

REVIEW OF RECENT LITERATURE ABOUT LEISURE TIME OF SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CROATIA

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ABSTRACT

This review covers peer-reviewed publications about free time of school-aged children and youth in Croatia, published since 1990. We briefly present these publications and extract their common points. Based on that, we suggest possible addition to leisure time activities of school-aged children and youth.

KEY WORDS

free time, leisure time, Croatia, children and youth, problem solving

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INTRODUCTION

Free time is an important part of lives of school-aged children and youth [1-9]. Many researchers approached that notion, in order to characterise it, to contextualise it, to understand whether there exists a universal form or many specific forms of free time, to analyse or propose its structuration and to address other topics related to that notion [1-4].

Additional topic is the free time structure. How to describe it? Is there some optimal form? Does that structure change over time? If it changes, does it change primarily because of a persons' age, because of changes on societal level, or because of some other reason? Moreover, are the answers to stated questions universal, or differ among communities?

The structure criterion is one of the main scientific and research starting points for determining the quality of free time. Although, in addition to the structure, the quality of free time is also defined by other micro and macro systemic factors, it has been shown that the structure of free time is of great importance for the potential development benefits of children and young people. Until now, the Croatian scientific framework has dealt with research that goes in the direction of analysis and research of the basic structure of free time. Despite the valuable scientific conclusions derived from these analyses, the interdisciplinary field of free time brings limited scientific results in relation to the world science of free time, which advances both scientific evidence of the optimality of free time for children and young people, as well as practical implications. Although international research is important and provides valid scientific research guidelines, scientific conclusions are not always applicable to every area of free time presence due to the cultural determinants of free time. From this comes the importance of scientific research on free time in Croatia.

Our long-term objective is to contribute to better structuration of the leisure time, as part of a free time of children and youth. This article is our starting point in achieving the stated objective. It analyses existing, recent literature about free time of school-aged children and youth in Croatia. However, because time spent in school and time spent in conducting school-related tasks (e.g. homework and learning) are important and significant parts of childhood and adolescence, there is a diffuse boundary between them and the free time. In particular, here we consider free time as consisting of leisure time, time for out-of-school activities and time for out-of-class activities. Before proceeding, let us note that majority of approaches utilise definition of free time formulated by J.R. Kelly [8; pp.54-55] or J. Dumazedier [8; p.66], which is why we do not address here the definition of free time in details.

It is important to characterise the texts included. We included texts from 1990, as that year mark the beginning of significant political and societal changes, which rather soon brought about correspondingly significant changes in the education and overall, in relation between the society in general and its youth. Since we restrict the review to free time of school-aged children and youth, further in the text we will assume that children and youth attend primary or secondary school, if not stated otherwise. However, some of the literature encountered is not devoted precisely for them, the children and youth in schools. In order to gain a broader and better insight into free time, apart from the population included in the regular education system, this paper provides an insight into free time that applies to young people outside the education system as well as adults.

One must be aware that free time is important for children and youth primarily because of its role in their formation. Because of that, during free time many important processes take place, such as value formation, socialisation, sub(culture) adoption, various aspects of risky behaviour, etc. Articles which explicitly cover such topics, but do not contextualise it clearly in a free time, are not covered here.

Although it includes all important relevant scientific conclusions about free time, this work does not show the historical context of free time and does not deal with historical facts related to free time in general. We tried to represent included articles with mentioning briefly their main points, however, we are aware that it cannot be optimally done and consider that this review will serve the readers as starting point for their reading of the covered literature.

While on the one hand we extensively searched the publications related to that topic, we are aware that some of the publications could be missing from the presented collection. In a small part we purposefully avoided publications that were prepared for specific purposes and are shortened versions of other publications presented here. Despite our efforts, it is possible that we unintentionally missed some of the publications devoted to the topic of free time of children and youth in Croatia.

In the second section we present an extensive list of such a literature, and briefly characterise it. Third section concludes the article and provides a particular perspective.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There are the following forms of the literature about free time of school-aged children and youth in Croatia: monographs, proceedings and project reports, and articles.

As an introductory, yet summarising text of existing needs and constraints, we emphasise a text by V. Previšić, part of a foreword in [5; pp.9-10]:

Free time is still today ... a very modern and current topic. Intended for rest, leisure, recreation and personality development of each individual – separated from daily biological, needs, work obligations, family duties and social-individual life – free time offers what to do when there is “nothing to be done”! How to carry it out in a meaningful way or just “get lost” in ignorance and not getting along with this benefit and the reach of modern life in time of the fourth scientific and technological revolution. As it was during time of Danica Nola’s work, today the following question is actual: what to do through institutions and societies intended for the life of children and youth outside of school and family, to fulfil their free time in an organized way, but the way that will not be overly programmed, pedagogic and arranged to exterminate the essence of the child’s natural and natural development.

Children and youth need “unstructured free time”. But, equally, how to resist commercialized offers and consumerist contents that do not care about the natural children growth; their individual and social integrity.

In diverse forms, thoughts presented in that text are found in other included texts, thus one can argue about a spontaneously and independently reached consensus regarding more important aspects of children and youth free time.

Before proceeding, as a specific theoretical approach encompassing national context and diverse concurrently realised processes, we extract another V. Previšić’s contribution [10], in which he points that free time is contemporary important phenomenon. Work and free time are to be considered on equal footing as they both are non-separable human activities [10; p.404]. He states that “it is possible that children and young people do not really decide and do not manage their free time (due to the different influences of parents and aggressive external manipulators primarily aimed at children and young people)” [10; p.405]. Previšić considers that family is the first and foremost factor of educational during free time, followed by school and by out-of-class and out-of-school activities [10; pp.405-407]. However, according to him the role of the school should be enhanced since its actions are incorporated into the basis of education.

TEXTBOOKS AND MONOGRAPHS

Monographs dealing with free time of children and youth cover in detail both the theoretical notions originating within the pedagogy of free time, and experience collected from realisations of initiatives related to free time of children and youth.

In particular, the university textbook by J. Plenković [2] encompasses the theoretical background from pedagogy of free time. But, pedagogy of free time is much more than a scientific discipline. It is so because there is a world-wide actuality of pedagogy of free time, and especially its futuristic importance for the theory and practice of education in the 21st century, which the author explicitly states as one of the three main reasons for dealing with pedagogy of free time [2; p.5]. Following that, the fundamental task of a pedagogy of free time is to enable all people to fill their free time, which remains after they conduct their duties, with activities which will ensure the optimal opportunities to develop their strengths and capability for personal and societal development [2; p.45].

The author defines free time and emphasises that it is to be approached as a collection of activities [2; p.9]. Based on the activities of a pupil, free time is divided into tri basic groups: time for rest, time for recreation and time for personal development [2; p.40]. There is societal need for coherent action devoted to organisation of free time, because the free time is also the source of large number of problems, which are important for positive or negative human development [2; p.10]. Free time is characterised with its dynamics, as it is an ever-changing process in human history and development of work [2; pp.20-21] within which one observes continuous confrontation of models belonging to earlier approaches with novel educational needs [2; p.91].

D. Nola, with her impressive opus about the interplay between the child games and child creativity, in the following two works emphasised the importance of free time for children and youth: “Culture and Free Time of Youth” [5; pp.109-116] and “Free Time – a Distinct Phenomenon of New Informatic Civilisation” [5; pp.117-124]. Because the development of civilisation brought about significant rise in average free time of a person, there is a need to structure it with appropriate out-of-school activities, and that need is to be fulfilled promptly as there are many intentional, yet not benevolent, initiatives that also tend to take over the youth free time [5; p.112]. The author emphasises the importance of free time for proper societal, developmental action [5; p.121], and moreover emphasises the role that free time has in making possible the revealing and expressing of creativity of individuals and groups [5; p.122].

G. Livazović exhaustively describes existing approaches and individual contributions of experts and scholars to the pedagogy of free time [6]. He provides the readers with the history of research about free time in Croatia [6; pp.178-181], and similarly to other authors relates the rise in the amount of free time as well as the rise of the importance of its structuration to development of industrial societies [6; pp.76-77]. He contributes to free time structuration by dividing the existing, rather large number of activities conducted within free time into well-described groups: games, hobbies, creativity, and group of mixed activities [6; p.254, 6; 263]. There are further theoretical contributions to pedagogically founded structuration of free time by the same author, but with surveying higher education students [11].

V. Puževski, in a part of his large collection of articles devoted to diverse school-related topics, from theoretical to practical approaches, he deals with the notion of free time [7; pp.97-98]. He states that free time is a general societal fact. Gradually, average person’s free time enlarge as a consequence of several competing processes; lessening of working time but devoting more time to societal obligations and to emerging system of a permanent education [7; p.97]. Having in mind that children and youth are subject to diverse influences from their environment, it is of ultimate importance to determine who and how will conduct the development of their relation toward free time and culture [7; p.98]. Regarding free time, V. Puževski concludes that as a

consequence of all stated, a new task for schools emerges: the education for free time [7; p.98]. However, he treats out-of-class and out-of-school activities in more details, as he considers a reformed, new, “open school” as a school for more out-of-class activities. Schools will be, according to him, creators, facilitators and coordinators of diverse education programs, with ultimate aim to enable students to maximise their potentials, sociability and preparation for life [7; p.120]. He mentions paradoxical examples of out-of-school activities that have become almost school-based activities, as a spontaneous consequence of a tendency for their better organisation. That should in fact be avoided so that out-of-school activities can become basis for authentic companionship and true youth-societies [7; p.120]. He concludes that development of out-of-school activities is a combined task of schools and many shareholders ranging from families to economy institutions [7; p.128]. He analyses in details notions of extended and full-day schooling [7; pp.137-163] and lists approaches that has already existed in practice.

