

PEDAGOGICAL POTENTIALS OF LEISURE TIME IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPING INTELLECTUAL, ETHICAL, AND AESTHETIC VALUES IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract. *This paper explores the importance of leisure time in the development of children's creative, cognitive, and aesthetic potential. Leisure time contributes to physical, intellectual, and emotional development, with a particular focus on the impact of music and art education. Activities such as singing, playing, composing, and painting stimulate aesthetic abilities, creativity, and social skills. Additionally, extracurricular activities, such as sports clubs, promote teamwork, moral values, and problem-solving skills. In the context of preventing social crises, leisure time plays a crucial role in the development of the child's personality, enabling them to engage in society through various forms of collaborative work and social interaction. Finally, the paper concludes that when leisure time is used constructively, it enables children to develop their overall personality, acquiring skills that will allow them to lead a successful and fulfilling life.*

Key words: *free time, creativity, pedagogy, moral education, cultural activities, personality development.*

INTRODUCTION

Pedagogy, as a scientific discipline, encompasses the entire spectrum of children's upbringing and education. A fundamental component of this process is establishing a general goal for education. In our society, this goal is to develop free, well-rounded individuals (Trnavac & Đorđević, 2011). One significant factor in achieving this objective is the pedagogy of leisure time. The concept of "leisure time" is a relatively recent cultural and historical phenomenon, deeply intertwined with the concerns of human sciences. In a pedagogical context, the term most closely associated with leisure time is **freedom**—the freedom to self-determine and self-actualize. Leisure time provides

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children with opportunities to explore their talents, needs, and desires. They can choose activities aligned with their interests, remain motivated, and independently manage their time. This freedom allows for fulfilling of developmental needs that may be overlooked in formal educational settings. Therefore, examining the pedagogical potential of leisure time is essential to recognize, understand, and harness its benefits. In formal education systems, instructional and educational activities are structured according to predefined curricula and content plans. These are subsequently implemented by classroom teachers, who play a pivotal role in ensuring the quality of students' knowledge acquisition and skill development across all educational levels.

From an early age, children exhibit individual differences, just as adults do. An effective educational process must be designed to accommodate and positively influence diverse levels of knowledge and abilities among students. However, practical challenges often arise in educational institutions, particularly in the execution of supplementary and extracurricular activities, as well as in teachers' engagement and communication with students. Today's society faces numerous challenges. While technological advancements and modern research offer new possibilities, they also present unique difficulties. One significant shift from previous centuries is the emergence of a new lifestyle trend — hedonism. This trend increasingly dominates the lives of young people, emphasizing immediate gratification over meaningful engagement. Temporary pleasures, however, cannot replace the experience of boredom or unproductive leisure time. Numerous studies on leisure have shown that people often equate free time with boredom. The question then arises: "How should one spend or 'kill' free time?" (Božović, 1975). This association between leisure and boredom underscores the necessity of studying the phenomenon of children's free time. By doing so, we can better shape it pedagogically to contribute meaningfully to their development.

The potential and importance of leisure time for children and youth are immense. By examining various activities that occupy their free time, we can observe how these contribute to personality development. Leisure time offers opportunities for growth, development, rest, recreation, and education. Through activities such as music, language learning, sports, and religious education, a well-rounded and healthy personality can be cultivated. The primary objective of this research is to explore, through a literature review, the potential influence of leisure time on children's development and highlight its pedagogical possibilities. Additionally, the study aims to determine how leisure time can impact children's development, contribute to their life experiences, foster intellectual, moral, and emotional maturity, and expand their horizons.

From this overarching objective, several specific tasks emerge:

1. **Analyze the concept of leisure time from a pedagogical perspective** and emphasize the importance of upbringing during leisure time.
2. **Highlight the key functions of children's leisure time**, including its structure and organization.
3. **Examine the most significant pedagogical potentials of leisure time**, particularly focusing on:
 - Intellectual development
 - Aesthetic education
 - Moral education
 - Physical education
4. **Investigate the role and contribution of Religious Education** in realizing the pedagogical potentials of leisure time.

