

Quality of Youth Leisure – Traits and Opportunities for Prevention Planning

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to give a critic overview on the context of leisure, from defining to analysing contribution of leisure to developmental outcomes of children and youth, and to reach a conclusion based on comprehensive analysis. Leisure can be viewed as an important context that promotes the positive, healthy and normative developmental pathway of adolescents. On the other hand, leisure can represent a context that carries with it risk factors for youth involvement risk behaviours. LACE Model (Leisure Activity-Context-Experience Model) is a model focused on understanding adolescent development through leisure (Caldwell, 2005; Caldwell, 2011) and is presented in this paper in greater detail. Furthermore, this paper gives an overview of research studies linking quality of leisure with youth developmental outcomes. Evaluation research of interventions based on leisure did not provide unambiguous answers regarding their efficiency, therefore a need still exists for scientific studies to find answers on the conditions in which structured leisure time, i.e., interventions in the context of children's and youth's leisure, can lead to positive developmental outcomes.

Key words: *developmental outcomes for children and youth; LACE model; leisure.*

Introduction

The way adolescents spend their leisure time has a significant impact on their development, identity, socialisation, and future life (Caldwell, 2008). Shaw et al. (1995) emphasise that leisure time is an important transitional situation in adolescence that helps overcome the gap between play in childhood and labour in adulthood. Leisure time can be observed as a significant context that promotes the positive, healthy and normative developmental pathway of adolescents (Freire et al., 2016). On the other

hand, leisure can represent a context that can stimulate youth to participate in risk behaviours and/or develop behavioural problems.

The aim of this paper is to give a critic overview of the leisure time context, from definition to analysis of contribution of leisure time to developmental outcomes of children and youth, and hence yield the conclusions based on a comprehensive analysis. Objectives arising from this aim refer to definition of leisure time, reflection on the role of leisure time regarding promotion of healthy and positive youth development and prevention of risk behaviours and development of behavioural problems, as well as propose guidelines for further preventive research and investments. Objectives of this paper shall be attained through review of recent literature, critical review and synthesis of current knowledge in the field of science of leisure and prevention science.

Leisure

Leisure time is globally considered both in developed countries as well as in developing countries to be an important context or important time in a life of a young person. Although there is no universal common meaning of the term “leisure time”, numerous researchers and policymakers worldwide suggest that all youth in the world have hours in the day that can be considered as discretionary or free (Irby & Tolman, 2002). Defining and understanding the context of leisure time is complex hence it is possible to find different terms in literature related to leisure time. Very often the word leisure time is replaced with the term free time. In its original meaning leisure is free time. Leisure, free time, idle time; in describing a person, idle means the act of nothing or no work (translator’s note: definitions of Croatian terms *dokolica* and *dokon* from the original paper can be found in Anić, 2009). Although often used as synonyms, there is a difference in analytical meanings between the terms free time and leisure. Free time means the time off-work, while leisure assumes wider meaning of free time during which a person is dedicated to activities of his or her own interest (Ilišin, 2007). Therefore, when defining leisure time, we can differentiate between objective and subjective conceptualization (Godbey, 2008; Iso-Ahola, 1980; Sharp et al., 2011). Objective conceptualization of leisure time refers to the quantity of time spent away from duties (e.g., school, work) or to doing specific activities (e.g., sports, spending time with family and/or friends, watching TV). However, if we rely on subjective conceptualization, leisure time can be viewed as a state of mind, state of being or a meaningful experience (Weybright, 2013). Furthermore, in international literature afterschool programmes are mentioned in the context of leisure time, and these are regular, structured or semi-structured activities that students attend before or after school, or during summer (McDowell Group, 2018). Moreover, there is a frequent use of terms such as out-of-school time, extracurricular activities and expanded learning time (Little et al., 2008; McDowell Group, 2018). According to Cindrić (1992), extracurricular activities refer to organised leisure time of students in school environment, while out-of-school activities are happening outside of school,

and these activities are organised and managed by some other institution, association or a club, independently or in partnership with the school.

Leisure time is recognised as a human right in many cultures, but also as an important context for development of humanity (Caldwell, 2008). Leisure time is considered to be the fourth developmental context (Silbereisen & Todt, 1994), alongside family, school/work and community environment, as it offers numerous and unique opportunities to achieve developmental outcomes. It gives adolescents opportunities to develop into healthy adults by doing activities and behaviours that contribute to personal enjoyment, meaning and development of identity and autonomy (Caldwell & Faulk, 2013). Opaschowski (1976, acc. to Badura, 2018) gives eight basic functions of leisure time: a) recreation (recreation, health and well-being); b) education (acquiring knowledge, learning stimulation, further learning); c) compensation (equilibrium, diversion, pleasure); d) contemplation (resting, relaxation, self-determination); e) communication (communication, contact, sociability); f) integration (being together, community aspects and group formation); g) participation (taking part, commitment and social self-representation); and h) enculturation (creative development, productive activity and participation in cultural life). These functions indicate the broad area of impact that leisure time has on human lives.

In western industrialised countries, leisure time covers approximately half of adolescents' "wake" time, with somewhat greater quantity of leisure time recorded in North America compared to Europe (Larson & Verma, 1999; Wight et al., 2009). This information shows that students, alongside all their duties, have a lot of leisure time available that should be carefully considered, given the fact that the way adolescents fill their leisure time has significant developmental and health outcomes.

In the past ten years, there have been several research studies regarding the quantity of leisure time and the way children and youth in Croatia spend their leisure time. Research done on a sample of Zagreb secondary school students (N=116) shows that 41.3% report that they have two to three hours of leisure time a day (Budimir, 2017). Valjan Vukić (2016) undertook a research study on a sample of primary school students attending higher grades (N=970) in the territory of Zadar and Šibenik-Knin county and found that 37.2% of students spend one to two hours a week doing leisure activities, 29.9% of them spend three to four hours a week, while 32.9% of students spend 5 hours and more doing leisure activities. Furthermore, Valjan Vukić (2016) states that only 34.6% of students participate in extracurricular activities in school and 53% in out-of-school activities. Research done on a sample of Croatian university students (N=141) showed that students have 33 free hours a week and that they spent approximately 10 hours alone, while they spend the rest with their friends and families. Furthermore, students spend part of their leisure time on fun and relaxation, including watching TV, exploring interesting things online, playing computer games, communicating via Internet, and just lying around (Brkljačić et al., 2012).

Research shows that the way we spend our leisure time has changed significantly in the past several decades (Kleiber & Powell, 2005; Lopez-Sintas et al., 2017). This

can be attributed to fast development of “new media”. Initially, TV time has increased (Voorpostel et al., 2010), and then TV was replaced with new digital technologies connected to Internet (Lopez-Sintas et al., 2017). Digital era has brought about drastic changes, therefore more and more youth spent their time on their devices. Data collected in 2015 in the United Kingdom shows that youth spend 1/3 of their leisure time (approximately 14 hours a week) using devices and only smaller amount of time doing sports and cultural activities (Office for National Statistics, 2017). Furthermore, data from EUROSTAT (2015) show that during 2015, in 28 EU Member States, 85.2% of youth have participated in cultural activities at least once (in Croatia 74.4%), while only 47.3% of youth (in Croatia 52.8%) participated in sport activities. In the context of quantity and ways of spending leisure time, it is important to emphasise that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed daily lives of children and youth. During the pandemic and isolation, children and youth had less opportunities for physical activities, including less time spent in open air and exhibit more sedentary behaviour (including having more “screen time”), and they sleep more. However, research data also show that parental stimulation and support, as well as engagement of parents in physical activities and having a dog for a pet, are all positively correlated with behaviours related to healthy movement. Although families spend less time doing physical activities and more time in sedentary behaviours, several parents reported adopting new hobbies and/or accessing new resources during the pandemic (Moore et al., 2020). Future years and research studies that will follow shall bring new insights on the pandemic’s impact on youth leisure.

Understanding the context of leisure through LACE model

LACE model, i.e. Leisure Activity-Context-Experience model, is a model focused on understanding adolescent development through leisure (Caldwell, 2005; Caldwell, 2011). The model suggests that combination of activity, context, and experiential quality interacts to produce positive or negative leisure experiences (Caldwell & Faulk, 2013; Caldwell & Witt, 2018a).