V. Rosić [8] provides the readers both with the detailed approach to pedagogy of free time and its various aspects, and the guidelines for its successful organising and conducting. He presents genuine importance and characteristics of free time [8; 65-132] and provides readers with more action-oriented approaches to free time [8; pp.163-190]. Moreover, he lists ten rules how to organise better out time (implicitly: free time) and achieve success [8; pp.176-179] and develops in details workshops devoted to rising awareness of various aspects of free time [8; pp.199-203].

V. Mlinarević and M. Brust Nemet [12], in the extensive monograph, present detailed review of scientific and professional texts devoted to free time of children and youth, additionally presents historical development of our understanding of that notion, to which they add description of existing approaches and definitions. They stress modern characteristics of free time [12; pp.24-25]. The authors list four conditions for reasonable and cultured use of free time: “to provide various opportunities for cultural, social and individual use of free time; to train children and young people to systematically and optimally use these opportunities; to encourage the establishment of youth centres at the national, county and city levels; and to encourage the opening of ‘schools for parents’ and organizing projects for awareness and training of parents” [12; p.40]. Mlinarević and Brust Nemet list contemporary problems about free time of children and youth, discuss media influence, emphasise educational role of sport and in particular deals with extracurricular activities in school curriculum (both out-of-class and out-of-school). Regarding that last point, the authors stress that in such activities both the students and the teachers who lead the activities – are sucreators. Important contribution to such activities is animation and encouragement [12; p.190].

The authors conducted empirical study in school year 2010/2011, in 3 urban and 3 rural primary schools in three counties of region Slavonia, incorporating in total 344 respondents: students of these schools, leaders of extracurricular activities and teachers. Almost all the students participate in several extracurricular activities, most of them in choir, sport and drama-recitation activity. Along with data about distribution of participation in activities, the authors present teachers’ attitudes and reasons why students participate in some activity.

Previously, Valjan Vukić prepared a review article about free time of children and youth [13], that included also a detailed theoretical approach to the notion of free time.

There are several proceedings of conferences and thematic issues of scientific and professional journals devoted to free time, either solely to free time of children or generally to free time for all age groups.

GENERAL APPROACH TO FREE TIME

Cindrić presents part of the larger project devoted to the out-of-curriculum and out-of-school activities of primary school students [14]. The research is partly motivated by the observed need to modernise the organisation of these activities, taking into account developmental

particularities of the classroom and of the subject teaching. Out-of-class and out-of-school activities contribute to confirming the children's creative abilities [14; p.51]. Generally, these activities are characterised by the activity itself, by the organisation and by the voluntary participation [14; p.51].

The peculiarities of teaching, as a consequence of the appropriate age, are that in classroom teaching the basis is group connection, so out-of-class and out-of-school activities require compact groups and joint activity [14; p.53]. In contrast, the age of students in subject classes is characterised by individuality, separation from parents and family and striving for independence. At that age, the group is a necessary living environment for the child, it is hierarchically organised, and friendship is important to children [14; p.54].

The author considers in detail many aspects of the mentioned activities, such as basic starting points, organization of work, preparation of the new school year, scope of the program and work schedule, form and method of work, personnel prerequisites and pedagogical documentation [14].

Vukasović [15] points that proper education is powerful and the only protection of youth from physical and moral degradation. In circumstances valid during time of his writing, he concluded that education in free time is rather new and unavoidable pedagogical need. Along with these statements he suggests possible way of inclusion of relevant institutions. He argues about contemporary battle for free time. Earlier tendencies resulted in quantitative enlargement of free time, while in the time of preparing his text the main problem is quality of free time and culture of its implementation [15; p.452]. According to Vukasović, family, school, church, cultural institutions and media may contribute in solving that problem.

Puževski, in a reminder about some historical moments in national pedagogy [16], deals with two topics. First, he considers research and development of our own type of elementary school and secondly he considers how is free time related to development of elementary school. His work combines historical notes and theory of future school, with practical examples.

Ilišin, in a collection of articles devoted to free time and other parts of youth life, covers extensively its diverse aspects [17-24].

She analyses data collected in 1986 and 1999 about young people aged 15-29, to analyse the structure of free time and the changes that occurred in the observed period [17]. One of the stated hypotheses is that changes affected more the hierarchy than the structure of free time. According to Ilišin "Free time survives/remains primarily as a training ground for leisure, relaxation, and recreation. At the same time, this means that the realization of the function of free time that contributes to personality development can only be discussed sporadically, and more in the context of patterns that belong to the field of mass culture, than as part of elite-cultural pattern, since they are used by a small number of young people" [17; p.423]. Here, the elite-cultural pattern represents playing electronic games [17; p.423] and is significantly connected to education, urbanisation of the neighbouring places and to regional specificities.

Ilišin [18, 19] presents results of a detailed study regarding children's free time, a part of a larger research about children and media. Following survey in 2000, 1000 questionnaires were obtained for further analysis, all filled by children from 5th to 8th grade of 10 Croatian primary schools. Overall, 25 questionnaires were collected from each of 40 surveyed classes, with due attention devoted to their representativeness [18; pp.34-35]. Research concentrated on leisure time, to be differentiated from semi-leisure time, within which out-of-school activities are conducted [19; p.101].

The author pays attention to "... several indicators of children's free time: involvement in extracurricular activities, amount of time they spend alone at home, favour forms of socializing,

way of spending school holidays, experiences with psychoactive substances, and amount of daily free time and activities in that. With regard to the topic of the research, among the activities a special place was given to the use of various mass media, while some activities were deliberately omitted” [19; p.102].

The data show “that a quarter of children are not engaged in any extracurricular activities, and that the most popular is active participation in some kind of sport. A fifth of children learn a foreign language, and a little less of them attend a music school or course, and only one in twenty tries to express themselves in literature or acting” [19; p.103].

Another result of Ilišin is that “Children who are not occupied with some extracurricular activity do not have more free time (which would be expected), and the reason for this is probably that these children are occupied with some other obligations (eg helping with household and similar tasks)” [19; p.105].

After analysing the data “it can be concluded that the majority of students are not without the supervision of their parents or some other family members for a long time” [19; p.109].

Author presents detailed distribution of leisure time [19; pp.116-117] and analyses its connection with age, gender, size of living space and other respondents’ characteristics. She concludes “that the examined children do not have an enormous amount of free time, but still more than enough to think about how to fill that time with contents through which the children will be entertained and educated at the same time” [19; p.117], and overall argues that “it could be stated that the surveyed children are relatively disciplined” [19; p.118]. Children spend most of their free time on the media, but when looking at individual activities, social contacts are the most common [19; p.119-120]. Several patterns of behaviour were observed from the data, which fit in with previous research on young people [19; p.126-127].

Ilišin conducted and presented additional research about children and media [20]. Media analysed [20; p.21] were printed media for children and youth, radio, television and personal computers. In particular “It was revealed that the use of different media, apart from socializing with peers, is the most common activity in children’s free time. As in the world, the most used media is television, and children most often watch film programs and quizzes” [20; p.9]. As one of the conclusions of the research, Ilišin points out as a surprising and devastating finding that “the level of education of parents does not affect the use of media by children, nor their communication with children about media content. This tendency suggests that, although parents are considered to have the greatest responsibility for training children to use the media selectively, they are not (yet) ready to assume the role of media educators” [20; p.9].

Along with presented articles, devoted to free time of children, Ilišin analysed free time of young persons, aged 15-29 [21, 22], based on data collected in 1999 and 2004 about 30 activities that they conduct. Despite the rather small time period between two data collecting, data from 2004 show somewhat larger participation of youth in all listed activities along with rise in their interest for these activities [21; p.198]. Data, analysed in details, reveals heterogeneity of the youth, as seen in many aspects [21, 22]. Overall, eight patterns of youth behaviour are mutually differentiated. It is found that “Situational (marital and socio-professional status) and socialization (age and level of education) circumstances are the characteristics differentiate young people to the greatest extent in accepting or rejecting certain forms of free time” [21; p.198].

Ilišin analyses interests of young people and their relation with free time [23]. She theoretically clarifies these notions. Regarding interests, she focuses onto the list of 15 interests about which young people were surveyed twice in the past. In later survey respondents showed larger interest for almost but not all the tested phenomena [23; pp.273-275], while relative importance of interests was also somewhat changed [23; p.275]. Ilišin reveals and describes four groups of

interests. Generally, interests for private sphere are stronger, and interests for public sphere weaker [23; p.298]. Activities in free time are factorised into seven groups. Author lists and discuss the respondents' characteristics which significantly influences activities conducted in their free time. Since respondents were young people aged 15-29, as in some other papers, a care must be taken if one wants to address some of the findings onto youth aged 15-19.

Ilišin formulates simple yet profound analogy: "the more varied the interests of young people, the more meaningful and richer their free time" [24; p.299] to which she adds that "Free time is part in which the socialization of young people takes place, and cultivated free time can contribute the most to the development of their identity" [24; pp.300-301]. In her work [24] she in details presents data and compares results of two surveys, the national one conducted in 2004 and the Zagrebačka county one conducted in 2006. Hierarchy of 15 interests that were presented to respondents in these two surveys is almost identical. The most important interest is friendships and acquaintances, although generally young people in county have lower interest for phenomena than young people at the national level [24; pp.302-309] – it is to be emphasised that methods of implementation are compliant, yet participation in available activities is lower on county level than on national level [24; p.307].

Hanžek et al. undertook research to find out interested in the needs of young people in local communities, and to formulate recommendations, the implementation of which will make future national and local youth policies more aligned with the needs of young people [25; p.58]. In order to achieve stated task, first they surveyed 358 students from 2nd grades of 10 secondary schools in 5 Croatian cities [25; p.60]. Distribution of free time is similar in all cities, with 43 % of respondents having more than 4 hours of free time daily [25; p.62]. Respondents are rather satisfied with their free time, however in the largest city included in the survey none of the respondents was completely satisfied with it. The authors present in detail in which activities the respondents participate, frequencies of these participations and level of importance that respondents attribute to the activities.

