

THE PARADIGM OF EDUCATION THROUGH LEISURE ACTIVITIES IN THE BOARDING SCHOOL: TEACHER'S VIEWPOINTS

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Abstract. We often look at leisure time in different spheres of life by default and not so much importance. The aim of the paper is to consider and observe the views of boarding school teachers towards the paradigm of education through leisure activities in the boarding school. The obtained findings indicate that teachers perceive the importance of leisure activities, but that a large number of them estimate that there is not enough developed competence for the specific section they lead in the boarding school. When it comes to cooperation with colleagues in the direction of improving leisure time, the teachers' opinions are divided, where there are answers that reflect good cooperation, but there are also answers from teachers that suggest that cooperation is bad or non-existent.

Keywords: boarding school teacher; leisure activities; sections; education

Introduction

As individuals of the time, filled with a lot of content, we very often do not look at the segment of leisure time through the prism of importance, significance and special dedication. Many factors contribute to this behavior, because in times of anxiety and striving to satisfy (the) most basic needs, we usually forget who we are, what we strive for, what we love and/or want, are we satisfied with what we are doing, what would we change? Many questions arise before the individual of the postmodern world. In these matters, we mostly (un)consciously use the time that belongs only to us unconstructively. Tired of time filled with obligations, leisure time, more and more often, becomes a space that we fill with a passive rest from the abundance of obligations that we have to fulfill for the sake of functioning and survival. Where is the time for yourself? Where is the time for ourselves? Do we want it and/or other factors shape this situation? Do we know what activities we like and recognize in order to create time that remains only for ourselves? These questions remind us that we often forget and take for granted the aspect of leisure time. As the focus

of this research was placed on education through leisure activities in the boarding school, it is clear to us that it is about the institutional aspect of leisure time and the life of students in a collective. Boarding schools significantly influence the process of socialization of students, because they live in such an environment where it is impossible not to establish and build social relationships (Vidaković 2018). Therefore, this way of life implies functioning in smaller and larger groups, where each educational group has its own leader - a teacher. An important feature is lifelong learning and education of pedagogical workers, which researchers pay attention to (Coolahan 2002; Horvat & Lapat 2012; Aleandri & Refrigeri 2014). Also, for the purpose of successful educational practice, teachers are more and more often referred to as reflective practitioners. „A reflexive practitioner is an active individual who explores the possibility of solving problems in practice and is characterized by a reflexive openness that occurs in situations when we are willing to question our own opinion. All of this leads us to the conclusion that educational practice, regardless of how convincing and well-conceived it is, is constantly subject to review and improvement“ (Maksimović 2017, p. 17). Considering the modern tasks to which teachers in the boarding school should respond, the role and importance of teachers is extremely important, both in other pedagogical segments and in the pedagogical segment of leisure time (Ješić 2008; Milanović 2020; Milanović & Stevanović 2020). The authors believe that teachers should work on improving their own skills needed to lead sections and introduce other content in their leisure time, upgrade their competencies, cooperate with colleagues and the local community in this sphere. Since leisure time in everyday life is often viewed from a certain distance, this work will try to consider the aspect of leisure time within an educational institution and present the views of teachers on the paradigm of education through leisure activities.

Methodological research

The aim of this research is to consider and observe the views of boarding school teachers towards the paradigm of education through leisure activities in boarding school. The following research tasks were formulated: to examine the opinions of boarding school teachers about education through leisure activities in the boarding school and their competences in this sphere; to examine whether, from the teachers' perspective, higher education institutions that train pedagogical staff, if they do not have them, should have a compulsory subject Pedagogy of leisure time and/or some other teaching subject that deals with the same topic; to examine which sections the teachers lead in the boarding school; investigate whether boarding school teacher have the competencies to lead those sections; examine whether teachers cooperate with the local community for the purpose of better organization of students' leisure time; to examine how teachers evaluate cooperation with colleagues in the direction of improving leisure time. A descriptive method and surveying and scaling techniques were applied. By using the literature in this

field, an instrument was created – a survey questionnaire with an assessment scale. The research is of an empirical character. The data were processed in the statistical package SPSS 21. The sample consists of 64 boarding school teachers, 43 (67.2%) female and 21 (32.8%) male. Teachers with up to nine years of experience participated, 18.8%; from ten to nineteen years of service 57.8%; twenty and more than twenty years of service 23.4%.

Research results

The opinions of boarding school teachers about education through leisure activities in the boarding school and their competences in this sphere.