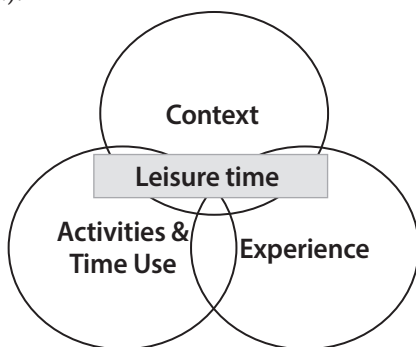


Figure 1. LACE model (Caldwell, 2011)

Leisure activities are things done in leisure time, such as swimming or hanging out with friends (Caldwell, 2008; Caldwell 2011). Activities follow different categories within cultures and across cultures, while the majority attempt to classify activities by using one or more elements: frequency, intensity, type of activity, activity characteristics, sensuality, place of activity and personal meaning. Classification of activities is important as it allows you to ask correct research questions and give meaningful statements on activity-related outcomes and use of time (Caldwell, 2008). Furthermore, the bulk of literature on the context of leisure time has focused on the structure of activity, hence we differentiate between organised, structured and non-structured activities (Caldwell & Faulk, 2013). Structured leisure activities can be characterised by a clear structure with defined rules and aims, supervised by adults, having regular schedule and placing an emphasis on skill building (Larson, 2000). Due to these abovementioned characteristics, it is believed that structured leisure activities contribute to positive adolescent development, unlike other ways of spending leisure time (Bartko & Eccles, 2003). On the other hand, non-structured, informal and passive leisure activities are often related to risky behaviours and do not impact development of skills/competences, i.e., it is believed that they do not contribute to positive developmental outcomes (Mahoney, Stattin & Magnusson, 2001; Caldwell, 2008). To understand the impact of structured and non-structured leisure time on developmental outcomes of youth, it is important to bear in mind the complexity of the process of growing-up. It is not possible to reach simplified conclusions that leisure leads to positive developmental outcomes, and that non-structured leisure does not impact developmental outcomes or that it even negatively impacts youth developmental outcomes. Just because an activity is supervised by an adult does not necessarily mean that the activity also stimulates skill building, and contrary, just because adults are not present during leisure it does not mean that adolescents participate in activities that do not create opportunities for skill building (Caldwell & Faulk, 2013; Haggard & Williams, 1992; Mahoney et al., 2001). Hence, participation in non-structured leisure time activities does not automatically mean it is risky or negative for youth development (Osgood et al., 2005; Sharp, Tucker, Baril, Van Gundy & Rebellon, 2015), given the fact that there are different options for young people to do in their leisure time that no one would label as meaningless or negative (for example, reading a book). Furthermore, activities are always happening within a certain context, meaning that there are elements within an activity or environment that contribute to participation in leisure activities (Caldwell, 2008; Caldwell, 2011). Caldwell and Faulk (2013, p. 42) define context as “situational features surrounding the activity such as presence or absence of adults and opportunities for leadership”. Depending on situational features, the context of leisure can be a context for positive development giving adolescents opportunities for skill building and initiatives, development of new skills and competencies, as well as interaction with peers (Caldwell & Faulk 2013), or can be considered as a context for developing behavioural problems, such as delinquency, substance abuse and sexual

risk-taking behaviour (Caldwell & Smith 2006). In order to understand how leisure time contributes to adolescent development, it is also important to consider experiences (for example, emotions and attitudes) that adolescents have through participation in leisure activities (Caldwell, 2008; Caldwell, 2011). These new experiences generated while taking part in leisure activities can be positively or negatively correlated to personal dimensions of an individual, according to type of leisure activity a person is participating in, and/or situational features of the leisure time context (Caldwell & Smith, 2006). For example, engagement, interest and motivation are correlated with positive outcomes such as initiative, self-efficacy and competence building, hence contributing to positive adolescent development. Contrary to this, negative experiences (boredom, stress and conflicts) are related to negative outcomes such as substance abuse and delinquency (Caldwell & Faulk, 2013; Caldwell & Smith, 2006; Larson, 2000).

Youth leisure and developmental outcomes

Pursuant to LACE model and through consideration of leisure time activities, the research shows that different types of leisure activities contribute differently to adolescent development (Sarriera et al., 2014; Trainor et al., 2010; Ward & Zabriskie, 2011; Weidman et al., 2012).

Participation in extracurricular activities (i.e., organised, structured activities in leisure time) that include adult supervision and happen after school is related to improved wellbeing and progress of adolescents (e.g., academic success, social connections with peers and adult mentors, constructive use of leisure time) (Badura, Madarasova Geckova, Sigmundova, van Dijk & Reijneveld, 2015; Darling, 2015; Forneris et al., 2015; Fredricks & Eccles, 2008; McCabe et al., 2016; Motamedi et al., 2019; Oberle, Ji, Guhn, Schonert-Reichl & Gadermann, 2019; Oberle et al., 2020). Furthermore, participation in structured leisure activities is positively correlated with high level of self-respect, self-esteem, life satisfaction and psychological functioning, and better physical and mental health of adolescents (Badura et al., 2015; Blomfield & Barber, 2011; Bradley & Inglis, 2012; Sarriera et al., 2014; Trainor et al., 2010). Research shows that adolescents who participate in structured extracurricular activities are less likely to join in risky behaviours, and it is also more likely that they will have higher level of academic success and positive psychosocial functioning (Badura et al., 2018; Bartko & Eccles, 2003; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000; Mahoney, Cairns & Farmer, 2003; Zaff et al., 2003; Caldwell & Witt, 2011). Longitudinal research done in Canada observed the participation of 548 children in extracurricular activities (parents reported on participation of their children in extracurricular activities in the period from kindergarten to 4th grade), as well as how this participation was correlated with symptoms of internalised and externalised behavioural problems (based on teachers' and parents' reports) and academic skills (based on teachers' reports) in 4th grade (Aumètre & Poulin, 2018). The authors have reached the conclusion that children who had a high level of participation in extracurricular activities showed better academic skills in 4th grade

and less symptoms of internalised and externalised behavioural problems in 4th grade, compared to children who were at a low level of participation or did not participate in extracurricular activities at all (Aumètre & Poulin, 2018). Oberle et al. (2020) reached a conclusion suggesting that adolescents who participated in extracurricular activities (such as sports, art programmes, community programmes) are significantly less likely to have 2 or more hours of screen time a day after school (for example, watching TV, scrolling the Internet, playing computer games). The findings show that participation in extracurricular activities is related with greater life satisfaction and optimism, as well as with lower levels of anxiety and depression symptoms. Contrary to this, longer screen time (> 2 hours a day) is correlated with lower levels of life satisfaction and optimism, and higher levels of anxiety and depression symptoms. For both boys and girls, mental health and well-being were most favourable if they participated in extracurricular activities and had shorter screen time (Oberle et al., 2020). Furthermore, Mahoney, Parente and Zigler (2010) reported on the results of analysis of 43 studies of extracurricular activities for children aged 5 to 14. Results show that there is a reduction in substance abuse or arrests and/or changes in attitude towards using substances for children and youth who participated in extracurricular activities.

Many research studies have focused on sports among all the different types of leisure activities. Systematic review of psychological and social benefits of children and adolescents engaging in sports show that participation in team sports is correlated with benefits for mental health, lower levels of social isolation and higher levels of socio-emotional well-being (Eime et al., 2013). Furthermore, it is believed that team sports contribute to participants' health and wellbeing (Oberle et al., 2019). Social aspect of team sports was discussed as a central component that contributes to better mental health and wellbeing of participants. Furthermore, longitudinal research on a sample of 200 children aged 7 to 8 in Switzerland showed that social anxiety has reduced with time for children who participated in team sports (Dimech & Seiler 2011). However, there are also research studies that show that solely participation in sport activities is not always correlated with lower rates of substance abuse. Moreover, certain data suggest a correlation with higher rates of smoking and drinking (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and World Health Organization (WHO) 2018). Hence, for example, Murray et al. (2021) state that participation in team sports is correlated with higher risks of smoking among young boys, but not among young girls, and with higher risk of consuming alcohol for both adolescent boys and girls. These associations can be attributed to certain sports such as football, volleyball and hockey. However, the results show that these trends change in young adulthood, when participation in team sport in team sports negatively correlates with the use of addictive substances (cigarettes and marijuana).

On the other hand, research suggests that there are several characteristics that increase the likelihood of risky or delinquent behaviour: lack of opportunities for productive or healthy leisure, lack of adult supervision and joining asocial peers (Caldwell, 2017).