1. THE IMPACT OF LEISURE TIME ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

One of the most important aspects of life, especially for students and young people, is how they spend their leisure time. These activities allow them to engage in extracurricular pursuits and develop active behaviors outside the classroom. It is believed that when children are given time to explore areas of interest, they tend to be more creative, which, in turn, enhances their academic performance (Shelly et al., 2004). This is particularly evident in young people who participate in a wide range of activities such as sports, physical exercise, recreational pursuits, indoor activities, social interactions, reading, and later, activities related to social outings and relationships. Each of these activities positively impacts the academic achievements of children and youth (Durik et al., 2006).

Time management is a skill that does not come naturally; it must be learned and continuously refined. It involves adopting new behaviors and developing unique strategies. Additionally, it is essential to implement exercises that help adolescents and young adults improve their existing time management skills (Josel, 2015). The interesting study about leisure time. In the study *Leisure Time Activities and Interests of Elementary School Children* (Stojanović, Ristić, Đorđević, & Dimitrijević, 2017), the authors highlight that elementary school children predominantly engage in passive and receptive activities at home, such as listening to music, watching cartoons, and reading children's books. Some of these activities, like reading and watching educational shows, have self-educational or educational potential. The presence of play, particularly at a younger age, is emphasized as a meaningful and proper use of leisure time, supporting intellectual and ethical development. These findings align with modern sociological perspectives on the importance of leisure time for personal growth. The research we examined also revealed another aspect of children's behavior, where leisure time is spent passively.

From an early age, most of us have participated in various leisure activities, whether it involved reading a book or playing outside with friends. Since students are engaged in a variety of academic activities, it is crucial to understand how to prioritize and balance these activities to maintain a healthy equilibrium. One of the main challenges for today's children is maintaining concentration in school, which directly affects their academic performance.

Physical activities during leisure time significantly contribute to the development of physical, mental, emotional, and social skills. Numerous studies have demonstrated the benefits of physical exercise for mental health, supporting the theory that exercise enhances positive emotions such as vitality, satisfaction, and energy while reducing anxiety, tension, fatigue, and anger (Caldwell, 2005).

Educational institutions play a crucial role in shaping how leisure time is spent, in addition to their commercialized curricula. According to Puževski (2000), recent years have seen a noticeable expansion in opportunities for leisure engagement across various domains such as sports, arts, knowledge acquisition, and technology. Schools today strive to offer numerous extracurricular activities, allowing students to choose based on their interests.

Moreover, schools can and should participate in the cultural activities of their communities. As Mikanović and Panzalović (2014) note, "Celebrations marking significant dates or various events, school-organized performances showcasing students' achievements, festivals, and charity events enable schools to participate in the cultural life of the community." These activities not only support young talents but also inspire them to pursue new accomplishments.

Time management is the art of arranging, organizing, and scheduling tasks to enhance efficiency and productivity (Khanam et al., 2017). High school and university students often lack the knowledge necessary to manage their free time effectively. However, when they succeed in managing their leisure time well, they tend to experience greater life satisfaction. In this section, we will review two studies related to this topic. Interestingly, some studies indicate that students who engage in well-planned leisure activities tend to excel academically, while others show a weaker correlation between leisure time and academic success (Britton & Tesser, 1991).

One notable study conducted in schools and universities in India (Erinjeri & Lobo, 2023) aimed to examine how students utilize their leisure time. Participants were involved in various activities such as sports, social media engagement, and recreational pursuits. The researchers identified six key components of leisure activities:

1. Physical activity,
2. Self-reflection and personal development,
3. Social interactions,
4. Reading,
5. Activities related to romantic relationships, and
6. Recreational activities.

The study's findings highlighted several important observations. First, physical activity itself did not have a direct positive or negative impact on students' academic success. Its influence depended on how well students balanced their academic responsibilities with physical exercise. Previous research supported the notion that physical activity enhances attention and concentration, suggesting that students must learn to maintain a healthy balance between study time and physical activity. Outdoor recreational activities, in particular, were found to improve overall health, enhance endurance, and boost energy levels, ultimately resulting in better focus and more effective learning.

