

MUSICAL INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES IN CHILDREN'S LEISURE TIME IN HUNGARY AND BULGARIA

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ABSTRACT

Beneficial use of leisure time is extremely important as it helps to expand the horizons for intellectual growth, emotional experiences, and personal enrichment. The aim of this study is to establish the interests and needs for music in children's leisure time. Music is very close to the emotional nature of children and therefore could stimulate and develop their mental and physical abilities. This report focuses on the place of music and art in students' life and discusses how much of their free time is taken up with these pursuits. It also analyses the needs of such activities. Here the results from a study in which children between 9 to 17 years of age from Bulgaria and Hungary took part are presented. The type of musical activities preferred by the children in their leisure time and the correlation between the activities of choice and cultural differences are also studied. Understanding what music activities children favour in their leisure time is important because learning combined with the arts builds long lasting social skills and educates on tolerance, creativity and discipline. This combination when used in work with children, helps children to develop ability for better self-expression, building up confidence, concentration, integration in the group, developing imagination, recognizing the good and beautiful, and increases their chances for success in life.

Keywords: music, musical interests, needs of music, musical activities, leisure time, adolescents

INTRODUCTION

Man's leisure time is the subject of research of different scientific fields. *Sociology* examines leisure time as an indicator that measures people lifestyles. *Economics* explores leisure time as a basic part of budget time and as an alternative to the "working time". *Psychology* studies the personal attitude to leisure time and the emotions that people experience during leisure time activities and what are their personal senses of the passage of time in particular. *History* researches the development of different forms of spending leisure time as part of culture on a global scale. *Ethnography* studies the ethnic, cultural and lifestyle characteristics of the nations' life. In this context, it describes how different ethnicities use their

leisure time. *Medicine* and *sciences* related to physical exercise and sport, especially sport tourism and the entertainment industry, are interested in providing best conditions for healthy lifestyle, emotional stability and entertainment during leisure time. *Statistics* is also relevant to leisure time, especially when presenting different aspects of leisure time as a quantity of its characteristics such as magnitude and number of activities. *Linguistics* helps to solve some serious problems with the names of leisure time activities. *Art* also reflects the phenomenon of leisure time. Note that often leisure time can be interpreted as a story line in art works because it is part of the people's lifestyle (Popov, 2010, p. 13-17).

All this shows that the science attaches great importance to leisure time. It is an essential part of people's lifestyle. In the past decades researchers demonstrated increasing interest in activities that occupy people's spare time because by studying these they can understand the living standard of the society. At the same time other people do not realize how essential it is to spend leisure time efficiently for their personal development. They take it as time to „waste“.

There has been increased attention to leisure time and its educational value. This gave rise to the formation of a new branch of pedagogy – Pedagogy of leisure time or “pedagogization” of the leisure time. „In modern times there is a need for »pedagogization« of different aspects of every-day life and the need for specialized educational institutions. In this context, unlike all other sciences, the subject of pedagogy of leisure time is how rationally to conduct leisure time. In this sense we can talk about »pedagogization« of leisure time as a subject. In this definition, the subject – the rational use of leisure time should be understood as a conscious effort of social and individual factors for contributing to such organization and self-organization of leisure time in which it has a formative value for the individual“ (Popov, 2010, p. 17).

Thinking in this direction and analyzing the research of other scholars, one can conclude that leisure time is loaded with humanistic meaning. Sensible and appropriate use of leisure time is embodied in the concept of a number of authors. Leisure time can have two faces. It provides the opportunity for education, intellectual development, building up social contacts, personal development and on the other hand it may provoke destructive emotions, activities that destroy personality, aggression and violence towards other individuals or objects. These “harmful” for society activities are object of increased attention and impose “pedagogization” of leisure time.

As regards to children it is essential to educate them how to use their leisure time adequately. “When defining »spare time« of students one should keep in mind that they still do not have professional commitment and attend school and do mandatory training. Therefore their free time is part of the general budget of time that remains outside academic work, the journey to school, self-service, participation in the household and some forms of work and assistance at home, care for elderly, children or ill relatives, sleep, meals and physiological needs” (Boyadjieva, 2009, p. 5).

Extracurricular educational activities play an important role in achieving positive results and meeting children's spiritual needs in their leisure time. According

to G. Atanasov (1996) extracurricular educational activity is a social phenomenon, which to a large degree:

1. Forms values and attitudes to help fast adaptation of growing up children to the dynamically changing social environment;
2. Creates conditions for team activities and communication;
3. Provides opportunities for personal expression and self-development;
4. Generates conditions for preventive and corrective action. (Atanasov, 1996, p. 59).

