

ORGANIZATION OF NON-FORMAL ACTIVITIES AND LEISURE OUTSIDE SCHOOL: ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDE

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Abstract. *Study present the research aimed to reveal the situation of non-formal students' activity. The process of non-formal education tends characterized by creating more flexible learning spaces, developing more caring and less hierarchical relationships, and aiming to meet participants' needs. According to the research, the results discussed in two aspects: a) non – formal education implemented out of comprehensive school and b) non – formal education implemented in the comprehensive school. Having compared the attendance of non – formal education activity at school and out of comprehensive school according to gender, the results have shown that girls' and boys' choice of activity types is similar; girls are more involved into non – formal activities organized out of comprehensive school. Reasons participating in the activities of non – formal education are primary associated with general psychological status, life goals, motives and interests of students.*

Keywords: *non-formal education, school activities, preferences of non – formal activities of 13 – 16 years' age students.*

Introduction

During recent years, intensive education reform is taking place and pedagogues and school community face with a new challenge solving the problem of students' qualitative leisure time and the non-formal education activities, as well.

Object of the research – Analyzes of student's non - formal activity and determination of the relationship between leisure and non-formal education.

Aim of the research: Based on literature studies to reveal the preferences of student's non - formal activity and to determine the relationship between leisure and non-formal education.

Methods of the research: Analysis of scientific literature; quantitative research (questionnaire survey); Statistical data analysis was performed with

SPSS 11.0programme. Analyzing the results, the percent distribution of the responses and statistically significant differences among them, correlation coefficient, data analysis and interpretation was calculated. Popularity index (PI) shows which place is taken by a concrete evaluated object in the list created in the order of decreasing scores. The reliability of differences was evaluated according to the indicator of Pearson Chi-Square; the strength of relation between indicators was evaluated calculating the Spearman correlation coefficient (r). All differences commented in the text are statistically significant, the threshold of significance is 0,05.

The research data was collected using questionnaires, composed according to the analysis of scientific literature (Mikalauskas, et al., 2017; Langvinienė, 2013, Batlle, 2019). The questionnaire consisted of 37 questions that aimed to find out the student's attitudes towards the organization of non - formal activity at school, its influence on students' learning, self-expression, and communication.

Quota of research. 344 students of 7th (N=203) and 9th (N=141) grades of Siauliai comprehensive schools participated in the survey. There were 212 girls and 132 boys at the age of 13 – 16 years.

Analysis of Research Results

There are some differences in understanding leisure time and non-formal activities. Leisure is described as a “non-obligatory activity that is intrinsically motivated and engaged in during discretionary time, that is, time not committed to obligatory occupations such as work, self-care, or sleep” (Guruprasad, Kr. Banumathe & Sinu 2012). Student's leisure time develop socialization, creativity and many-sided abilities, improving the culture of self -growing, meeting the needs of self-expression. Leisure activities helps to improve quality of life characteristics. Auhuber, Vogel, Grafe, Kiess & Poulain (2019) state that children with lower SES (Education and socioeconomic status) more often use screen-based media and were less physically active. Physical activity, in contrast, was significantly related to better social life and more outdoor time. So, it supports the need to involve students into active leisure through physical activities. The basic characteristics of leisure are relaxation, enjoyment, freedom of choice, intrinsic motivation, commitment, control and challenge. Engagement in leisure can promote physical and psychological wellbeing for persons of all ages (Elsborg & Pedersen, 2013, Mirić, 2016) stated that a lack of satisfying leisure activities may be associated with behavior problems such as delinquency. Some common leisure activities in school children were reading, television watching, use of computers, spectator activities, arts and crafts, game and physical activities and some other hobbies as per their interest (Guruprasad, Kr Banumathe & Sinu, 2012). These considerations support idea that non – formal education and leisure

having some differences has one common feature - both of them are deliberately chosen leisure activities.

Non-formal education mostly leads to qualifications that not recognized as formal qualifications by the relevant national educational authorities or to no qualifications at all. Batlle (2019) present Coombs & Ahmed's (cit. Batlle, 2019) definition of non – formal activity as an organized activity, with a learning goal in mind, that occurs outside of the more hierarchical formal education system (i.e., school or university). However, alternative interpretations of non-formal education define it as a process rather than focusing on the setting. The process of non-formal education tends to be characterized by creating more flexible learning spaces, developing more caring and less hierarchical relationships, and aiming to meet participants' needs (Malcom, Wilson, & Davidson, cit. Campbell M., N. Watson, & N. Watters, 2015); Romi & Schmida, (2009). Non-formal education activity includes students' participation in various groups, clubs, trips, festivals and other activities that are organized in mainstream schools and elsewhere (music, art, sport schools, etc.) (Juodaitytė, 2002 & Mikalauskas, et al., 2017).