All this supports the view that availability of non-structured leisure time represents a challenge for adolescents because it often requires them to develop independent, constructive and self-sufficient sources of entertainment (Trainor et al., 2010). Research findings support the conclusion that contexts with such features offer adolescents space to participate in risky behaviours (Lee & Vandell 2015) and are more appealing to adolescents who are generally more susceptible to risky behaviours (Persson et al., 2007). Participation in non-structured activities is correlated with substance abuse, sexual risk-taking behaviour and poor academic achievement (Bartko & Eccles, 2003; Badura et al., 2018; Barnes et al., 2007; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000; Nelson & Gastic, 2009; Pulver et al., 2015). Moreover, participation in non-structured activities (such as watching TV, using a computer or playing video games) is negatively correlated with well-being, self-respect and life satisfaction, and provides less developmental benefits (Bradley & Inglis, 2012; Caldwell & Faulk, 2013; Sarriera et al., 2014; Trainor et al., 2010). Researchers consider unsupervised and non-structured leisure time as problematic. However, this conclusion is not final as there are very few studies that consider outcomes related to unsupervised, pro-social activities that young people do independently or in interaction with others (Caldwell, 2017). Many young people independently or informally take on different hobbies, sports in the open air, reading out of pleasure, hiking, fishing, computer games and music/art/drama activities. Furthermore, when unstructured activities are more broadly defined, research findings are more positive (Caldwell & Witt, 2011). Pérez et al. (2010) researched different factors among adolescents related to initiating cannabis consumption. Research has shown that some of the factors related to initiating cannabis consumption among boys included visiting bars or clubs, and not participating in organised activities in their leisure time. The research has shown that substance abuse is correlated with subjective experiences during leisure time, including boredom, productive leisure time and motivation for leisure, although in different ways. For example, productive leisure time and boredom during leisure time have a direct impact on substance abuse in such a way that productive leisure time is a protective factor, while boredom is a risk factor (Caldwell, 2017; Sharp et al., 2011; Montamedi et al., 2019; Weybright, Caldwell, Ram, Smith & Wegner, 2015). Milhausen et al. (2003) emphasize that lack of opportunities and resources for quality and meaningful leisure time in rural areas contributes to earlier onset of sexual relationships, compared to youth from urban areas where there are greater opportunities and resources for quality leisure time. Results of a longitudinal study by Miller et al. (2014) on a sample of 1.695 youth in South Africa show that there is higher probability that youth (particularly young men) who experience high level of boredom in leisure time will engage in risky sexual behaviours. This study has significant implications for preventive programmes aimed at delaying initiation of sexual relationships and reducing sexual risk-taking behaviour (including the spread of sexually transmitted diseases) (Miller et al., 2014).

Prevention research places an emphasis on promotion of healthy development and well-being, as well as on prevention of environmental risk factors. Hence, they naturally

Table 1

Protective factors and outcomes from participating in a leisure activity (adapted from Caldwell, 2008; Caldwell, 2017; Caldwell & Witt, 2018a; Caldwell & Witt, 2018b; European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2019; Hansen et al., 2003; Irby & Toman, 2002; Little et al., 2008; McDowell Group, 2018; WHO, 2020).

Protective factors in the context of leisure time		Outcomes from participating in a leisure activity	
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing interests • developing autonomy • developing initiative and persistence • developing identity • developing skills and competence (setting objectives, decision making, planning, conflict resolution) • developing team work skills • developing life skills • developing cultural identity • opportunity to initiate • sense of belonging and importance • dealing with successes and failures • facing challenges • experiential learning 	Health outcomes	Physical health
			Mental health
Peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prosocial peers • having friends • developing intimate relationships 	Social-emotional outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good nutrition • increased physical activity • lower BMI • improved blood pressure • lower fats • better body image • positive self-concept • lower rates of depression and anxiety • greater well-being • better mental health • better individual resilience • better social and communication skills • positive relationships with peers, parents and teachers/coaches
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attachment to school environment • academic success 	Cognitive outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better critical thinking • creativity • problem-solving skills • professional development / orientation and engagement
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positive relationships with family members and/or important adults • supervising patterns in spending leisure time and friendships • involvement in child's education and learning 	Academic outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher academic aims and aspirations • greater dedication to school duties • fewer skipping classes • less disciplinary measures and smaller drop-out rates • better academic achievement
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ties with community • active citizenry • participation in political processes • safe, supporting and well-connected neighbourhoods • opportunities within community for meaningful youth engagement • ties with social institutions • ties with community members 	Prevention of behavioural problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lower rates of behavioural problems • lower substance abuse rates • lower rates of sexual risk-taking behaviour • lower rates of violent behaviour • lower delinquency rates

provide a framework within which we can deal with the paradox of leisure time that can present both risk and protection at the same time. Irby and Tolman (2002) state that leisure time is a key context for education, learning, human development and participation in citizenry and society. In Table 1 there is an overview of protective factors that could be targeted by involving young people in leisure activities, as well as an overview of developmental outcomes that can occur from participation in leisure activities.

Participating in structured leisure activities after school and/or weekends is important and contributes to adolescent development. However, it is also important to participate in some other types of leisure activities that are not necessarily supervised or structured, particularly if youth does not have any structured leisure activities available (Caldwell, 2017). It is not enough to just correlate types of activities and context of activities with results, i.e., participation in any organised leisure activity is not a sole factor behind the relation with youth developmental outcomes (Badura, 2018). Research shows that regardless of the activity, the feeling of engagement and interest for the activity are correlated to positive outcomes, while lack of engagement or interest are correlated to negative outcomes (Larson, 2000). Furthermore, reasons or motivation for doing certain activity are probably more important than the activity itself, regardless of the activity being structured or non-structured (Caldwell & Faulk, 2013). Chosen activities in leisure time should be something that an individual likes to do according to personal free choice. There is a very strong consensus that adolescents who do not do any leisure activities, or do them without real purpose or motivation, will probably be less adapted and will more frequently engage in risky behaviours (Caldwell, 2017). Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that sole participation in leisure activities without individual's interest or motivation shall not lead to positive developmental outcomes. Wegner and Caldwell (2012) state factors that are necessary for achieving the desired outcomes in the context of organising leisure activities: giving youth the possibility of autonomy and choice; frequent participation of youth in the programme; easy access to the programme and its sustainability; appropriate supervision and programme structure, educated staff, partnership with school, family and community. Same authors state that, together with all this, it is also important that leisure activities give opportunities for developing skills and competences. If we wish for leisure activities to have a positive impact on youth development, the activities should be organised in such a way that protective factors are strengthened (see Table 1), such as promotion of important skills and behaviours in leisure time.

For the end of this chapter, it is important to emphasise once again that sole focus on structured leisure activities is not enough to stimulate positive youth development. Certain young people are intrinsically motivated to do organised structured leisure activities and by participating in them they experience numerous challenges that they need to overcome (Hansen et al., 2003). This promotes forming of identity, developing teamwork skills and social capital (Hansen et al., 2003), thus correlating structured leisure activities with healthy and positive developmental outcomes (Farb & Matjasko, 2012).

Guidelines for further preventive investments

For some time now science has been providing us with guidelines for creating scientifically based preventive interventions that can help society implement its task and create opportunities to prevent the involvement of youth in risky behaviours and/or development of behavioural problems and thus provide an opportunity for positive development of youth.

However, there are still several key areas for which there is very little evidence of efficiency, or the evidence is weak and even contradictory, therefore requiring further research (UNODC & WHO, 2018). Among others, these areas include extracurricular activities, sports and other structured activities in leisure time, and interventions and policies pertaining to children and youth outside of school. The same source brings data based on the analysis of available evaluation studies that found no positive influence of informal educational activities on youth development. A review of 24 studies regarding extracurricular activities in USA has shown positive but weak and statistically insignificant effect on externalised behaviours and school attendance. The research has shown that students who attend extracurricular activities do not exhibit less externalised behaviours or improvements in terms of school attendance compared to their peers who did not attend extracurricular activities (Kremer et al., 2015).

However, in many countries and communities it is popular to organise sports and other leisure activities as a way of providing adolescents with prosocial and healthy activities to prevent their involvement in risk behaviours including substance abuse. Policymakers and decision-makers should be very cautious when selecting these types of interventions, and if they do recommend these activities to be implemented, they should also include rigorous evaluation research of their effect.

Given the lack of research studies exploring the conditions under which leisure time serves as protection or risk for positive youth development, efforts should be invested in identifying risk and protective factors in the context of leisure time, as well as in evaluation research. There is also a need to harmonize all conclusions and develop clearer guidelines to highlight under which conditions structured leisure time, i.e. interventions in the context of leisure time of children and youth would contribute to positive developmental outcomes. This would also require implementation of longitudinal research studies based on theories of leisure (such as, for example, LACE model presented here) that would consider the needs of children and youth, as well as characteristics of communities (their social environment). Longitudinal research would provide answers that could then be applied to create preventive interventions in the context of structured leisure time or help adapt the existing ones.

Furthermore, it would be very important to disseminate this knowledge among researchers and experts of similar focus. The need to establish sustainable cooperation and partnerships, and to bring together researchers of leisure and prevention science can also be seen in the recent differences in approaches to researching the impact

of leisure time on youth developmental outcomes. While researchers of leisure have researched subjective experience of leisure time, researchers in prevention science have examined objective experience of leisure time, that is, they have tied leisure time with the type of activity and time spent in activities (Weybright, Caldwell & Weaver, 2019). Bringing together researchers from both fields would give an opportunity to investigate the potential of the effect leisure time has on the development of youth through a comprehensive approach, by using the existing knowledge from both fields. Consequently, this would lead to scientific knowledge and evidence that would be important to communicate with experts, key people and decision makers to create opportunities in the society for an efficient and ethical response to the needs of young people and their positive development.

