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High School Students' Leisure Time Activities

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Abstract

The research paper examines high school students' leisure time preferences ($N=437$, 194 male, 44.4%; 243 female, 55.6%) while taking into account the school type, age and gender effect on their leisure preferences. The study included mid and late adolescents whose age ranged from 14 to 19. The questionnaire consisted of socio-demographic and leisure time activity questions. The results point to significant differences between students in terms of culture-oriented, family-oriented and passively spent free time activities. A statistically significant difference was found in relation to *spending time in a bar* (passively-idly spent time) as older adolescents were more prone to it. A significant difference was noted in terms of *attending church, sermons or lectures* (religion-oriented free time) and *actively doing sports* (sport-oriented free time), where younger adolescents ascribed a higher importance to these activities as opposed to older adolescents. Gender was significant concerning family and home-oriented leisure activities, passively-idly spent activities, culture and sport-oriented activities. Future studies should incorporate a more comprehensive list of activities in order to provide an in-depth view of out-of-school activities and daily lifestyles.

Keywords: *leisure time, adolescents, school, age, gender*

1. Introduction

During the formative period of adolescence, young people feel the need to express, interact and engage with their environment, especially their peers. Although their family and school surrounding can provide a useful means of expression, youth often uses leisure time in order to express certain aspects of their personal and social identity (Barber et al., 2005). Leisure represents a specific social context or timeframe, where adolescents' express individual preferences through leisure activities. Leisure activities become very important in adolescence as they can provide a means through which adolescents find enjoyment, fulfilment and freedom (Zeijl, Du Bois-Reymond, and Poel, 2001). However, it can also serve as an out-of-school timeframe, where adolescents passively consume goods, and wander without structure and purpose (Mlinarević, Miliša, and Proroković, 2007). Therefore, this study aims to investigate high school students' leisure time preferences while taking into account the socio-demographic factors.

2. Theoretical background

Leisure is a product of industrialization or, to be more precise, a social phenomenon that arose after a gradual shortening of working hours, mass employment and separation between work and free time (Ilišin, 1999). Dumazedier (1972) sees leisure as a set of voluntarily chosen, fun, educational or creative activities that an individual undertakes after he or she is done with other professional, social or family obligations. Holder, Coleman, and Sehn (2009) define leisure as freely chosen non-work activities that are done for relaxation and enjoyment.

With regards to adolescence, Zeijl, Du Bois-Reymond and Poel (2001), see leisure as an after-school time, where adolescents engage in voluntary activities (organized or unorganized). Opić and Đuranović (2014) see it as the time left after one's school obligations are done, as a "training ground" (p.547) for the development of various social, and verbal skills as well as a place of resolution and tolerance. Hendry, et al. (2005) define adolescence as a "peak time of leisure needs" (p.32), when adolescents use various activities to construct meanings and for personal

and social expression. Dworkin, Larson and Hansen (2003) emphasize that adolescents are “active agents in their own development” (p.17) and leisure, as a distinct context, provides adolescents with the freedom to investigate and express various skills, competencies and aspects of their identity. Leisure in adolescence is “instrumental”, as it enables “the development and exploration of skills and knowledge”, and it is “expressive”, as it provides adolescents with the opportunities to express “the interests, values and abilities that affirm social and personal identity” (Abbott and Barber, 2007, p.63). Aside from enabling identity formation, participation in discretionary activities provides a glimpse into one’s own motives, talents and values (Erikson, 1968). Participation in certain leisure activities reflects the adolescent’s own beliefs, while his/her participation allows the adolescent to create, uncover, explore and express different aspects of himself (Barber et al., 2005). Various authors have shown the significance of leisure time as well as its effect on adolescent creativity, well-being, satisfaction, and fulfilment (Dumazedier, 1972; Ilišin, 1999; Mahoney and Stattin, 2000; Bouillet, Ilišin, and Potočnik, 2008; Leversen, et al., 2012). As opposed to older generations, adolescents have more leisure time at their disposal. For instance, youth in North America has 6.5 to 8 hours; European youth has 5.5 to 7.5 hours, while East Asian youth has 4 to 5.5 hours of leisure time (Larson and Verma, 1999). Moreover, Ilišin (1999) states that adolescents use leisure in order to self-actualize and socialize, while it has an effect on personality development. Adolescents convey their identity through consumption practices and they are socialized through their chosen free time activities (Bouillet, Ilišin, and Potočnik, 2008). Leisure activities provide a context for identity development and they enable the facilitation of those competencies that are integral for the transition into adulthood. By participating in structured leisure activities, adolescents are provided with an opportunity to socialize, cooperate and relate to their peers, which are important developmental needs. Leisure preferences connect the individual to his or her peers because leisure choices reflect his or her inner beliefs and thoughts (Eccles, et al., 2003). Specifically, discretionary activities allow the individual to be “personally expressive and to communicate to both themselves and others that *“This is who I am”* or *“I believe I am meant to do”* (Barber et al., 2005, p.188). Mahoney and Stattin (2000) claim that structured leisure