Social media also had a positive impact, especially among female students, as it provided both practical and emotional benefits. Students could participate in online courses, share their knowledge, or seek help by asking questions on platforms like NPTEL, Udemy, and YouTube. Additionally, many students use social media platforms such as LinkedIn to apply for internships and job opportunities.

However, reading habits among adolescents and university students have been on the decline. Reading was identified as one of the least preferred leisure activities. Despite this trend, the study confirmed that reading significantly aids learning. In India, students who read regularly outperformed their peers academically. Interestingly, male students reported higher reading engagement compared to female students. Self-reflection and personal development were ranked as the third most popular leisure activity, even more favored than physical activities. On the other hand, social outings and activities related to romantic relationships showed no measurable impact on academic performance in this study.

Confirmation of the role of physical activity as a stimulus for academic achievement also comes from a study conducted in Finland (Aaltonen et al., 2016). This research focused on children aged 12 to 17 and found that those engaged in running and other physical activities performed better academically, were happier, and demonstrated greater enthusiasm for learning. By reviewing approximately 50 studies, the authors examined the link between school-based physical activity and various indicators of academic success among students aged 5 to 18. They concluded that the relationship between physical activity and academic

performance was predominantly positive, although some studies did not find definitive evidence to support this connection.

As we can see from these studies, students often face the burden of mandatory activities, whether at school or home. However, what truly fulfills them are activities that bring them joy and motivation. Leisure activities play a critical role in fostering academic success by providing students with a sense of satisfaction and encouragement to continue working toward their goals. Therefore, it is essential for students to carefully select their leisure activities and develop effective time management skills to maximize the benefits of their free time.

2. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUPPORTING INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT IN LEISURE TIME

As we have already emphasized, leisure time activities are those that an individual engages in freely, driven by their will and interest, and they inherently carry certain obligations and consequences (Mlinarević, 2004). The foundation of these activities is the freedom of choice, accompanied by a motivational structure that ensures that choice. Therefore, it is necessary to have a purpose in utilizing leisure time for it to be beneficial. For this reason, teachers who support students in their intellectual development should adequately organize their use of time (Stepanović, 2021). Also, learning is a continuous and progressive process which brings changes in the students. During this process, children with different personality respond differently to certain situations, so it is absolutely clear that internal factors drive individuals to act. These internal factors are called motives (Cenić, Petrović, & Cenić, 2018). By employing appropriate motivational methods, teachers encourage students to engage in diverse activities and fulfill their needs. On the other hand, it is essential to listen to students' suggestions, particularly in the later stages of schooling, from the fifth to the eighth grade. Some suggestions may include the content, location, and timing of workshops that interest the students (Ajanović-Stevanović, 2004).

Within this framework, we have opportunities to support intellectual development during leisure time. In traditional schools, intellectual development is fostered through subjects that stimulate student creativity (e.g., history, geography, chemistry, mathematics). Through the content of these subjects, students not only achieve educational goals and objectives but also independently explore and utilize specific materials that are part of the curriculum and present them in the school setting. The theoretical foundations of education and upbringing during leisure time can be derived from various models: the formal education model, the non-formal education model, and the informal education and upbringing model. Each of these models (directly or indirectly) impacts education and upbringing during leisure time in different ways. From the perspective of leisure time, formal and non-formal education, with their purpose, content, and methods of implementation, are suited for education and upbringing for leisure, while informal education focuses on upbringing and education within leisure time. The development of individuality in children is a core component of informal education. Constant new impressions, impulses, and experiences help shape personal attitudes and judgments (Loewen, 2011). Informal learning can be intentional, but in most cases, it is unintentional or unconscious. It is a fundamental part of daily life and simultaneously the foundation of education, distinctly different from formal and non-formal education. The essential difference between these three models lies in the intentionality present in formal and non-formal education.

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF MORAL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN DURING LEISURE TIME

With the emergence and development of civilization, the culture of leisure time also began to evolve. Today, leisure time can be defined as a vital necessity in human life, where productive work ensures existence, and leisure time allows one to experience that existence (Janković, 1973).