Conclusion

Leisure activities give us space, time and freedom to be what we truly are. Leisure provides rich and unique context for adolescents to develop into healthy adults by doing activities and exercising behaviours that contributes to personal enjoyment, meaning and development of identity and autonomy. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (2007), a child has a right to rest and leisure, age-appropriate play and pass the time, as well as to participate freely in culture and arts. State is obliged to entice favourable conditions for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activities because children have the right to play appropriately to their age and pass the time according to their interests. In Croatia, the Act on Primary and Secondary Education (OG 64/20) and Teaching curriculum for primary school (OG, 102/06) form the legal basis for organising extracurricular activities according to students' needs. Article 28 of the Education Act states that "School curriculum defines syllabus of elective courses and extracurricular activities, and is brought pursuant to the national curriculum and teaching curriculum". It is important to emphasise that Croatian educational system is currently undergoing a challenging transition of the entire curriculum. In that aspect, cross-curricular themes Learn How to Learn (Decision on the adoption of the syllabus for cross-curricular theme Learn How to Learn for primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Croatia, OG 7/19) are included in the teaching hours, but also in all extracurricular activities from an early age. Furthermore, cross-curricular themes are directed towards development of social and emotional competencies of students. All the above creates a potential to organise leisure activities for students while considering a wider context (acquiring skills and harmonisation with students' interests, needs and experiences), and not just considering available offer of activities.

Skills acquired and used during leisure time can contribute to adolescents' transition into healthy adults. However, interventions are needed to help adolescents positively use their leisure time (Caldwell & Faulk, 2013, Caldwell, 2017). Formal and informal education in the context of leisure time is needed to promote positive youth development and prevention of risk behaviours (Caldwell, 2008). When leisure

time is used for meaningful leisure, it is more probable that positive development will occur. Conversely, positive development is less likely when leisure time is spent without meaningful activities (i.e., when one is just filling the time) (Caldwell & Witt, 2018b). Youth who regularly do self-determined activities have better health-related outcomes (abstinence from smoking, better quality of life, etc.), while externally imposed activities and unmotivated behaviours are related to negative outcomes (e.g., higher level of depression and anxiety) (Motamedi et al., 2019). In order for extracurricular activities to impact changes in behavioural outcomes, it is necessary to invest resources in design and elements of interventions based on efficiency evidence, i.e., to use empirical evidence and theories of change in the very design of interventions in order to achieve the planned outcomes.

To conclude, to empower youth to have high quality leisure, and therefore positively impact their development and prevent risk behaviours and problems arising among youth, it is important to focus on creating opportunities and educating all important stakeholders in the community about the importance of investing into high quality implementation of youth leisure.

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Kvaliteta provođenja slobodnoga vremena mladih - obilježja i mogućnosti za preventijska planiranja

Sažetak

Svrha ovoga rada jest kritički se osvrnuti na kontekst slobodnoga vremena, od definiranja do analize doprinosa slobodnoga vremena razvojnim ishodima djece i mladih te donijeti zaključak na temelju cjelokupne analize. Slobodno se vrijeme može promatrati kao značajni kontekst koji promovira izgradnju pozitivne, zdrave i normativne razvojne putanje adolescenata. S druge strane, slobodno vrijeme može predstavljati i kontekst koji pogoduje uključivanju mladih u rizična ponašanja i/ili razvoju problema u ponašanju. LACE Model, odnosno model slobodnih aktivnosti-konteksta-iskustva (engl. model Leisure Activity-Context-Experience), predstavlja model usmjeren na razumijevanja adolescentskoga razvoja kroz slobodno vrijeme (Caldwell, 2005; Caldwell, 2011) te je detaljnije predstavljen u radu. Isto tako, dan je pregled istraživanja koja povezuju kvalitetu slobodnoga vremena s razvojnim ishodima mladih. Evaluacijska istraživanja intervencija koje se temelje na slobodnom vremenu nisu dala jednoznačne odgovore o njihovoj učinkovitosti te ostaje potreba da se znanstvenim istraživanjima odgovori na pitanje pod kojim uvjetima strukturirano slobodno vrijeme, odnosno intervencije u kontekstu slobodnoga vremena djece i mladih, doprinose njihovim pozitivnim razvojnim ishodima.

Ključne riječi: LACE model; razvojni ishodi djece i mladih; slobodno vrijeme.

Uvod

Način kako adolescenti provode svoje slobodno vrijeme ima značajan utjecaj na njihov razvoj, identitet, socijalizaciju i budući život (Caldwell, 2008). Shaw, Kleiber i Caldwell (1995) ističu kako je slobodno vrijeme važna tranzicijska situacija u adolescenciji te da pomaže premostiti jaz između igre u djetinjstvu i rada u odrasloj dobi. Slobodno se vrijeme može promatrati kao značajni kontekst koji promovira izgradnju pozitivne, zdrave i normativne razvojne putanje adolescenata (Freire, Tavates, Silva i Teixeira, 2016). S druge strane, slobodno vrijeme može predstavljati i kontekst koji pogoduje uključivanju mladih u rizična ponašanja i/ili razvoju problema u ponašanju.

Svrha ovoga rada jest kritički se osvrnuti na kontekst slobodnoga vremena, od definiranja do analize doprinosa slobodnoga vremena razvojnim ishodima djece i mladih te donijeti zaključak na temelju cjelokupne analize. U odnosu na svrhu rada postavljeni su ciljevi koji se odnose na definiranje slobodnoga vremena, osvrst na ulogu slobodnoga vremena u odnosu na promicanje zdravoga i pozitivnoga razvoja mladih te prevenciju uključivanja mladih u rizična ponašanja, odnosno razvoj problema u ponašanju te prijedlog smjernica za daljnja preventivna istraživanja i ulaganja. Ciljevi rada postižu se pregledom recentne literature, kritičkim osvrtom te sintezom dosadašnjih spoznaja u području znanosti o slobodnom vremenu i prevencijske znanosti.

Slobodno vrijeme

Diljem svijeta, kako u razvijenim zemljama, tako i u zemljama u razvoju, slobodno vrijeme smatra se važnim kontekstom ili vremenom u životu mlade osobe. Iako ne postoji univerzalno zajedničko značenje pojma slobodno vrijeme, brojni istraživači i kreatori politika širom svijeta, sugeriraju da svi mladi u svijetu imaju sate u danu koji se mogu smatrati diskrecijskim ili slobodnim (Irby i Tolman, 2002). Definiranje i razumijevanje konteksta slobodnoga vremena je složeno i u literaturi moguće je pronaći različite pojmove vezane uz slobodno vrijeme. Vrlo često se slobodno vrijeme zamjenjuje pojmom „dokolica“. U svojem izvornom značenju dokolica je upravo slobodno vrijeme. Dokolica, slobodno vrijeme, dokonica; dokoličan je onaj koji nije zauzet poslom; koji je besposlen, dokon (Anić, 2009). Iako se često koriste kao sinonimi, postoji razlika u analitičkim značenjima između pojma slobodno vrijeme i dokolica. Slobodno vrijeme je vrijeme izvan obveznoga rada, a dokolica podrazumijeva šire područje slobodnoga vremena u kojem se osoba posvećuje aktivnostima prema vlastitim interesima (Ilišin, 2007). Dakle, prilikom definiranja slobodnoga vremena, može se razlikovati objektivna i subjektivna konceptualizacija (Godbey, 2008; Iso-Ahola, 1980; Sharp i sur., 2011). Objektivna konceptualizacija slobodnoga vremena odnosi se na količinu slobodnoga vremena izvan obveza (npr. škola, posao) ili na bavljenje specifičnim aktivnostima (npr. sportske aktivnosti, druženje s obitelji i/ili prijateljima, gledanje televizije). Međutim, ako se oslanjamo na subjektivnu konceptualizaciju, slobodno vrijeme možemo promatrati kao stanje uma, stanje bivanja ili kao smisleno iskustvo (Weybright, 2013). Nadalje, u kontekstu slobodnoga vremena u stranoj literaturi spominju se programi poslije škole (eng. *afterschool programs*), a riječ je o redovitim, strukturiranim ili polustrukturiranim aktivnostima koje učenici pohađaju prije, nakon škole ili tijekom ljeta (McDowell Group, 2018). Osim navedenoga, učestalo i naizmjenično se koriste termini poput vremena izvan škole (eng. *out-of-school time*), izvannastavnih aktivnosti i izvanškolskih aktivnosti (Little, Wimer i Weiss, 2008; McDowell Group, 2018). Prema Cindriću (1992) izvannastavne aktivnosti odnose se na organizirano provođenje slobodnoga vremena učenika u školskom okruženju, dok se izvanškolske aktivnosti odvijaju izvan škole te je riječ o aktivnostima koje organizira i izvodi neka druga ustanova, udruga ili klub, samostalno ili u partnerstvu sa školom.

