

Components of Leisure Education for Primary and Secondary School Children

Süleyman Munusturlar*, Müge Akyıldız Munusturlar*, and Edanur Yolcu**

Abstract—This qualitative study investigates the variables influencing the leisure education levels of primary and secondary school students, particularly examining how these variables differ by school type (public vs. private). Designed as a case study, the research involved 20 students from Eskişehir, Türkiye, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews consisting of open-ended questions developed based on the leisure education literature and finalized with expert input. Thematic content analysis yielded eight primary themes: leisure awareness, self awareness, problem-solving, decision-making skills, diversity of leisure activities, social interaction skills, time management, and motivation. Findings reveal that students attending private schools demonstrated heightened awareness in areas such as leisure opportunities, interest- and talent-based self-expression, and external motivation. In contrast, students in public schools exhibited stronger skills in managing leisure-related constraints, building peer relationships, and cultivating intrinsic motivation. These results underscore the critical need for integrating leisure education systematically into both formal and non-formal educational environments to foster holistic development in children and adolescents.

Keywords: Leisure Education Dimensions, Formal Education, Leisure Education

I. INTRODUCTION

Leisure time is defined as a period in which an individual is intrinsically motivated and freely spends time on rest, entertainment, relaxation, and self-development [1]. Leisure represents a lifelong learning process that encompasses the development of an individual's attitudes, values, knowledge, skills, and resources [2].

Leisure is regarded as a fundamental human right, alongside education, health, and work [3]. This right should be equally accessible and learned by everyone without discrimination based on gender, age, religious preference, or other factors. Leisure stands out as a significant element in an individual's life, especially in terms of socialization. Conceptually, leisure has been observed to develop across various disciplines. Leisure education contributes to the enhancement of an individual's personal resources and skills. Moreover, the responsibility of society to meet the leisure needs of individuals is considered an important social duty [4].

Leisure education (LE) can be provided within schools or offered as a service outside the formal education system. In other words, leisure education may occur in both planned (formal) and unplanned (informal) settings. Various types of tools, experts, and educational environments are required to deliver leisure education effectively [5].

Considering the significant contributions leisure makes to an individual's life and development, along with the principle that leisure experiences and participation in recreational activities should be accessible to all, it becomes evident that leisure should be recognized as a fundamental human right. Accordingly, the necessity of providing leisure education that enables individuals to advocate for their leisure rights and make efficient use of their leisure time emerges as a noteworthy issue [6].

The family environment serves as the primary play area where children can express themselves most naturally. Through these activities, the child undergoes a continuous reciprocal educational process with family members. Leisure education processes, which begin in the family at an early age, are influenced by choices regarding play and toys, selection of materials and tools, and guidance on how and to what extent these resources should be utilized [7].

Although it is often assumed that leisure practices show intercultural similarities, culture-based perceptions, preferences, obstacles, and pressures vary [8]. Therefore, it is essential to understand the individual and societal factors that shape leisure behaviors and develop an appropriate leisure education model accordingly. This approach enables individuals to identify their needs, create an effective and competent repertoire of activities to meet these needs, and acquire the skills to cope with potential constraints. For this purpose, individuals should be involved in leisure education processes from the earliest possible age [9].

Leisure education encompasses specially designed programs that allow people to experience leisure and happiness, thereby facilitating their development, growth, and progress. Imparting knowledge through positive leisure experiences is also included within this scope [10].

Leisure activities have been extensively researched due to their positive impact on quality of life and various factors such as feeling happy, socialization, entertainment, and relaxation. Leisure activities provide individuals with numerous benefits cognitively, affectively, physically, and spiritually.

The aim of this study is to identify the factors influencing the leisure education level of primary and secondary school children and to determine how these factors are shaped

*Faculty of Sport Sciences, Eskişehir Technical University, Türkiye

**Institution of Graduate Schools, Eskişehir Technical University, Türkiye

according to the different types of compulsory primary and secondary education received.

II. METHOD

A. Research Design

In this study, a case study design was employed within the scope of qualitative research methods. Case studies are qualitative research designs in which researchers collect detailed and in-depth information about a real, current, and clearly bounded case or cases through one or more techniques such as interviews, observations, visual and auditory materials, reports, or documents, and ultimately describe the case [11]. Within this framework, semi-structured interview methods were used for data collection.

B. Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of primary and secondary school students attending private and public schools in Eskişehir province. Using purposive sampling, a total of 20 students participated in the study, including 10 primary school students (5 from public schools and 5 from private schools) and 10 secondary school students (5 from public schools and 5 from private schools).

C. Data Collection Tool

For data collection, researchers used 10 open-ended semi-structured interview questions prepared based on a review of the literature on leisure education. Since data collection was planned to be conducted face-to-face, a pool of questions was initially developed through a literature review conducted by the researchers. The final version of the questions was determined based on evaluations by eight field experts.