activities are more socially complex (as opposed to unstructured ones) and involve peer cooperation, family support and guidance from other adult figures (for instance coaches). Fredricks and Eccles (2008) explain that organized activity contexts facilitate personal exploration and provide adolescents with an opportunity to enhance their academic and leadership skills.

However, leisure is often seen as a space where risky behavioural patterns are seen. For instance, Bouillet, Ilišin, and Potočnik (2008) mention that structured activities as well as time spent within the family decreases the possibility of at-risk behaviour as opposed to leisure time spent exclusively with other peers. Mahoney and Stattin (2000) revealed that participation in structured activities (for instance music, theatre, various hobbies, sports, church, etc.) led to a decrease in antisocial behaviour (especially in boys). Moreover, leisure patterns are also a product of mass media and one's own material status (parents' socio-economic status). While comparing adolescents' free time in Europe, East Asia and North America, Larson and Verma (1999) discovered that *media use* (television use or TV viewing) was the largest and most consistent category across these nations. Interestingly, the authors note that higher media use in Asian and African American youth may be attributed to a lack of other leisure options at home or to a prolonged number of leisure hours, while a lack of parental supervision had an effect on European youth. Roberts (2006) insists that leisure preferences are based on conscious and unconscious mechanisms or *social* and *decision* filters. Hendry, et al. (2005) explain that adolescents' leisure choices are coloured and influenced by various factors, such as the family, school, friends or peers, media, leisure trends, and socio-structural changes.

Even though leisure presents a space where various socio-cultural values and norms clash, Leversen et al. (2012) highlight that leisure still acts as a place where adolescents exercise self-determination and autonomy. By choosing activities of their own interest, they enhance their level of involvement and become active creators of their unstructured, free time. This is most evident in their chosen leisure practices, such as listening to specific types of musical or film genres, going to places of personal interest, spending time with friends, etc. Larson, Hansen and Moneta (2006) highlight that other unstructured activities (such as listening to

music, socializing with peers, etc.) have a constructive role in adolescence since they are self-directed and autonomous. The increase in leisure activity offers has coincided with the advances in parents' material status, unsteady family household and media-promoted goods, which have in effect allowed adolescents to plan and orient themselves towards various leisure goods, fashion and music styles (Zeijl, Du Bois-Reymond, and Poel, 2001; Hengst, 2001). Investigations therefore into adolescent leisure activity preferences do not only provide an insight into a mere list of adolescents' activities and the manner in which they are performed but as well an insight into the functions that these activities have for young people throughout the formative period of adolescence.

3. Method

3.1. Research goal and aims

The research aims of this study were twofold: (1) to compare leisure time preferences/activities between grammar school students and vocational school students and (2) to explore the differences in leisure time preferences based on gender and age.

3.2. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: Differences in leisure preferences based on school type are expected, since the school programme varies and possibly dictates leisure preferences.

H2: Differences in leisure preferences based on age are expected, since adolescents change interests throughout the formative period of adolescence.

H3: Differences in leisure preferences based on gender are expected since there is a stereotypical view of how leisure time is spent, while previous research has pointed to a gender effect when it comes to leisure preferences.

3.3. Sample

The sample consisted of 437 high school students, specifically 245 students from grammar schools and 192 students from vocational schools in Osijek, Croatia. Two (2) randomly selected grammar and vocational schools participated and gave their research approval, which amounts to 437 participants. The study included 194 males (44.4%) and 243 female students (55.6%). Mid (9th to 11th grade) and late (12th grade) adolescents, whose age ranged from 14 to 19, participated in the study. Table 1 shows the descriptive data concerning the number of male and female participants.