Moral education is always social education, as it prepares individuals for communal life within specific social groups and communities. Conversely, social education is always moral, as it entails preparing individuals to respect those same values in life. Morality has a general social character because it consists of norms widely accepted in a given society, applying to all who meet certain criteria (Minić & Jovanović, 2015).

The term "morality" is widespread, and we encounter it in various contexts. The term originates from the Latin word *mos* (mores, moralis) – custom, behavior. In Greek, we find a different term, *ethos*, meaning custom, and *ethicos*, meaning moral. Several important definitions are associated with morality, one of which is that morality is often defined as a set of social norms related to human behavior (Minić & Jovanović, 2015). Specifically concerning the moral upbringing and orientation of children, we observe a complex process of moral formation and shaping individuals into social beings (Branković & Ilić, 2011). According to Piaget, moral development occurs as a result of two distinct processes – biological (cognitive) maturation and interaction with the environment. Interaction with the environment allows children to change their attitude toward authority and to increase their ability to put themselves in someone else's place, which are all prerequisites for mature morality (Đokić, M., & Stojiljković, S. 2019,21). In this responsible, specific, and long-term process, we gain an awareness of humanity, self-awareness, and community awareness. Additionally, we learn how to respect others and enable them to grow into healthy and well-rounded individuals. Thus, moral education contributes to the development of moral awareness, feelings, interests, attitudes, beliefs, observation, and judgment (Ninković, 2006).

We could confidently say that, alongside the family and school, moral education is also taught in other settings, such as cultural institutions and religious establishments. In the context of leisure time, a Christian perspective is often considered. From an Orthodox Christian viewpoint, humans are beings who realize their potential through community with others (Zizioulas, 2017). Consequently, the moral value of a person is viewed through their love for their neighbor. Therefore, moral criteria within the Church are not based solely on how others treat us, but on how we treat others. The Church thus calls us to regularly examine our conscience, enabling us to build relationships with those around us in the best possible way (Živković, 2011).

In the school system, moral education is integrated into all subjects in primary school. Its importance for developing moral awareness is significant, which is why moral education must begin at an early age. "The school, as an institution where the content of moral education is implemented, represents the most organized form of its proper guidance and effective daily implementation" (Minić & Jovanović, 2015).

On the other hand, it is essential to emphasize the importance of role models in moral education. In schools, teachers serve as role models, while professors fulfill that role in universities. Therefore, it is crucial for society as a whole to recognize moral education as something important, complex, and multifaceted. Although morality has evolved throughout history, the core remains: the awareness of others as neighbors, the understanding that we are

not alone, and the recognition that society requires something to sustain it internally, which is morality. Accordingly, moral education during leisure time can be provided by everyone surrounding the child, offering guidance to make good use of that time.

4. PRESERVATION OF HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN CHILDREN DURING FREE TIME

We know that free time encompasses various aspects of work, and what makes it useful is its diversity. On the other hand, it is well known that young people, particularly adolescents, need to make the best use of their free time. During this period of life, they undergo intense personal development, socialization, and in a word, self-transformation. Therefore, it is essential to select activities that encompass all these functions. Our primary focus is on the impact of free-time activities on the growth and development of children.

In contemporary times, we distinguish between two forms of physical activities: sports and physical activity as recreation. Recreation includes all activities conducted outside of professional work, which individuals engage in as a personal need for relaxation, entertainment, and rejuvenation through sports activities. Numerous studies, mostly from the neopositivist perspective, conclude that moderate and regular exercise is beneficial for health (Skempler, 2007).

Sports, however, is a more complex activity. Although many sports have specific patterns, participants often cannot fully control their movements or influence the intensity and pace of their involvement in the game. This is why sports activities are vital—they provide a genuine source of health and energy for further activities. A particularly interesting perspective that combines both body and mind suggests that compared to other leisure activities, sports during free time can help individuals achieve unity and harmony between body and soul, aligning with the developmental needs of children (Bichescu, 2014). Sports foster internal satisfaction and, to some extent, enhance one's popularity. The media plays a significant role in promoting sports and physical activity (Božović, 2010).

