

## HOW DO FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD ADOLESCENTS SPEND THEIR FREE TIME – RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY ELSPAC<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** *In the paper we deal with problems about spending free time, especially by leisure activities, their characteristic, structure and their development with regard to the age of the respondent. Data were obtained within international project ELSPAC. Analysing leisure activities we assume that during personality development of an individual structural changes in the domain of interests occur, but also changes in organization of free time. At the age of 15 there are activities mostly organised by children individually and they depend slightly on parents and school.*

**Keywords:** *Adolescence, leisure activities, leisure time, school*

Leisure time is a matter of interest in many psychological, pedagogical and social professions. Hofbauer (2004) defines leisure time as time when the man is not active under a certain strain of obligations arising from his social roles. Leisure time can be also perceived as time when we are able to choose our activities freely, we do it voluntarily and with pleasure, they bring us feeling of satisfaction and relaxation (Pávková et al., 2002).

Leisure time of children and youth attires, especially recently, exceptional attention, because, as Hajek et al. (2008) presents, it means longitudinal life and education perspective, the manner as well as the chance of their development and self-realization.

The way of using adolescents' leisure time is influenced by social environment. Especially strong is influence of family, crowd, and contemporaries. It is just in the time of adolescence when changes generally occur in leisure time management, which proceeds from the family to contemporaries and it should end by using self-education elements. Parents can serve their children as examples either positive, or negative. Families that do not fulfil correctly their educational function do not care about their childrens' leisure time. Schools, leisure time centres, educational organizations and other subjects have the opportunity to change this deficiency. When it fails, the child may get under influence of undesirable group of contemporaries (aggression, vandalism, alcohol or

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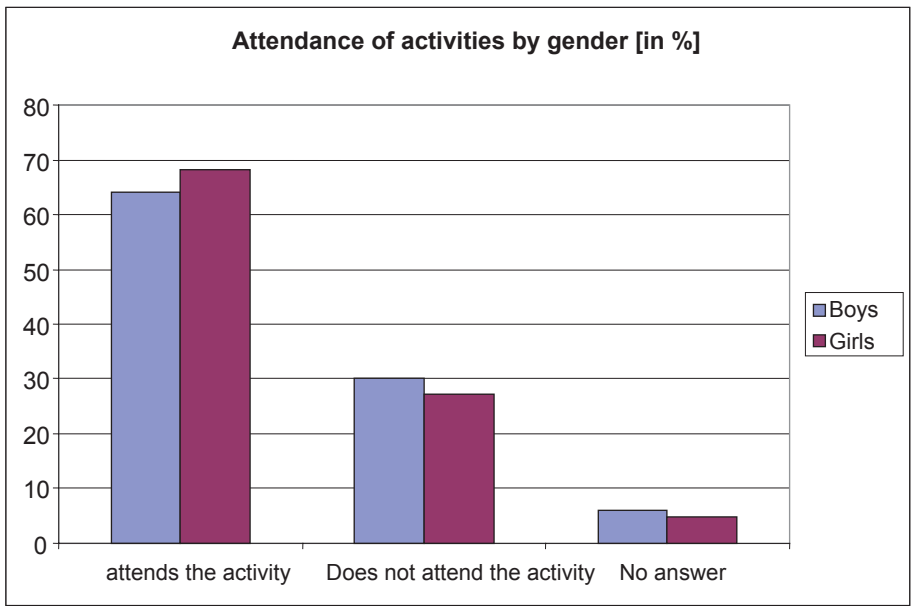
other drugs). The time of adolescence extends importance of groups of contemporaries that often miss sufficient opportunities for leisure time establishment available and attractive for children from stimulating, as well as socially weaker backgrounds and for individuals with average and below-average skills.

Leisure time pursues educational, health care and social function. It contributes to formation of interpersonal relations, reinforcing them at the same time; it develops abilities, strengthens moral qualities, satisfies human needs, forms value interests. Hájek et al. (2008) understands also the system of activities and leisure time institutions as a component of social structure.

Project was realized within the study ELSPAC (European Longitudinal Study of Pregnancy and Childhood), which is European longitudinal study of pregnancy and childhood that is in progress in several European countries and is observing selected groups of children and their families from the mother’s pregnancy, the childbirth and next six weeks and suckling period till at least 18-year-old child with the aim of identifying factors that participate in the healthy children’s development, or trying to define the threatening influences for the healthy children’s development.

The research group was made with respondents of this study, who were, at the age of fifteen, asked about their leisure time. To be concrete, there were 328 persons, 174 (53%) boys and 154 (47%) girls.

Data were collected by semi-structured interview. The respondent’s task was to answer, whether he or she attends any leisure time activities and if so, to enumerate them.