Regarding characteristics that some person should have to work with young people, respondents listed communication skills, listening skills, skills to motivate young people, creativity and tolerance as important characteristics [25; p.87].

Hanžek et al. conclude that "young people are extremely poorly informed about the role of youth organizations in their local communities. It has been shown that in no city do students know about the existence of youth centres, youth clubs and youth associations. In addition, respondents are dissatisfied with the offer of free time activities, which they mostly get information about via the Internet" [25; p.89].

Gvozdanović et al. [26] conducted exhaustive research about young people. The survey conducted in 2018, included 1500 respondents, aged 14-29 [26; p.5]. Out of that group, 35 % of respondents have 14-19 years [26; p.7] which is why many of results cannot be straightforwardly interpreted from the point of view of free time of children and youth as we specified in this article.

Miliša, Tolić and Vertovšek [27] are some of the authors focusing onto the influence of media onto children and youth. That influence is pervasive, gradually increasing and influences many dimensions of children development, free time structure being just one of them. In particular, they state "In this part of the book, the warning fact is pointed out that the time young people spend in front of screens (television, mobile phones and computers) has become equal (and sometimes exceeds) the time spent in schools" [27; p.177], and add to that "Nowadays, it is impossible to consider any aspect of young people's lives outside the context of media influence" [27; p.177]. The authors observe that the very negative orientation in structuring free time is the most dominantly represented [27; p.180] and continue with several more aspects of the influence that media has on children and youth.

The authors undertook empirical study by surveying 227 students from 7th and 8th grade of 3 elementary schools in Zadar. Data revealed that: 30 % of respondents watch television programme 3 or more hours [27; p.185] (expectedly daily) with girls prevalently watching series and boys sport; more than one third of respondents use mobile phone more than 1 hour per day [27; p.187]. By comparing various papers that collected data about the use of technology, the period represented in this article is shown to contain significant technology changes, and rather fast consequent changes in the social domain.

Miliša and Milačić further develop stated notions about the role that media have on development of young people [28]. They stress the current lack of experts in the field of media pedagogy, the need for whom is related to more entertaining but also manipulative content in the media, the consequences of which are more and more disastrous for the creative expression of youth [28; pp.572-573]. They analysed data collected during 2009 from 319 secondary school students and university students to obtain distribution of activities that respondents attend in their free time, as well as to obtain diverse additional data.

Potočnik [29] concentrates on the relation between the young persons and technology use. It is indirectly related to free time, since new technology brings about additional activities and redistribution of duration and intensity of activities that have been previously conducted. Goals of her research [29; p.108] include, among others, comparison of activities in 1999 and in 2004 for young people, and comparison in activities between young and older people (older being people of age 30 or more). Data point out the tremendous enhancement in owning of high-technology gadgets [29; p.109], presumably but not exclusively among younger group. Moreover, “By comparing the data for the younger age group, we see that the biggest growth occurred in the possession of mobile phones. The growth in mobile phone ownership is also noticeable because it is a device that is mainly used for personal purposes and is most often associated with personal ownership, while all other devices are owned at the household level” [29; p.110]. Along with detailed data about socio-demographic characteristics of users of technology, author also in detail analyses reasons underlying absence of use of technology [29; pp.115-117]. Author carefully analyses data about regional concentration of technology gadget owners and points out that it has regular, previously observed gradual dynamics [29; p.114].

Polić presents a theoretical approach to understanding trends in education and society that generally influences development of children and youth [30]. She critically addresses a wide range of aspects that form leisure time of children and youth, as well as of adults. On the one hand she effectively reviews available literature and on the other hand she rises questions that may serve as starting points for future studies. In particular, she notes that “The question that arises after all is: can people recognise leisure as their need? According to everything, it seems that there is little room left for leisure, and then also for learning, which would not serve this or that purpose, but would simply be the satisfaction of a personal need. A big role in this is certainly played by ‘education’ that does not nurture personal research ability – and then the need for creativity – which begins with that well-known and often repeated children’s question: *why?* [30; p.35]. The author concluding thought is that “modern education should encourage and nurture, and not, as it seems to do now, denounce the need for leisure, which should not be equated with useless idleness, but precisely with the time of freedom in which and through which people as cultural and historical beings they only have a future” [30; p.36].

Perasović [31] discusses relationship between the leisure time and subcultural identity within sociology of youth subcultures. He considers free time to be at the centre of discussion about subcultures, and is considered to be the source of subcultural identification [31; p.411]. He further states that “the fact that the process of subculturalization most often begins in the ‘sphere of free time’ does not imply limiting the results of that process in any way ... to the sphere of free time ... this will also persist in the spheres of school, parents’ home or work [31; p.407].

Perasović and Bartoluci [32] combine many studies about youth free time and derive several conclusions. In particular, they consider leisure time as a crucial for young person's development; within their leisure time domains, young people often build up their own identities and lifestyles; leisure time is important for quality of life, but it cannot have the leading role as does the formal education, employment and tenancy; kinesiological activities – in the widest meaning of the expression “doing sport” is of crucial importance for health of each individual and the whole society, but still, practising sport is at the level much below the needed, or expected one [32; pp.16-17]. There is a trend of lengthening the period in which young people live with their parents, which leads to complex economic and psychological dependence [32; p.19]. The authors considers that it is of vital importance to find modalities strengthening the recreational, regularly conducted physical activity [32; p.22]. As an additional note, the authors observe that there are reasons for both pessimism and optimism about the changes, the latter being a consequence of the fact that in post-industrial societies there is a stronger interest in, among other topics, one's own body and health [32; p.23].

Along with these two contributions to free time of young people in which it is connected with the notion of subculture [31, 32] there are many contributions solely to subculture. Implicitly, many aspects of subcultures are formulated, conducted and modified in free time of their members, see. e.g. [33]. However, such implicit references to free time are generally avoided here.

It is seen that many authors deal with socialisation of the youth, and stress the importance of free time for that, gradual and all-life important process. Socialisation, and overall value formation is a much broader topic. More detailed contribution to values of young people is a review article by Franc, Sučić and Šakić [34]. In addition to general approach to values, these authors analyse surveys about values of young people in Croatia, that were conducted in 1998 and 2006. The authors were, in particular, interested in answering “What are the value priorities of young people, and do they change over the years? Are values related to the attitudes and behaviours of young people, and can they be considered risk or protective factors in the development of young people?” [34; p.144]. The analysis of collected data about attitudes toward 18 individual values revealed that, for both surveys, values group into three value orientations, that were on average all estimated to be important: self-actualisation (which was shown to be the most represented by Croatian secondary school students), the conventional orientat, and the hedonistic orientation (the least represented by Croatian secondary school students) [34; p.139].

Mlinarević analyses diverse aspects of free time [12, 35-44]. In a short, yet profound statement, she stresses importance of the structure of free time: “Because, in order for free time to optimally contribute to the developmental and preventive role in the life of young people, it is first of all necessary to determine the structure of the total free time, and especially the individual activities that take place in it” [35; p.54]. Following that, she conducted empirical work based on which she concluded that structure of free time of children and youth contains four substantially different factors which qualitatively differentiate free time of respondents [35; p.166]. Mlinarević states that “Youth of the 21st century enjoy the chaos of information and ideas and often create new ones precisely in negation trends. Sometimes they do not respect the traditional way of life rules, seeks spontaneity, and the ideal is to be stunned” [36; p.244]. It is important, because “with constant, painstaking pedagogical work with children from their earliest childhood, children can be taught to perceive free activities as an incentive to ‘use’ time, and not ‘kill’ it” [36; p.243]. Mlinarević connects these statements with their longer- time importance for society by stating that “Young people are the bearers of change and the bearers of a new, better way of working that can contribute to the realization in all spheres of society. Unfortunately, very few things come as a youth initiative. This is worrying, especially if one takes into account the fact that young people will be leading this country in a few years” [37; p.56]. She considers a culture rather important in effective two-

way communication with young people, within which one can find what they really think. Mlinarević alone [35-38], or in collaboration [39-44], conducted a series of empirical studies in primary and secondary schools in region of Slavonia in Croatia in order to find out quantity and distribution of free time [35-37], attitudes of students and teachers towards these activities [39, 40], styles of spending the free time by school-age students [36]. Mlinarević, Miliša and Prorotović compare results of two empirical studies to determine “with which activities young people (high school students and students) fill their free time, how satisfied they are with it and what is their value orientation towards education and work” [39; p.86]. The authors argue that “It seems that we are in a time where young people are personally uninterested and passive, so the question arises of the further development and prosperity of young people in terms of education, learning and future work” [39; p.96]. Mlinarević and Brust [41] surveyed 53 students, 17 teachers and a director of one primary school to find out attitudes of all respondents toward extracurricular activities. That approach was further developed by Mlinarević and Matanović [40]. These authors stress that students generally are highly motivated for activities in which they participate in their free time [40; p.334], survey 23 teachers and 103 elementary students from 6 primary schools, and after analysis of collected data reveal several reasons why surveyed teachers’ lead extracurricular activities along with student respondents’ attitudes toward the activities [40; p.344]. Within that approach, Mlinarević and Brust Nemet [42] surveyed 344 primary school students to find out about the distribution of their involvement in extracurricular activities, about their reasons to participate in some activity and satisfaction with it, and about the possibility that the students contribute suggest some activity. All three studies [40-42] state that students are marginally involved in creation and structuration of extracurricular activities.

Mlinarević and Gajger in details discuss contemporary situation regarding on the one side children and youth needs and aspiration, and on the other response from societal environment, particularly school [43]. They critically approach the subject and, among other aspects state that “instead of offering activities for which students are interested and motivated, schools offer those activities for which they have the conditions ... and the organization and offer does not correspond to the diverse interests and needs of young people, and if they do not have an adequate quality offer even outside of school (which is often the case in smaller communities), the space of free time remains open to all other, often negative influences” [43; p.50]. Moreover, they argue that “Young people are less and less organizers of entertainment and free time, and more and more consumers of content offered by highly professional machinery” [43; p.44]. The authors present data about two extracurricular activities, that are held annually for several decades: one for gifted primary school children and the other for creativity in art.