On the Likert-type rating scale, teachers expressed their opinions and offered statements about the educational dimension of leisure activities. Mostly, a large number of teachers agree with the statement that leisure activities can contribute to the education of students, building their individuality and critical outlook ($M=4.70$). The concept of leisure activities should have an educational effect and can be directly and/or indirectly aimed at students' critical thinking, while it is necessary to cover various social topics that can encourage students to think. Teachers also highly evaluate the claim described that students strengthen social relationships within groups through well-prepared leisure activities. A slightly smaller, but definitely positively oriented, mean value was calculated for the statement that points out that leisure activities at boarding school can help in the aspect of students' professional orientation ($M=4.34$). Therefore, teachers in leisure activities should use the space to direct students' potential for certain professions and activities, through which they help students to see themselves more broadly and objectively and build a self-image. As teachers are an essential person who should occupy this time with useful content, competences are needed for the organization of leisure time within institutional education. Teachers self-assess that 62.5% have the competence to organize and realize leisure time, 32.8% cannot state with certainty that they are fully competent and 4.7% of teachers state that they have not acquired competence in this sphere. The acquired competencies were evaluated more positively by female teachers than by male teachers. Many authors today focus on permanent learning and the empowerment of pedagogical staff, and considering the importance of permanent learning through our research, we can point out that it is the basis for successful practice, a greater choice and better quality of leisure activities and the professional progress of teachers.

Teachers' opinions on the fact that higher education institutions that educate teaching staff, if they do not have them, should introduce a compulsory course in the curriculum, Pedagogy of leisure time and/or some other teaching subject that focuses on this area

The presented results show that 96.9% of boarding school teachers answered that they fully agree that higher education institutions that educate teaching staff, if they

do not have them, should introduce a compulsory subject Pedagogy of leisure time and/or some other teaching subject that focuses places on this important area, while only 3.1% answered no. With an open question, teachers had the opportunity to explain their own opinion. In addition to emphasizing the importance of this subject and other subjects dealing with this topic, they mostly stated that it is necessary, during formal and informal education, to offer clear ideas on how to organize time at boarding school with students. As one of the roles of pedagogical workers is to be innovators, this means that in the sphere of leisure time they search and find innovative ideas that they will apply. Students are a wealth of creative and original ideas, and their participation should be respected. In this context, teachers suggested that it would be useful for them to have modern handbooks for boarding school teachers that would have suggestions for specific activities that they can carry out with high school students in their leisure time. Some of the teachers' answers were that in addition to higher education institutions, teaching subjects dealing with this topic should also be introduced in primary and secondary schools, because students do not know how to fill their leisure time with good content. We can agree with the teacher's attitude and suggestion, because more and more often students are at a loss to fill their own time that is available to them. One of the teachers' answers to this topic was, *„the world rests on young people, so they need to be taught not to deviate from the path and to engage in some sport or art, in order to develop themselves“*. We can agree with this comment of the interviewed teacher, but in order for young people not to deviate from the right path and to engage in some activity, they must have developed habits and views towards it. Therefore, young people must have adults in their environment who are aware of good and bad influences and should develop habits for healthy use of leisure time.

Teachers' opinions about sections in the boarding school

In practice, sections are often synonymous with leisure time in the boarding school, so we tried to ask the boarding school teachers to state the name of the section that they implement in the student's boarding school as one of the ways of spending leisure time and leisure activities.

12.5% of boarding school teachers answered that they run a drama section at boarding school, 3.1% stated that they run an English language club, 6.3% answered that they run a journalistic-informatics section with students, 7.8% run a creative section, 6.3% lead modern dance, 12.5% lead a music section in the boarding school, 4.7% a chess section, 7.8% lead a folklore section, 18.6% lead a football section, 14.1% lead table tennis, while 6.3% realize the basketball section in the boarding school. Therefore, based on the obtained results, we can see that every interviewed teacher in the boarding school organizes and implements a certain section. Also, we can see that there are widespread sports sections, cultural and artistic sections, sections concerning technique and technology, as well as educational sections, such as the English language club. The correlation between gender and teachers' opinions

about the sections they lead with students is statistically significant and negative ($C = -0.47$; $p = 0.00$), which means that female teachers more often state that they implement cultural and artistic sections in the boarding schools than male teachers who more often mention sports sections.

Teachers' opinions about having competencies for the section they implement in the boarding school

As the previous question listed and presented an overview of the sections that the teachers lead, the next question required that the teachers state whether they have the appropriate competencies for the section that they implement in the boarding school. Based on the results, we can see that 20.3% of boarding school teachers answered that they completely agree with the statement that they have the appropriate competencies for the section that they implement in the boarding school, 18.8% answered that they agree, 7.8% of teachers are undecided, 34.4% stated that they did not agree and 18.7% of boarding school teachers indicated that they did not agree at all. Therefore, about half of the respondents stated that they do not agree and do not agree at all with the statement about whether they have the appropriate competences for leading and implementing sections in the student's boarding school. This distribution of answers leads us to the assumption that the lack of knowledge and skills of teachers to implement the section probably affects the quality of leisure activities in the boarding schools. The incompetence of teachers can be reflected in the lower response of students and their non-involvement in boarding school sections. When asked how they would describe their ability to manage sections, the teachers answered with an open question:

„After the retirement of my colleague, I took over the music section, even though I have no vocal abilities and have never been involved in music, nor did I sing in the school choir. Regardless, I try to make our section work well. We have children who play music and sing beautifully and we hang out together and cheer others up with songs. The number of students for the music section increases every year, which makes me very happy“.