Therefore it is crucial that parents, educational institutions and society as a whole promote and implement the realization of activities which support the social, cultural, creative and communication education of children in their leisure time. Such activities can be extracurricular educational activities using different arts.

The educational role of the arts is widely accepted in the Reforming Pedagogy. Pedagogues – reformers “aim to educate well-rounded, creative thinking and active persons acting through a special system of education in which art occupies a significant and in many cases, central part” (Boyadjieva, 1991, p. 65). Pedagogues – reformers are theorists who based on their experience created the concept of art education and education for *didactic craft* or *art and education through art*. In other words art could be used as a tool for education.

Undoubtedly pedagogues – reformers use successfully the educative force of arts in the learning process with children applying various artistic activities such as poetry, drama, modelling, painting, crafts, dance, music and many more. “Construction of moral and society virtue, overall shaping of a child’s personality and reeducation rely on art” (Boyadjieva, 1991, p. 63).

“Education in the arts is also widely used in learning-free time. Meaningful free time activities for children are walks, visits to museums, cinemas, and the central position occupied by holidays that combine elements of work, physical and aesthetic education” (Boyadjieva, 1991, p. 41). There is a perceived importance of the beneficial use of leisure time for the development of children’s personal qualities.

The educational movement *through art* became popular at the beginning of our century due to the rise and achievements of the new Psychology and particularly in relation to research on emotions – their overall importance in life and essential role in volitional activities (Boyadjieva, 1992, p. 64). Arts have an important supporting and educational role in our life and this was true not only over the past years but also today when man is easily amenable to the increased consumerism and destructive behavior.

Music is one of the arts that acts as a powerful stimulant for intellectual development of the personality. „Music is an artistic reflection of the reality in the form of sound. It is characterised by its specific sound emotional expressiveness and intonation imagery. The emotional power of music comprehensively affects people’s spiritual life. As an art it perhaps more than any other art has the capacity to recreate human feelings and experiences with their nuances and emotional tones, approve various thoughts, ideas, processes and phenomena through its specific sound emotional expressiveness, following its internal constructive logic.

All this leads to specific cognitive and social-influential role of music as socialized by the person's artistic and aesthetic values" (Takvoryan, 1998, p. 20).

Music does not only affect human emotions and reflect feelings and experiences. Many researchers are interested in its ability to support the development of perception, memory, language skills, vocabulary and verbal skills, maths skills, intellectual development, creativity, development of personal and social skills, physical development and health. Active engagement with music may also affect many other children's activities.

The variety of positive effects of musical activities in human development is not a subject of this study. This was investigated in my previous study on the topic „Integration of music in the education of children during the summer extracurricular activities" - published in the book of International Conference *Art and Education – Traditions and Modernity*, October 2014, Plovdiv, Bulgaria. However it is important to emphasize the many aspects of music important for children's development.

At this stage it is considered that the use of music and musical activities in the process of education contributes to young people's emotional, social and cognitive development. Aristotle and Plato regarded music as a powerful educational tool. It has an „impact on the moral world of man, educates and creates certain psychological moods" (Kolev, 1998, p. 64). As music is everywhere – in us, in nature, in society, then it is quite normal and appropriate to be a part of the daily life and used as educational tool. In summary of the above we can say that music has an impact on human development and it is important to emphasize that musical activities in leisure time positively support children's personal development.

Several professional music teachers developed reformist ideas on how to translate *practicing music* into a *positive impact* on children's daily life. Over the years, they impose their ideas into practice in the field of music education and music pedagogy. Their work provides very favorable results for the upbringing and development of children. These ideas gained worldwide fame and are now practiced all over the world . Their work is of high scientific and practical value, attracts attention not only in specialists in the field of Music Pedagogy, but also in teachers and parents who are interested and willing to work with their children through music. They have followers today, who not only keep their ideas and methods of working with children through musical activities, but also practising and developing them in their work.

