



Sociological analysis of the ways of spending leisure time

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Abstract

Introduction: The main purpose of this article is about leisure time. Leisure time is a period in which people start to reveal their values, interest, power and resistance without any trouble or tension and act as the presenter of their own social class. Social scientist has defined Leisure time as a dimension of social life, background maker and an important base for all the social terms and patterns. This research tries to explain the ways of comprehending and explaining Leisure time from the viewpoint of young people, the ways of spending it, its obstacles and problems, consequences and effective methods for decreasing the problems which are caused by the lack of spending a good Leisure time by applying social expound approaches. In the theoretical section by applying scientist suggestions about different aspects of Leisure time, we have created a conceptual framework and will use it for analyzing.

Materials and Method: The applying method is qualitative and the source data were obtained by applying deep interviewing and theoretical saturation criterion among 20 citizen of region no.10 (Tehran city).

Results: The obtained results include findings such as mass media categories as the center of Leisure time, modern approach toward Leisure time, potential aspect in amusement and trip taking, combined functions of journey taking and the relationship between gender and leisure time, also cultural- social issues and financial problems are considered as an important problems in the field of Leisure time, Which endanger the correct spending of leisure time.

Conclusion: Improving leisure time require a lot of attention and programming. Expanding welfare facilities, green environment, sport activities, general institutions (public library) and etc. are some of the factors that can help to solve the problems of leisure time.

1. Introduction

One of the most important factors in the daily life of every human being is leisure time and the ways of spending it, which beside daily activities has a considerable amount of importance. Leisure is an inseparable part of human life and beside work time there always exist a leisure time. Leisure time is defined as a temporary release of jobs and formal occupations of life and performs the desirable activities. The literal meaning of (Leisure) is relief and comfort and it is a time in which not only the human are free from their occupations and economical obligations, but also they are free from personal, family and social obligations (Hezarjaribi and Safari, 2011). The activities of leisure time have a direct influence in creating the personality of people (Thompson et al., 2003). Leisure time as cultural- social phenomena, which has a great impact on economic and social dimensions, is the common subject of all the social classes. As an aspect of human life, leisure time is an opportunity in which people freely and with the complete comfort choose their interest and tendencies. Leisure time and the ways of spending it have turned into a very important subject after the industrial revolution. After the industrial revolution the availability of new technologies has increased, which led to the creation of changes in leisure time and the ways of spending it (Amirtash, 2003).

Generally, leisure time has long been the subject and the concentration center of humans, the conducted studies reveal that human are trying continuously to find solutions to the problems that are related to leisure time. At the present time the concentration and sensitively of this subject has even increased more. Some of the related facts of this increasing concentration and sensitively are: the development and increasing of machinery life, decreasing the amount of working and activities, increasing human knowledge and informality level. The most important and effect reasons are the cultural changes and forming humans special tendencies and interests. Beside the population increasing, urban and other change in economic and social structure (Importance of education, increasing servicing occupations, geographical and

social mobility, importance of transportation industry and etc) the patterns of leisure time has also been changed. Based on the mentioned facts one of the most important subject in the majority of societies, is the subject of leisure time and the ways of spending it, which has extremely occupied education experts and ideologues of social science.

1.1. Records of the research

Noori (1999) in the article “a review of sociology on the leisure time” has stated that the major and general changes which occurred in the past, not only changed the structure of this subject, but also changed the demands of this subject from general to central. One of the requirements of central families is the way of spending the leisure time which can be schemed for different age groups and genders. Shahidi (2006) in her article “Sociological recognition of the activities of leisure time in young females by concentrating on leisure time pathological factors” indicates that there is a correlation between cosmetology, shopping and style, relationship with an opposite gender, watching satellite and religious fidelity. Ghafari (2008) in his article “Interaction of leisure time and social values among young Iranians” has concentrated on the relationship between leisure time and social values on social science structure.

The results indicates that the young people who spend their leisure time in group activities have more social values than the young people who spend their leisure time in performing individual activities. Safari and Modiri (2010) in their article “The meta-analysis of the effective factors on leisure time” has reached this conclusion that among the studied factors having kinds, age, class, education, gender and marriage have great influence on leisure time and occupation relationship has no effect on leisure time. Romsa and Hofman (1980) has conducted a research about “An application of nonparametric data in recreation research”, this research was conducted on 350 housewives in Germany. The results indicate that factors such as: lack of time, facilities and economical- financial problems are the problems that prevent women from doing sport activities in their leisure time. Carroll and Alexandris (1997) evaluated the

individual differences (Age, gender, education, and marital status) in comprehending the obstacles that prevent the participation in sport activities. The result of this research which was conducted in Greece indicates that women face more considerable obstacles than men in performing sport activities. Also, married people in comparison with single people face the obstacle of time. Ampofo-Boatenga et al (2003) have investigated the influence of demographic variables in factors (such as gender, age, education, marital status and ethnicity) that constrain recreational sport participation in Malaysia. He randomly selected 602 Malaysian citizens and reached these conclusions: The men significantly face more obstacles than women, the group which consist of a people with more than 26 years old, face the most difficult obstacles and the married group, and significantly face more obstacles than single group.