„I know English very well, so I have no problem with leading the section. Mostly the members of the section are children who already know English well or want to learn it, but my goal is to include more children who need to improve their English“.

„I graduated from the Faculty of Sports and I have good competences for the sports section. I introduce interesting sports games so that the students have fun. Although I am in the football section, we also play other sports such as basketball, volleyball and handball. I think it is important that we constantly emphasize how important sports are for health“.

„I lead a section for which I have neither knowledge nor skills. More experienced colleagues help me. I started working almost, so I'm still managing all the boarding school activities“.

„My colleague and I are leaders of the drama section in the boarding school. I have no acting experience. In primary school I took part in performances, but after that I never did. I have a lot of anxiety. My colleague is great at this. I help her and we enjoy all the gatherings. I think we are running this section well. We also won the first places at Domijada“.

„The chess section fell to me to lead. I like to play chess, but it's not the same to play chess and lead a section. It is much more demanding to teach students to play this game“.

„I read a lot about the section I lead and study. I am always prepared for the section and I try not to let the students notice that my competences in this section are very weak“.

„I am not great about my role in running the section. I think I have to put in a lot of effort to make the section more successful“.

„I don't know if I have the knowledge for my section. I have and I don't. I was thinking of withdrawing from that section somehow. I was scared when we started preparing for a city competition, but as we won two first places and one second place in different categories, I got the wind behind me to continue working with students“.

„I don't have any knowledge, expertise or competence. Very often in the section we only talk about everyday problems and life. Students who know play, while others sit and listen to their performance“.

„In the boarding school, I was hired for the folklore section. I only know one game. I am lucky that in my section I have four female students and two male students who have been playing folklore since they were little, so they lead the way. I also learn from them“.

When we consider the answers given by the teachers, we notice that for many of them, the sections they lead are not their strong point, but that despite their weaknesses and lack of knowledge, they try to occupy the students. Systemically, it is necessary to pay attention to this segment within the educational domain of the functioning of the boarding school and work on empowering this staff so that, if they do not have competencies, they get the opportunity to improve them. Certainly, the good will and desire of the teacher can overcome the lack of knowledge of the characteristics of that section and, through active learning and familiarization, influence the good quality of the section. The findings show that 64.1% of teachers most often spend their leisure time at boarding school with students implementing the section, while 35.9% the teacher often initiates and realizes other activities besides the section. The analyzed results show that male teachers more often stated that they spend their leisure time with students, including other activities, than female boarding school teachers ($\chi^2=12.820$; $df=1$; $p=0.00$). The results of the research (Milanović & Stevanović 2020) show that the students estimate that the sections are the most dominant aspect of the organization of leisure time and the students suggest that teachers should be more interested and dedicated to the section. Therefore, teachers and students should use

the potential of the boarding school purposefully, because they have leisure time in front of them that they can fill with good will, original ideas and joint participation.

Cooperation of boarding school teachers with the local community

In the direction of success and enrichment of the aspect of leisure time, cooperation with the local community is an important factor. „The local community is a dynamic category whose basic elements are in constant interaction. In addition to the school, a large number of different social groups, organizations and institutions participate in the life of the local community, such as: local government institutions, social and private enterprises, medical and social protection institutions, cultural institutions, various social organizations, non-governmental organizations, the media, religious institutions, informal groups of citizens, etc.“ (Pavlović 2002, p. 177). Therefore, the spectrum is institutions and institutions within the local community with which teachers can establish and maintain cooperation in the direction of improving leisure time. Therefore, the question that was asked to the boarding school teachers was to indicate whether they cooperate with the local community when organizing and implementing leisure time. The obtained findings show that 73.4% of boarding school teachers answered that when organizing and implementing leisure time, including the implementation of sections, they cooperate with the local community, while 26.6% stated that they do not cooperate with the local community. Those who cooperate with the local community describe that the cooperation is reflected in buying and/or getting tickets for theater performances, movies in cinemas, visiting institutions, cooperation with the school of acting, ballet and folkloric societies, cooperation with other schools, visiting events that take place, and they are useful for students. Also, one group of teachers cites cooperation with the Red Cross and the local center for social work, where they occasionally hold forums and lectures on certain educational topics. They also mention cooperation with doctors who have so far held lectures on topics related to narcotics, addiction and youth sexuality. These types of cooperation are an extremely good example of how, in practice, cooperation with the local community should be nurtured and its potential used in educational work. Those teachers who answered that they do not cooperate state that they do not have time, that they contact certain institutions, but that they are not always willing to cooperate, as well as that they do not have the support of their colleagues to initiate and establish this type of cooperation.