Rattinger focuses onto quality of life [45, 46]. In their research she stresses the importance of online social networks, because youth rather rapidly adopted these new technologies and integrated them in many aspects of their life, including free time. Overall, Rattinger recognised and explained the need to analyse in detail the relationships among youth leisure time activities, their attitudes about online social networks and their overall quality of life [45; p.45]. She surveyed 150 students, from 1st to 4th grade of different secondary schools in the city of Zagreb and Zagrebačka county [45; p.45]. Data shows that respondents have on average between 4 and 5 hours of free time daily, but some of them stated that they do not have free time. Respondents on average spend 2,3 hours per day using online social networks, usually between 2 and 3 of them [45; p.46]. They use online social networks primarily for continuation of communication with friends and then for viewing pictures and videos [45; p.47].

Respondents are generally satisfied with the quality of their life: “the surveyed students are satisfied with themselves, their work ability and interpersonal relationships. They believe that their life has meaning, they enjoy life, they generally have a good ability to concentrate and have enough vital energy. They accept their external appearance well. They consider

themselves informed and have time for themselves and activities according to their own wishes. They are satisfied with living conditions, mobility and health care” [45; p.50]. They are not so satisfied with their sleeping and their concentration [45; p.50].

Rattinger analysed collected data and showed that there is statistically significant difference about self-evaluation of quality of life and gender: boys are more satisfied with their quality of life than girls. There were no statistically significant differences in that self-evaluation regarding location of the school [45; p.52], regarding school achievement and major in school [45; p.54].

In another work, Rattinger considerably broadened scope of her research [146]. In 2018, she surveyed 594 secondary school students from city of Zagreb and Zagrebačka county, and additionally interviewed 23 of them [46; pp.147-148]. General result is that “Activities in free time have the greatest influence on the quality of life, that is, meeting the psychological needs of the respondents when participating in these activities. Although the quantitative part of the research did not show a statistically significant connection between social networks and quality of life, the qualitative part shows that students very clearly connect social networks with the quality of their lives” [46; p.227].

Blažević theoretically approached the relationships between the child’s social development and the family, peers and school [47]. She founded her approach with theories of social development. The author discusses how “The middle childhood is developmental period of intensive social interactions where the first friendships are made” [47; p.44]. She conveys family influences by four types of parent’s education; authoritarian, authoritative, indifferent, and indulgent [47; p.45]. Overall “In the period of the middle childhood, influence of the family is still present even though the influences of the school and peer are involved when they start the school” [47; p.47] with emphasis put on the teachers as the most representative conveyors of the influence of school [47; p.47].

Miljević-Ridički, Pahić and Vizek Vidović [48] focused onto parental perspective. They were interested in parents’ perception of the cooperation with schools which their children attend, namely whether there exist differences in that relation regarding rural or urban environment of schools. For preliminary data collecting they utilised focus groups. Final data collecting was conducted in 2009 in the form of interviews with 1052 parents of children attending 2nd to 8th grade of 30 elementary schools in Croatia – 14 from rural and 16 from urban settings. The basis of the approach is the theory of parental involvement by Joyce Epstein according to which “parents and school share responsibility for the socialization of the child; the goals and objectives of parents, schools and communities overlap; for children’s growth and development, the most important contexts are family, kindergarten, school and community” [48; p.167].

The results show that “parents consider that it is the sole job of the school to do everything to ensure that the teaching is good and that their child is safe at school ... and that it is largely responsible for the organization of a good extracurricular program ... They see it as the sole job of parents to take care for the children to write their homework ... while for all other issues they consider that they are mostly equally the responsibility of the school and the parents [48; p.170]. In short “parents in Croatia do not see themselves as a significant factor that could or should contribute to improving the quality of education itself” [48; p.177]. However, as authors discuss in detail, one can conclude that parents are willing to participate more, but they expect the schools to initiate that change [48; p.178].

The authors found difference in parents-school relationship based on the rural or urban setting of the school, as the “results indicate a higher level of cooperation between school and parents in rural settings as well as higher levels of general satisfaction with school and possibility to influence school decision making” [48; p.181].

Belošević and Ferić [49] give critical overview of the leisure time, from defining to analysing contribution of leisure to developmental outcomes of children and youth. On the one hand, leisure time contributes significantly to positive development of adolescents, but on the other hand “leisure can represent a context that can stimulate youth to participate in risk behaviours and/or develop behavioural problems” [49; pp.641-642]. The basis for their approach is Leisure Activity-Context-Experience Model, a model focused on understanding adolescent development through leisure.

Ličina [50], similarly to other authors, points that there is a significant quantity of free time, that should be filled properly, but being aware that sidetracks are possible. But, as he observes, filling the free time brings us very close to the state in which there is in practice no free time for children and youth, because activities that they participate in during time become too heavy load. In practice, participants then leave the activities [50; pp.334-335]. Ličina presents further details of situation in Petrinja, where around 26 % of children are enrolled in organised out-of-school activities: 15 % in sport activities and others in diverse other activities like scouts, mountaineering, music, dance, etc.

Previšić notes already in 1994 that “school is reduced to acquiring knowledge through books, verbalism, learning definitions, rules and everyday facts” [51; p.151] to which he adds that “young people want to spend their free time actively ... by no means on the model and stereotype of schoolwork” [51; p.152]. He critically addresses relationship between school and creative spending free time. Along with this work, in the same proceedings one can find more contributions to the out-of-class and out-of-school activities devoted to science and technology.

Flego edited the Proceedings [52] which contains many contributions to free time of children. In particular, Puljiz stresses the recent, rather large and rapid changes in daily life which brings about significant number of challenges both to children and to parents [53]. Puljiz emphasises both extremes, one being the lack of structuration of children’s free time and the other being too-structured free time; “Some parents go to extremes by controlling every free moment of their child, driving them to various activities and directing them in accordance with their own ambitions. ... The emotional aspect is neglected, the pressure on children is increasing, and they often develop into non-independent and immature personalities” [53; p.23]. She describes activities for creative structuration of children’s free time in the Centre for Children, Youth and Family Velika Gorica, that are organised by estimated needs of local community [53; p.24] and that are more intensively conducted during the school vacation [53; p.26]. Reič Kukoč and Pezo presents the legislative situation, which recently changes in a way that gives more important role to the local community. They list the possible improvements in local communities that would bring about complete fulfilment of children’s rights: “better vertical and horizontal flow of information between entities in the community, cooperation between institutions, clear division of roles and assumption of responsibility, better awareness of local authorities for children’s needs and problems, and continuous assessment and evaluation of the situation” [54; p.34]. Opačak focuses onto free time of children with different abilities [55]. She addresses in detail the inclusive and non-inclusive approaches and states that “Inclusive leisure activities should offer the necessary adaptations, so that individuals of different abilities can participate. Of course, in accordance with the trend of inclusion, in accordance with the talent and persistence and commitment of individuals, a certain number of children with different abilities are included in regular sports clubs and music and dance groups in Croatia” [55; p.41]. Free time of youth with different abilities is extensively addressed, but for university students [56], thus different age group than the age group of children and youth considered in this article.

Almost all the literature about free time of children and youth in Croatia deals with that topic in regular societal environment, or societal environment that is considered long-term. An important, partially implicit, contribution to free time of children and youth in different

situation is work of Ćurković, Lukačin and Katavić [57] who focused onto recent period of imposed pandemic measures and analysed their influence onto several characteristics of free time of children and youth. In particular, in 2020 the authors used surveys to collect data from about 30 % of students in 5th and 7th grades of all primary schools in Croatia, and about 20 % of graduates of all secondary school in Croatia [57; p.276]. Ćurković, Lukačin and Katavić were interested in their physical activity and diet, both before and during the pandemic measures (in particular, during self-isolation) and additionally analysed gender and age differences. They found out that self-isolation brought about significant decrease in motivation for physical activities, and that it is more pronounced for boys in all age groups [57; p.280]. Self isolation influenced eating habits in the sense that diet become less healthy while the number of both the small and the large meals increased for all age groups [57; pp.281-282].

Brdar and Lončarić [58] analyse whether it is possible to classify primary and secondary school students into groups regarding the combination of their involvement in free time activities and coping with school-related stress. Their reasoning is as follows: “If the way of spending free time can reduce stress, then it can also be seen as a way of dealing with stress. Since school is the most common stressful context for children and adolescents, ... this research focused on coping with academic stress” [58; p.970]. In particular, they searched for contribution of gender and age to stress-coping methods and free time activities, as well as for links of stress-coping methods with school results, self-respect and anxiety [58; p.970]. Operationally, they collected data from 455 students from two primary and one secondary school and utilised 4 instruments to analyse the data (they specifically developed one of the instruments, *Questionnaire on the way of spending free time*, for the research conducted,) [58; pp.971-973].

Analysis revealed four clusters. The first cluster includes students who spend most of their free time in entertainment and relaxation (going out to cafes, cinema, disco clubs, etc.). The second includes students who have below-average results in all free activities, so they devote less time to them. The third consists of students who spend most of their free time reading books and visiting cultural events (theatre, exhibitions), while the fourth is made up of students who spend most of their time in sports activities, and additionally they are the least prone to socially undesirable entertainment, they spend a lot of time working on computers, relaxing and socializing with their brothers and sisters [58; p.974]. Age is shown significant for clustering, while gender is shown significant for anxiety, average free time and success in school [58; p.975].

Clusters differ in satisfaction with free time: the cluster connected with sports is the most satisfied, and the cluster focused on fun and relaxation is the least satisfied [58; p.976]. The later also have the weakest result in solving problems and addressing parents [58; p.977]. There is complex correlation between variables considered, that authors address in detail. Along with results presented, the authors state that “The mentioned research showed that free time and activities in free time are unjustifiably neglected constructs in models of psychosocial adjustment, coping with stress and health outcomes of children. In addition to indirectly, through coping strategies, the way you spend your free time can also directly help reduce stress” [58; p.982].

