sup>24</sup>.

We must remember that older people need to talk and be listened to. It promotes building a good relationship, mutual trust and also makes a senior citizen feel needed, not left aside from family life. Discussions may centre on many mundane topics but it could be much more exciting if we watch an interesting film together, read a book or listen to music – all these may trigger a stimulating conversation.

Nowadays, senior citizens constitute considerable part of a society, Retirement is perceived as the beginning of the old age and the end of active lifestyle which has provided the sense of direction in life and the meaning of any activities<sup>25</sup>. Undoubtedly, if the old age is supposed to be happy it should be active. At this life stage the desire to gather goods is becoming weaker while selfless sharing begins. It is the time to calculate all hardships and collect their results<sup>26</sup>.

Analysing all the life stages and pastimes in human life it can be noticed that each stage is unique and has its own characteristics. We must always remember to be understanding and open-minded as each age has its own set of rules.

## Summary

In literature free time is defined in various ways and has many terms while everybody associates it with something pleasant, time for voluntary activities. It is spent individually the way it is considered suitable.

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<sup>23</sup> M. Omyła-Rudzka, *Sposoby spędzania czasu na emeryturze*, Warszawa 2012, p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> M. Halicka, J. Halicki, *Integracja społeczna i aktywność ludzi starszych*, [in:] *Polska starość*, ed. B. Synak, Gdańsk 2003, pp. 142–143.

<sup>25</sup> B. Gosik, *Formy spędzania czasu wolnego starszych osób w województwie łódzkim*, Łódź 2016, p. 137–149.

<sup>26</sup> K. Wiśniewska-Roszkowska, *Nowe życie po sześćdziesiątce*, Warszawa 1986, p. 6–8.

The main factor which affects an individual form of spending leisure time is age. It cannot be denied that each age group has its own pastime character. Society can be divided into four separate age groups: children, adolescents, adults, senior citizens. Each of these groups enjoy distinct amount of spare time and spends it differently from the others. From our early life leisure time is of much significance even if it is determined by parents' choices but still a child can decide how to spend it and what to do. Parents should keep watch over their offspring but, at the same time, give them a chance to choose, of course within reason. As for adolescents and their difficult age parents' interference is also advisable to some extent as this life stage particularly needs pedagogical supervision. Here leisure time begins to change depending on sex – adolescence follows its own rules. Adults spend free time entirely at their choice taking into account family or financial standing. Senior citizens primarily take into consideration their health as it is the factor which influences their choice of pastimes.

Everybody, regardless of age, has the freedom of choice of how they want to spend their leisure time. It is moments which should provide enjoyment and relaxation, should develop and shape one's personality. Every person is an individual with different tastes and these ought not be questioned. The environment a person lives in plays a role in the choice of pastimes. Pastimes in an urban agglomeration differ from these in a rural one. We must bear in mind financial situation as it is often believed that the more funds the more possibilities of spending spare time. Yet, we should not lose our common sense. We should remember of our immediate family and, far and foremost, of our own personal desires.

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## Leisure time in different aspects of social interaction

Free time is understood differently and can be defined in a number of ways but it is usually associated with something pleasant, time activities of our choice. The vital factor which affects individual forms of spending leisure time is age. Society can be divided into four separate age groups: children, adolescents, adults, senior citizens. Each of these groups enjoy distinct amount of spare time and spends it differently from the others. The environment a person lives in plays a role in the selection of pastimes. Pastimes in an urban agglomeration differ from these in a rural one. We must bear in mind financial situation as it is often believed that the more funds the more possibilities of spending spare time. Yet, we should not lose our common sense. We should remember of our immediate family and, far and foremost, of our own personal desires.

**Keywords:** leisure time, age, physical development, urban agglomeration, rural agglomeration, financial situation.

## Czas wolny w różnych wymiarach społecznego funkcjonowania

### Streszczenie

Czas wolny jest rozumiany w różny sposób i może być definiowany na wiele sposobów, ale zazwyczaj wiąże się z czymś przyjemnym i wybranym przez nas. Istotnym czynnikiem wpływającym na poszczególne formy spędzania czasu wolnego jest wiek. Społeczeństwo można podzielić na cztery odrębne grupy wiekowe: dzieci, młodzież, dorośli, osoby starsze. Każda z tych grup korzysta z innej ilości wolnego czasu i spędza go inaczej niż pozostałe. Środowisko, w którym żyje dana osoba, odgrywa rolę w doborze rozrywek. Czas wolny w aglomeracji miejskiej różni się od tego w aglomeracji wiejskiej. Musimy pamiętać o sytuacji finansowej, gdyż często uważa się, że im więcej środków, tym większe możliwości spędzania wolnego czasu. Nie powinniśmy jednak tracić zdrowego rozsądku. Powinniśmy pamiętać o naszej najbliższej rodzinie, a przede wszystkim o naszych osobistych pragnieniach.

**Słowa kluczowe:** czas wolny, wiek, rozwój fizyczny, aglomeracja miejska, aglomeracja wiejska, sytuacja finansowa.