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STUDY REGARDING THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND THE LEISURE TIME SEGMENT IN MIDDLE SCHOOL PUPILS

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Abstract Preadolescence is the the most active age group, from a physical point of view, the fittest and healthiest. This reality hides, unfortunately, another one, less encouraging - from the beginning of adolescence, many youths considerably diminish their physical activity, or worse, they completely abandon it. The objectives of this research were to: identify the influence of leisure time activities on the behavior of middle school pupils, identify the way in which middle school pupils spend their leisure time, identify the ways to optimize the extracurricular activities. This research used: the bibliographical method, the pedagogical observation method, the statistical-mathematical method, the graphical representation method, the inquiry method, the observational experiment method. There are significant differences between the two applications of the questionnaire, regarding exercising during leisure time, to the way in which this is organized, and to the aggressive behavior. The results suggest that the young people are confronted with numerous conflicts that, most of the time, they try to solve in the manner of winner-loser, or loser-loser, this attracting a series of negative effects, such as: the diminishing of self-confidence, taking extreme sides and forming coalitions, moral dilemmas, difficulties in making decisions.

Introduction

The education of the modern individual is based on its development in a comprehensive way, involving physical, intellectual, ethical and aesthetic aspects, in close connection with the demands of contemporary society and with the real skills necessary for the development of the human personality. Psychomotor activities are characterised by their physiological nature, the pedagogical strategies used, their biological effects and their way and forms of organisation which are social in nature [6]. Preadolescence is the most active age group, from a physical point of view, the fittest and healthiest [2,3,5,15]. This reality hides, unfortunately, another one, less encouraging - from the beginning of adolescence, many youths

considerably diminish their physical activity, or worse, they completely abandon it. Spending time "uselessly" is determined by lack of self-control and poor organization of one's activities. Most times, the pupils give reasons such as: "I had a long discussion with a friend about video games", "I was out and went with my friends to shoot some pool", "I want for a walk and didn't realize it was dark", etc.

During their training period, school time represents a large percentage of every person's life. As a result, the way in which school organizes the pupils' time is also a form of control and influence on them. Although the syllabus is often seen as an educational politics instrument that affects primarily the teachers' norms, it is actually an instrument of organizing the pupils' lives [7, 8, 9].

This paper aimed to study, verify, and show the role played by leisure time in the middle schoolers' leisure time and the ways in which they spend it, considering that the syllabus contains too much material, and in order to have good and very good school results, the pupils, in theory, would not have enough time for extracurricular activities.

Material-method

The purpose was to highlight the rural middle schoolers' ways to spend their leisure time, and the differences in how they behave at school and outside it, according to everyone's ability to organize their leisure time.

The objectives were to: Identify the influence of leisure time activities on the behavior of middle school pupils; Identify the way in which middle school pupils spend their leisure time; Identify the ways to optimize the extracurricular activities.

Research Hypotheses

1. Presumably, if the educational program would be lighter, the pupils could exercise more often during their leisure time?

2. Presumably, if the middle schoolers would be more aware of the need to organize their daily activities, they would become more decisive and persevering in reaching their goals?

3. Presumably, if pupils would exercise regularly in their leisure time, this would determine modifications in their moral-volitional and temperamental traits?

This research used: the bibliographical method, the pedagogical observation method, the statistical-mathematical method, the graphical representation method, the inquiry method, the observational experiment method.

Subjects and conditions of the research: The study was conducted at the "Silistea Middle School"**,** on 21 students (girls) and 19 students (boys). The research consisted in applying a questionnaire with closed and open questions, with two or three answer choices. The questionnaire was applied to the "Silistea Middle School" pupils, in the aforementioned grades. The questionnaire was filled during counseling class, initially and finally. In our study, we applied a questionnaire consisting of 16 questions, comprising both open and closed answer options. This

questionnaire was distributed to students participating in the research, and it took an average of about 10 minutes to complete. We would like to point out that participation in the questionnaire was completely voluntary and all responses were treated anonymously. We informed the participants about the purpose of the research and how the results obtained will be used. We stressed that participation is voluntary and that they can refuse or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. We have also provided contact information for additional questions or concerns.