1.2. Theories

Leisure time is the French translation of (*loisir*) and the English equivalence of (*leisure*) and its Latin root is (*licere*), it contains two dimensions of meaning, first the freedom to choice and second is being allowed to choose. Leisure time is defined as a time in which there is no occupational activity. Occupation, which has gained control over the modern life, has experienced a lot of internal changes, which these changes require a new outlook which is defined by the term “occupational mortality”. In these mortalities occupation is the main source of identity, status and outcome of a person in society (Alavizadeh, 2003). Dumazedier(1967) the French sociologist define Leisure time as a collection of activities in which an individual perform with passion and desire after evaluating occupational, family and social obligations and its purpose is resting, amusement, expanding knowledge, perfecting capabilities, creativity or expanding the willing participation in society (Yousefi, 2008). Thorstein Veblen (1857 – 1929) can be named as the trailblazer of Leisure time theories. Veblen believes that conspicuous consumption, dramatic leisure, superiority symbols and etc, are the means by which humans try to be more valuable and look superior in front of their

neighbors and relatives.

Consumption and conspicuous leisure is not necessary related to those people who wish to reach a more valuable point in front of other people. He believes that conspicuous consumption and leisure based life style has covered the whole social structure. In a competitive culture the people of lower classes try to apply the life style of higher class people and reach respect and higher social status (Coser, 2006).

The intellectuals of Frankfort school believe that freedom and leisure time is nothing more than illusion which is packed as an object and is delivered to the markets which has a lot of consumers. In this approach, optional freedom which is offered by the markets of Leisure time, doesn't give us the right to choose. Actually, people are trapped in the ideology of consumption and investment. Government is the source of preventing leisure, freedom and the reason for decreasing the cultural values.

Frankfort school believe that Leisure time is an instrument for domination and leisure facilities gave the facilities which drive people toward an acceptable form of leisure time and the recreation of social structure (Hee Wood et al, 2001).

Adorno (1999) consider the leisure time as the monster of cultural industry. Although, this pattern can be changed in different situations. Adorno believes that the philosophy of leisure has been forgotten. Therefore, it is obvious that the activities which are related to leisure time are managed by profiteers. Adorno (1999) investigate the effect of gender on leisure time. Green et al (1990) consider the concept of patriarchal investment as an important component for explaining the forming and limiting the entertainment opportunities. He believes that leisure change its structure and color in accordance with its situation and competitors.

Gender rules is one of the competitors, which Green believes that has an important influence on leisure time. Green believes that lack of time and optional leisure times limitations for girls and women are the results of the effect of gender on leisure time. Women have a much lesser time for leisure and the extent of their leisure time is limited, however even the indoor leisure is

connected with gender (Green et al., 1990). Clark and Critcher (1985) have also considered the effect of gender on opportunities and leisure time. They define the difference between two genders as follow: women have much lesser time for leisure and therefore they do not participate a lot in leisure activities. Women spend most of their leisure time at their houses and with their families. Historically, males show more tendencies toward sport activities, because the society provides more values and opportunities for the male sport activities; therefore females show much lesser motivation for participating in sport activities (Hee Wood et al., 2001).

Bordio (2011) has also conducted a lot researches in the field of leisure time and lifestyle. He believes that bringing up an individual in a special family and class, has a direct influence on his leisure time decisions. He believes that interests and styles, demands and conceptions which are related to leisure time activities are formed in families, childhood periods and the surrounding social environments.

1.2.1. Leisure time theory from the aspect of time

Leisure time is defined as a time which is left after performing the essential activities of life. In this definition, leisure time is defined as a time in which an individual freely spend his time.

Van der poel(1997) separate the leisure time from the time in which a human seek the essential needs of life and define it as a time in which an individual freely perform his activities. Parker believes that leisure time is the remained time after performing the activities which are not amusing. In this definition, the criterion of leisure time is the performance of activities which are considered amusing (cited in Green et al, 1990).