How do you describe cooperation with colleagues in the aspect of improving leisure activities?

From collaboration with colleagues, teachers can find inspiration and ideas for different activities. Together they can consider ideas and try to put them into practice. Colleagues can also be good critics in order to consider and supplement the activity proposal with their own ideas and/or give an opinion on certain contents in their leisure time. Therefore, teachers stated how they describe cooperation with colleagues in the aspect of improving leisure activities. Some of the answers are as follows:

„Cooperation is good. The atmosphere is great in the home”.

„The team is colorful. We mostly agree”.

98% of my colleagues do not accept my proposals. It is very difficult to work with people where you know in advance that you will encounter a negative comment”.

„The director is a wonderful woman. She pays a lot of attention to well-planned free time with students. Always supports good ideas and student engagement”.

„I work with older colleagues who are not very interested. They don't want to get involved. There is a lot of jealousy when I do something new with the students”.

„I have good communication with my colleagues when we need to organize an activity”.

„I just started working and I see that the students look forward to every new game I introduce. Some colleagues support me, while others do not accept my ideas and games”.

„All of them are somehow competitively determined. When the time comes for Domijada, I have the feeling that it is more important to my colleagues who will win which place than to the students. They don't look at the event from the side of socializing, they only talk about victories and awards”.

„I am the person who leads discussions, organizes visits, and runs the program of all the events that take place in the home.” I have a few colleagues that I can rely on and who are always there to help, while others are always looking for objections and weaknesses in all these activities”.

„Cooperation with male and female colleagues is superficial. They are disinterested”.

„Cooperation is bad and interpersonal relations are bad. I don't like the collective”.

„Sometimes cooperation is good, sometimes not. I think it depends on the proposal and the colleagues who propose it. We cooperate when we all have to be involved, this is how everyone runs their section”.

From the quoted answers of the teachers, we can see different views on the aspect of cooperation with colleagues in the direction of improving leisure activities in the boarding school. While one group of teachers believes that cooperation is good, there is a larger number of those who state that the relationship and communication between colleagues is not at an enviable level. Certainly, the mutual relationship of colleagues should not affect the quality of educational work. Teachers must improve their relationship with their colleagues and interact with them professionally.

Conclusion

As teachers are one of the primary leaders in the high school dormitory, in this paper we have considered and presented their views on the paradigm of education through leisure activities. Teachers estimate that in the process of formal and

informal education, they acquired appropriate competencies in the sphere of leisure time. All the interviewed teachers are involved in leading certain sections in the boarding school, but mostly, they estimate that they do not have the competence to run certain sections. Therefore, teachers assess competences for the organization and realization of leisure time, but they lack the skills needed for certain sections they lead (eg music, drama and others). When it comes to the inclusion of other content in their leisure time, 35.9% of teachers often initiate and organize other activities in their leisure time in addition to sections. Cooperation with the local community is considered an important factor and as many as 73.4% of teachers cooperate with the local community in the direction of organization and implementation of sections and/or other leisure activities in the boarding school. The results show that teachers' opinions about cooperation with colleagues in the direction of improving leisure time are divided. Based on the obtained results, we can agree that formal and informal forms of teacher training should include the aspect of their preparation for leading certain sections. As all the interviewed teachers answered that they lead a section in the boarding school and that there are many who are not competent to answer the tasks of the section, it is necessary to approach overcoming this problem. Therefore, the phenomenon of permanent education of pedagogical workers is the basis of a good process of upbringing and education, where their strengths must be directed towards acquiring additional competencies needed for the section they lead. A little more than a third of teachers, in addition to sections, are also involved in the organization of other leisure activities. If teachers assess their incompetence for the section they lead and do not work to include other content, the space of leisure time becomes neglected and subject to serious risk. Therefore, it is necessary to enrich the content of leisure time at boarding school so that students can be empowered, develop healthily, have fun and actively rest. The teacher's answers to the open-ended questions indicate that the idea of future research can be directed towards the cooperation of teachers with colleagues in the direction of improving leisure time, as well as teacher's suggestions for more successful implementation of sections. A significant contribution to this problem would be made by research that would deal with the participative role of parents in their leisure time at boarding school, whereby the process of partnership between the family and the student's boarding school would be strengthened. Teachers should continuously work on creating a boarding school as a unique place, positively occupied and enriched with pleasantness and various contents, in which the life of young people will develop smoothly and prepare them for the roles ahead.

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