TABLE 1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

<i>SCHOOL</i>	<i>GENDER</i>	<i>N</i>
GRAMMAR SCHOOL	MALE	110
	FEMALE	135
VOCATIONAL SCHOOL	MALE	84
	FEMALE	108

3.4. Instruments

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part contained socio-demographic questions, while the second part contained questions related to leisure preferences. The socio-demographic questions were related to school type, gender, age, family structure, parents' educational level and previous year's school success.

The second part of the questionnaire examined the participants' leisure choices/preferences. It contained 15 items /leisure choices that were roughly grouped into passively oriented time (*I spend my free time in a bar; I participate in games of chance (online poker, lottery, sport betting); I play games (PS, Xbox, Warcraft, Lol, etc.); I spend the weekend posting pictures of my night out; I lay around all day*), family/home-oriented time (*I participate in the housework and do the chores; I spend my free time with family members*), culture-oriented time (*I go to the cinema, the theatre or see a concert; I read books in my free time*), religion-oriented time (*I attend church, mass, sermon and lecture*), socially engaged time (*Free time is best spent with friends ; I spend time with my girlfriend/boyfriend; I do charity and volunteer work*) and active/sport-oriented time (*I actively do sports; I spend my free time with my pet*). The participants rated the frequency of certain leisure activities on a five-point Likert scale. The scale

consisted of five response categories ranging from (1) never, (2) seldom, (3) sometimes, (4) often and (5) very often.

3.5. Procedure

The research was conducted in accordance with *The Ethical Standards for Research with Children* (2003). The school board approved the questionnaires beforehand, while the parents gave their written consent. The study was conducted via an anonymous questionnaire during regular classes, in the month of May, school year 2017/2018. The participants were given a brief introduction, after which they completed the questionnaire voluntarily and in complete anonymity.

4. Results

As evident in Table 2, a statistically significant difference between vocational and grammar school students was found in terms of sports-oriented, culture-oriented, passively and family-oriented leisure time preferences. Taking into account the T-test results and frequency of leisure activities (based on mean scores) vocational and grammar school students often spend time with their friends, family members, doing house chores and lying around the house. Still, grammar school students are more prone to lying around, while vocational school students are more prone to doing housework or spending time with the family. While both vocational and grammar school students sometimes do sports or spend time with their girlfriend/boyfriend, vocational school students are more prone to both activities than grammar school students are. Both grammar and vocational school students sometimes go to the cinema/theatre/a concert, but grammar school students are more inclined to visit such establishments or events. Both groups rarely go to bars, church or read books, but grammar school students are still more prone to reading. While both groups rarely play video games or post pictures, grammar school students are still more interested in games, whereas vocational school students are more prone to posting pictures online.

While they rarely spend time with their pets, vocational school students are more prone to such an activity. Both groups very rarely do charity work or participate in games of chance, but vocational school students are still more prone to gambling of sorts.

**TABLE 2. T-TEST RESULTS ON GRAMMAR AND VOCATIONAL STUDENTS
LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES**

<i>VARIABLE</i>	<i>SCHOOL</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
FREE TIME IS BEST SPENT WITH FRIENDS.	GRAMMAR	245	4.06	.80	-1.46
	VOCATION	192	4.18	.83	
I SPEND TIME WITH MY GIRLFRIEND/BOYFRIEND.	GRAMMAR	245	2.61	1.64	-3.32
	VOCATION	192	3.11	1.49	
I ACTIVELY DO SPORTS.	GRAMMAR	245	3.20	1.34	-
	VOCATION	192	3.35	1.33	1.23 ***
I GO TO THE CINEMA, THE THEATRE OR SEE A CONCERT.	GRAMMAR	245	3.01	1.01	3.70
	VOCATION	192	2.63	1.09	***
I READ BOOKS IN MY FREE TIME.	GRAMMAR	245	2.49	1.29	3.53
	VOCATION	192	2.07	1.14	***
I SPEND MY FREE TIME IN A BAR.	GRAMMAR	245	2.70	1.21	.26
	VOCATION	192	2.67	1.18	
I PARTICIPATE IN GAMES OF CHANCE (ONLINE POKER, LOTTERY, SPORT BETTING).	GRAMMAR	245	1.52	1.12	-1.75
	VOCATION AL	192	1.71	1.13	
I PLAY GAMES (PS, XBOX, WARCRAFT, LOL, ETC.)	GRAMMAR	245	2.56	1.54	1.05
	VOCATION	192	2.40	1.55	
I SPEND THE WEEKEND POSTING PICTURES OF MY NIGHT OUT.	GRAMMAR	245	2.08	1.14	-1.96
	VOCATION	192	2.31	1.22	
I LIE AROUND ALL DAY.	GRAMMAR	245	3.66	1.11	2.71
	VOCATION	192	3.36	1.19	**
I SPEND MY FREE TIME WITH MY PET.	GRAMMAR	245	2.58	1.44	-
	VOCATION	192	2.90	1.42	2.33 *
I DO CHARITY AND VOLUNTEER WORK.	GRAMMAR	245	1.89	1.08	-.70
	VOCATION	192	1.96	1.08	
I PARTICIPATE IN THE HOUSEWORK AND DO THE CHORES.	GRAMMAR	245	3.60	1.07	-
	VOCATION AL	192	3.97	1.05	3.65 ***
I SPEND MY FREE TIME WITH FAMILY MEMBERS.	GRAMMAR	245	3.43	.97	-
	VOCATION	192	3.69	1.02	2.68 **
I ATTEND CHURCH, MASS, SERMON AND LECTURE.	GRAMMAR	245	2.83	1.48	.04
	VOCATION	192	2.82	1.43	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Still, grammar school students are more prone to lying around, while vocational school students are more prone to doing housework or spending time with the family. While both vocational and grammar school students sometimes do sports or spend time with their girlfriend/boyfriend, vocational school students are more prone to both activities than grammar school students are. Both grammar and vocational school students sometimes go to the cinema/theatre/a concert, but grammar school students are more inclined to visit such establishments or events. Both groups rarely