Results

After the first administration of the questionnaire, the research continued with the inclusion of the subjects in a program aimed to discipline them, helping them become more responsible and succeed in organizing their leisure time in an efficient way. The program was conducted 3 times per week, for one month, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, each day comprising different activities, as follows:

A. Monday - General strength development program

The training program included basic exercises for multiple muscle groups, and the method used was the circuit:

- station 1: genuflections (quadriceps, gluteus maximus, gluteus medius, spinal adductors and erectors).
- station 2: deadlifts (lumbar muscles, hamstrings, gluteus muscles, quadriceps).
- station 3: push-ups.
- station 4: lunges over 15 meters.
- station 5: jumps on and over the bench - 20 seconds.

The optimal time for a session was estimated to be between 45 and 60 minutes, with an average of 50 minutes, 10-15 repetitions for each station, and passive breaks of 1-2 minutes. This circuit was repeated 3-4 times with breaks of 3-4 minutes between repetitions.

B. Wednesday - Organization of competitions that are refereed and organized by the players themselves.

This activity aimed to place the players, in turn, in the role of coach, team leader, referee and supporter, for them to understand the responsibilities that each role involves, to know the rules, respect their teammates and opponents in a competition, to know the concept of fair-play in sport, to develop emulation, and to correctly use the materials and court. The games used were football/soccer, handball, and cycling.

C. Friday - Local treks / Movement games

The treks aimed to develop the subjects' aesthetic sense, a taste for what is beautiful, and to stimulate their social skills. Through socializing, the individual

acquires, internalizes, and reintegrates values, behaviors, experiences, conducts that allow them to adapt and integrate in society [4, 11].

After one month, during which the subjects benefited from the extracurricular program, the same questionnaire was distributed, and the results were compared to the initial ones.

The results presented next represent only the answers that had significant differences between the initial and final testing - for the questions 9-16.

Table 1. Final answers compared to the initial answers given for question 9

Do you like sometimes to upset other people?			
YES/Initial (no./%)	YES/Final (no./%)	NO/Initial (no./%)	NO/Final (no./%)
18=45%	9=22.5%	22=55%	31=77.5%

Table 1 presents the final answers compared to the initial answers given for question 9. The drop in the percentage from 45% to 22.5% of pupils who like sometimes to upset other people could be the consequence of Wednesday activities, when the subjects were put in the position of referee, player, or coach.

The final answers compared to the initial answers given for question 10 are presented in the figures 1-2.

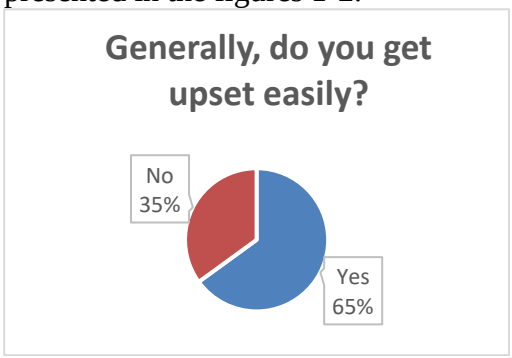

Fig. 1. Initial answers to question 10

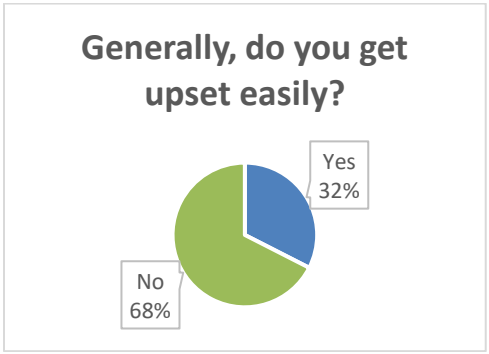

Fig. 2 Final answers to question 10

Table 2. Final answers compared to the initial answers given for question 11

Do you have any classmates who upset you so much that a fight broke out between you?			
YES/Initial (no./%)	YES/Final (no./%)	NO/Initial (no./%)	NO/Final (no./%)
19=47.5%	4=10%	21=52.5%	90%

Table 2 shows that the aggressiveness level has considerably decreased, after only one month of organized activities. During this time, only for 10% of the subjects the fact of being upset has led to hitting the other, compared to the initial 47.5%.