III. FINDINGS

TABLE I. THEMES AND CATEGORIES EXPLAINING THE LEISURE EDUCATION TENDENCIES OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Themes	Categories
Leisure Awareness	- Meaning of leisure - Benefits of leisure - Leisure opportunities
Self Awareness	- Skills - Interests
Problem Solving	- Leisure barriers - Opportunities - Problem-solving skills
Decision-Making Skills	- Autonomy - Self-confidence
Leisure Activity Diversity	- Multiple experiences - Skill diversity and discovery
Social Interaction Skills	- Peer skills - Assertiveness skills - Communication skills
Time Management	- Time management skills - Time wasters
Motivation	- Intrinsic motivation - Extrinsic motivation - Lack of motivation and boredom

Table 1 presents the themes constituting leisure education and the categories under these themes, identified based on the responses of primary and secondary school students attending public and private educational institutions to open-ended questions. Accordingly, it is observed that the leisure education variable includes six themes and coding under 20 categories associated with these themes.

TABLE II. THEMES, CATEGORIES, AND CODING FREQUENCIES EXPLAINING PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' VIEWS AND TENDENCIES TOWARD LEISURE EDUCATION COMPONENTS

THEMES	CATEGORIES	CODING FREQUENCIES	PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOL	PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Leisure Awareness	Meaning of leisure	A1, A2, A5, B2, B3,	↑	↓
	Benefits of leisure	A1, A2, A3, A5, B2, B3,	↑	↓
	Leisure opportunities	A1, A3, A4, A5, B1, B3,	↑	↓
Self Awareness	Skills	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B3, B5	↑	↓
	Interests	A1, A2, A3, A4, B3, B5	↑	↓
Problem Solving	Leisure barriers	A3, A5, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5	↓	↑
	Problem-solving skills	B1, B3, B5, A2	↓	↑
	Opportunities	A1, A2, A3, A5, B2, B5	↑	↓
Decision Making Skills	Autonomy	A2, A3, A5, B1, B3, B4	↔	↔
	Self-confidence	A2, A3, A5, B1, B3, B4	↔	↔
Leisure Activity Diversity	Multiple activity experiences	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B2, B5	↑	↓
	Skill diversity and discovery	A1, A2, A4, A5, B2, B4, B5	↑	↓
Social Int. Skills	Peer skills	A1, A4, B1, B5	↓	↑
	Assertiveness skills	A1, A2, A4, B1, B4, B5	↓	↑
	Communication skills	A1, A2, A3, A4, B1, B3, B4,	↔	↔
Time Manag.	Time management skills	A2, A3, A4, B3	↑	↓
	Time wasters	A1, A3, B3, B4, B5	↓	↑
Motivation	Intrinsic motivation	A3, A5, B1, B2, B3, B5	↓	↑
	Extrinsic motivation	A1, A2, A5, B4, B5,	↑	↓
	Lack of motivation and boredom	A2, A4, B1, B3, B4	↑	↓

A: Private primary school, B: Public primary school

When examining Table 2, it illustrates the themes constituting leisure education components for primary school students attending public and private schools, the categories

under these themes, and the coding frequencies determined based on the responses given to these categories. Accordingly, it is observed that students studying in private educational institutions exhibit higher coding frequencies in the following categories compared to those in public schools: under the leisure awareness theme—meaning of leisure, benefits, and leisure opportunities; under self awareness—skills and interests; under problem solving—opportunities; under leisure activity diversity—multiple activity experiences and skill diversity; under time management—time management skills; and under motivation—extrinsic motivation and lack of motivation.

TABLE III. THEMES, CATEGORIES, AND CODING FREQUENCIES EXPLAINING SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' VIEWS AND TENDENCIES TOWARD LEISURE EDUCATION COMPONENTS

THEMES	CATEGORIES	CODING FREQUENCIES	PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL	PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL
Leisure Awareness	Meaning of leisure	C1, C2, D2, D3,		
	Benefits of leisure	C1, C2, C3, C5, D2, D3, D5		
	Leisure opportunities	C1, C3, C5, D1, D3,		
Self Awareness	Skills	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, D3, D5		
	Interests	C1, C2, C3, D3		
Problem Solving	Leisure barriers	C2, C4, D1, D2, D3, D4,		
	Problem-solving	C2, D1, D3,		
	Opportunities	C1, C2, C3, C5, D2, D5		
Decision Making Skills	Autonomy	C2, C3, C5, D1, D3, D4		
	Self-confidence	C2, C3, C5, D1, D3, D4		
Leisure Activity Diversity	Multiple activity experiences	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, D2, D5		
	Skill diversity and discovery	C1, C2, C4, C5, D2, D4, D5		
Social Int. Skills	Peer skills	C1, C4, C5 D1,D3, D5		
	Assertiveness skills	C1, C2, D1, D4, D5		
	Communication skills	C1, C2, C3, C4, D1 ,D3, D5		
Time Manag.	Time management skills	C2, C3, D3,D5		
	Time wasters	C1, C3, C5, D3 D4, D5		
Motivation	Intrinsic motivation	C2, C3, C5, D1, D2, D3, D5		
	Extrinsic motivation	C2, C4, C5, D1, D5		

Lack of
motivation and
boredom

C1, C2, C4, D1,
D3, D4



C: Private secondary school, D: Public secondary school

Conversely, primary school students in public schools show higher coding frequencies in the following categories compared to those in private schools: under problem solving—leisure barriers and problem-solving skills; under social interaction skills—peer skills and assertiveness skills; under time management—time wasters; and under motivation—intrinsic motivation.