Slobodno vrijeme je od strane mnogih kultura prepoznato kao ljudsko pravo, ali i kao važan kontekst za razvoj čovječanstva (Caldwell, 2008). Slobodno vrijeme smatra se četvrtim razvojnim kontekstom (Silbereisen i Todt, 1994), pored obiteljskoga, školskoga/radnoga okruženja i okruženja zajednice budući da pruža brojne i jedinstvene mogućnosti za postizanje razvojnih ishoda. Adolescentima pruža mogućnosti da se razvijaju u zdrave odrasle osobe baveći se aktivnostima i ponašanjem koja doprinose osobnom uživanju, značenju te razvoju identiteta i autonomije (Caldwell i Faulk, 2013). Opaschowski (1976, prema Badura, 2018) ističe osam osnovnih funkcija slobodnoga vremena: a) rekreacija (rekreacija, zdravlje i dobrobit), b) obrazovanje (upoznavanje, stimulacija učenja, daljnje učenje), c) kompenzacija (ravnoteža, razbibriga, zadovoljstvo), d) kontemplacija (odmor, opuštanje, samoodređenje), e) komunikacija (komunikacija, stvaranje kontakta, socijalizacija), f) integracija (biti dio zajednice, aspekti zajednice i formiranje grupa), g) sudjelovanje (sudjelovanje, predanost i socijalna samoreprezentacija) i h) inkulturacija (kreativni razvoj, produktivna aktivnost i sudjelovanje u kulturnom životu). Navedene funkcije ukazuju na široko područje utjecaja slobodnoga vremena na život pojedinca.

U zapadnim industrijaliziranim zemljama slobodno vrijeme obuhvaća približno polovinu „budnog“ vremena adolescenata, s nešto većom količinom slobodnoga vremena zabilježenom u Sjevernoj Americi nego u Europi (Larson i Verma 1999; Wight, Price, Bianchi i Hunt, 2009). Navedeni podatak govori da učenik uz sve svoje obveze, ima na raspolaganju mnogo slobodnoga vremena kojemu je potrebno posvetiti adekvatnu pozornost, s obzirom na to da način na koji adolescenti ispunjavaju ovo vrijeme ima značajne razvojne i zdravstvene implikacije.

U posljednjih desetak godina, dostupno je nekoliko istraživanja, u odnosu na količinu i način provođenja slobodnoga vremena djece i mladih u Hrvatskoj. Istraživanje provedeno na uzorku zagrebačkih srednjoškolaca (N = 116) pokazuje da njih 41,3 % izvještava kako imaju 2 do 3 sata slobodnoga vremena dnevno (Budimir, 2017). Valjan Vukić (2016) provela je istraživanje na uzorku učenika viših razreda osnovnih škola (N = 970) na području Zadarske i Šibensko-kninske županije te navodi kako tjedno 37,2 % učenika provodi jedan do dva sata u radu slobodnih aktivnosti, a njih 29,9% tri do četiri sata tjedno, dok pet i više sati tjedno u slobodnim aktivnostima provede 32,9 % učenika. Ujedno, Valjan Vukić (2016) navodi kako tek 34,6 % učenika sudjeluje u izvannastavnim aktivnostima u školi, a njih 53 % u izvanškolskim aktivnostima. Istraživanje provedeno na uzorku hrvatskih studenata (N = 141) pokazalo je da studenti imaju 33 slobodna sata tjedno te da 10-ak sati provode sami, a ostalo vrijeme provode družeći se s prijateljima i obitelji. Ujedno, dio slobodnoga vremena studenti provode na zabavu i relaksaciju, uključujući gledanje televizije, proučavanje zanimljivosti na internetu, igranje na računalu, komuniciranje putem interneta i izležavanje (Brkljačić, Kaliterna Lipovčan i Tadić, 2012).

Istraživanja pokazuju kako se način provođenja slobodnoga vremena, posljednjih desetljeća značajno promijenio (Kleiber i Powell, 2005; Lopez-Sintas, Rojas-DeFrancisco

i Garcia-Alvarez, 2017). Navedeno se može pripisati brzom razvoju „novih medija“. Isprva se povećalo vrijeme provedeno gledajući televiziju (Voorpostel, van der Lippe i Gershuny, 2010), a zatim je TV zamijenjen novim digitalnim tehnologijama koje su povezane s internetom (Lopez-Sintas i sur., 2017). Digitalno doba donijelo je drastične promjene te sve više mladih slobodno vrijeme provodi na uređajima. Podatci iz 2015. prikupljeni u Ujedinjenom Kraljevstvu, pokazuju kako 1/3 svojega slobodnog vremena (otprilike 14 sati tjedno) mladi provode koristeći uređaje, a manju količinu vremena provode u sportskim i kulturnim aktivnostima (Office for National Statistics, 2017). Nadalje, podatci EUROSTAT-a (2015) pokazuju kako je tijekom 2015. među 28 zemalja Europske unije, najmanje jednom u kulturnim aktivnostima sudjelovalo 85,2 % mladih (Hrvatska, 74,4 %), dok je u sportskim aktivnostima sudjelovalo svega 47,3 % mladih (Hrvatska, 52,8 %). U odnosu na količinu i način provođenja slobodnoga vremena svakako je potrebno istaknuti i pandemiju virusa COVID-19 koja je promijenila svakodnevni život djece i mladih. Djeca i mladi, tijekom pandemije i izolacije imaju manje mogućnosti za tjelesne aktivnosti, uključujući i manje vremena provedenoga na otvorenom te je zabilježeno više sjedilačkoga ponašanja (uključujući provođenje slobodnoga vremena na „ekranima“) i više spavanja. Međutim, podatci istraživanja pokazuju kako je poticaj i podrška roditelja, kao i angažman roditelja u tjelesnoj aktivnosti kao i imanje psa za kućnoga ljubimaca pozitivno povezano s ponašanjima koji se odnose na zdravo kretanje. Iako obitelji manje vremena provode u tjelesnoj aktivnosti, a više u sjedilačkim ponašanjima, nekolicina roditelja ipak izvještava o usvajanju novih hobija i/ili o pristupu novim resursima tijekom razdoblja pandemije (Moore i sur., 2020). Naredne godine i istraživanja koja slijede donijet će nove spoznaje o utjecaju pandemije na kontekst slobodnoga vremena mladih.

Razumijevanje konteksta slobodnoga vremena kroz LACE model

LACE Model, odnosno model slobodnih aktivnosti-konteksta-iskustva (eng. *model Leisure Activity-Context-Experience*), predstavlja model usmjeren na razumijevanja adolescentskoga razvoja kroz slobodno vrijeme (Caldwell, 2005; Caldwell, 2011.) Model sugerira da kombinacija aktivnosti, konteksta i iskustvene kvalitete utječe na stvaranje pozitivnih ili negativnih doživljaja provođenja slobodnoga vremena (Caldwell i Faulk, 2013; Caldwell i Witt, 2018a).

Slika 1.

Aktivnosti u slobodno vrijeme su djelovanja koja se obavljaju u slobodno vrijeme, kao što su npr. plivanje ili druženje s prijateljima (Caldwell, 2008; Caldwell 2011). Aktivnosti su različito kategorizirane unutar i među kulturama, a većina je pokušala klasificirati aktivnosti koristeći jedan ili više elemenata: učestalost, intenzitet, vrsta aktivnosti, karakteristike aktivnosti, senzualnost, mjesto aktivnosti i osobno značenje. Klasifikacija aktivnosti je važna jer omogućava postavljanje pravih istraživačkih pitanja i davanje

smislenih izjava o ishodima povezanim s aktivnostima i upotrebom vremena (Caldwell, 2008). Ujedno, značajan dio literature o kontekstu slobodnoga vremena usredotočio se na ulogu strukture aktivnosti pa tako razlikujemo organizirane, strukturirane aktivnosti i nestrukturirane aktivnosti (Caldwell i Faulk, 2013). Strukturirane slobodne aktivnosti mogu se okarakterizirati jasnom strukturom s definiranim pravilima i ciljevima, koje nadziru odrasle osobe, imaju redovan raspored i stavljaju naglasak na izgradnju vještina (Larson, 2000). Upravo zbog navedenih karakteristika, vjeruje se da strukturirane slobodne aktivnosti doprinose pozitivnom razvoju adolescenata za razliku od drugih načina provođenja slobodnoga vremena (Bartko i Eccles, 2003). S druge strane, nestrukturirane, neformalne i pasivne slobodne aktivnosti često se povezuju s rizičnim ponašanjem ili ne utječu na izgradnju vještina/kompetencija, to jest, smatra se da ne doprinose pozitivnim razvojnim ishodima (Mahoney, Stattin i Magnusson, 2001; Caldwell, 2008). Pri razumijevanju utjecaja strukturiranoga i nestrukturiranoga slobodnoga vremena na razvojne ishode mladih treba imati na umu kompleksnost procesa odrastanja. Naime, nije moguće pojednostavljeno zaključiti kako strukturirano slobodno vrijeme vodi pozitivnim razvojnim ishodima, a nestrukturirano slobodno vrijeme ne utječe na razvojne ishode ili vodi negativnim razvojnim ishodima mladih. Naime, samo zato što aktivnost nadziru odrasle osobe, ne mora nužno značiti da aktivnost također potiče i izgradnju vještina te samo zato što odrasli nisu prisutni tijekom slobodnih aktivnosti, ne znači da adolescenti sudjeluju u aktivnostima koje ne pružaju mogućnosti za izgradnju vještina (Caldwell i Faulk, 2013; Haggard i Williams, 1992; Mahoney, Stattin i Magnusson, 2001). Dakle, sudjelovanje u nestrukturiranim slobodnim aktivnostima ne znači automatski da je navedeno rizično ili negativno za razvoj mladih (Osgood, Anderson i Shaffer, 2005; Sharp, Tucker, Baril, Van Gundy i Rebellon, 2015) s obzirom na to da postoje razne mogućnosti koje mladi mogu raditi u slobodno vrijeme i koje vjerojatno nitko ne bi označio besmislenim ili negativnim (primjerice čitanje knjiga). Nadalje, aktivnosti se odvijaju u određenom kontekstu, što znači da postoje elementi ugrađeni u aktivnost ili okruženje koji doprinose sudjelovanju u slobodnim aktivnostima (Caldwell, 2008; Caldwell 2011). Caldwell i Faulk (2013, str. 42) definiraju kontekst kao „situacijske značajke aktivnosti poput prisutnosti ili odsutnosti odraslih i mogućnosti za vođenje“. Ovisno o situacijskim značajkama, kontekst slobodnoga vremena može se smatrati kontekstom za pozitivan razvoj, pružajući priliku adolescentima za razvoj vještina vođenja i poticanja inicijativa, razvoj novih vještina i kompetencija te interakciju s vršnjacima (Caldwell i Faulk, 2013) ili se može smatrati kontekstom za razvoj problema u ponašanju, poput delinkvencije, korištenja sredstava ovisnosti i rizičnoga seksualnog ponašanja (Caldwell i Smith, 2006). Pri razumijevanju kako slobodno vrijeme doprinosi razvoju adolescenata, također je važno pažnju usmjeriti na iskustva (npr. emocije i stavove) koja adolescenti doživljavaju kroz sudjelovanje u slobodnim aktivnostima (Caldwell, 2008; Caldwell, 2011). Novonastala iskustva tijekom sudjelovanja u aktivnostima slobodnoga vremena mogu biti pozitivno ili negativno povezana s osobnim dimenzijama pojedinca, prema