Among pedagogues – reformers of music, names such as Zoltan Kodaly, Karl Orff, Emile-Jacques Dalkroz, Shinichi Suzuki stand out, as well as their followers: Klara Kokas, Katalin Forrai, Gunild Keetman, Sofia Lopez – Ibor, Doug Goodkin, prof. Veronica Cohen, Edwin E. Gordon and many others. The list of followers of the reformers in Music Pedagogy is impressively long. Many teachers around the world appreciate the favorable and beneficial impact of musical activities for children's development and implement innovative ideas, methods, techniques where music is involved in their practice. It is often that combination of methods from different authors is used in practice and techniques are selected in a way that they complement each other and support teacher's work.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the study is to investigate: (1) how much children are interested in music? (2) Does their leisure time include any musical activities?; The research presented here aims to provide answers to questions such as: (3) How much is music involved in the everyday life of children? (4) Are they willing to engage in musical activities?; It is interesting to investigate (5) what is their attitude to different arts, sports and self-organized extracurricular activities?

The theme of children's occasions of musical activities in their leisure time is my main/ basic/ principal focus of research. This article is a continuation of research on what place and part music takes in children's everyday life and whether they have an interest in musical activities or activities with other arts in their leisure time. In a previous study are examined the attitude to music and music related activities of children in Bulgaria. The results were published in *Interests in music and need for it in the free time of adolescents*, The International Conference *Contemporary challenges to educational theory and practice*, June 2014, Sofia, Bulgaria. Participants in the study were 130 children, ages between 15 and 17 years. Here are presented results on children's interest in music collected in Hungary. The data from Hungary was compared to those from Bulgaria.

The focus of the current study is preferences for music activities of children in Hungary. Hungary is chosen because it is the home country of world-famous reformer in Music Pedagogy – Zoltan Kodaly. Z. Kodaly's method is used in the curricula of general schools (not only music schools). It is not intended only for professional musicians but for every child, which makes the method unique. Z. Kodaly's technique makes music accessible to everyone.

Jean Sinor said that "Those who have had the opportunity to put into practice some of Kodaly's ideas realize that his is a pedagogy of harmony: harmony between music and the child. The role of the teacher is to understand better both the nature of music and the nature of the child in order that he can provide those experiences which allow music and children to touch one another so that the harmony can happen".

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants in the study were 238 children, ages between 9 and 17 years (7.9% were under age of 10 years, 46.7% were between 11 and 13 years and 45.4% were between 14 and 17 years). The children are from three different schools located in Budapest (Hungary) – Pécsi Sebestyén Music Primary School, Lonyay Utcai Reformatus Gimnázium es Kollegium and Bolgár Nyelvoktató Nemzetségi Iskola. 136 girls and 102 boys were interviewed. Using a questionnaire were investigated favorite activities of students in their leisure time. The questionnaire included questions related to different activities performed during their leisure time, such as reading books and visiting art galleries, theater, concert, music club, watching television, film, radio, and also sports activities and attending the various art disciplines. For the purposes of this study, questions and answers related to music

and musical activities were analysed. The results are presented in this article.

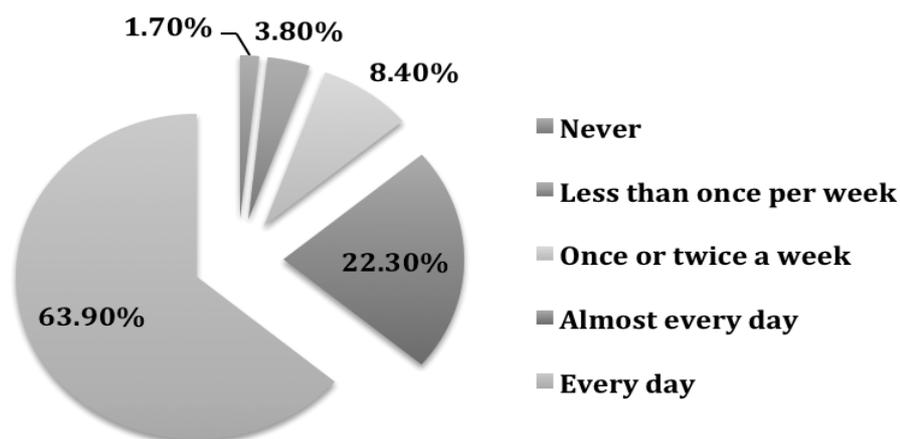
Methods of study: Descriptive – analysis of the literature in the field of Pedagogy of leisure time, Music Pedagogy, Music Psychology, Music Education; Empirical – questionnaire based survey to research leisure time activities, summary and analysis of results. The questionnaire (composed by Nely Boyadjieva - Psycho-pedagogy of leisure time in the middle and upper school age) aims to collect information on the choice of leisure time activities of students and spending it effectively. Questions related to preferences to arts and music specifically were of interest in the current study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

“Musical interest” is an expression, widely used in works on the empirical study of the cultural level of listeners and their orientation towards one or another type and genre of music. In general “musical interest” is understood as a realization of the need for music and the conscious choice of the type of musical work to listen to (Burlina, 1989, p. 130).