Table 3. Final answers compared to the initial answers given for question 12

Do you feel sometimes like breaking an object?

YES/Initial (no./%)	YES/Final (no./%)	NO/Initial (no./%)	NO/Final (no./%)
24=60%	10=25%	16=40%	30=75%

Table 3 shows that for the question, Do you feel sometimes like breaking an object? the percentage of affirmative answers dropped from 60% to 25%, which shows that the irritability level is no longer that high among the pupils.

Table 4. Final answers compared to the initial answers given for question 13

If you are hit, do you hit back?			
YES/Initial (no./%)	YES/Final (no./%)	NO/Initial (no./%)	NO/Final (no./%)
23=57.5%	12=30%	17=42.5%	38=70%

The final answers, centralized in table 4, confirm what the subjects answered to questions 9-10, which is a major decrease in aggressiveness. The subjects' desire to hit back has dropped from 57.5% initially to 30%, finally.

Regarding question 14, "What do you like to do in your leisure time?" the preference order is modified. The subjects mentioned activities in the following order:Walking with friends/classmates = 26 initial answers /20 final; Playing football/soccer with friends/family = 24 initial answers /30 final; Cycling = 21 initial answers /35 final; Various ball games (including handball or volleyball) = 18 initial answers /26 final; Reading = 20 initial answers /20 final; Running = 15 initial answers /10 final; Playing on your phone = 14 initial answers /8 final; Dancing = 2 initial answers /2 final; Painting = 2 initial answers /2 final; Household activities (bringing wood, gardening) = 2 initial answers /0 final; Fishing = 1 initial answers /1 final; Sleeping/resting = 1 initial answers /0 final; Doing homework = 1 initial answers /0 final.

For a better understanding, figure 3 presents these preferences, comparing the initial and final answers.

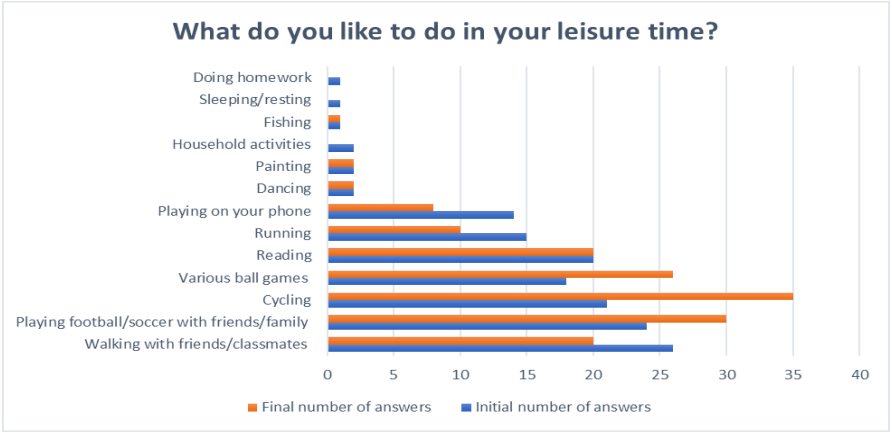

Fig. 3. Comparison between the initial and final answers to question 14

Table 5. Final answers compared to the initial answers given for question 15

How much time do you have left in a school day?				
	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	More than 3 hours
Initial	6 answers=15%	2 answers=5%	24 answers=60%	8 answers=20%
Final	-	-	16 answers=40%	24 answers=60%

Table 5 centralizes the comparative initial and final answers to the question "How much time do you have left in a school day?" The results show that in the end, the subjects have organized their leisure time better; the percentage of the respondents who said they have more than 3 hours of leisure time left has increased from 20% to 60%. In regards to the last question, **"**What is the week day with the most classes / the hardest day?", one can see that the final answers are not much different than the initial ones, Wednesday remaining the busiest day of the week. The percentage of the subjects who said that has increased from 72.5% initially to 82% finally. The extra work from the last month can be a reason for this increase. The results are presented in table 6.