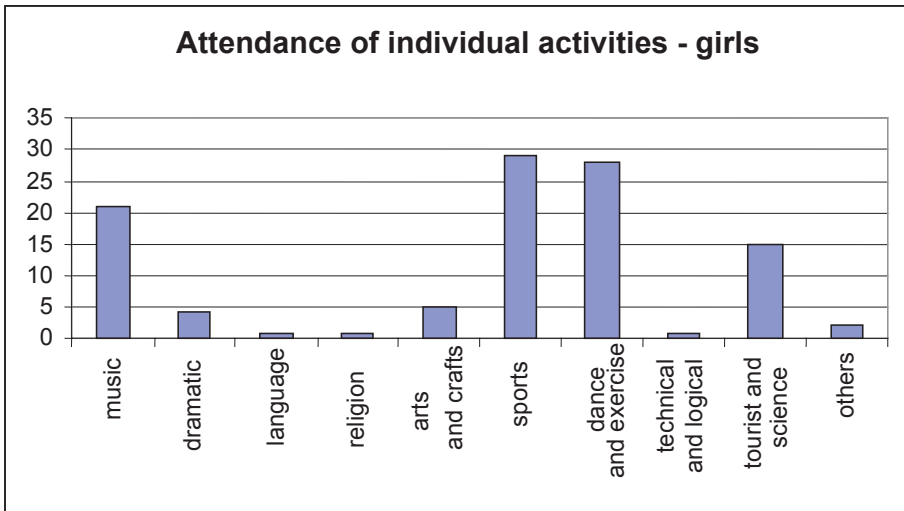


Graph 1 Attendance of activities by gender

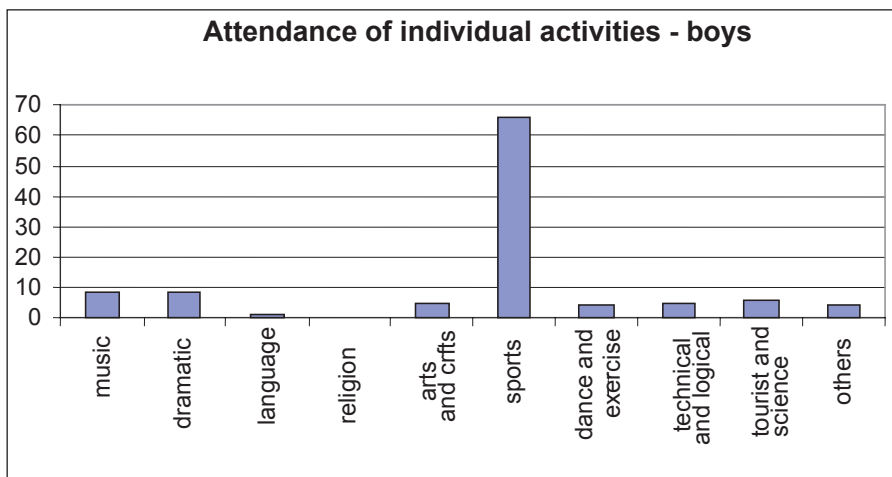
Elaborating the data we pursued categorization of adolescents’ will statement. We divided respondents’ leisure activities according to the specializations into following categories:

- music (singing, choir, playing some music instrument, music theory)
- dramatic (dramatic club, theatre, dramatic art, film camp)
- language (above standard or extra learning of foreign language)
- religion (religion, servers' meetings)
- arts and crafts (pottery, arts, crafts, model making)
- sports activity (football, swimming, judo, tennis etc.)
- dance and exercise activities (dancing groups, gymnastics, aerobics, hip hop etc.)
- technical and logical activities (working on PC, programming, various board games, chess etc.)
- tourist and science hobbies (youth tourist club, scouting, equitation etc.)
- others (girls club, fire brigades, cactuses growing etc.)

Thus, there are 10 categories. Then, in each respondent, we wrote down presence (1) or absence (2) of the given category within individual categories. Attendance of individual activities is presented in graphs as follows, separately for girls and boys.



Graph 2 Attendance of individual activities – girls



Graph 3 Attendance of individual activities – boys

Interpretation of these data would demand a lot of other information, for example about accessibility and present offer of individual activities, about social and educational environment or general case history data.

Analysing leisure time activities we come to conclusion that fulfil our expectations in many items. Nevertheless, after data evaluation, we present here several interesting findings we have done. It is obvious that during personality development of an individual there are not only structural changes in the domain of interests, but also changes in leisure time organization. If our subjects of interest are adolescents aged 15, it is understandable that the way they spend their leisure time will be determined by the same, or considerably similar factors, which influence other domains of their life. Effort to become independent from the family and parents' influence is evident, on the other hand, contemporaries' opinions and evaluation are more significant.

On the basis of the research we can generally claim that at the age of 15 there are predominating those activities that are organized individually by adolescents and depend little on parents and school. Although these claims are intuitively predictable, findings confirmed by the research prove also the importance of interest continuity and persistence of preferences in the way of spending leisure time. If the child at an early age is oriented to interests developing creative activity, we can with higher probability suppose that his or her interests will be developed in the later age. Preference for sport activities in childhood may also lead to sports activities in the future life. Results of our research reveal that this fact begins to be at the age of 15 significantly revised by own child's preferences. Previous leisure time activities continue in the case that they remain interesting and enjoying for adolescent. Stimulation emerged at an early age may or may not be developed later on.

## **JAK TRÁVÍ VOLNÝ ČAS PATNÁCTILETÍ ADOLESCENTI - RESPONDENTI STUDIE ELSPAC**

**Abstrakt:** V našem příspěvku se zabýváme problematikou využívání volného času, zejména volnočasovými aktivitami, jejich charakteristikou, strukturou a jejich vývojem vzhledem k věku respondenta. Data byla získána v rámci mezinárodního projektu ELSPAC. Při analýze volnočasových aktivit docházíme k závěrům, že v průběhu osobnostního vývoje jedince dochází nejen ke strukturálním změnám v oblasti zájmů, ale také ke změnám v organizaci volného času. V 15ti letech převládají činnosti, které si adolescenti organizují individuálně a jsou již málo závislé na rodičích a škole.

**Klíčová slova:** adolescence, volnočasové aktivity, volný čas, škola