The data obtained from the survey showed that 63.9% of the students took part in listening to music every day, 22.3% - almost every day, 8.4 % - once or twice a week, 3.8% - less than once a week and 1.7% never listen to music (Figure 1). The same percentage distribution was observed between boys and girls suggesting that there is no difference between genders at this age. This demonstrates that music is part of children’s lifestyle. Only a small percentage of the children do not listen intentionally to music, therefore we could say that they are not engaged in any kind of musical activity.

Fig. 1. How often do you listen to music in your spare time at home?



Source: own chart.

How much of their leisure time children spend for musical entertainment? 15.1% of the participants visit music/disco club at less than once a week, 9.7% - once or twice a week and 1.3% - every day. The majority of the children (73.1%) do

not go to music/disco club. This could be explained by the young age of the students. Only 25% of the participants are of suitable age (teenagers) and could supposedly visit these places of entertainment. However, more often the children attend cinema, theater, concerts, exhibitions (71.4 % of respondents answered positively). I observed that the adolescents prefer to spend their leisure time communicating with acquaintances, meeting friends and informal groups. 41.6 % of the respondents meet friends every day and 23.9 % almost every day.

To the question *How often are you engaged in art (including dance, painting, photography, theater school, etc.)?*, percentage distribution of the responses about the frequency of activity is as follows: for arts most of children spend time once or twice a week – 22.3%, 21.4% - less than once a week, 15.1% - almost every day, 17.6% are engaged every day with art and 23.5% are not involved in art activities. The analysis showed that nearly 33% of respondents actively do arts, 45% do not do art often, while 23.5% are not engaged in arts in their spare time at all. The suggested that the interest in this type of activities is relatively low. However, the most preferred art related activities among Hungarian children are as follows: cinema (55.9%), arts (38.7%), dance (24.8%), but affinity to other arts also has a high rating among children – theater and literature are equally preferred by children (with 22.7%), computer animation (21%), circus arts (13%), music (11.8%), photography (2.5%). A low percentage of interest in musical arts was observed. I compared this result to my previously published data with Bulgarian children. They preferred: cinema (55.4%), dance (37.7%), theater (26.9%), computer animation (26.9%), fiction (24.6%), visual arts (22.3%), circus arts (9.2%) and music (6.2%) (Table 1). I noticed that only a small percentage of the children in both groups prefer musical art among the others. Nevertheless according to the responses to the question: *How often do you listen to music in your spare time at home?*, it seems that listening to music is the most preferred leisure activity at home (total 86.2% of the children daily or almost daily listen to music).

Table 1. Activities in children's leisure time in Hungary and Bulgaria.

Activities in children's leisure time	Hungarian children	Bulgarian children
Cinema	55.9%	55.4%
Arts	38.7%	22.3%
Dance	24.8%	37.7%
Theater	22.7%	24.6%
Literature	22.7%	24.6%
Computer animation	21.0%	26.9%
Circus arts	13.0%	9.2%
Music	11.8%	6.2%
Photography	2.5%	0.0%

Source: Own chart.

Children shared the opinion that the most common reasons that stimulate them to do arts are: they enjoy it (44.1%), for entertainment (34%), they discover new things about life (29.8%), they have friends with similar interests (10.1%).

It is noteworthy that more than half of surveyed children (66%) are engaged in various activities in their leisure time (outside school time and homework preparation). The girls are twice more likely to do so than the boys. Activities preferred by children in their free time are: sport (26.9%), musical instrument lessons, musical theory (20.6%), dancing (10.9%), language lessons (9.2%), drama (2.5%), arts (2.5%), singing (2.1%), playing games (1.3%). These activities are practiced by the girls as well the boys. Some of the activities are preferred by one or other gender.