go to bars, church or read books, but grammar school students are still more prone to reading.

TABLE 3. T-TEST RESULTS ON LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES AND AGE EFFECT

<i>VARIABLE</i>	<i>AGE</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>
FREE TIME IS BEST SPENT WITH FRIENDS.	YOUNGER	218	4.15	.85	.88
	OLDER	219	4.08	.77	
I SPEND TIME WITH MY GIRLFRIEND/BOYFRIEND.	YOUNGER	218	2.64	1.60	-2.43*
	OLDER	219	3.01	1.58	
I ACTIVELY DO SPORTS.	YOUNGER	218	3.43	1.28	2.53*
	OLDER	219	3.11	1.37	
I GO TO THE CINEMA, THE THEATRE OR SEE A CONCERT.	YOUNGER	218	2.89	1.02	.93
	OLDER	219	2.79	1.10	
I READ BOOKS IN MY FREE TIME.	YOUNGER	218	2.30	1.24	-.10
	OLDER	219	2.31	1.25	
I SPEND MY FREE TIME IN A BAR.	YOUNGER	218	2.43	1.20	-4.66***
	OLDER	219	2.95	1.13	
I PARTICIPATE IN GAMES OF CHANCE (ONLINE POKER, LOTTERY, SPORT BETTING).	YOUNGER	218	1.56	1.09	-.77
	OLDER	219	1.65	1.17	
I PLAY GAMES (PS, XBOX, WARCRAFT, LOL, ETC.)	YOUNGER	218	2.63	1.57	1.87
	OLDER	219	2.35	1.51	
I SPEND THE WEEKEND POSTING PICTURES ABOUT MY NIGHT OUT.	YOUNGER	218	2.17	1.14	-.19
	OLDER	219	2.19	1.22	
I LIE AROUND ALL DAY.	YOUNGER	218	3.49	1.15	-.68
	OLDER	219	3.57	1.15	
I SPEND MY FREE TIME WITH MY PET.	YOUNGER	218	2.64	1.43	-1.14
	OLDER	219	2.80	1.43	
I DO CHARITY AND VOLUNTEER WORK.	YOUNGER	218	1.92	1.09	-.00
	OLDER	219	1.92	1.07	
I PARTICIPATE IN THE HOUSEWORK AND DO THE CHORES.	YOUNGER	218	3.72	1.04	-.85
	OLDER	219	3.81	1.11	
I SPEND MY FREE TIME WITH FAMILY MEMBERS.	YOUNGER	218	3.49	1.07	-1.16
	OLDER	219	3.60	.92	
I ATTEND CHURCH, MASS, SERMON AND LECTURE.	YOUNGER	218	3.04	1.47	3.03*
	OLDER	219	2.62	1.42	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

While both groups rarely play video games or post pictures, grammar school students are still more interested in games, whereas vocational school students are more prone to posting pictures online. While they rarely spend time with their pets, vocational school students are more prone to such an activity. Both groups very rarely do charity work or participate in games of chance, but vocational school students are still more prone to gambling of sorts.