Defining sports is not simple, but the term implies a period of skill acquisition (Kejn, 1984). Physical education teachers often emphasize several key aspects:

1. **Physical fitness** is enhanced by sports and is closely linked to emotional well-being. Conversely, poor physical fitness is associated with poor emotional health.
2. **Acquiring motor skills** significantly contributes to fulfilling basic needs for safety and respect, particularly in younger children of both genders.
3. **Engaging in play and sports** improves emotional health and prevents delinquency.
4. **Play and sports** provide opportunities to express emotions.
5. **Competitive sports**, when applied correctly, can enhance emotional health and accelerate the development of desirable personality traits.
6. **Play therapy, group therapy, and physical exercise** aid in psychiatric treatment.

Types of Sports in Free Time

Based on their purpose, sports during free time can be divided into four types:

a) Sports-recreational activities – These include activities people enjoy during their free time, such as basketball, soccer, tennis, hiking, or jogging. The foundation of physical recreation is play, and people choose these activities to maintain mental and physical health and for personal enjoyment.

b) Sports-fitness activities – These aim to help people stay in good shape, maintain physical function, and improve their physical and mental health. Examples include jogging, exercising, aerobics, and dance.

c) Sports-adventure activities – These are chosen by individuals seeking relief from urban stress, fulfilling their need for exploration and adventure in nature. Examples include mountaineering, skiing, and traveling.

d) Sports-social activities – These include chess, community sports events, and other activities that foster social interaction and friendships (Min & Jin, 2010). An interesting activity that can help in preserving health is dance. Dance is a dynamic form of play that combines rhythm, movement, and emotion. As Huizinga highlighted, it is one of the purest forms of play, blending cultural, ceremonial, and artistic elements. Key benefits of dance include:

- Physical activity that supports health,
- Positive emotional impact,
- Development of aesthetic appreciation,
- Promotion of social interaction and creativity.

Dance, as both an artistic and educational tool, fosters children's physical and mental development while enriching their free time (Stojiljković, N., Uzunović, S., & Stamenković, S. 2019).

Participating in sports during adolescence helps youth learn, think critically, solve problems, and develop a spirit of friendship, solidarity, fair play, teamwork, self-discipline, trust, responsibility, and respect for others. Sports also help young people manage stressful situations, integrating feelings of pain, fear, and loss (Unicef, 2004). Parents play a crucial role in encouraging children from an early age to participate in individual or group sports to develop personal and social competencies. While children are the primary focus, parents serve as guides, motivators, and responsible figures. Thus, the essence of preserving health and promoting active living through sports is crucial for both children and society.

5 DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S MUSICAL AND AESTHETIC POTENTIALS IN FREE TIME

As previously mentioned, free time not only influences the development of physical abilities, intellectual growth, and moral values, but also fosters creativity. The creative freedom individuals experience during their leisure time can serve as an educational tool. Emancipation, as the liberation of individuals or social groups from dependence, implies minimizing a child's subordination and dependence. This means that in education, freedom is not primarily focused on outcomes but on the process itself. In educational contexts, freedom plays a significant role, especially in promoting creative and aesthetic development (Knežević-Florić, 2005). Youth, as the primary carriers of societal progress, must engage in creative activities during their free time, allowing space for imagination, creativity, music, and art. Interestingly, music education in early grades equally impacts students' cognitive development: *"Playing, listening to, and creating music involve cognitive functions, emotional development due to the strong connection between music and emotions, and the social-psychomotor development of students"* (Denac, 2014).

Aesthetic education can be defined as the process of enabling individuals to understand, evaluate, experience, and create beauty in life, work, and art (Đorđević & Potkonjak, 1988). It