vrsti slobodnih aktivnosti u koje su uključeni, i/ili sa situacijskim značajkama konteksta slobodnoga vremena (Caldwell i Smith 2006). Primjerice, angažman, zainteresiranost i motivacija povezani su s pozitivnim ishodima poput inicijative, samoučinkovitosti i razvoja kompetencija, pridonoseći pozitivnom razvoju adolescenta. Suprotno tome, negativna iskustva (dosada, stres i sukobi) povezana su s negativnim ishodima, poput korištenja sredstava ovisnosti i delinkvencije (Caldwell i Faulk, 2013; Caldwell i Smith, 2006; Larson, 2000).

Slobodno vrijeme i razvojni ishodi mladih

Slijedeći LACE model i uzimajući u obzir aktivnosti slobodnoga vremena, istraživanja pokazuju da različite vrste slobodnih aktivnosti imaju različite doprinose razvoju adolescenata (Sarriera i sur., 2014; Trainor, Delfabbro, Anderson i Winefield, 2010; Ward i Zabriskie, 2011; Weidman i sur., 2012).

Sudjelovanje u izvannastavnim aktivnostima (tj. organiziranim, strukturiranim aktivnostima u slobodno vrijeme) koje uključuju nadzor odraslih i odvijaju se u izvanškolskim satima, povezano je s poboljšanom dobrobiti i napretkom adolescenata (npr. akademska postignuća, socijalna povezanost s vršnjacima i odraslim mentorima, konstruktivna upotreba slobodnoga vremena) (Badura, Madarasova Geckova, Sigmundova, van Dijk i Reijneveld, 2015; Darling, 2015; Forneris, Camiré i Williamson, 2015; Fredricks i Eccles, 2008; McCabe, Modecki i Barber, 2016; Motamedi i sur., 2019; Oberle, Ji, Guhn, Schonert-Reichl i Gadermann, 2019; Oberle i sur., 2020). Nadalje, sudjelovanje u strukturiranim slobodnim aktivnostima pozitivno je povezano s visokom razinom samopoštovanja, samopouzdanja, zadovoljstva životom i psihološkim funkcioniranjem te boljim tjelesnim i mentalnim zdravljem adolescenata (Badura i sur., 2015; Blomfield i Barber, 2011; Bradley i Inglis, 2012; Sarriera i sur., 2014; Trainor i sur., 2010). Istraživanja pokazuju da je kod adolescenata koji sudjeluju u strukturiranim izvannastavnim aktivnostima manja vjerojatnost da će se uključivati u rizična ponašanja, a vjerojatnije da će imati višu razinu akademskih postignuća i pozitivno psihosocijalno funkcioniranje (Badura i sur., 2018; Bartko i Eccles, 2003; Mahoney i Stattin, 2000; Mahoney, Cairns i Farmer, 2003; Zaff, Moore, Papillo i Williams, 2003; Caldwell i Witt, 2011). Longitudinalno istraživanje provedeno na području Kanade, proučavalo je sudjelovanje 548 djece u izvannastavnim aktivnostima (roditelji su u razdoblju od vrtičke dobi do 4. razreda izvještavali o sudjelovanju njihove djece u izvannastavnim aktivnostima) te kako je sudjelovanje povezano sa simptomima internaliziranih i eksternaliziranih problema u ponašanju (temeljem izvještaja učitelja i roditelja) i akademskim vještinama (temeljem izvještaja učitelja) u 4. razredu (Aumètre i Poulin, 2018). Autori su došli do spoznaja kako su djeca koja su imala visoku učestalost sudjelovanja u izvannastavnim aktivnostima iskazivala bolje akademske vještine u 4. razredu te manje simptoma internaliziranih i eksternaliziranih problema u ponašanju u 4. razredu, u odnosu na djecu koja su imala nisku učestalost sudjelovanja ili nisu uopće sudjelovala u izvannastavnim aktivnostima (Aumètre i

Poulin, 2018). Oberle i suradnici (2020) došli su do nalaza koji upućuju da je kod adolescenata koji su sudjelovali u izvannastavnim aktivnostima (npr. sport, umjetnički programi, programi u zajednici) znatno manja vjerojatnost da će 2 ili više sati dnevno nakon škole provoditi kroz rekreaciju na „ekranima“ (npr. gledanje programa, pregledavanje interneta, igranje računalnih igara). Nalazi pokazuju da je sudjelovanje u izvannastavnim aktivnostima povezano s višim razinama zadovoljstva životom i optimizmom te nižim razinama anksioznosti i simptomima depresije. Suprotno tome, duže vrijeme provedeno na ekranima (> 2 sata dnevno) bilo je povezano s nižim razinama zadovoljstva životom i optimizma te višim razinama anksioznosti i simptoma depresije. I za dječake i za djevojčice mentalno zdravlje i dobrobit bili su najpovoljniji ako su sudjelovali u izvannastavnim aktivnostima i kraće vrijeme provodili pred „ekranima“ (Oberle i sur., 2020). Nadalje, Mahoney, Parente i Zigler (2010) izvještavaju o rezultatima analize 43 studije izvannastavnih aktivnosti namijenjenih djeci u dobi od 5 do 14 godina. Rezultati pokazuju pad upotrebe sredstava ovisnosti ili uhićenja i/ili promjene u stavu prema korištenju sredstava ovisnosti za djecu i mlade koji su sudjelovali u izvannastavnim aktivnostima.

Među različitim vrstama slobodnih aktivnosti, mnoga su se istraživanja usredotočila na bavljenje sportom. U sustavnom pregledu psiholoških i socijalnih dobrobiti bavljenja sportom za djecu i adolescente, sudjelovanje u timskim sportovima povezano je s dobrobitima za mentalno zdravlje, nižim razinama socijalne izolacije i višim razinama socijalno-emocionalne dobrobiti (Eime, Young, Harvey, Charity i Payne, 2013). Nadalje, smatra se kako timski sportovi doprinose zdravlju i dobrobiti sudionika (Oberle i sur., 2019). O socijalnom aspektu timskih sportova razgovaralo se kao o središnjoj komponenti koja doprinosi boljem mentalnom zdravlju i dobrobiti sudionika. Nadalje, u longitudinalnom istraživanju provedenom na uzorku od 200 djece u dobi od 7 do 8 godina, na području Švicarske, socijalna se anksioznost s vremenom smanjivala za onu djecu koja su sudjelovala u timskim sportovima (Dimech i Seiler, 2011). Ipak, postoje i istraživanja koja pokazuju da sudjelovanje u sportskim aktivnostima samo po sebi nije uvijek povezano s nižim stopama upotrebe sredstava ovisnosti, štoviše pojedini podatci ukazuju na povezanost s višim stopama pušenja i opijanja (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) i World Health Organization (WHO) 2018). Tako, na primjer, Murray, Sabiston, Doré, Bélanger i O’Loughlin (2021) navode da je sudjelovanje u timskom sportu povezano s povećanim rizikom od pušenja kod mladića, ali ne i kod djevojaka te povećanim rizikom od konzumiranja alkohola kod mladića i djevojaka tijekom adolescencije. Navedene asocijacije mogu se pripisati određenim sportovima, uključujući nogomet, odbojku i hokej. Međutim, rezultati pokazuju da se ti trendovi mijenjaju u mladoj odrasloj dobi, pri čemu je sudjelovanje u timskom sportu u mladoj odrasloj dobi negativno povezano s upotrebom sredstva ovisnosti (cigarete i marihuana).