The T-test data analysis shows that *younger* (age 14-16) and *older* adolescents (age 17-19) vary in terms of boyfriend/girlfriend-oriented, sports-oriented, passive (bar) and religion-oriented leisure time (see Table 3). Specifically, based on the T-test results and overall mean scores, it is evident that older and younger adolescents often spend time with their friends, family members or doing house chores. However, younger adolescents spend a bit more time with friends, while older adolescents spend a bit more time with family members or doing housework. Younger adolescents spend more time on sports as opposed to older adolescents. Although they both often lay around the house, older adolescents still do it more often. Both groups sometimes spend time with their boyfriend/girlfriend, but older adolescents still spend a higher amount of time with his/her love interest. While younger and older adolescents sometimes go to the cinema/theatre/a concert or to the bar, older generations spend more time at the bar while the younger ones still go to the movies/theatre/a concert a bit more. The younger group sometimes goes to church, while the older group rarely attends. While both groups rarely read books or play video games, the younger one spends a bit more time on games. Both rarely spend time with their pets, but the older group is still a bit more interested in spending time with them. Both groups very rarely do charity work, participate in games of chance and post pictures of themselves online.

The t-test results did not show a statistically significant gender effect across all leisure activities. However, as presented in Table 4, the T-test data analysis and overall mean scores show that both groups often spend time with friends and family or doing chores. However, female students spend a bit more time with the family or doing housework. Male students do sports or play games more often than females. Male and female students both lie around a lot, but girls are less prone to doing it.

TABLE 4. T-TEST RESULTS ON LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES AND GENDER EFFECT

<i>VARIABLE</i>	<i>GENDER</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
FREE TIME IS BEST SPENT WITH FRIENDS.	MALE	194	4.10	.78	-.33
	FEMALE	243	4.12	.85	
I SPEND TIME WITH MY GIRLFRIEND/BOYFRIEND.	MALE	194	2.87	1.53	.44
	FEMALE	243	2.80	1.66	
I ACTIVELY DO SPORTS.	MALE	194	3.59	1.30	4.68 ***
	FEMALE	243	3.00	1.30	
I GO TO THE CINEMA, THE THEATRE OR SEE A CONCERT.	MALE	194	2.71	1.04	- 2.40 *
	FEMALE	243	2.95	1.06	
I READ BOOKS IN MY FREE TIME.	MALE	194	1.85	1.10	- 7.36 ***
	FEMALE	243	2.67	1.22	
I SPEND MY FREE TIME IN A BAR.	MALE	194	2.71	1.22	.27
	FEMALE	243	2.67	1.18	
I PARTICIPATE IN GAMES OF CHANCE (ONLINE POKER, LOTTERY, SPORT BETTING).	MALE	194	2.05	1.38	7.22 ***
	FEMALE	243	1.26	.70	
I PLAY GAMES (PS, XBOX, WARCRAFT, LOL, ETC.)	MALE	194	3.49	1.45	14.4 0***
	FEMALE	243	1.69	1.09	
I SPEND THE WEEKEND POSTING PICTURES ABOUT MY NIGHT OUT.	MALE	194	1.98	1.10	- 3.24 **
	FEMALE	243	2.34	1.22	
I LIE AROUND ALL DAY.	MALE	194	3.66	1.20	-.45
	FEMALE	243	3.36	1.11	
I SPEND MY FREE TIME WITH MY PET.	MALE	194	2.58	1.37	- 3.89 ***
	FEMALE	243	2.90	1.44	
I DO CHARITY AND VOLUNTEER WORK.	MALE	194	1.89	1.02	- 2.51 *
	FEMALE	243	1.96	1.11	
I PARTICIPATE IN THE HOUSEWORK AND DO THE CHORES.	MALE	194	3.60	1.09	- 4.17 ***
	FEMALE	243	3.97	1.02	
I SPEND MY FREE TIME WITH FAMILY MEMBERS.	MALE	194	3.43	1.01	- 4.28 ***
	FEMALE	243	3.69	.95	
I ATTEND CHURCH, MASS, SERMON AND LECTURE.	MALE	194	2.83	1.46	- 2.46 *
	FEMALE	243	2.82	1.44	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Both groups sometimes spend time with their love interest or go to the bar. Both male and female students rarely go to the theatre/cinema/a concert, but female students do it a bit more often. Male students read books very rarely, as opposed to female students, who do it a bit more often. Male students rarely participate in games of chance, while female students do it even less often. Male students rarely spend time with their pets, as opposed to female students. Female students rarely post pictures, while male students do it even less often. While both groups rarely go to sermons/church, male students are still a bit more prone to going to church. Both groups very rarely do charity work.