Babić [59] deals with free time of youth in three island communities within Zadar county. Based on survey conducted in 2001 among 107 primary and secondary school students from three islands, he analyses relation of type of school (primary or secondary school), belonging to a specific island community, and gender to amount of free time and to activities conducted within it. He in details presents various aspects of daily life, a mixture of traditional and modern contributions. Regarding the interplay among the school, other social environment and individual free time he states “The distinction between school classes and other activities is precisely expressed in terms of time and is therefore similar to the attitude of a factory worker towards work obligations, but the extracurricular part of the student’s day is more similar to the traditional (rural) daytime. The most important feature of traditional village time is its

completeness ... When students come home, they are both free and not free. They are free to the extent that they can make their own schedule of duties (similarly to a peasant who can choose whether to dig or plow) during the day, but mostly they cannot avoid them. Double social control, parental and school, at the same time represents a strong pressure on that population” [59; p.396]. Regarding the amount, primary school students have significantly more free time [59; p.397] and there is no significant difference in its amount between boys and girls [59; p.398].

However, subjective experience of students brings about large number of additional aspects. Respondents consider that they lack free time, presumably because of school-related work. The specificity of islands is seen in traveling between home and school as an additional time-consuming school-related activity, which is significant for secondary school students [59; p.398].

Regarding type of free time activities “Music among young people has an almost cult status among forms of entertainment and spending free time” [59; p.401] as it is overall the most frequent free time activity. However, after differentiating results by type of school, it is seen that listening to music is the second most frequent free time activity: among primary school students the most common free time activity is watching television programs, and among secondary school students it is sport [59; p.401]. However, secondary school students’ involvement in sport is again an island specialty, because these students mostly stay in the city of Zadar, where there are more such opportunities. Henceforth, based on the analysis of the responses of primary school students, there are too few sports activities available to children and youth in islands [59; p.402].

The distribution of the free time activities differs among the islands, but not statistically significant [59; p.402]. There is a significant difference in that distribution between boys and girls, which author connects with the way of life [59; p.404]. The majority of young people are dissatisfied with available leisure activities [59; p.405], primarily because there is not enough content [59; p.406]. According to the author: “The predominance of passive forms and contents of free time and the consumption of media-shaped reality corresponds with global trends in that sphere. The symbolic sphere, dominated by the rule of the image, has a growing influence on the shaping of free time” [59; p.407].

Zrilić and Košta [60] approach the teachers as conveyors of creativity. They base their approach on the statement that “Creativity is an elementary starting point in the education of young people. ... Teachers have a great responsibility to identify the scope and type of creative potential of each of their students, considering the fact that creativity has its beginning contained in a creative individual, who through the creative process comes to of new and original solutions as a special product that has personal or wider social value. Therefore, the education of future teachers should also be in the function of developing and releasing creative potentials” [60; p.161]. Authors argue that “Nowadays, school is focused on the result, strives to adopt content, to achieve results, and to frame opinion. Therefore, extracurricular activities are an opportunity for students to develop in other areas of their personality, and on their informal initiative, teachers can also change their teaching style” [60; p.163]. Zrilić and Košta describe some generic situations like encouraging or restricting the participation of children in extracurricular activities, along with their long-term consequences [60; pp.165-166].

Zrilić and Košta focused onto Zadar county and interviewed pedagogues in its 36 primary schools having extracurricular activities. In addition, they collected data from County office to obtain detailed distribution of altogether 33 such activities [60; pp.166-167]. Authors argue about the multidimensional role of sport, that is not appropriately represented in practice [60; p.167] as well as the role of music [60; p.168]. In further observations, authors provide additional details about realistic position of extracurricular activities [60; p.168].

SPECIFIC GRADES

Opić and Đuranović [61] collected data about leisure times of school-aged children and youth in order to track the influence of gender, place of residence and type of school (elementary or secondary). Their sample included 1062 respondents from 8 elementary and 7 secondary schools in Sisak-Moslavina county. They expressed ways of free time using the following six composite variables: Electronic media, Internet, Sports, Cultural activities, Socializing and outings, and Relaxing activities [61; p.548]. Data reveals that all the ways of spending free time are actually relatively poorly represented. Regarding maximal and minimal values, students spend most time on the Internet, while the least of free time is spent doing cultural activities [61; p.548]. Boys and girls use Internet equally often; boys spend more times doing sport, while girls spend more time in all other composite variables [61; p.549]. Furthermore, primary schools' respondents more often spend their free time on electronic media and doing sports, and secondary school respondents on activities of socializing and relaxing activities [61; p.549], and finally there was no statistically significant influence of place of residence onto time spent in some free time activities [61; p.550].

Arbunić, in series of articles [62-64] analyses daily structuration of children's free time, based on data, collected during 1995 in two primary schools on island Hvar, from 290 children and their parents. In particular, the aim of research in one of the articles was to determine the structure of children's and their parents' interest in leisure activities [62; p.118]. The children's interests were investigated from the point of departure of the desirability of the activities, and the interests of the parents were the desire for such activities to be available to the children [62; p.118]. For both groups, sports activities are the most important, while other activities show statistically significant differences, a consequence of differences in social experience [62; p.120] and of parents' awareness of the role of free activities in their children's free time as well as of their significance for the development of children's personalities [62; p.121]. Arbunić, furthermore, as a rather rare contribution to research about children free time, analyses data to obtain average hourly distribution of different contributions to free time, ranging from school-related and other work to leisure time [63]. He found that type of the day (weekend or not) and children age significantly influence structure of free time. Finally, he analyses, and finds it to be significant, the difference in children's and their parents' reports about the use of free time particularly considering those activities which indicate behaviour disorders, risky behaviours, and fun [64; p.221]. As a novel result of the analysed data, the area of quantity of activities in free time was differentiated into 9 substantively and 5 qualitatively different sub-spaces [64; p.227]. The data revealed that parents do not know enough about their children's free time, especially in that segment that indicates leisure and "spare time", [64; p.227]. Overall [64; p.228]: "the new challenges of free time and the decreasing possibility of control over the upbringing of children due to the obligations of parents and the multitude of factors involved in the formation of the young generation require parents to focus their educational activities more on attitudes and personality than on control itself" – but it is necessary to make them competent to recognize risk factors.

Vidulin-Orbanić conducted study to find out which extracurricular activities for primary schools are represented and in what percentage [65, 66]. In order to obtain initial data, she surveyed 275 children attending from 5th to 8th grade of two primary schools, one in Rovinj and the other in Tar, in Croatia. Survey contained a list of 38 extracurricular activities. Distribution of participation show that most of the respondents participate in the sport-health-recreational group of extracurricular activities. Great majority of respondents participate in at least one such activity [65; pp.29-30]. When focus was put onto musical activities, one obtained a specific distribution of participation of respondents in them [66; p.736].

Šiljković, Rajić and Bertić [67] use data from rather large group of respondents to reveal specific aspects of participation of primary school students (from 5th to 8th grade) in out-of-class

and out-of-school activities. They concentrate on gender and age differences. While, generally, respondents show a significant degree of motivation for participation in such activities, there are additional, rather non-trivial differences in that participation between boys and girls, and between different grades.

Matijašević [68] analyses data about free time use by primary school students in two Croatian counties. He concentrates on possibilities of spending free time of primary school students as well as on differences in regard to gender, age and place of residence.

Martinčević [69] points the fact that out-of-class activities significantly contribute to children's development, since "Extracurricular activities at school are the space where it is easiest to reach students, their needs, wishes and aspirations. It is a part of school practice in which there is no numerical assessment" [69; p.22]. She surveyed 123 primary school students, from 6th and 7th grade, asking for participation in extracurricular activities and socio-demographic data. She found statistical significance between respondents' characteristics and two free-time activities, namely reading popular literature, and playing computer games [69; p.32].

Matić Tandarić [70] similarly, conducts empirical research on several hundreds of students from two Osijek secondary schools, in order to analyse age and gender related differences in prevalent mode of free time use.

Prlić and Ilić surveyed 616 students of Medical school Osijek, aged 14-19 [71]. They found out that 95 % of respondents have free time, and that 56 % of respondents would like that school offer them free time activities. Moreover, 66 % of respondents have their own suggestions for organisation of free time. According to the authors "We discover talent more in the free time than in everyday classes" [71; p.458].

Dragun [72] focuses onto leisure time activities and value set of secondary school graduates. In particular, in 2009 he surveyed 254 graduates from 10 (out of 16) secondary schools in the city of Zadar. Survey contained list of 19 leisure time activities and 21 values. The initial assumption of the research is that "different samples of young people – from different (and differently modernized) regions of Croatia – are more like each other in terms of forms of use of free time than in terms of values. This assumption stems from the general expectation that the field of free time is more susceptible to the influence of modernization and globalization than the field of values" [72; p.489].

Following that assumption, Dragun formulated the research goals: to learn more about the leisure and value aspects of the sociocultural identity of high school graduates in Zadar (as a subgroup of young people in urban areas of Dalmatia); to learn about the different conditioning of these two aspects by the complex social context; and to learn more about the similarities in the area of free time, as well as in the area of values among the examined subgroups of young people in Croatia [72; pp.490-491].

Respondents stated what activities they practice and what values they consider significant, along with other socio-demographic questions. Three most often practiced leisure time activities relate to media: *listening to music at home*, *watching television program* and *surfing the Internet* [72; pp.497-498]. Regarding values; *health*, *friendship* and *good family relations* are three most important values [72; pp.502-503], followed with the *honesty* and *love* [72; p.503].