S druge strane, istraživanja sugeriraju da nekoliko značajki povećava rizik za rizično ili delinkventno ponašanje: nedostatak mogućnosti za produktivno ili zdravo provođenje

slobodnoga vremena, nedostatak nadzora odraslih i udruživanje s asocijalnim vršnjacima (Caldwell, 2017). Navedeno je u skladu s gledištem da dostupnost nestrukturiranoga slobodnog vremena predstavlja izazov za adolescente jer često zahtijeva da oni razviju samostalne, konstruktivne ili neovisne izvore zabave (Trainor i sur., 2010). Podatci istraživanja podupiru zaključak da kontekst s takvim značajkama nudi adolescentima prostor za sudjelovanje u rizičnim ponašanjima (Lee i Vandell 2015) i privlačan je adolescentima koji su općenito ranjiviji za uključivanje u rizična ponašanja (Persson, Kerr i Stattin, 2007). Sudjelovanje u nestrukturiranim aktivnostima povezano je s konzumacijom sredstava ovisnosti, rizičnim seksualnim ponašanjem i lošijim školskim uspjehom (Bartko i Eccles, 2003; Badura i sur., 2018; Barnes, Hoffman, Welte, Farrell i Dintcheff, 2007; Mahoney i Stattin, 2000; Nelson i Gastic 2009; Pulver, Davison i Pickett, 2015). Ujedno, sudjelovanje u nestrukturiranim aktivnostima (kao što su gledanje televizije, korištenje računala ili igranje videoigara) negativno je povezano s dobrobiti, samopoštovanjem i zadovoljstvom životom, pružajući manje razvojne koristi (Bradley i Inglis 2012; Caldwell i Faulk 2013; Sarriera i sur., 2014; Trainor i sur., 2010). Nenadgledano i nestrukturirano slobodno vrijeme istraživači obično smatraju problematičnim, ali ovakav zaključak nije cjelovit jer zapravo malo studija uzima u obzir ishode povezane s nenadgledanim, prosocijalnim aktivnostima kojima se mladi bave samostalno ili u interakciji drugima (Caldwell, 2017). Mnogi se mladi samostalno ili neformalno bave raznim hobijima, sportovima na otvorenom, čitanjem iz užitka, planinarenjem, ribolovom, računalnim igrama i glazbenim/umjetničkim/dramskim aktivnostima. Ujedno, kada su nestrukturirane aktivnosti šire definirane, nalazi istraživanja su pozitivniji (Caldwell i Witt, 2011). Pérez, Ariza, Sánchez-Martínez i Nebot (2010) istraživali su čimbenike povezane sa započinjanjem konzumacije kanabisa među adolescentima. Istraživanjem je utvrđeno kako su neki od čimbenika povezanih s inicijacijom za konzumaciju kanabisa kod dječaka bili posjećivanje barova ili klubova i nesudjelovanje u organiziranim aktivnostima u slobodno vrijeme. Istraživanja ukazuju da je upotreba korištenja sredstava ovisnosti povezana sa subjektivnim iskustvima u slobodno vrijeme, uključujući dosadu, produktivno slobodno vrijeme i motivaciju za slobodno vrijeme, iako na različite načine. Primjerice, produktivno slobodno vrijeme i dosada u slobodno vrijeme izravno utječu na uporabu sredstava ovisnosti tako da je produktivno slobodno vrijeme zaštitni čimbenik, a dosada rizični čimbenik (Caldwell, 2017; Sharp i sur., 2011; Montamedi i sur., 2019; Weybright, Caldwell, Ram, Smith i Wegner, 2015). Milhausen i suradnici (2003) ističu kako nedostatak mogućnosti i resursa za kvalitetnu i smislenu provedbu slobodnoga vremena u ruralnim područjima, doprinosi ranijem upuštanju mladih u seksualne odnose, u odnosu na mlade iz urbanih područja gdje postoji više mogućnosti i resursa za kvalitetnu provedbu slobodnoga vremena. Rezultati longitudinalnoga istraživanja provedenoga od strane Millera i suradnika (2014) na uzorku od 1 695 mladih na području Južne Afrike, pokazuje kako je veća vjerojatnost da će mladi (posebno mladići) koji doživljavaju visoku razinu dosade u slobodno vrijeme, upuštati se u rizična seksualna ponašanja. Navedena studija

ima značajne implikacije na preventivne programe koji ciljaju na odgodu stupanja u seksualne odnose i na smanjivanje rizičnoga seksualnoga ponašanja (uključujući i prijenos spolno prenosivih bolesti) (Miller i sur., 2014).

Prevenzijska istraživanja stavljaju fokus na promicanje zdravoga razvoja i dobrobiti te na prevenciju rizičnih čimbenika u okruženjima. S obzirom na navedeno, ona prirodno pružaju okvir u kojem se može pozabaviti paradoksom provođenja slobodnoga vremena, koji istovremeno može predstavljati rizik i zaštitu. Irby i Tolman (2002) navode da je slobodno vrijeme ključni kontekst za obrazovanje, učenje, ljudski razvoj i participaciju u građanskom životu i društvu. U Tablici 1 nalazi se prikaz zaštitnih čimbenika koji se jačaju uključivanjem mladih u aktivnosti slobodnoga vremena te prikaz razvojnih ishoda kojima sudjelovanje u aktivnostima slobodnoga vremena može doprinijeti.

Tablica 1.

Sudjelovanje u strukturiranim slobodnim aktivnostima nakon škole i/ili vikendom važno je i doprinosi razvoju adolescenata. Međutim, važno je i sudjelovanje u nekim drugim vrstama slobodnih aktivnosti koje nisu nužno nadzirane ili strukturirane, a posebice ako mladima nisu dostupne strukturirane slobodne aktivnosti (Caldwell, 2017). Nije dovoljno samo povezati vrste aktivnosti ili kontekst aktivnosti s rezultatima, odnosno samo sudjelovanje u bilo kojoj organiziranoj slobodnoj aktivnosti nije jedini čimbenik koji stoji iza asocijacija s razvojnim ishodima mladih (Badura, 2018). Istraživanja pokazuju da bez obzira na aktivnost, osjećaj angažiranosti i zainteresiranost za aktivnosti povezani su s pozitivnim ishodima, a neangažiranost i nezainteresiranost s negativnim ishodima (Larson, 2000). Ujedno, razlog ili motivacija za obavljanje aktivnosti vjerojatno je važnija od same aktivnosti, bez obzira je li ona strukturirana ili nestrukturirana (Caldwell i Faulk, 2013). Odabrane aktivnosti u slobodno vrijeme trebale bi biti nešto što pojedinac voli raditi po vlastitom i slobodnom izboru. Postoji vrlo snažan konsenzus da će adolescenti koji se ne bave slobodnim aktivnostima ili se bave, ali bez stvarne svrhe ili motivacije, vjerojatnije biti manje prilagođeni i uključivati se u rizična ponašanja (Caldwell, 2017). Isto tako, potrebno je imati na umu da samo sudjelovanje u aktivnostima slobodnoga vremena, bez zainteresiranosti i motivacije pojedinca, ne vodi nužno do pozitivnih razvojnih ishoda.

Wegner i Caldwell (2012) navode čimbenike koji su nužni za postizanje željenih ishoda u kontekstu organiziranja slobodnih aktivnosti: pružanje mladima mogućnosti autonomije i izbora; učestalo sudjelovanje mladih u programu; lakoća pristupa programu i održivost programa; odgovarajući nadzor i struktura programa, educirano osoblje, partnerstvo sa školom, obitelji i zajednicom. Isti autori ističu kako je uz navedeno, važno da aktivnosti slobodnoga vremena pružaju mogućnosti za razvoj vještina i kompetencija. Ako se želi da slobodne aktivnosti utječu na pozitivne razvojne ishode mladih, njihovom je organiziranju potrebno pristupiti tako da se jačaju zaštitni čimbenici (vidi Tablicu 1), poput promicanja važnih vještina i ponašanja u slobodno vrijeme.

I za kraj ovoga poglavlja važno je još jednom istaknuti kako isključiva orijentiranost na strukturirane aktivnosti slobodnoga vremena nije dovoljna kako bi se poticao pozitivan

razvoj mladih. Pojedini su mladi intrinzično motivirani za bavljenje organiziranim strukturiranim slobodnim aktivnostima te kroz sudjelovanje doživljavaju brojne izazove koje moraju savladavati (Hansen, Larson i Dworkin, 2003). Navedeno promovira formiranje identiteta, izgradnju vještina timskoga rada i socijalnoga kapitala (Hansen i sur., 2003) te tako povezuje strukturirane slobodne aktivnosti sa zdravim i pozitivnim razvojnim ishodima (Farb i Matjasko 2012).