5. Discussion

The research study aimed to examine the differences in the chosen leisure time activities or preferences between grammar and vocational school students and to explore the differences in leisure time preferences based on gender and age. The t-test results did not show a significant school, gender or age effect across all leisure activities. However, vocational school students were more active sportswise and they spent more time with their families and house pets. Grammar school students lay around after school, read books and visit the cinema, theatre and concert halls in their free time. The difference in school programmes (bigger number of hours devoted to their craft), daily changes in school and work setting and the emphasis placed on practical training could explain the difference in grammar and vocational school students' leisure preferences (Farias and Sevilla, 2015). These results were in line with other research results on high school students' activity preferences, specifically vocational students' sports-oriented leisure time (Hardman and Green, 2011; Zhou and Wang, 2019). Based on 771 students attending three different school programs, Hardman and Green (2011) noted that the school programme had the highest impact on the students' sports activity. Shanahan and Flaherty (2001) as well as Mortimer (2003) added that vocational school students, or students engaged in part-time work, are more prone to spending leisure time with their families, doing chores as well as spending time with friends than grammar school students. The results, however, are not in line with Singha and Misra's (2015) research

on leisure patterns, as their participants did not spend time doing sports nor did they read books or visit galleries, the theatre or museums in their free time.

The T- test data analysis shows that older adolescents spend more time in a bar or in the company of their boyfriend/girlfriend. The research findings also indicate that younger and older adolescents are equally prone to spending time with their peers or friends. Moreover, younger generations are more active in sporting activities and going to church/listening to sermons in their free time. The current results are in accordance with other similar research (Ilišin, 2002; Badrić and Prskalo, 2011; Opić and Đuranović, 2014). Opić and Đuranović (2014) note that the period of adolescence is marked by an increase in socialization so it is not surprising that adolescents ascribe a higher importance to it. Hendry, et al. (2005) highlight that adolescents see leisure as a period of time when they can joke around, have fun with their friends and do nothing in particular. Bouillet (2008) explains that most adolescents see socializing with friends, girlfriend/boyfriend as the best-spent leisure time. After analysing American and Korean leisure activities, Won and Han (2010) conclude that interacting with friends and watching TV are the most common activities. While analysing and comparing leisure activities, Badrić and Prskalo (2011) note that young people spend their time watching TV, hanging out with friends and going to bars/night clubs. Based on a comparative analysis of leisure interests (conducted in 1999 and 2004), Ilišin (2007) noticed slight changes in the incidence of certain leisure activities. Thus, for instance, participants spent time socializing, watching TV, listening to folk music, playing games and participating in games of chance. In addition, they went for walks, to concerts, various clubs or parties and they afterwards rested (as a result of going out). An increase in sporting activities could be accounted by an increase in their participation in games of chance.

The results are in accordance with Leburić and Relja (1999), who conclude that night clubs (30%); bars (18.9%) and the cinema (15, 6 %) are the most common places to spend leisure time relaxing. Mlinarević, Miliša and Proroković (2007) also note the passiveness when it comes to structuring leisure activities. The results of their research show that adolescents spend their time in front of the TV, listening to the radio or

going out to clubs or bars. While analysing night/disco clubs as specific social contexts where younger generations express their identities, Leburčić, Relja and Božić (2007) noticed that the participants are passive consumers since they are not able to create meaningful acts of identity expression. Tomić-Koludrović (1998) states that the expansion of leisure has led to media-enforced product placement, where various media outlets are trying to push various consumer-driven styles of life.