The analysis revealed that both groups (boys or girls and Bulgarian or Hungarian) of children are interested in sports. There is a wide variety of sports activities that children like: waterpolo, volleyball, gymnastics, swimming, basketball, football, hockey, handball, running, badminton, horse riding, tennis, athletics, gymnastics, aerobics. Overall, the boys showed greater interest in sports, activities with a computer, computer and television games, language lessons and acting than the girls. The girls prefer to play a musical instruments, paint, sing, dance, act and read books. It was evident that both – boys and girls play a musical instruments, among which the most preferred are: piano, flute, oboe, cello, violin, guitar, horn, trumpet and percussion. It is important to note that the majority of the children who took part, study in music school. It is interesting that students who study in other schools also play musical instruments. Although the number of these children is relatively small compared to the total number of participants, the result showed that interest in music is not necessarily related to the type of education children receive.

Both genders at their own wish are attracted to recreational activities, irrespective of whether they are initiated by themselves or organized by the school. On the reasons for visiting different types of disciplines (except the ones organized by the school) children share the following grounds: the activity itself (45.4%), atmosphere (33.2%), communicating and meeting new people (25.2%). A characteristic of adolescents is their desire to communicate and satisfy their need for contacts with others of their age. This is shown by the questionnaire results – as a reason for inclusion in the activities organized by the school the highest percentage of respondents pointed out entertainment (57.1%) followed by communicating and meeting with supporters and friends (33.2%) and the activity itself (37.4%).

The main reasons preventing 32.7% of the children to attend some discipline (language, sport, dance, art, drama) are: lack of suitable disciplines (15.5%); lack of interest (13.0%); financial reasons (4.2%).

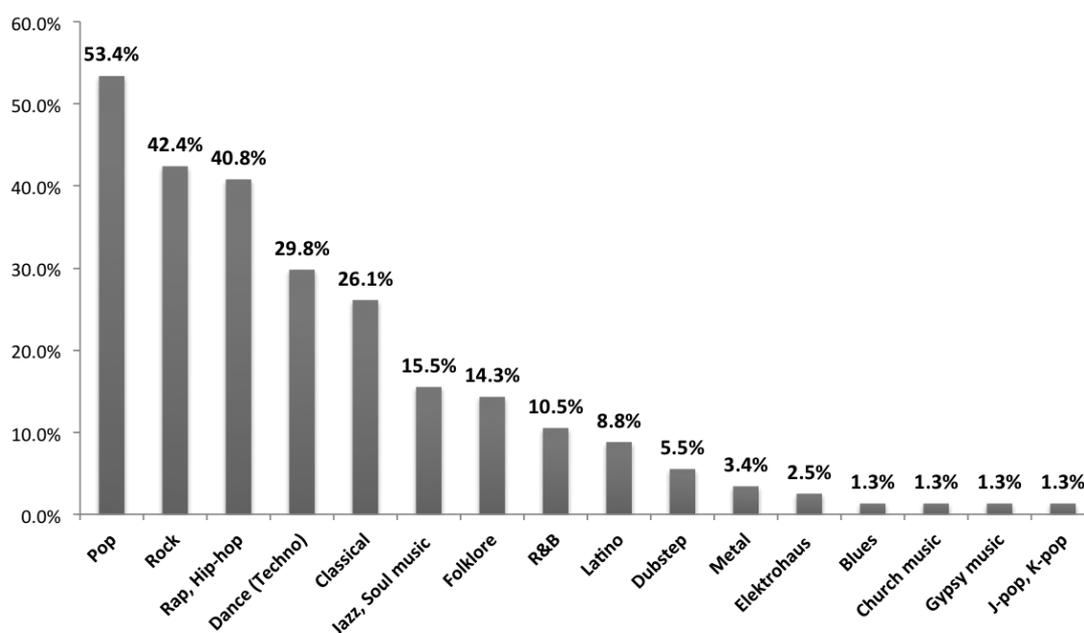
Watching television is also among the favorite childrens' leisure time activities. Most of the children (40.3%) watched television "between 1 and 2 hours a day" followed by "half an hour" answered by 24.8%. Preferences for types of television program are: feature films (70.2%), sports (58%), entertainment (44.5%), documentary (35.7%), series (34.5%), music (26.9%), games (18.5%), children's programmes (16.4%), shows (8%). It is noted that the girls have highr interest in music programmes (70% of the girls) and then rank shows, feature films, series, entertainment, children's and documentary/scientific programmes. The boys are mainly interested in scientific and sports programmes.

Unlike watching music shows, listening to music is a popular activity among the children. All of the listed ways/devices and places where children listen to

music received high percentage of preference. Listening to music is happening in various ways and at different places: the most preferred place is “at home” (76.1%), followed by “at friend’s home” (35.3%), “at live concert” (24.8%) “in a club” (12.2%). The most preferred ways are “on my computer while browsing the internet” (73.5%) and “on my phone, on my audio player” (45.4%).