With proper organization of non-formal activity, it is possible to achieve strengthening of child's self-confidence and his/her feeling of higher independence. During complementary education it is possible to implement many tasks of education. When the stream of information is becoming larger and the process of teaching (learning) is becoming more intensive it is important to appropriately match non-formal activity and leisure (Garbauskaitė-Jakimovska, 2014; Priti, 2016). So, different youth programs do not simply 'happen' – they are designed to have particular outputs (exl. to stop or prevent a behavior; not alter social structures). Similarly, initiatives that promote life skills like teamwork and leadership usually do so in a manner that emphasizes individual responsibility. In other words, it is up to the young person to become an active person, regardless of the environment they live in (Batlle, 2019; Priti, 2016). School systems can encourage group games, sports, arts and crafts, or can be a free play which develops unity and social integration among students. Active leisure also stimulates physical and cognitive process which in turn leads to good physical and mental wellbeing. It can also enhance self-esteem and confidence thereby the child can achieve a sense of self-satisfaction (Guruprasad, Kr. Banumathe, & Sinu, 2012).

Summarizing theoretical issues pointed out that non-formal education and leisure time of students analyzed from the different points of view. Leisure time is not highly structured, flexible, not required administrative measures and reflects personal internal situation of preferred activities. Non- formal activities usually are organized in more structured way, they may need some specific environment, non-formal activities require leadership and action planning according to the

content of non – formal activity. However, in both cases activities arises from the internal needs of the students, interest in the process, opportunities to experience satisfaction and to reach own goals, both activities reflects individual well-being of the student.

Appropriate organization of non – formal activities after lessons retract students from spending time in vain. And at the same time from harmful habits, delinquency creates conditions to realize the need for self-expression and communication through artistic, technical and sports activity, to develop national and cultural self-identification, raises the prestige of the school (Petronė 2011; Pinkevičienė, 2012; Mikalauskas et al., 2017; Samašonok & Barkauskaitė, 2012). Different programs in non-formal education supported development of student's personality and they as a part of holistic education, could be included into curricular in formal education. Non- formal programs in schools provide reinforcement of positive character and even become necessary” so that students' character develops well (Widodo & Nusantara, 2020; Tudor, 2013).

Non – formal education of students, as a significant leisure problem, analyzed by the Lithuanian researchers. The importance of complementary education for personalities' socialization has been analyzed by Langvinienė (2013), Kedrayate (2012), Šiaučiulienė (2011). As Tudor (2013) noticed it almost become a rule, to engage students, starting from early age, in various categories of non-formal activities. The intentions of these processes are to build learning experiences formally gained and ensure the development of skills discovered in the student. The significance of any type of occupation in the development of personality has been pointed out by Romi & Schmida (2009). Straub (2004), Malcom et. al. (cit. Campbell M., N. Watson & N. Watters, 2015) have noted that non – formal activities gaining increasing role in the whole process of students' socialization. Great attention by the European authorities: initiative of the European Council (The State Education Strategy 2013-2022, 2012), European Association for Leisure Time Institutions of Children and Youth (EAICY) shown. Document Non-Formal Education with Children and Young People (2013) points out the need of coordination of non - formal activity of children and youth, the concern towards the readiness of the growing generation for independent political, cultural and educative activity. According to A. Petrauskienė & D. Matulevičiūtė (2007) it is not enough formal education only to educate students and youth as responsible and creative citizens. Organization of non-formal activity is an important part of the modern process of education and it correspond with STE(A)M (Science, Technology, Engineering, (Art), Mathematics), goals that points out significant of complex education of creativity, interrelation and application of practical and theoretical knowledge (Šorienė, 2015).

However, a lot of question are still need more careful research (what are the preferences of students – leisure time or non- formal activities, what type of

activities that attract students could be applied more widely, ext.) So, it should be noted that the development of the system of non – formal education is important part of whole education system and area of student's personal development as well.

According to the obtained results, students most often choose non – formal education at school according of a subject, and mostly they organized at school. Subject non-formal education organized out of school is less. Sports groups are popular among students both at school and out of school. As the research shows that non – formal educational institutions are popular among the students (Fig.1).