The T-test research results show that female students spend their time reading books, going to concerts/cinema/theatre and doing charity work. They also spend time with their pets, family members or doing house chores. In addition, female students spend their time posting pictures of themselves or their outings on social media. Moreover, the research results show that male students are more sport-oriented; they are more prone to betting/online poker/the lottery and playing video games more often than females. These findings are in accordance with the results obtained by Opić and Đuranović (2014), which show that girls use electronic media more, and that they tend to spend their free time on cultural activities, whereas boys turn to sports. Pejić Papak, Vidulin-Orbanić and Rončević (2012) and Badrić and Prskalo (2011) also explain that males are more prone to sports, while girls pertain to cultural activities. McHale, Crouter and Tucker's (2001) three-year longitudinal study showed that girls are more interested in real-life activities, for instance various hobbies or reading books, while boys are concerned with games and doing sports. Won and Han (2010) discovered that Korean students play PC games or use the Internet 30% of the time (after-school) while American students tend to do sports, chores or part-time jobs. Fawcett (2007) states that girls are more involved in cultural activities, as opposed to boys, who play sports and video games more often. The results further highlight stereotypical roles that shape leisure possibilities. Fawcett (2007) explains that girls are more prone to spending time with family and doing housework. Videnović, Pešić and Plut (2010) add that parents are usually stricter when it comes to girls and girls usually take care of their siblings.

The research findings are in line with other research results on religious activities in adolescent lives (Markstrom, 1999; Barber, Eccles, and Stone, 2001), as these results indicate that male students are more inclined to go to church/lectures/sermons.

Low mean scores in terms of civic/social engagement indicate that adolescents do not attribute much importance to it in their leisure time. Videnović, Pešić and Plut (2010) highlight that few participants are usually involved in a sort of civic activity, which could stem from a lack of social awareness in schools/at home or extracurricular activities of that sort in schools.

6. Conclusion

The study examined and compared high school students' leisure preferences while taking into account the school type, age and gender. The t-test data results did not show a statistically significant school, gender or age effect across all leisure activities. However, vocational school students are more active, spend more time with family members and pets and do house chores more often, as opposed to grammar school students, who are more inclined to lie around all day, read books and visit the theatre, cinema and concerts in their free time. Older adolescents spend more time with their boyfriend/girlfriend or in a bar. Younger adolescents are more active and attend masses. Gender differences were also noted as female students go to the cinema/the theatre/concerts, read books, do volunteer work, house chores and spend time with family members and pets. They are also more inclined to take pictures of themselves and post them online. Male students do sports, participate in games of chance and spend more time playing games on the computer. Interestingly, male students are more inclined to go to church. High mean scores were found in terms of spending time with friends, which is not atypical for their age and developmental needs. However, lower mean scores were noted for civic involvement as the participants did not volunteer or do charity work. It should be noted that the study has certain limitations as sample sizes (between vocational and grammar school students) were unequal. A larger sample size could, therefore, provide a more in-depth view of leisure preferences.

Due to the fact that adolescence is a very turbulent period filled with changes, adolescent leisure preferences will continually change. Still, efforts should be placed on creating more creative extracurricular activities or provide content that is more interesting and stimulating so that

adolescents can change activities and express aspects of their identity in different ways.

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Slobodnovremenske aktivnosti učenika srednjih škola

Sažetak

U radu se istražuju razlike u odabranim slobodnovremenskim aktivnostima ili preferencijama između gimnazijalaca i učenika strukovnih škola ($N=437$, 194 dječaka, 44.4%; 243 djevojaka, 55.6%), kao i razlike temeljene na spolu i dobi. U istraživanje su uključeni ispitanici u srednjoj i kasnoj adolescenciji, čija je dob varirala od 14 do 19 godina ($M=2.32$, $SD=1.16$). Upitnik se sastojao od socio-demografskih pitanja i pitanja vezanih uz slobodno vrijeme. Rezultati ukazuju na značajnu statističku razliku između učenika u vezi s kulturno, obiteljsko i pasivno provedenim slobodnim aktivnostima. Značajna je razlika utvrđena u vezi s provođenjem *vremena u kafiću* (pasivno provedeno vrijeme) te su stariji adolescenti skloniji tomu. Značajna razlika je uočena kada je riječ o *odlaženju u crkvu, na mise ili predavanja* (religijski orijentirane aktivnosti) i *aktivnom bavljenju sportom* (sportski orijentirano vrijeme), gdje su mlađi adolescenti pripisivali više značaja navedenim aktivnostima za razliku od starijih adolescenata. Spolne su razlike značajne kada je riječ o aktivnostima orijentiranim na obitelj i dom, pasivno provedenim aktivnostima, kulturnim i sportsko orijentiranim aktivnostima. Buduća istraživanja mogu kreirati sveobuhvatniju listu aktivnosti u svrhu dobivanja dubljeg uvida u slobodne aktivnosti i svakodnevne stilove života.

Ključne riječi: *slobodno vrijeme, adolescenti, škola, dob, spol*