1.2.2. Leisure theory in the form of activities

Leisure time is constructed from activities which are informative and instructive. This viewpoint include a lot of activities, watching television, going to restaurant, listening to music, playing computer games, working out, meeting friends and etc. are considered as a leisure time activities. Kaplan(1975) describe leisure time as a separated

time from activity time and consider it as an objective and define leisure time as a collection of activities in which an individual perform willingly for resting, amusement, increasing knowledge or expanding skills. Dumazedier (1967 cited in Hee wood et al., 2001) has defined the term semi-leisure as an activity in which an individual is forced to perform, and their performance, satisfies the performer.

In the theory of leisure time as a form of matter, leisure time by itself is not considered as an objective, and is considered as a condition. Bordio (2011) believes that leisure time is not the simple and unavoidable result of external factors or free time, rather it is first considered as an ideology and a mental-spiritual condition.

De Grazia (1962 cited in Torkildenson, 2001) considers leisure time as a necessity of daily life. He believes that leisure guide men and women to perfection and opens a gate toward future.

2. Method

The applied method in this research is qualitative method used to understand the deep complications, details and structures of phenomena. Leisure is a complicate, multi-dimension and pluralistic. It means that it contains a lot of ambiguous and unknown aspects and its constructing elements might differ in different people.

Therefore, we should apply a method which is general and contain all different aspects of leisure time. Actually, reaching hidden functions, subjective and objective approaches in individual activities, discovering hidden and unknown dimensions, recognition of important elements, deep and more sensitive comprehension of individual structural activities have forced us to use qualitative method (Marshall and Rosmen, 2002, Flaik, 2009). However, the sampling method is theoretical. In this sampling method the selections of samples depend on the process of a new theory and ideology and how much an individual help in this process. In theoretical sampling the number of samples are defined by using the criterion of theoretical satiation, which means that when the researcher reach this conclusion that performing more interviews, doesn't supply him with new

information and data are repeating the same results, the researcher would stop the process of data collection (Mohammadpour, 2010).

So deep interview was performed on 18 citizens of region 10 (Tehran city)

3. Results

3.1. Media as a center of leisure time

One of the most important facts in spending leisure time is the application of social related Medias. This case can be observed in the present study. The majorities of interviewees use massive Medias in their leisure time and certainly spend, considerable amount of their time on watching pictorial Medias, reading written media and etc. Meanwhile, pictorial media allocate most of leisure time to itself and this point is confirmed by many responders. Among the pictorial communication instruments television, satellite and internet are considered so important that most responders spend their leisure time on these activities. One of the most important results of this research is the issue of internet.

Saeed (a 26 years old male) says:

"I watch TV a lot and I'm seriously occupied with internet. In general I can say that I spend most of my leisure time with internet, Television and satellite".

Reza (a 28 years old male) says:

"I watch TV a lot and sometimes I read a newspaper, but I prefer to spend my leisure time with my family and on traveling".

Based on these finding a new classification is formed which classify leisure time in two groups of short term and long term leisure. Short term leisure contain daily activities and which are common among the majority of social classes (activities such as watching television, reading newspapers, studying books and etc), but long term leisure are a kind of activities which are performed once a week or once a month and are usually performed by a group and have been planned before (such as: travelling)

The relationship between gender and leisure time. Leisure time is not the same in different group and social classes. Based on this fact some people believe that gender is the different making factor in

the ways of spending leisure time. Most of the time the women are occupied with their houses and emotional caring for others, meanwhile men face less obstacles and take advantages of their leisure time, these facts create destructions between male and females, in a related matter subjects like the outdoor job of women, marriage and giving birth to children has intensified these distinctions. These findings support the fact that gender is an important factor in spending leisure time. The obtained results from analyzing the reviews indicates that in comparison with men, women have a much lesser leisure time and usually their leisure time is mixed with house works and taking care of their children. The amount of leisure time is different for women, also the way of spending it is different, women usually don't perform exciting activities (such as sport) and spend most of their leisure time in watching television.

Saeedeh (a 29 years old housewife) says:

"I spend most of my time at home, watching TV and playing with my daughter, however sometimes I go to market, but only for buying the essential things for life".

Amirmohammad (a 24 years old student) spend his leisure time completely different and says:

"I spend most of my time outside my house, I usually workout with my friends and we take different trips together, in general I don't want to stay at my house".

The obtained results from analyzing the reviews indicates that females wish to spend their leisure time as the males of their own age, but the social laws and mores prevent them from spending their leisure time as they wish to, it can be stated that leisure time as it's official definition doesn't exist for women or it has been extremely controlled by parents and social protocols. Some responders referred to this fact that leisure is a complicated version for females which contain some opinions that only those option can be chosen.