Dragun in details considers and contextualises many correlations between values. In particular, values with the largest number of significant positive correlations with other values are *be respected* and *health* while the value with the largest number of significant negative correlations is *power over others* [72; pp.502-503]. Along with that, value *to be yourself* does not have any significant correlation with other values, neither positive nor negative, which is in fact self-explanatory [72; p.500]. Dragun concludes that "It is obvious that the respondents

attach the greatest importance to ‘conventional-moral’ and ‘conventional-self-realization’ values, and less importance to ‘hedonistic’ and ‘autonomy’ values, even less to ‘conventional-patriotic’ values, and they value ‘self-realization through prestige’ the lowest” [72; p.504].

Grabić [73] describes experience in out-of-school activities with children and youth aged from 7 to 18 years in Centre for Providing Services in the Community Klasje in Osijek. During activities the users developed community feeling, they adopted teamwork and cooperation, communicated better and overall, there was relaxed atmosphere in the group [73].

Many texts show that watching television is the most often, or one of the more common free time activities of children. Regarding watching television, as Citković [74] states, focus is regularly on its negative influence onto children development. However, Citković discusses possible positive influences that should be analysed in more detail and subsequently enhanced, in particular: development of empathy, solving conflicts, cooperativity and respecting others. Author bases its conclusions prevalently on the international literature since, as she states, there are few domestic contributions in literature about that topic.

Some authors treat free time sporadically, and they concentrate on activities regularly conducted in free time and analyse literacy of communication within social networks [75].

VOLUNTEERING

Some authors address volunteering as an activity, regularly conducted in free time, that is important for socialisation, empathy and generally formation of point of view of children and youth [76-80]. Volunteering has many important characteristics, both from the personal and from the societal point of view, and some of them are rather complex [76]. Zrinščak et al. [76] present in detail the results related to Croatian students and put them into broader perspective revealed within the international research project.

Miliša [77] critically analyses free time of children and youth, especially distribution of initiatives aiming to free time, to youth and for youth, with emphasis put on volunteering. His conclusion is that high-quality use of free time activities implies, above all, active volunteering [77; p.111]. He develops that conclusion in a significant part based on the data presented in the existing literature, in particular in report of the project conducted in 2005 by the National Foundation for Civil Society Development. The project collected the data about attitudes of 1000 randomly chosen young people with age not less than 15 years. It was shown in literature that more than half of the interviewed persons do not think about volunteering, while only 5 % of them volunteer [77; p.102]. Miliša further points that volunteering is not only a way of spending quality free time, but also prevention of addiction [77]. However, in order to change attitudes towards volunteering, it is necessary to work on changing attitudes towards work, to teach young people (by examples) that persistence, frugality, helping others, material independence, criticism, self-criticism and responsibility are the most important elements of the educational dimension of work [77]. Furthermore, Miliša develops the well adopted fact about rise in free time by pointing out its unintentional consequences: “The excess of boredom and the lack of ambition are called by some the new vice of young people. The fact is that we have an unorganised and optional way of creating leisure activities for young people. Organized care for the free time of young people prevalently remains at the level of non-governmental organisations and rare activities of enthusiasts encouraged by the local and regional self-government bodies” [77; p.105], but one must bear in mind many examples that listed organisations reveal instrumentalization, and other deficiencies [77; p.102].

As an important contribution to reflection about volunteering in relation to free time, Hazdovac Bajić [78] presents the research “My free time”. The obtained results “suggest areas and directions which requires more intensive work in order to respond more successfully to the

needs of young people, specifically in Dubrovnik. The application and development of volunteer practices is a recommendation to all institutions, organizations and clubs working with young people as a supplement, but also as a fresh approach to the process of upbringing and education” [78; p.2]. She tests and confirms the hypothesis that majority of secondary school students spend their free time “passively” (following media and socializing with peers). In addition to other conclusions, that are aligned with overall conclusions about volunteering and free time of children and youth, she argues that regarding the organisation of free time “simultaneous action on adults and on promoting the value of volunteerism in the wider society would have a great impact on secondary school students” [78; p.27].

Within the group of authors emphasising volunteering as part of free time activities, there are Ćavar, Pavić and Racz that conclude, based on the local empirical research, that “83 % of their respondents consider volunteering as a good way to spend their free time” [79; p.153]. These authors state a high percentage of volunteering in church communities and argues that this is related to the church’s position on the importance of helping others, which includes volunteering [79; p.154].

Additionally, research was conducted on gender differences in volunteering as part of free time activities, based on the data collected about students from Nursing school in Vrapče in 2014 [80].

FREE TIME AND KINESIOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES

Doing sport, or generally doing kinesiological activity, is important part of structured free time activities. It can be done either in out-of-class or out-of-school activities. If conducted within a sport club it is not considered as a leisure time activity. Competitive or recreational sport activities are included in many other literature sources which do not consider sport explicitly, but instead analyse distribution of participation of children and youth in available free time activities. In this section we concentrate on literature sources which analyse solely on doing kinesiological activities in free time.

Prskalo, alone and with collaborators [81-87], covered sport-related free time in significant details with profound conclusions. He summarises importance of the sport, and more generally kinesiological activities, as follows: “Systematic, scientifically based exercise can significantly influence not only the regulation of morphological, motor and functional characteristics, but also to a considerable extent cognitive functions and conative dimensions responsible for behavioural modalities and effective socialization of young people to variable living and working conditions. There are few human activities that can simultaneously influence such a large number of human characteristics as is possible with expertly designed kinesiology activities” [83; pp.162-163]. On the sample of 287 pupils from 1st to 4th grade of two primary schools in Zagreb, in 2007 he tested attitudes about the importance of the school subject *Physical and Health Culture* and influence of age and gender onto answers. As the author further states “there is no optimal growth, development and upbringing without physical exercise, because it is partly a conditional need that cannot be compensated for by anything. On the contrary, from a kinesiology point of view, it is important to state that neglecting or preventing the need for exercise is one of the important causes of disorders of overall development” [83; p.166]. Author analyses in details obtained data, according to which, among other results, it is found that “Spending free time in some characteristic static activity is significantly higher (27%) than in some kinesiological activity (17%)” [83; p.170].

Prskalo conducted another survey in 2012 [84] on the one hand to gain clearer insight into respondents’ attitudes and on the other hand to compare results with the results obtained in 2007 [83]. In 2012 he surveyed 341 pupils from 1st to 4th grade of the same two primary schools in Zagreb as in 2007 survey. The author found considerable changes in respondents’ attitudes,

namely “Preference for Physical Education was significantly reduced from 37% in 2007 to 27% in 2012. Spending leisure time in a typically static activity was significantly higher (44%) than doing kinesiological activities (25%) in 2012 as opposed to 2007 when leisure time spent in a static activity was 27% in comparison to 17% spent doing kinesiological activities” [84; p.118].

Badrić and Prskalo [85] in details review literature about free time. They emphasise the kinesiological activities among other free time activities, since “For the purpose of increasing the general health of children and young people, raising the level of muscle activity is a significant contribution to satisfying the biological need for movement, and thus contributes to the improvement of their anthropological status. The survival and development of humans as creators of positive values and material goods is conditioned by motor activities and movement” [85; p.487].

The authors state that “The key task of contemporary society must be to create a habit for lifelong meaningful use of free time, which includes independent physical exercise of children and youth in their free time. Children must use all natural resources, because only in such conditions will they recognize the value system, that is, that they have a natural environment that provides countless possibilities for the affirmation of various forms of sports activities” [85; p.488].

Badrić, Prskalo and Barić [81] surveyed 300 boys and girls from 5th to 8th grade of elementary school about their kinesiological activities in their free time. They found out that 59 % of boys and 29 % of girls participate in some sport activity in their leisure time. Boys prevalently enrol in soccer and girls in driving bicycle and roller skating. Main reasons for doing kinesiological activities are fun, socialising, while health comes after these [81; p.48]. Majority of respondents would like to continue doing sports in the secondary school [81; p.49].

The authors note that “Young people spend their free time in activities that do not require muscular effort. Precisely because of this state, the preservation and improvement of physical and mental health becomes an imperative of the present time. Creating the habit of proper use of free time, dedicated to exercise and movement, becomes the primary educational method from a kinesiology point of view” [81; pp.44-45].

Badrić, Prskalo and Pongračić [82] surveyed 60 boys and girls from 4th grade of elementary school to find out about their participation in sport activities in leisure time. They found out that 20 % of respondents participate in some kinesiological activity in their leisure time. Along with that, 72 % of respondents consider school subject *Physical and Health Culture* to be the school subject which is most important for their lives.

Badrić, Prskalo and Matijević in 2010 surveyed 847 students from 5th to 8th grade of primary schools, who live in urban areas of Sisak and Petrinja in Croatia [86]. The survey aimed at collecting data about distribution of free time activities in which respondents participate, and for that purpose contained a list of 15 kinesiology related and 13 non-kinesiology related activities, with the possibility that respondents add further activities [86; pp.304-305]. Respondents were asked to state how many times they participated in some activity during the last seven days. Respondents mostly participated in cycling and soccer, and in most of the activities respondents prevalently participated three times. For each of the listed, kinesiology related activity there were respondents who conducted it seven or more times [86; p.305-306].

Regarding non-kinesiology related activities most of the respondents watched television (and more than half of them did that almost every day in the observed week). Gender differences were shown to be significant in 11 and non-significant in 4 kinesiology related activities, and furthermore significant in 12 while non-significant only in 1 non-kinesiology related activity [86; p.307-308]. Age was significant for only one kinesiology related activity, but for seven out of the 13 non-kinesiology related activities [86; p.309-310].

Authors compare their results with surveys carried out earlier, and argue about considerably larger percentage of time spent in electronic-media related free time activities like is television watching, internet surfing and playing electronic games. According to the authors “These results are a cause for concern because spending time in front of various media has almost doubled in the last 10 years and has brought with it implications of sedentary lifestyle and consequently these activities are given precedence over kinesiology related activities” [86; p.312], and these facts are more pronounced for older respondents [86; p.313] so that “The results obtained in this way show that the age of students can serve as a good predictor of the students’ participation in particular free time activities [86; p.314].