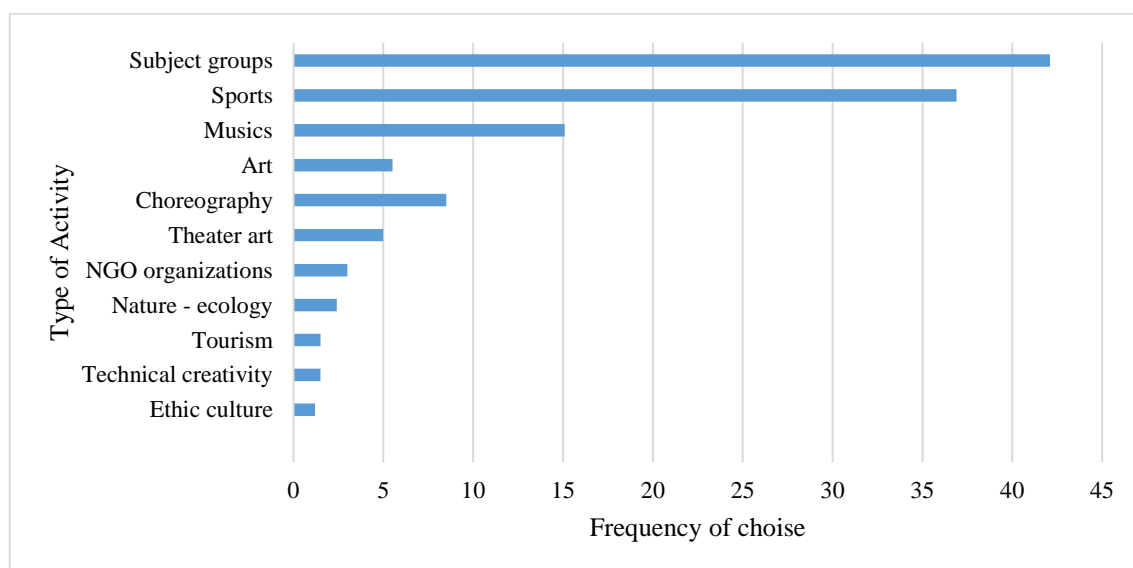


Figure 1 Attendance of Non – formal Education Activities at School and out of School

Analyzing results of the research a certain paradox emerged. Sometimes there occur misunderstandings talking about non – formal education. In every day practice, it is accepted that non-formal education is often understood as a non-classroom activity. But following under the description of non – formal education it is obvious that these institutions have all features of formal educational institutions: structure, hierarchy, recognized level and type of education. According to our research, the results discussed in two aspects: a) non – formal education implemented out of comprehensive school and b) non – formal education implemented in the comprehensive school.

General attendance of non – formal education groups by students at school and out of school has been present according to the criterion of sampling frequency (fk). Mostly non – formal education activities are organized in out of school educational institutions (specialized sports, art, music schools). Other ones' non – formal activities students can attend at school after lessons time. In the out of school non – formal education (sports, music, art, choreography, theatre

art, NGO's) participated 51,26 % of all respondents; and 48,74 % prefer to attend activities organized at school. The research has shown that subject employment at school (42,1fk) is preferred most of all in comparison with all other forms of non – formal education. Ethnic culture (1,2fk), technical creation and tourism and regional studies (1,5fk) are less popular. The number of students attending non – formal education out of school is larger (and most preferable is sport activity (36,9fk).

Having compared the attendance of non – formal education activity at school and out of comprehensive school according to gender, the results have shown that girls' and boys' choice of activity types is similar. The differences are observed in choosing certain activity groups: a larger number of girls attend subject groups, 65,3(fk) at school and 36,7(fk) out of school, but a fewer girls attend sport activities; girls participate in the activity of non-governmental organizations (9,3 fk), boys do not participate there at all. Girls more actively attend activities associated with artistic character while boys attend those of sports and technical character. Having compared the attendance and choice of non - formal activities according to gender observed the tendency that a larger number of girls participate in non – formal activities both at comprehensive school and out of it.