Golnar (a female student) says:

"I usually face many obstacles, either it is my parent or the blaming of others and etc. in general I can't spend my leisure time with the activities which I like."

It is worth mentioning that there is a direct

relationship between the population of society and the differences of spending leisure time by considering the gender of people. Therefore, we can state that gender is considered as an important factor in the ways of spending leisure time. Leisure differs according to gender, and in comparison with females, males have a lot of freedom in choosing the activity of their leisure time.

3.2. Modern approach toward leisure

One of the leisure activities is spending time with friends. It is expected that young people (Both males and females) spend a lot of time with their friends, it was observed in the analyzing of the interviews revealed that unlike what is expected, young people don't spend only their leisure time with their friends, but also they seek some purposes and opportunities from their relationship with their friends. Achieving identity, independence feeling, scientific friendships, diversification and etc. are some of these purposes. Each one of these purposes distinguishes the individuals from each other.

3.3. Potential aspects in trips and amusements

Most of the interviewees were interested in buying centers and wandering around in streets, their purpose of visiting these places are buying the needed materials and spending leisure time. People have more tendencies to spend their leisure time in fulfilling a purpose in a green environment and not just spend their leisure time without a purpose. The interviewee trips and amusements are performed for many reasons, such as adding novelty to life and escape from the daily life problems. The source of attempts to create variety in lifestyle is being unsatisfied from the existence condition. Among the interviewee responses that are two noticeable points, first some of the young people strongly disagree with amusing activities which are performed by the weekends and they have some interesting reasons for this disagreement. Some of them consider these amusements as unhealthy and believe that people only visit these places to compete with each other. The people who visit these sites are mostly consumers and there's a great amount of modernism among them. The controlling ideology of these green environments is

morally abnormal and this fact prevents some of the young people from visiting these places. Even if they visit these places they seek for a quiet place in order not to disturb the individual easement of other people. The interesting point is that, these young people avoid these places for traditional and social reasons and religious reasons don't play an important part in their decisions. Although this point cannot be a modern approach, but we can't call it traditionalism, because these people avoid these places in order to not disturb the easement of others and they don't have a problem with the pastime activities.

Another point is that some others believe that instead of just passing the time, they can fill their leisure time with useful activities.

Therefore, these groups of people don't participate in the outdoor activities and spend their leisure time in studying. These groups are under the same category of those people who believe in the scientific approaches of leisure time.

Mohammad Reza (26 years old) disagrees with amusement activities and says:

"I don't go to trips; the current environment of these trips is unhealthy. The controlling environment of the places that people attend to at their weekends is not at all healthy, both from the moral and behavioral aspects, also there's an enormous amount of modernism among these people, because I can't adapt myself with these situations I prefer to remain at home."

Mohammad (a 28 years old BA owner) says:

"I rarely go outside... even if I go outside I seek for a less crowded place, I'm not at all satisfied with the controlling environment of these places. The easements of other people are easily avoided and there are a lot of immoral tensions in these places."

3.4. Journey taking

Taking journeys is one of the most important indicators of leisure time, which people in the past and specially nowadays consider one of the most important activities of leisure time. Annually some families take a journey to different far and near places. An interesting point is that taking abroad journeys has become part of these journey plans.

However, the obtained results from interviewing indicates that similar to spending leisure time with friends, taking journeys has also is being performed with new patterns and has a lot of different functions.

The continuous journey taking is one of the indicators of a modern life style and of course an individual social-economic status plays an important rule in it. Most of the families which have a very strong financial status take journeys, but nowadays this process has changed and the journey taking of all the social classes is being considered. The important point in analyzing the interviews was that almost every interviewee consider the journey taking as a plan of their life, this fact indicates the universal movements, social approaches and that they have fixed the value and importance of journey taking and it's factious. People have different purposes in taking a journey that the most important one of them are mentioned here: the usual and traditional approach of journey taking which is spending leisure time, in which during it people change their life conditions and get out of their boring and steady conditions changing weather, which is not a new purpose and have always been an important factor. As mentioned before the controlling space of people life and different problems and pressures has created a condition in which people are prepared to do anything just to have a good time.