The children listen to variety of music styles. Most preferred one among teenagers is pop music – 53.4%, rock music is next – 42.4% followed by rap and hip-hop styles (40.8 %), dance (techno) music with 29.8 %, classical music was preferred by 26.1% of respondents, jazz, soul music are 15.5% and 14.3% prefer folk music. R&B music with 10.5% and Latin music with 8.8% occupy the last positions. In “other styles” the children include blues, church music, gypsy music, J-pop, K-pop, dubstep – 5.5%, metal - 3.4%, elektrohaus - 2.5%. Probably gypsy music is not a surprising choice as it is very popular and typical musical culture in the country. Each style was preferred by both girls and boys. However more boys listen to elektrohaus, metal and dubstep than girls. The styles preferred by more girls than boys are classical music, latino, pop, jazz, R & B, gypsy music and church music (Figure 2).

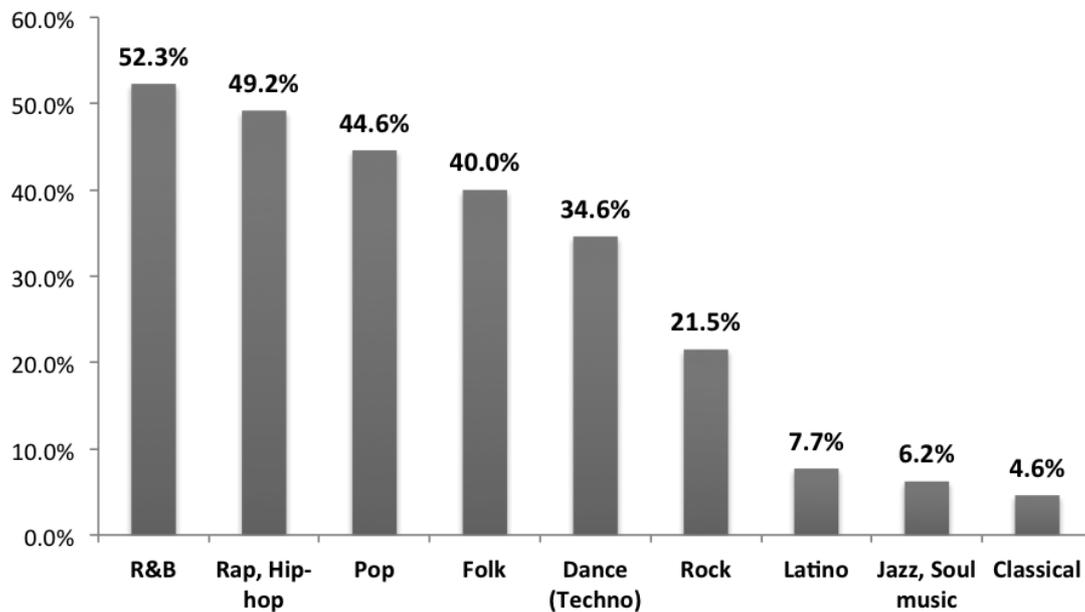
Fig. 2. What kind of music listen Hungarian children.



Source: Own chart.

The data from the Bulgarian survey (previously published) showed the following levels of interest: R&B music - 52.3%, rap and hip-hop styles are next in preference - 49.2%, followed by pop music, with 44.6%, folk music is preferred by 40% respondents, dance and techno styles included in the ranking with 34.6%, classical, jazz, soul and latin music are among the least listened by adolescents styles. In “other styles” the students included relaxing music, reggae, country, dubstep, metal, indierock, house (Figure 3).