aims to develop competencies in perceiving, experiencing, and creating beauty, as well as cultivating an aesthetic relationship with reality and art (Stojanović, 2012). Music, in particular, has a profound impact on developing children's aesthetic abilities and inclinations toward creation. Whether through singing, playing instruments, or composing, engaging with music encourages creativity. Listening to music enables students to experience emotions, recognize character, and understand musical expressions, prompting them to evaluate and even create music themselves (Đorđević, 2008). Music education in primary schools, delivered through the subject of *Music Culture*, plays a vital role in aesthetic development. However, this aesthetic culture should extend beyond the classroom through activities like music clubs, attending concerts, and listening to music during leisure. Despite its importance, modern schooling remains predominantly focused on cognitive development, often neglecting the aesthetic dimensions of a child's personality. The significance of arts and music in primary schools is substantial, as demonstrated by the following research. According to *The Significance of Children's Folk Dances Accompanied by Singing in the Process of Music Tradition Conservation and Fostering* (Stojadinović, 2017), children's folk dances accompanied by singing in the lower classes of primary school, when presented in a way that connects with children's lives, have the potential to enhance their intellectual and ethical development by fostering joy and cultural understanding. Schools play a critical role in offering valuable folk music pieces that can counteract the negative influences of inappropriate media content.

According to Piaget's theory, the early manifestation of aesthetic activities is driven by a child's intrinsic need for creative expression and interaction with the environment. This need for self-expression, communication, and balancing the internal and external worlds does not end in preschool but continues throughout childhood (Grandić & Letić, 2009).

The primary focus should be on fostering creativity in children, as it triggers other developmental processes, ultimately achieving the goal of contemporary education: developing creative and critical thinking. Creativity can be nurtured in all children, albeit through different methods tailored to individual needs and interests. Motivation plays a crucial role in unlocking a child's potential, emphasizing the importance of various forms of artistic expression, including visual, literary, and vocal expression. Another form of emotional and creative expression is visual arts. In schools, this subject is known as *Art Culture*. The goal of art education is to develop creative abilities and aesthetic judgment. An effective aesthetic education program should encompass:

1. **Perception** of visual relationships,
2. **Production** of artistic works,
3. **Knowledge** and understanding of artistic objects, and
4. **Evaluation** of artistic creations (Milutinović, 2015).

Recognizing, experiencing, and creating beauty are central abilities children should develop. Therefore, during free time, children, accompanied by their parents, should visit galleries, view art, and participate in workshops involving sculpting, painting, and various other artistic activities. Additionally, literature introduces children to illustrated stories, whether fables, fairy tales, or musical compositions, enhancing their aesthetic development.

Music and visual arts are particularly suitable for fostering students' aesthetic abilities (Bojović, 2010). While they predominantly stimulate the ability to experience and understand beauty, they less frequently encourage the perception and creation of beauty. Thus, it is of great importance that through early education in music and visual arts, children get educated

through other art forms, as these fields intertwine and complement each other. In a pedagogical sense, *freedom* is the key concept associated with free time, while *culture* represents the creative expression through which individuals reshape and enrich the world with their spirit. Freedom connects and integrates culture and leisure. Cultural activities in free time not only contribute to rest and recreation but also play a significant role in personality development, fostering learning and a critical attitude toward the environment.

Although music education, literacy, and culture may not be decisive for academic or professional success, they significantly impact overall personality development. All children, regardless of musical talent, should engage with music during childhood. As Manasterioti (1978/1979) notes: "*Music is one of the most significant factors in the formation of a well-rounded personality*". By introducing children to music, we influence their holistic development, nurture their musical aesthetics, stimulate their emotions and imagination, and inspire creativity.

CONCLUSION

The demand for time is exceptionally high in modern society. Each individual seeks to have their own time while striving to realize their potential and nurture the gifts they carry within. This makes the topic of time utilization inevitable. The pedagogical potential of leisure time, as outlined here, offers diverse ways to utilize free time effectively. Consequently, both society and individuals are called upon to adopt a "modern" approach to learning how best to spend leisure time. Naturally, freedom of choice allows everyone to spend their time as they wish.