Table 6. Final answers compared to the initial answers given for question 16

What is the weekday with the most classes / the hardest day?					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	None
Initial	6 answers 15%	1 answer 2.5%	29 answers 72.5%	3 answers 7.5%	1 answer 2.5%
Final	3 answers 7.5%	-	33 answers 82.5%	2 answers 5%	2 answers 5%

Discussions

Our study is similar to research entitled "Primary School Pupils' Free Time Activities" as we investigate similar issues and analyse the same areas of interest relating to pupils' leisure use. The aim of this research was to identify differences in the use of leisure time for kinesiology and non-kinesiology activities, according to gender and age, among students completing primary and lower secondary education. Given the importance of daily exercise for the health of children and young people, the major concern in public health has become the absence of involvement in regular physical activity and participation in leisure activities [14]. We can also refer to the study entitled " Changes in physical activity and sedentary time during adolescence: Gender differences during weekdays and weekend days". In this study, daily duration spent in vigorous physical activity (VPA), moderate to vigorous (MVPA) and light physical activity (LPA), as well as time spent sedentary (ST) were measured and evaluated. The results of this study revealed significant gender differences in changes in MVPA and ST over the follow-up period. Total MVPA decreased significantly in boys (from 60 minutes/day at baseline to 2.2 minutes/day/year), while in girls MVPA levels remained at 49 minutes/day at baseline [12]. Autorii confirma ca si selectarea unor elemente specifice dansului, în funcție de vârstă, capacitatea de înțelegere și nivelul de

dezvoltare psiho-motorie al elevilor, poate contribui la obținerea unor rezultate superioare în ceea ce privește dezvoltarea supleței (flexibilității) care pot fi realizate cu succes în jurul vârstei de 10-11 ani, besides being enjoyable leisure activities, "both the dance sport and the classicla ballet, can constructively contribute to harnessing the motor, technical-tactical, psychical and attitudinal potential of the students"[1]. Our study can be related to research entitled "Study regarding the school curriculum and the leisure time segment in middle school pupils". The studies address issues related to students' use of leisure time and analyse how it interacts with the school curriculum, and the aim of our study was to examine how secondary school students spend their free time in relation to the school curriculum. Sports specialists, after conducting detailed studies, suggested various solutions to improve this process and promoted the use of modern methods and means. These findings support the fact that there is great concern and involvement from experts in the development and optimization of sports practices "In this way, came into being some installations, equipments and computerized technologies that more contributed to the improvement of the training process development" [13].

Conclusions

There are significant differences between the two applications of the questionnaire, regarding exercising during leisure time, to the way in which this is organized, and to the aggressive behavior. The results suggest that the young people are confronted with numerous conflicts that, most of the time, they try to solve in the manner of winner-loser, or loser-loser, this attracting a series of negative effects, such as: the diminishing of self-confidence, taking extreme sides and forming coalitions, moral dilemmas, difficulties in making decisions. The authors think that the significant differences between the two inquiries are due to:

A busy schedule that the pupils don't know how to manage; a lack of regular exercise based on a well-organized program that would be tightly followed. A lack of such a program has shown initially behaviors that had nothing to do with fair-play, regarding aggressiveness.

All of these confirm the working hypotheses, drawing attention to the need to: Increase the number of physical education and sports classes from 2 to 3 hours per week; To reduce the curricular volume, because the pupils' inability to use it correspondingly leads to educational failure, on one hand, and extracurricular failure, on the other.

To correctly use one's leisure time, this depending on each person's ability to control and direct themselves and "as teachers of physical education and sports coaches, we are concerned to keep informed about the latest developments in the field and to learn the best methods and techniques to enable students to take part in physical education and sports in the current conditions" [10].

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