Jurakić, Trošt and Visković [87] surveyed 148 pupils in 5th to 8th grade of elementary school “Bartol Kašić” in Zagreb. That number represents 90 % of pupils in that school. Data shows that 50 % of respondents are train in sport clubs out of the school. The authors critically observe that “most of them play sports very competitively, the selection is stricter in older age groups, and it is expected that a large percentage of children will stop training after primary school. The big question is what percentage of them will continue to play sports recreationally. There should be extracurricular activities to enjoy participation, movement and exercise” [87; p.73]. Bobić, Trošt and Jurakić [88], similarly surveyed students from one elementary school in Ivanić Grad to find out what are the preferred and desired sports-recreational activities of respondents, and to check significance of gender in answers. Data reveals that most of the respondents would prefer swimming. However, girls prefer individual, non-competitive activities like aerobic and dance, while boys prefer team sports such as football, handball and basketball.

Petračić [89] surveyed 284 children aged 10-13 years, from two elementary schools, and who live in Petrinja. The author found out that 47 % of boys and 9 % of girls are involved in sport-recreational activities in their free time [89; p.199]. As part of recreational activities, author considered vacations and found out that 73 % of respondents go to summer vacation, while 14 % of them go to winter holidays [89; p.200].

Pećar-Mraković and Mraković stress that “Play is generally an unavoidable factor in the optimal growth and development of all living beings, including humans ... Currently, there is no tool or method that could replace muscular or motor play” [90; p.44]. Moreover, they point out the complementary trends in free time of adults and of children: “for adults, working time is reduced and free time is increased, while for children and young people, free time is drastically reduced and working time is unscrupulously increased, and in a visibly dangerous way ... reduction of play, and that is necessary, all kinds of motor games” [90; p.45].

Jenko Miholić, Hraski and Juranić note that “the ratio of school work time and leisure time is increasingly changing for children and the youth. Children are overloaded with extensive academic obligations and therefore it is even more important to provide them with quality content for the rest of the day” [91; p.248]. Following that and other facts, they were motivated to find out how the primary school students spend their free time, with emphasis on possible differences regarding their place of living. For that matter they surveyed 139 students from first four grades of four primary schools in north-western Croatia [91; p.249]. Results show that most of the respondents watch television program or play video games in free time, while relatively small number of them participate in some sport, or more generally kinesiological activity in free time [91; p.251], among the later the soccer being most frequent sport [91; p.253]. The prevalent reason why respondents do sports is fun and hanging out with friends [91; p.253]. The authors analysed in details differences between respondents from schools in urban or rural areas and from boys and girls.

Vrbanac [92] collected data about free time of female students in one secondary school in Pula. Results show that respondents use more than 60 % of their free time for school-related learning, up to 30 % for cultural and similar activities and around 10 % for sport and sport-recreational activities.

Negotić [93] emphasises the role that sports games have in development of children and youth.

Matijašević and Maglica [94] point out importance of sport clubs and other civil society organisation dealing with prevention and treatment of behaviour problems in free time of children and youth. Furthermore, they emphasise cross-curricular topics contribution to free time organisation from the side of formal education.

FREE TIME IN RELATION TO CULTURE, FINE ART AND MUSIC

Several papers presented results about different out-of-class school activities, with art-related activities emphasised [95, 96]. In particular, Blažević [95] explored the types of out-of-class activities available to students, with details about the school in which they are conducted and about teachers who lead them. She was interested on the one hand in finding out the distribution of activities, and on the other hand in analysing in more details play belonging to sciences and play belonging to humanities and social sciences, among other types of play.

For that, in 2015 she surveyed 146 teachers for 1st-4th grades of primary schools, from the two Croatian counties. She found out about 42 activities that were considered different. Ratio of activities to teachers surveyed determined further analysis. The activities span broad range of disciplines, reveal rather creative and substantial approach of teachers, and point to the relation between teachers' level of advancement and the extraordinariness in creativity, innovativeness and contemporariness of activities they created. Blažević extracted additionally the play and observed that "results point to the awareness of teachers about the importance of using play in extracurricular activities, but also in classes in general".

Blažević and Matijašević [96] continued that line of research, starting with observation that the implementation of art in schools was not intended to create new artists and world-famous masterpieces, but to release creativity in children [96; p.210]. They wanted to find out how many art-related out-of-class activities are available to primary school students, because of previous introduction of the concept of Education through Art. For that, in 2019 they surveyed 176 teachers for 1st-4th grade primary school, from two Croatian counties asking questions about art-related out-of-class activities, about the school and other questions. Part of the questions tended to find out how many art-related programs exist and how often are they conducted, while part was focused onto self-evaluation of teachers.

Balić [97] discusses spending of free time, education during free time and education for free time. She considers art education to be crucial for creative work throughout our lives, and henceforth also for creative free time [97; p.235]. She analyses in detail who will deal with culture. Along with the culture, she analyses the relation between the amateur and professional sports.

Pejić Papak, Vidulin-Orbanić and Rončević [98] analyse in details out-of-school cultural activities as part of the students' free time. They analysed in what amount do students, who specifically are all involved in fine art activities, visit cultural institutions such as museums, galleries, etc., and in what amount do they participate in their programs. Their approach is one the one hand motivated by the importance that culture contributes to human development, affirmation and creation of new life patterns [98; pp.191-192], and on the other hand by emphasising the importance of culture in life of young persons by National program for youth, formulated in 2003 [98; p.192]. They started with data from school directories of 17 primary schools in the city of Rijeka and extracted data of 343 students from all eight grades, who at the same time attend some out-of-school cultural activity, altogether 42 activities the two most represented being musical and dance activities. In 2010 they surveyed these students anonymously in order to obtain data about frequency with which they visit cultural institutions, how do they find information about available cultural manifestations, as well as in what amount is their behaviour influenced by their environment and in particular by their parents'

behaviour [98; p.194]. Results are gender dependent as prevalently girls participate in cultural activities, and boys in sports activities. There are differences in methods of learning [98; p.195]. Regarding visiting the cultural institutions, majority of students visit libraries, however that is in a significant amount caused by required school tasks [98; p.196]. On the other hand, majority of students never visited a gallery, the exceptions being students who are themselves enrolled in fine art activities [98; pp.196-197]. Parental visits to cultural institutions are directly reflected in visiting of these institutions by their children, but one must also have in mind that parents, independently of their own behaviour, encourage children to participate in cultural out-of-school activities [98; p.197]. Majority of information about cultural programs come from peers and parents [98; p.198]. It is surprising that a rather small number of respondents found out about the program offered by cultural institutions by the very leaders of the cultural activities in which they participate [98; p.198]. Finally, most of the respondents visit the cultural institutions with school and their peers [98; p.199].

Dubovicki, Svalina and Proleta [99] concentrate on the musical extracurricular activities. Underlying reason for that is that music has considerable positive effects for the proper structuring of children's and young people's free time, for their psychological freedom and security [99; p.558]. They analysed the curricula of 30 primary schools from the city of Osijek and surrounding towns to see how many and which extracurricular activities were offered to students, with an emphasis on musical activities. Then, in the 2012/2013 school year, they surveyed 24 pupils from 3rd and 4th grade of an Osijek primary school who attend extracurricular musical activities, to find out which activities they attend and how satisfied they are with them. Data collected reveal that schools in the city offer more extracurricular activities than schools in smaller towns, and the number of activities is greater for children in higher grades of primary schools [99; p.562]. However, specifically for music, on the one hand there is significant difference in the number of musical activities offered in the city in comparison with their number in the surrounding towns [99; p.565], but on the other hand there is no significant difference in the share of musical extracurricular activities between classroom and subject teaching [99; p.566]. The largest number of participants has the choir as an extracurricular musical activity [99; p.564] and overall, singing is the most represented type of musical activity, while musical creativity is not represented anywhere (in regular primary schools) [99; p.566]. Participation in musical activities have different meanings for students, but for most it is a place of joy, socializing and learning, while for no one it is just another school obligation [99; p.572]. Authors present some details of children's opinions [99; p.572], conclusions and proposals for expanding the representation of such activities [99; p.575].

Šulentić Begić, Begić and Kir in 2018 surveyed 510 students from 4th to 8th grade, of two elementary schools in Osječko-baranjska county; one school in urban and the other in suburban environment [100; p.212]. They wanted to check whether the attending out-of-class and out-of-school music activities significantly depends on the location of the school (urban or sub-urban) gender, age and their parents' involvement in music [100; p.211]. Around 1/3 of respondents attend some out-of-class music activity [100; p.214] and somewhat larger part attend out-of-school music activity [100; p.216]. Girls attend such activities significantly more [100; p.220], while age is significant for out-of-school music activities but is not significant for out-of-class music activities [100; p.221]. Finally, parents' involvement in music significantly influences children attendance of all music activities [100; p.222].

Vaštuka [101] describes a specific activity enabling students to spend their free time in a well-structured manner. She describes the program "Pupils Days" ("Đački dani") aimed for school aged children, held annually since 1996 in City Library of Karlovac, for two months during school holidays. Program consists of guided workshops, "... but still leaves enough space for the development of children's imagination, spontaneity and creativity. The program

is always open to new ideas from the participants, which further encourages them to be active, imaginative, and at the same time develops a sense of appreciation for their opinions. The ‘Pupils Days’ program deserves special attention as one of the leading examples of good practice in spending free time” [101; p.67]. Year after year, children show an increasing interest in attending the program, and parents are interested in including their children in the program. The librarians recognized the need of children and young people for meaningful and high-quality leisure time, especially during school holidays, and began to implement the program [101; p.67]. The program consists prevalently of cultural and art workshops. Over the years, ecological workshops and game workshops have been held, and more recently workshops about robotics and informatics have been held [101; p.69]. Numerous participants apply for participation over several years [101; p.69].