The results show that girls are more involved into non – formal activities organized out of comprehensive school. For students it is not important were the non – formal education is organized, they pointed out the opportunity to realize their abilities (64,8fk). It is important to pay attention on this result, because it could be useful in thinking about future profession. Participation in non – formal education activities important for general psychological wellbeing of students. Girls were looking for new impressions (67,3fk), boys – 32,7(fk). Participating in non – formal education let's to fill gaps in student's knowledge (66,7fk), boys – 33,3(fk). For boys it is more characteristic to be respected by friends (71,1 k), for girls – 28,9(fk). For students it is important the personality of supervisor: if he/she is a good and well-known specialist is more important for boys (57,7fk). A part of students demonstrated some indifference to the forms of non – formal education. The motive of a random choice – “there was nothing else to choose” was fixed in 64 cases. The “need to spend time somewhere after” the lessons more actual for the boys (57,1fk). Both boys and girls had similar motive to participate in the non – formal education activities if a friend attends the activity together (boys – 53,1fk, girls – 46,9fk). Some students try to develop healthy life mode and strengthen their health (girls – 52,5fk, boys – 47,5fk). Attending both (non – formal education in the comprehensive school or outside the school) chosen activities, students realized the expectations and hopes: the activities met the about 45-55(fk) of expectations of the students, i.e. those who had striven there for the realization of abilities and interests.

Students, participating in the activities of non – formal education (Fig.2), indicated different reasons and motives. It is primary associated with general psychological status, life goals, motives and interests.

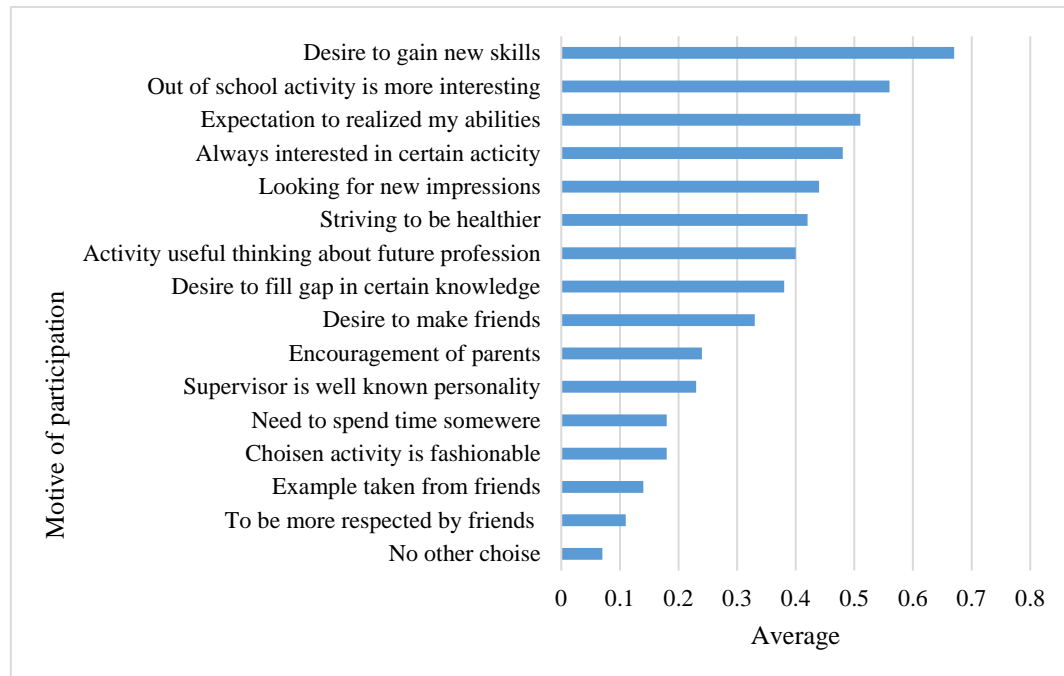


Figure 2 *The Motives of Attendance in Non – formal Activities*

Relatively, the motives for the non – formal participation choice analyzed from two aspects: prevalence of personal motives and prevalence of social motives. Personal motives include 9 items and named as desire to gain new skills (M - 0,67), expectation to realized own abilities (M- 0,51), interested in certain activity (M-0,48), striving for better health (M-0,42), activity associated with future profession (M-0,4), desire to fill gap in certain knowledge (M-0,38), need to spend time somewhere (M-0,18), to be more respected by friends (M-0,11), because of there were no other choice (M-0,07). Distribution according to the motive to participate in activities of non – formal education (Fig.2) points out the desire to gain new skills. As S.Elsborg & S. H.Pedersen (2013) says, learning is equivalent to basic changes, changes within the totality that consists of cognition (knowledge, concepts, thoughts, notions, perceptions of one's self and the world) action and social processes, in which the individual takes part. So, the highest points in desire to gain new skills and to realize own potential is the most motivating activity in the process of non – formal education. Higher scores in striving for better health and planning future profession proves R.Šiaučiulienė (2011). statement that motivation involves physical, emotional, and intellectual effort, that is socially important for personally satisfying and broad perspectives

on personality development. Non – formal education build is a direct link between external and internal motivation, in which the external circumstances comprise of the layout, frame, culture, and social conventions, etc., of the given environment (Elsborg & Pedersen, 2013). The main condition that these elements must connect with the expectations and life prospects, etc., of the participants, thus creating coherence and meaningfulness. The outside environment (or social situation) serves to support and strengthen the individual's motivation.