3.5. Approaches and consequences

Apart from the different effects of leisure time on different aspects of social life, and because of different opinions and interpreting of this concept, presenting a general definition for this phenomenon is very hard. Based on these principles different definitions have been presented and based upon these definitions there are a lot of obstacles and problems in spending leisure time. Social and cultural protocols are one of the existing problems in spending leisure time. In the new era and with the advancements of technology and turning the world into a village, the leisure time have become a universal subject and people try to fill their leisure time with similar activities. But by considering the different between cultures this process is facing a

lot of problems. Leisure time with all its cultural, social, political and economical dimensions is considered as an important factor in different places and among different social classes. The fact which makes leisure meaningful is it's spending in leisure places, but spending leisure time and leisure places have always had problems with each other. The relations and challenges of consuming groups upon leisure time and space occur in the framework of a competition, negotiation and contentions. On the opposite site of not using leisure time we can see the signs of lack of freedom or being prevented from applying this freedom. In general we can estate that there are both positive and negative consequences for leisure time which can include a variety of social classes. Any programming in the field of leisure time should include the recognition of that society needs and capacities. Sport is in the priority of leisure time activities in many social classes, therefore expanding new sport centers such as gyms, sport fields and etc. by the related authorities can attract people to sport and help the health of the society. Also one of the effective approaches toward filling leisure time is the establishing of cultural artistic and local centers for the participation of people in order to spend their leisure time. Also since a lot of organizations are involved in the process of leisure time, there must be some coordination and planning among these organizations to evaluate the leisure time and provide people with best choices. An adequate planning for spending leisure time can help to decrease the prices in society, because by presenting an adequate plan, the inadequate ways of spreading leisure time can be prevented. Beside these fact different planning can create, creativity among individuals and improve the society. Since the plan of spending leisure time is almost similar in different social classes, therefore the authorities in media, which plays an important role in leisure time, should create a lot of variety and excitements in their programs and increase the quality of their television and radio channels in order to create, creativity and improve the condition of the society. As mentioned before women spend most of their leisure time at home and on watching television, therefore the authorities should consider this fact in

their programs. So concerning with cultural protocols which is introduced as an obstacle that prevent women from participating in sport activities, it is suggested that patriarchal limitations for spending leisure time of women be decreased as much as possible, and they should not be prevented from the active participation in different social, cultural and sport fields. They also should be given the opportunity to discover their capabilities and potentials. The structure of families should change and women should be given the opportunity to enjoy their leisure time, this purpose can be achieved by the help of family members, Medias, educating books and presenting an adequate leisure time patterns.

4. Discussion

Leisure time is one of the fields in which an individual's freedom in making choices and his interactions are considered very important, it is also considered as one of the most important analytical aspects of lifestyle. In this field people present some of their patterns, lifestyle rules and social identity. Bordio (2011) believes that leisure activities create distinctions among individuals.

An important aspect of this distinction is social identity, because people to distinct themselves by performing different activities. In another expression leisure activities are considered as mechanism for social distinctions, because patterns and special approach selection by an individual reflect the individual and social identity. Actually, potentiality in choosing the patterns of spending leisure time give people identity and distinguish them from each other. In this article the ways and obstacles of spending leisure time were analyzed and some approaches were presented. The investigated individuals in this research perform a lot of different leisure activities and each one of them spends their leisure time differently. The way of spending leisure time is from one aspect is related to factors such as gender, values and viewpoints fidelity to religion and from another aspect is related to family condition, social-economical base of the family and social relation network. Each one of these factors affect the ways of spending leisure time and give patterns to this

phenomenon. Mass medias, specially pictorial medias are one of the most important factors in leisure time activities, this fact indicates the expansion of modern evolution and technology improvements in a manner that television, satellite and even internet has become a part of people life. There is a separation between men and women in spending their leisure time in which man have more tendencies toward sport activities. This fact reveals that women are less independence than men in the social and culture structure of their society. Another aspect of leisure time is the modernism approach which is affected by universal approaches and the individuals attempt to form their identity by choosing patterns and the ways of spending leisure time, people attempt to have an active role and form their identity. Another important factor is that almost all the interviewees have selected journey taking as a part of their life program, which indicates the universal approaches and social processes one of the most important problems and obstacles of leisure time is the cultural, social, traditional and regional problems which prevent people from having the desired leisure time.

Another issue is the financial issue and the availability of facilities. Many people don't have the capability to perform different leisure activities, and from another point there are no public facilities for some people. The problems and obstacles of leisure time require a lot of attention and programming. Expanding welfare facilities, green environment, sport activities, general institutions (public library) and etc. are some of the factors that can help to solve the problems of leisure time. Also, the related institutions can work together to present suitable options for spending leisure time, decreasing the costs and preventing the social harms which are caused by the lack of the availability of facilities.

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