Smjernice za daljnja preventivna ulaganja

Već duže vrijeme znanost nam daje smjernice za kreiranje znanstveno utemeljenih preventivnih intervencija koja društvu mogu pomoći da ispuni svoju zadaću u odnosu na stvaranje prilika za sprečavanje uključivanja mladih u rizična ponašanja i/ili razvoj problema u ponašanju te prilika za pozitivan razvoj mladih.

Ipak, još uvijek postoji nekoliko ključnih područja za koje postoji vrlo malo dokaza učinkovitosti ili su dokazi slabi ili su pak kontradiktorni te zahtijevaju daljnja istraživanja (UNODC i WHO, 2018). Navedeno između ostaloga uključuje: izvanškolske aktivnosti, sportske i druge strukturirane aktivnosti u slobodno vrijeme i intervencije i politike koje se odnose na djecu i mlade izvan škole. Isti izvor donosi podatak, temeljen na analizi dostupnih evaluacijskih istraživanja, kako neformalne obrazovne aktivnosti nemaju učinak na pozitivan razvoj mladih. Pregled 24 studije u odnosu na izvannastavne aktivnosti na području SAD-a, pokazalo je pozitivan, ali mali i statistički neznačajan učinak na eksternalizirana ponašanja i pohađanje škole. Odnosno, istraživanje je utvrdilo da učenici koji pohađaju izvannastavne aktivnosti nisu pokazali manje eksternaliziranih ponašanja ili poboljšanja u odnosu na pohađanje škole, u usporedbi s vršnjacima, koji nisu pohađali izvannastavne aktivnosti (Kremer, Maynard, Polanin, Vaughn i Sarteschi, 2015).

Pa ipak, u mnogim zemljama i zajednicama popularno je organizirati sport i druge slobodne aktivnosti kao način pružanja adolescentima prosocijalnih i zdravih aktivnosti, prevenirajući njihovo uključivanje u rizična ponašanja, uključujući korištenje sredstava ovisnosti. Kreatori politika i donositelji odluka trebali bi biti krajnje oprezni pri odabiru provedbe ovih vrsta intervencija te ako ih preporučuju za implementaciju, morali bi uključiti rigorozno evaluacijsko istraživanje u odnosu na njihov učinak.

S obzirom na nedostatak istraživanja koja se bave pitanjem pod kojim uvjetima je slobodno vrijeme zaštita ili rizik za pozitivan razvoj mladih, svakako bi trebalo napore uložiti u identifikaciju rizičnih i zaštitnih čimbenika u kontekstu slobodnoga vremena kao i evaluacijska istraživanja. Potrebno je i usuglasiti sve zaključke i izraditi jasnije smjernice, kako bi se jasno istaknulo pod kojim uvjetima strukturirano slobodno vrijeme, odnosno intervencije u kontekstu slobodnoga vremena djece i mladih, doprinose pozitivnim razvojnim ishodima djece i mladih. To podrazumijeva provođenje longitudinalnih istraživanja koja su temeljena na teorijama slobodnoga vremena (poput na primjer, prikazanoga LACE modela) te uzimaju u obzir potrebe djece i mladih kao i obilježja zajednica (njihova socijalnoga okruženja). Longitudinalna

istraživanja dala bi odgovore koji bi se tada mogli primijeniti u kreiranju preventivnih intervencija u kontekstu strukturiranoga slobodnog vremena ili adaptaciju postojećih.

Nadalje, svakako bi bilo važno dobivena znanja širiti među istraživačima i stručnjacima koji imaju sličan fokus. Potreba za uspostavom održive suradnje i partnerstva, odnosno povezivanjem istraživača u području slobodnoga vremena i preventivskoj znanosti vidljiva je i u donedavnoj razlici u pristupima istraživanju utjecaja slobodnoga vremena na razvojne ishode mladih. Naime, dok su istraživači slobodnoga vremena istraživali subjektivan doživljaj slobodnoga vremena, istraživači u preventivskoj znanosti uglavnom su istraživali objektivni doživljaj slobodnoga vremena, odnosno slobodno su vrijeme izjednačavali s vrstom aktivnosti i vremenom provedenim u aktivnostima (Weybright, Caldwell i Weaver, 2019). Povezivanje istraživača iz oba područja daje priliku da se istraži potencijal utjecaja provođenja slobodnoga vremena na razvojne ishode mladih kroz sveobuhvatan pristup, koristeći postojeća znanja iz oba područja. Posljedično, to će dovesti do znanstvenih spoznaja i dokaza koje je, opet, važno komunicirati sa stručnjacima te ključnim ljudima i donositeljima odluka kako bi se stvarale prilike u društvu za učinkovit i etičan odgovor na potrebe mladih ljudi i njihov pozitivan razvoj.

Zaključak

Slobodne aktivnosti daju prostor, vrijeme i slobodu biti ono što jesmo. Slobodno vrijeme pruža bogat i jedinstven kontekst da se adolescenti razvijaju u zdrave odrasle osobe baveći se aktivnostima i ponašanjem koje doprinose osobnom uživanju, značenju te razvoju identiteta i autonomije. Prema Konvenciji o pravima djeteta (2007), dijete ima pravo na odmor i slobodno vrijeme, na igru i razonodu primjerenu njegovoj dobi kao i na slobodno sudjelovanje u kulturnom životu i umjetnostima. Država je dužna poticati stvaranje uvjeta za provođenje kulturnih, umjetničkih i rekreativnih aktivnosti i aktivnosti slobodnoga vremena jer djeca imaju pravo na igru i razonodu primjerenu svojoj dobi i sklonostima. U Republici Hrvatskoj, Zakon o odgoju i obrazovanju u osnovnoj i srednjoj školi (NN, 64/20) i Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu (NN, 102/06) predstavljaju zakonsku osnovu za organizaciju izvannastavnih aktivnosti u skladu s potrebama učenika. Članak 28. Zakona o odgoju i obrazovanju ističe da „Školski kurikulum utvrđuje nastavni plan i program izbornih predmeta i izvannastavnih aktivnosti, a donosi se na temelju nacionalnog kurikuluma i nastavnog plana i programa“. Potrebno je napomenuti i kako Hrvatski obrazovni sustav trenutačno prolazi izazovnu tranziciju cjelokupnoga kurikula. U tom pogledu, međupredmetne teme *Učiti kako učiti* (Odluka o donošenju kurikuluma za međupredmetnu temu *Učiti kako učiti* za osnovne i srednje škole u Republici Hrvatskoj, NN 7/19) i *Poduzetništvo* (Odluka o donošenju kurikuluma za međupredmetnu temu *Poduzetništvo* za osnovne i srednje škole u Republici Hrvatskoj, NN 7/19) uvrštene su u nastavne sate, ali i u sve izvannastavne aktivnosti od najranije dobi. Ujedno, međupredmetne teme usmjeravaju se i na razvoj socijalno-emocionalnih kompetencija učenika. Navedeno predstavlja potencijal za organiziranje slobodnih aktivnosti učenika, vodeći računa o širem

kontekstu (usvajanje vještina te usklađivanje s interesima, potrebama i iskustvima učenika), a ne samo o ponudi dostupnih aktivnosti.

Vještine naučene i korištene u slobodno vrijeme mogu doprinijeti tranziciji adolescenata u zdrave odrasle osobe. Međutim, potrebne su intervencije koje pomažu adolescentima pozitivno i kvalitetno koristiti svoje slobodno vrijeme (Caldwell i Faulk, 2013, Caldwell, 2017). Formalno i neformalno obrazovanje u kontekstu provođenja slobodnoga vremena potrebno je za promicanje pozitivnoga razvoja mladih i sprečavanje uključenosti mladih u rizična ponašanja (Caldwell, 2008). Kada se slobodno vrijeme koristi za smisleni razlog, vjerojatnije je da će se dogoditi pozitivan razvoj. Suprotno tome, pozitivan razvoj manje je vjerojatan kada se slobodno vrijeme provodi bez značajnih aktivnosti (tj. kada se samo popunjava vrijeme) (Caldwell i Witt, 2018b). Mladi koji se obično bave samoodređenim aktivnostima imaju bolje ishode povezane sa zdravljem (npr. apstinencija pušenja, bolja kvaliteta života i slično), dok su izvanjski nametnute aktivnosti i amotivirana ponašanja povezana s negativnim ishodima (npr. veća razina depresije i anksioznosti) (Motamedi i sur., 2019) Kako bi izvannastavne aktivnosti utjecale na promjene u ishodima ponašanja, nužno je ulagati resurse u dizajn i elemente intervencija koji su temeljeni na dokazima učinkovitosti, odnosno koristiti empirijske dokaze i teorije promjene u samom dizajnu intervencije kako bi se postigli planirani ishodi.

I na kraju, kako bi se mladi osnažili za kvalitetno provođenje slobodnoga vremena te se time utjecalo na njihov pozitivan razvoj, odnosno kako bi se preveniralo uključivanje mladih u rizična ponašanja ili razvoj problema, važno se usmjeriti i na stvaranje prilika i obrazovanje svih važnih dionika u zajednici u odnosu na važnost ulaganja u kvalitetnu provedbu slobodnoga vremena mladih.