As it mentioned, the second part of the choice motives of non – formal participation named as social motives. In this research social motives include: example taken from friends (M-0,14), chosen activity is fashionable (M-0,18), supervisor leading the non – formal activity is well known personality (M-0,23), encouragement of parents (M-0,24), desire to make friends (M-0,33), looking for new impressions (M-0,44) and statement that out of school activities are more interesting (M-0,56). Sh. Priti (2016) states that soft skills gain in non – formal education include work ethics, attitude, communication skills, emotional intelligence and a whole host of other personal attributes. It means, that motives based on motives, linked to social activities, are important for the development of student's personality, as well. Desire to make friendships, seeking for new impressions; wish to participate in wider social environment show that students are going to be active citizens.

At the same time, we face with the results that explains student's unwillingness to participate in non – formal activities. Most of the students indicate objective reasons including the load of lessons 27,9%. It was set up that students lack time to prepare for lessons, 22,8%. 7,3% of the students do not attend non – formal education anymore because of a mismatch of interests and not satisfying their expectations and needs. 11,9 % of the respondents do not attend non – formal activities because of disagreements with supervisor and 8,7% of the respondents found a new activity. Comparing results according to the gender and grade girls indicate heavy workload (statistical significance $p < 0,05$, the correlation according to gender – 0,21 and according to grade – 0,29).

The results of the research show that unattractive non – formal education activities related to the certain subjects; advanced students more in comparison with others indicated this choice. It's because of purposeful choice, already knowing what they are going to study after the school graduation. Such types of non – formal education as safe traffic, regional studies are attractive only for a small number of students.

Organization of non – formal activities at school, it is attempted to meet students' needs, parents' wishes that are taken in the mind firstly. The meetings with students are organized and they express their wishes and needs.

Therefore, in organizing non - formal activity the following is important: to start the formulation of activity strategy of/out the institution from finding out

student's needs and creation of proper database, to organize activities starting from the first grades.

Conclusions

1. Theoretical issues let's to summarize, that non-formal education and leisure time of students could be analyzed from the different points of view. Leisure time is not highly structured, flexible, not required administrative measures and reflects personal internal situation of preferred activities. Non-formal activities usually are organized in more structured way, they may need some specific environment, non-formal activities require leadership and action planning according to the content of non – formal activity.
2. Dominating motives encouraging students to participate in non – formal education activities are related to the formation of skills and improvement of the knowledge, preparing for future profession, desire to strengthen their health, admiring supervisor's personality, expectation to realize one's abilities. Different reasons and motives were indicated by students, participating in the activities of non – formal education. It is primary associated with general psychological status, life goals, motives and interests.
3. Students' lack of time is the main reason of non-attendance of non – formal education and it is more common for the students of the 9th grade. The results of the research show that unattractive non – formal education activities are related to the certain subjects; this choice was indicated by advanced students more in comparison with others. It's because of purposeful choice, already knowing what they are going to study after the school graduation. Such types of non – formal education as safe traffic, regional studies are attractive only for a small number of students.

Summary

Study present the research aimed to reveal the situation of non-formal students' activity. The process of non-formal education tends to characterized by creating flexible learning spaces, developing more caring and less hierarchical relationships, and aiming to meet participants' needs. According to the research, the results discussed in two aspects: a) non – formal education implemented out of comprehensive school and b) non – formal education implemented in the comprehensive school. Object of the research – analyzes of student's non-formal activity and determination of the relationship between leisure and non-formal education. Aim of the research: Based on literature studies to reveal the preferences of student's non-formal activity and to determine the relationship between leisure and non-formal education. Analysis of scientific literature, quantitative research (questionnaire survey) used. Statistical data was analyzed applying non – parametric methods of SPSS 11.0 programme and methods of descriptive statistics.

Research data was collected using questionnaires, composed according to the analysis of scientific literature by Mikalauskas et al., (2017); Langvinienė (2013) & Batlle, (2019) consisted of 37 questions that aimed to find out the student's attitudes towards the organization of non - formal activity at school, preference of activities, and motives of attendance. Quota of research. 344 students of 7th (N=203) and 9th (N=141) grades of Siauliai comprehensive schools participated in the survey. There were 212 girls and 132 boys at the age of 13 – 16 years.

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