The pedagogical capacities of schools provide young people with opportunities to use their leisure time meaningfully through various clubs and extracurricular activities. The elements offered in this context include friendship and solidarity. Young individuals learn to work as a team, understanding the importance of support and mutual aid. This fosters friendships, understanding, and respect for others, enabling self-fulfillment in ways that not only offer pedagogical impact but also serve as excellent examples of how to avoid boredom. Furthermore, by promoting intellectual development, children and young people are provided with opportunities to spend their free time constructively, thereby avoiding potential societal crises. Someone who is highly deserving of credit here are the teachers. Teachers engage students in learning activities, to make them more active and energetic and keep them focused on a particular goal, and instill in them a sense of responsibility and autonomy as means for strengthening intrinsic motivation (Cenić, D., Petrović, J., & Cenić, S. 2018). When society and institutions fail to meet certain human needs, social crises emerge, making it crucial to prevent them. One significant means of crisis prevention is through moral education and the cultivation of ethical values. As mentioned earlier, although morality has evolved throughout history, its core remains—the awareness of others as neighbors and the understanding that a functioning society requires an internal moral compass. Consequently, moral upbringing during leisure time can be provided by all those surrounding children. This awareness of others underscores the importance of integrating individuals into society through sports activities and various other group endeavours. Recreation and sports, in this context, emerge as indispensable aspects of human development.

Sports during adolescence can have numerous positive effects on young people's development. Through participation, sports promote experiential learning, allowing youth to

acquire new skills, game rules, strategies, and techniques. Training and competition foster cognitive abilities such as planning, focus, problem-solving, and quick decision-making.

Critical thinking in sports encourages young athletes to analyze strategies, apply various techniques, evaluate performance, and find ways to improve. These analytical skills can be transferred to other life domains, such as education and career development. Problem-solving in sports introduces players to challenges requiring thoughtful solutions, teaching them to identify issues, evaluate strategies, and choose the best course of action. Such skills are invaluable for addressing broader life challenges. Not to be overlooked are the values of friendship, solidarity, self-discipline, and responsibility that sports foster. Creativity and imagination, particularly important for children and young people, also play a significant role. Imagination is a critical aspect of cognitive development, driving creative expression, innovation, and problem-solving. Thus, art and music education play a crucial role in nurturing children's imagination, with all forms of art interweaving and complementing one another.

These pedagogical potentials provide insight into how children can make the most of their free time, fostering well-rounded personal development. "The degree of a person's spiritual and material achievements during leisure time depends not only on their potential but also on what is possible under given circumstances. These possibilities are determined by numerous factors—individual, social, and natural" (Kačavenda-Radić et al., 2011). Among the spiritual potentials in schools is religious education, which offers children the opportunity to deepen their spiritual capacities alongside physical and intellectual skills, contributing to social integration. Religious education also addresses societal alienation by encouraging socialization and spiritual growth, helping individuals connect with themselves and others while fulfilling their spiritual aspirations.

In conclusion, numerous pedagogical potentials enable the comprehensive development of personality and the active utilization of leisure time. By leveraging these opportunities, individuals can achieve personal satisfaction and fulfillment in the best possible manner.

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PEDAGOŠKI POTENCIJALI SLOBODNOG VREMENA U KONTEKSTU RAZVOJA INTELEKTUALNIH, ETIČKIH I ESTETSKIH VREDNOSTI KOD UČENIKA OSNOVNIH ŠKOLA

Ovaj rad istražuje značaj slobodnog vremena u razvoju kreativnih, kognitivnih i estetskih potencijala dece. Slobodno vreme doprinosi fizičkom, intelektualnom i emocionalnom razvoju, s posebnim naglaskom na uticaj muzičkog i likovnog obrazovanja. Aktivnosti poput pevanja, sviranja, komponovanja i slikanja podstiču estetske sposobnosti, kreativnost i socijalne veštine. Takođe, vanškolske aktivnosti, poput sportskih sekcija, razvijaju timsku saradnju, moralne vrednosti i sposobnost rešavanja problema. U kontekstu prevencije društvenih kriza, slobodno vreme igra ključnu ulogu u izgradnji ličnosti deteta, omogućavajući mu da se uključi u društvo kroz različite oblike zajedničkog rada i društvene interakcije. Na kraju, rad zaključuje da slobodno vreme, kada se koristi na konstruktivan način, omogućava deci da razvijaju svoju celokupnu ličnost, stičući veštine koje će im omogućiti uspešan i ispunjen život.

Ključne reči: *slobodno vreme, pedagogija, kreativnost, moralno vaspitanje, kulturne aktivnosti, razvoj ličnosti.*