The program includes intensive cooperation with the public and is one of the contributions to the development of the library’s interdisciplinary activities such as cultural management and cultural tourism [101; p.71]. Based on the observed interest of the students and many participants, the author argues that the program “Pupils Days” is an example of good practice, in terms of free time well spent through socializing, having fun and acquiring knowledge and skills. The participation of pupils in the program positively influences the use of other library services and the increase in the total number of its members [101; pp.74-75].

Doreski and Marinić [102] also deals with libraries, in particular the school libraries, and argue about their contribution to free time, specifically within the context of life-long learning. Their starting point is that if one wants that pupils stay in the library then one should understand pupils’ interests and should recognize certain styles of their behaviour [102; p.163].

Rosić focuses onto role that student dormitories have in the education system [103]. Presently, dormitory pedagogy is insufficiently developed. Having in mind that students live there, it is important to structure their free time. Rosić emphasises the dormitory educator as “at least a teacher and lecturer; he is a collaborator and adviser, leader and skilled organizer” [103].

FREE TIME IN RELATION TO SPECIFIC ACTIVITY OR CLASS

Pešorda [104] considers the impact that a history curriculum can have on leisure time. Using survey, in 2006 she collected data from 124 students of one secondary school in Sesvete. Data included frequency of students’ participation in listed 40 free time activities. The author analyses how a particular activity is related, directly or indirectly, to the history curriculum and cultural aspect of free time. The novel ideas presented could help history teachers in designing, encouraging and organizing students’ free time and influence the modernization of the history curriculum [104; p.42]. Author emphasises the proactive and creative approach that a history teacher should have, and stresses their general lack of knowledge about pedagogy of free time [104; p.49].

Jagić [105] theoretically approaches the notion of the *youth tourism*, a type of cultural tourism consisting of school trips and excursions, because it “provides significant pedagogical and intercultural opportunities” [105; p.208] and is an important part of a set of out-of-school activities. Youth tourism is in Croatia practised in the final grades of primary and secondary school, is aligned with the educational objectives of the school and is considered as a contribution to pupils’ cosmopolitanism [105; pp.208-209]. “The creation and shaping of tourist culture is of exceptional value, and a high pedagogical requirement and obligation of many educational factors” [105; p.212].

Bogut, Obranić and Mlinarević analyse specifically scouting as an extracurricular activity [106]. They state that “The characteristics we expect from children/students today are the ability to make independent decisions, but also the ability to solve problems through teamwork and

group work ... In the Scouts, children socialize, learn through research, discovery, and acquire teamwork skills, share tasks and obligations, and develop a sense of responsibility, but also a sense of self-affirmation. Such free activities are very suitable for developing work habits among students. The scouts also learn communication skills and the ability to understand, work habits and cooperation in a small group under the guidance of the older and more experienced, organizational and leadership skills, planning and implementation of the agreed, resourcefulness and independence in solving problems” [106; p.300]. They surveyed higher education institutions students, future teachers, regarding scouting. That is eventually important for children and youth free time because the future teachers will lead scouting organisations for them.

Kovačević analyses and data about playing computer games among primary school students, collected in 2006 from 195 boys and girls attending 5th to 8th grade in 3 schools in Splitsko-dalmatinska county [107]. According to Kovačević: “Playing computer games in free time is free from the influence of parents and represents the child’s voluntary activity. Some parents support this kind of entertainment in their children’s free time, and some do not. However, it is hard to believe that it is the parent who suggests the child to play at the computer design your free time” [107; p.51]. However, stated views of the parents should be taken with a caution because they were collected indirectly, i.e. also from respondents [107; p.60]. Out of an average of 4 hours of free time, around 2 hours are spent at the computer. In that year 2006, respondents mostly used the computer for games, then for obtaining information and finally for communication [107; pp.55-56]. Overall, the data are presented depending on the class attended, gender and type of computer game.

Playing computer games is one example of a general attitude about the risk of insufficient leisure time, in particular: “it seems worrying that a very high percentage of respondents spend most of their free time at the computer, playing computer games. Such activities, (and to such an extent) do not lead to complete personality development, as the ultimate goal of institutionalized and free forms of education” [107; p.61].

FREE TIME AS SOURCE OF RISKY BEHAVIOUR

Many authors mentions that free time brings about the risk for development of misbehaviour, either because of the non-structured use of free time by children and youth, or by purposeful influence of manipulators. In this subsection we cover articles in which misbehaviour and risky behaviour of children and youth are treated explicitly.

Raboteg-Šarić, Sakoman and Brajša-Žganec [108] examined whether parental child-rearing practices are related to different styles of children’s leisure-time activities and, moreover, they aimed to find out which aspects of parental behaviour and after school activities are related to children’s school achievement and substance use. They were interested in examining “to what extent parental educational procedures are related to the styles of spending free time of their children and which aspects of parental behaviour and activities of young people during free time are related to their school achievement and alcohol consumption and drug” [108; p.243]. Specifically, they wanted to see how child gender and style of leisure time influence connection relation between behaviours of parents and children. They surveyed 2 832 secondary school students, attending gymnasium and vocational schools, from every Croatian county. Altogether 86 % of respondents live with both parents and 14 % with one parent [108; p.243]. Respondents were asked about their parents’ behaviour, activities they conduct in free time and about themselves. According to data collected: mothers significantly more supervise their daughters; girls feel less support from parents than boys; boys and girls similarly participate in the activity going out and having fun, while there are statistically significant differences in participation in all other 18 activities included in the survey; finally, boys’ and girls’ behaviours

are statistically significantly different [108; pp.246-247]. The authors present detailed analysis of contribution of socio-demographic and other characteristics onto overall and especially onto risky leisure time activities of respondents. The authors “pointed out the importance of parenting practices, especially parental supervision and support in the period of adolescence, for the successful psychosocial adaptation of young people” [108; p.258]. Their factorisation of types of parent’s behaviour is to be compared with that of Blažević [47].

Cavenago Morović et al. [109] focus onto risky behaviour of adolescents. Using anonymous surveys, in 2005 they collected data from 848 youth from 8th grade of primary school and all grades of secondary schools in Zadar county. They present detailed data about the respondents’ free time, risky habits and depression. The authors conclude that adolescents do not have enough acceptable and recognizable content for adequate leisure time, and that inadequate spending of free time increases the occurrence of risky behaviours and habits. They consider that the formation multidisciplinary youth centres could contribute to better use of free time and prevention of all forms of risky behaviour.

Nazor [110] starts with results of surveys conducted in 1995 and 2000 in Split, both devoted to young people aged 15 to 29. Both surveys had 996 respondents, but generally different people. Moreover, surveys significantly overlap in questions, but not totally. Regarding the use of drugs, the author divides the respondents into three groups: the abstainers, the tasters and the consumers. There are some general characteristics of how persons within some group use their free time, as shown by analysing data collected in 1995 survey. In particular, the abstainers most often watch television program in their free time. Tasters most often enrol in sport activities, while consumers prevalently go to bars. Based on the data analysis, the author states that there is significant connection between the contacts with drugs and the two activities; the extreme sports and alternative courses [110; pp.64-65]. Additional observation is that all young people often spend their free time in a rather passive way [110; p.65].

CONCLUSIONS

Since 1990 a large number of studies dealt with notion of free time for school-aged children and youth in Croatia. The studies differ in the age groups of the respondents from elementary school age students all the way up to the student population. They include differences in the place of residence as well as the place of education, which are usually reduced to differences between the countryside and the city. The studies are focused on a wide range of topics that include the criterion of the structure of free time, the connection of the contribution of free time with regard to the general development context and the preventive-intervention aspect. Structure of free time is the most represented topic in studies. Some of the studies have equivalent groups of respondents and their results can be mutually compared, what was done in several cases. Other studies cannot be directly compared, but their results can serve in forming a unified picture of dynamics of free time of children and youth during different intervals. Moreover, data collected, presented and analysed in existing articles represent solid basis for comparison with results of possible, future studies.

We extract two results, among many presented in literature. First, average quantity of free time is considerable. That is a valuable resource and it requires longer-term, correlated action of schools, parents, youth centres and other subjects to structure it. Secondly, improper approaches can degrade that potential: too intensive broadening of formal education can reduce the potential for creativity and self-development during free time; too weak approach will enable further raise of manipulative influences that, unintentionally or not, eventually also brings about ceasing of creativity and development of children and youth.

These facts go along with the general approach to a leisure time. Although leisure time as a term was recognized in pedagogy in the 1920s, lately it has been gaining more relevance,

especially in the context of creating education for leisure time of children and youth. Leisure time, in addition to being important for the overall development and wellbeing of an individual, at the same time enables the recognition of talents of an individual. Therefore, it is necessary to offer students a chance to independently organize leisure time with structured activities. In doing so, it is important to bear in mind that organizing leisure time is influenced by modernisation and globalisation. This influence can be observed in the context of systems theory, because leisure time can be understood as a system constructed from different elements, such as activities, motives, values, aims, preferences, resources, limitations, influences and outcomes. These elements interact and create a dynamic structure which reflects an individual's personality, needs and interests, and also affects their development, health, wellbeing and quality of life. Leisure time as a system is connected to other systems, such as family, school, work, culture, society and environment, and they also have an influence on its formation and function. Leisure time pedagogy is an interdisciplinary field of pedagogical science and is closely connected to other sciences. Because of that, it is necessary to devise an integrated questionnaire that fosters creative problem solving, enables a holistic approach in the development of children and youth and different forms of prevention. The aim of the integrated questionnaire is to enable an individual to learn actively, creatively and critically in line with their needs, interests and capabilities and to prepare them for a life in a complex and dynamic world. An example of an integrated questionnaire applicable in all areas would be a problem solving questionnaire. The dynamic structure of the occurrence of leisure time creates space for further research which would contribute to increased development quality of an individual but also the prevention of unwanted behaviors.

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