When examining Table 3, it presents the themes constituting leisure education components for secondary school students attending public and private schools, the categories under these themes, and the coding frequencies determined based on the responses given to these categories. Accordingly, students studying in private educational institutions show higher coding frequencies in the following categories compared to those in public schools: under the leisure awareness theme—benefits of leisure and leisure opportunities; under self awareness—skills and interests; under problem solving—opportunities; under leisure activity diversity—multiple activity experiences and skill diversity; and under motivation—extrinsic motivation.

Conversely, secondary school students in public schools demonstrate higher coding frequencies in the following categories compared to their counterparts in private schools: under problem solving—leisure barriers and problem-solving skills; and under social interaction skills—assertiveness skills.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study revealed that the levels of awareness, skills, and motivation related to leisure education among primary and secondary school students differ according to the type of school they attend. It was observed that private school students demonstrated higher levels of awareness and participation in terms of leisure opportunities, diversity in skills and interests, and extrinsic motivation. In contrast, students attending public schools exhibited stronger profiles in coping with leisure barriers, problem-solving and social interaction skills, as well as intrinsic motivation.

According to previous research findings, students who participate in extracurricular leisure activities show lower tendencies toward violence compared to those who do not participate, while individuals engaged in curricular leisure activities exhibit lower levels of social connectedness than those who do not [12]. Based on these findings, it is recommended that secondary school students be provided with opportunities to engage in extracurricular leisure activities both inside and outside the school environment.

As seen in Tables 2 and 3, private school students had higher coding frequencies in categories related to multiple activity experiences, skill diversity, and extrinsic motivation, whereas public school students stood out in skills such as assertiveness and peer relationships in social interaction. This indicates that the resources and opportunities provided by

educational environments shape students' leisure activity preferences and sources of motivation.

In conclusion, leisure education programs in both private and public schools should be diversified and planned according to student needs. Supporting extrinsic motivation should be emphasized in private schools, while strengthening social interaction and problem-solving skills should be the focus in public schools. In this context, it is important for schools to systematize leisure education services in both formal and non-formal educational settings and to develop methods that encourage active student participation.

Future studies supported by broader and deeper data on leisure education across different age groups, school types, and geographical regions will make significant contributions to the field.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study was supported by Eskisehir Technical University Scientific Research Projects Commission under no: 24ADP194.

REFERENCES

- [1] J. Neulinger, *To Leisure: An Introduction*, Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon Inc., 1981.
- [2] A. Sivan and H. Ruskin, *Leisure Education, Community Development and Populations with Special Needs*, Wallingford, UK: CABI Publishing, 2000. <https://doi.org/10.1079/9780851994444.0000>
- [3] T. Ayyıldız Durhan, "Antrenör Adaylarının Boş Zaman Eğitimi," *Ulusal Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 1–17, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.30769/usbd.700551>
- [4] M. Kırkpınar, "Lise son sınıftaki öğrencilerin boş zaman faaliyetlerine katılım biçimlerinin araştırılması," *Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Muğla Üniversitesi., Muğla, Türkiye, 2004.
- [5] V. Gül, "Boş zaman etkinliklerinin okuduğunu anlama ve okumaya yönelik tutumlar üzerindeki etkililiği," *Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi., İzmir, Türkiye, 2008.
- [6] A. Sivan, "Leisure Education in Educational Settings," *Loisir et Société/Society and Leisure*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 49–68, 2008. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07053436.2008.10707769>
- [7] P. Miller and M. Robinson, *The Leisure Age*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1963.
- [8] K. Roberts, "Is Leisure Studies 'Ethnocentric'? If So, Does This Matter?" *World Leisure Journal*, vol. 52, pp. 164–176, 2011. <https://doi.org/10.1080/04419057.2010.9728277>
- [9] S. Hutchinson and B. Robertson, "Leisure Education: A New Goal for An Old Idea Whose Time Has Come," *Pedagogia Social. Revista Interuniversitaria*, no. 19, pp. 127–139, 2012.
- [10] J. Dattilo, "Positive Psychology and Leisure Education: A Balanced and Systematic Service Delivery Model," *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, vol. 49, no. 2, pp. 148–165, 2015.
- [11] J. W. Creswell and C. N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2016.
- [12] M. Kocamaz ve S. Munusturlar, "Müfredat Dışı Okul İçi Boş Zaman Aktiviteleri Katılımının 10–14 Yaş Ortaokul Öğrencilerin Şiddet Eğilimleri ve Sosyal Bağlılık Düzeyleri Üzerine Etkisinin İncelenmesi," *Spor Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 335–348, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.25307/jssr.966329>