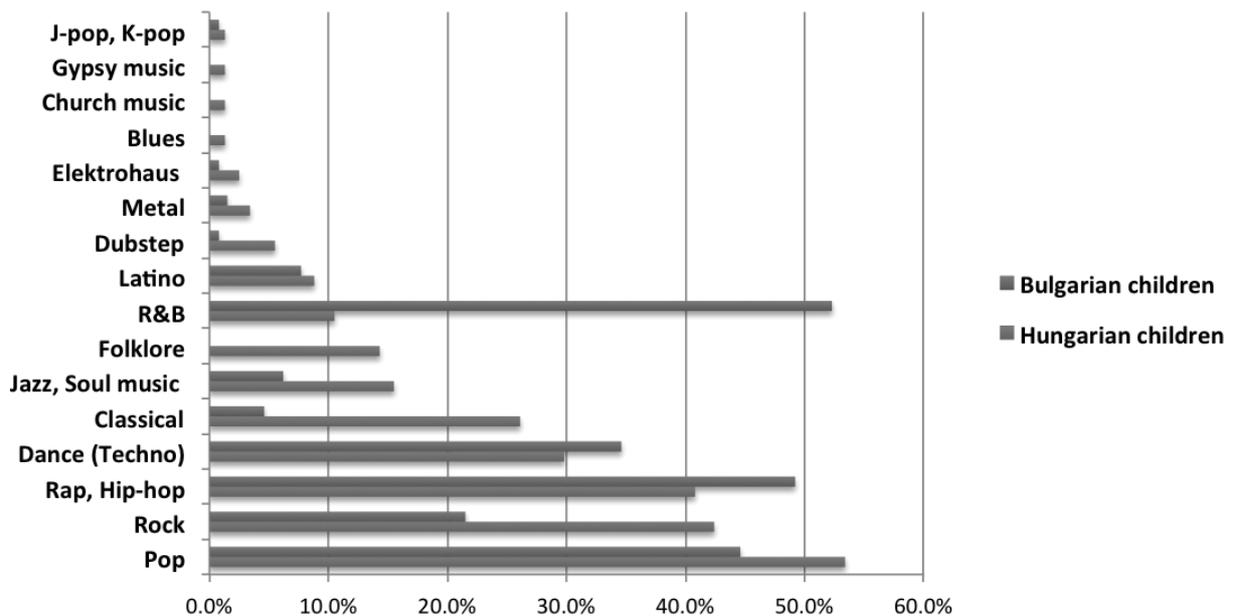
Fig. 3. What kind of music listen Bulgaria children.



Source: Own chart.

When we compared music style choices of Hungarian (presented here) and Bulgarian (previously published) children, we observed some similarities and differences in the preferences. Children from both countries prefer the same styles of music although the proportion in percentage terms is slightly differed.

Fig. 4. Comparison of music style choices between Hungarian and Bulgarian children.



Source: Own chart.

There is difference in the interest in classical music between Hungarian and Bulgarian children. This is probably due to the fact that in the Hungarian group there are children who study in professional music schools. All children from Bulgaria study in high schools without special musical activities. This shows how strong the influence is of practicing music in school to the formation of culture (in particular music) taste in adolescents. This difference also applies to the participation in different types of disciplines (arts, languages, sports) during their leisure time. While 66% of children from Hungary participate in different extracurricular disciplines only 42.3% of the children in Bulgaria took part in similar activities.

Music education in school is not the only way of forming interest in musical activities in Hungary. The results obtained from three different schools are compared in Table 2. Children from both mainstream high schools are also engaged in musical activities in their leisure time.

Table 2. Activities in children leisure time in Hungary.

Activities in children leisure time	Schools			Total (children)
	Pécsi Sebestyén Music Primary School (children)	Bolgár Nyelvoktató Nemzetiségi Iskola (children)	Lonyay Utcai Reformatus Gimnázium es Kollegium (children)	
Musical instruments	29	3	17	49
Language lessons	5	7	10	22
Dance	14	8	4	26
Sport	29	7	28	64
Singing	3	0	2	5
Acting	4	1	1	6
Arts, Drawing	1	1	4	6
Playing games	3	0	0	3

Source: Own chart.

Comparing the results obtained only from mainstream schools in Hungary with those in Bulgaria, I also observed differences in interest towards musical activities. While a significant part of the Hungarian children are actively engaged in sports, language lessons, playing musical instruments and dance, the Bulgarian children have interests in sports, language and dance activities. Playing musical instruments is not so attractive for the children in Bulgaria (Table 3).

There are other activities that occupy children's leisure time. Reading books is one of the less preferred activities among the children. 40.7% of them read in their spare time every day and almost every day, 39.1% read less, and 19.3% never read books. However, 73.5 % of the children use the Internet every day and almost every day, and those who used the Internet once or twice a week are 17.2%. Most

of the children have hobbies and 73.1% of the children spend time on their hobbies every day or almost every day.

Table 3. Activities in children leisure time in Hungary and Bulgaria.

Activities in children leisure time	Bulgarian High Schools	Hungarian High Schools
Musical instruments	0.8 %	21 %
Language lessons	9.2 %	9 %
Dance	13.8 %	10 %
Sport	15.4 %	27 %
Singing	0.8 %	2 %
Acting	1.5 %	3 %
Arts, Drawing	2.3 %	3 %
Play games	2.3 %	1 %

Source: Own chart.

As expected the majority of the children (75.1%) communicate with their family every day and almost every day (18.1%). However they rarely play entertaining games together regularly: 0.0% - every day, 6.3% - almost every day, 26.9% - once or twice a week, 43.3% - less than once per week, 23.1% - never. However, the children answered that they are satisfied with the way in which they spend their leisure time at home: 54.6% answered "Yes", 39.5% - "Partially" and dissatisfied are 5.5% of the respondents. Children are more satisfied with their activities outside: 70.2% of them responded positively, 22.7% were almost satisfied, 7.1% are not satisfied how they spend their leisure time outside. This result suggested that children are engaged in activities both at home and outside in their spare time.

It is important to note that this study provided valuable research data but also it had positive effect on the children who took part. All of them had the opportunity to realise how important the way they spend their leisure time is and how this could influence their development as individuals. They had a chance to think of what activities fulfilled their daily lives and which are part of their spare time and which of their working time. Through conducted activities and games they had a chance to learn more about the "budget" of their time.

CONCLUSION

based to the study's objectives and results can be made the following conclusions. All interviewed students listen to music. The majority of them listen to music every day. It is part of their daily lives.

The percentage of children involved in some kind of art is not high, however everyone of them has contact with various kinds of arts - cinema, dance, theater, literature, playing an musical instrument, singing, computer animation, art, circus, drama artistry, photography. Entertainment, pleasure and communicating with friends are in main reasons for this results. Unfortunately, the number of children engaged in music/musical art is not high.

The interest in music is higher than in the other arts based on the results on the frequency of listening to music in leisure time. "Reason for musical interest is the cognitive element which to a certain extent reflects the structure of the object needs. ... interest in one or another kind of music can not be awakened only through words, without given the opportunity to know this music, to penetrate in its world" (Burlina, 1989, p. 131).

There is an increased interest towards mass and team activities, which shows the children's need of communication. They highlighted it as the most common reason for their choice of activities. Being with friends is the main factor driving the choice and music is the universal tool for achieving it at this age.

Lack of financial resources and lack of interest are reasons given by some children for not attending any kind of disciplines. Based on the very small percentage who put finances as main reason, can be concluded that most families have the opportunity to provide additional leisure activities for their children. A more important factor is the interest. 13% percent of the children answered that they are not interested in art because the family does not have such interests. The family has a vital role in activities choice. Undoubtedly, parents can pass on their interest to their children.

Among the most popular activities related to music are listening to music of different genres. There is no significant difference in genre preference between children in Hungary and Bulgaria.

Children are occupied with variety of activities which provide entertainment and fun in their leisure time but also with activities that form personal skills. Art and practising art is seen as a means for revealing intellectual forces, for moral formation and socialization, forming priorities, awareness and attitude to artistic values.

The children from both European countries (with a similar historical and cultural development) have similar musical interests and activities in their spare time at home and outside.

Activities in school strongly influence the formation of interest in arts and to artistic activities in their leisure time. This is observed when comparing children from musical and general education. There is larger number of children occupied with musical activities in the Music school compared to the other schools.

There are differences in music preferences between genders. The boys like more elektrohaus, metal, dubstep. The girls prefer classical music, latin, pop, jazz, R&B, gypsy music and church music. The girls engaged in various activities in their leisure time twice as much as the boys.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendations of the study are as follows. Since the interests are one of the factors that determine the quality of leisure time, it is necessary to stimulate different ideas, preferences, interests in children, family, school and social environment in order to diversify children's leisure time.

An important factor for the education and socialization of young people is family education system, government, society, media and various non-governmental and charitable organizations and the private sector to offer activities that support

children's moral and cognitive development. A beneficial factor for forming children's interests in arts (especially music) is whether the schools they attend include activities with arts in their programme. Having more diverse, attractive and interest awakening activities for young people would contribute to their physical and spiritual development. It is important that teachers point out and draw special attention to children's achievements – in school and outside. It would be valuable for young people if teachers emphasized their abilities through academic work. Maintaining a dialogue and discussion with children would help teachers and parents to come up with new and diverse proposals for leisure time activities.

This current investigation tried to answer the question how to help children with the choice of leisure activities in order to assist their development as individuals; how to search and find artistic values and to develop their creative thinking, imagination and curiosity and innovative thinking. More work will be conducted on this subject.

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