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**Organization of Out-Of-Lesson-
Time Activities at School and out
of School: Analysis of Students'
Attitude**

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Organization of Out-Of-Lesson-Time Activities at School and out of School: Analysis of Students' Attitude

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Abstract

The analysis of scientific literature has shown that the occupation of the leisure time of children and youth is a social problem that should be solved: it is necessary to help students to meet their needs of self-expression, develop abilities. Suitably directed spending of students' organized leisure time is an important factor of early prevention and teenager's self-expression. With good organization of out-of-lesson-time activity it is possible to achieve strengthening of child's self-confidence and his/her feeling of bigger independence. Aim of the research – to analyze the situation of out-of-lesson-time activity and present the guidelines about the organization of this activity in Siauliai Town. The research results showed, that students' lack of time is the reason of non-attendance of out-of-lesson-time activity and it is more characteristic for the students of the ninth form. Although the majority of the respondents have stated that lack of time (budget) is the main reason of non-attendance of out-of-lesson-time activity, however, quite a big number of the respondents participate in some hobby group. The results of the research have shown that students willingly participate in various out-of-lesson-time activities in their class and at school, they attend hobby groups both at school and out of school. In mainstream schools of Siauliai Town and out of school hobby groups of sports, arts, school subjects are dominating. Students admit that out-of-lesson-time activity is quite interesting and useful, however, it needs to be improved, there is a wish of a bigger variety and novelty.

Key words: non-formal education, out-of-lesson-time activities, leisure time of students.

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Introduction

In the recent years when intensive education reform is taking place pedagogues and other administrators of school community face new tasks how to solve the problem of students' qualitative leisure time. Leisure time may be organized and non-organized. To develop socialization, creativity and many-sided abilities, to improve the culture of leisure time, meeting the needs of self-expression in various education programmes, hobby groups in arts, music, sports and other areas at schools and out of school appropriate conditions are created by out-of-lesson-time activity (Barkauskaite, 2004). Out-of-lesson-time activity is understood as students' participation in various hobby groups, clubs, trips, festivals and other activities that are organized in mainstream schools and elsewhere (music, art, sport schools, etc.) (Ignatavicius et al., 2003).

The importance of out-of-lesson-time activity in such a complicated context of socialization is undoubtedly very big. Its perception is also reflected in the state educational strategy – out-of-lesson-time activity is regulated by legal acts and international juridical documents. The UN Convention of Child Rights (1999) obliges the state and its every member to create conditions for full development, expression and unfolding of child's personality. In Article 31 it is noted that the participant States acknowledge child's right to rest and leisure, right to participate in the games and entertaining events corresponding to his/her age, fully participate in cultural and creative life. Organization of out-of-lesson-time activity and leisure time is a very important part of the education process of a young person. Much attention to out-of-lesson-time activity is paid in the provisions of State Education Strategy for 2003-2012, Socialization Programme for Children and Youth, also in general education plans for 2005-2007. In the report of the activity of the Ministry of Education and Science for 2004 the plan of the events of informal education has been prepared, the programme of the socialization of children and youth is being performed.

With good organization of out-of-lesson-time activity it is possible to achieve strengthening of child's self-confidence and his/her feeling of bigger independence. During complementary education it is possible to implement many necessary tasks of education – to occupy students after the lessons in order to protect them from unwanted influence in the street. As Barkauskaite states (2001) the intensification of out-of-lesson-time activity and expanding it at school and out of school is one of the possibilities in attempting to solve the problems of truancy and decrease delinquency. When the stream of information is becoming larger and the process of teaching (learning) is becoming more intensive it is important to appropriately match activity and leisure. As the research of out-of-lesson-time activity, leisure time and self-feeling of students of mainstream schools of Siauliai Town has shown (Vaitkevicius et al., 2005), during leisure time students of Siauliai Town find time for satisfying harmful habits too. Students not only smoke and abuse alcohol but also miss lessons every day. Dapkiene (2002) is sure that appropriate organization of complementary education especially of informal and formal – interesting activity after lessons retracting students from spending time in vain and at the same time from harmful habits, delinquency creates conditions to realize the need for self-expression and communication through artistic, technical and sports activity, to develop national and cultural self-identification, raises the prestige of the school. It is important that purposeful organization of out-of-lesson-time activity has positive influence on student's occupation.

Children's informal education as a significant problem is analyzed by the Lithuanian researchers in various aspects of socialization. The importance of complementary education for the socialization of personality has been analyzed by Bitinas (1986, 1990), Vaitkevicius (1995), Jovaisa (1995), contents and forms in contemporary school has been analyzed by Dapkiene (1998, 2002) and she has presented quite many ideas, suggestions and examples how educate spiritual and creative people, Ramanekiene (2002) has analyzed the functions of complementary education, discussed the problems of complementary education, recommended applying sessions of therapeutic character in practice as one of the forms of complementary education. The significance of occupation in the development of personality has been accentuated by Barkauskaite (1997, 2001). However, it should be noted that the development of the system of informal education and its tendencies have not yet been thoroughly analyzed. Foreign scientists Straub (2004), Steiner (2000), Joy G. Dryffos (1999), Keys W. (1999), Malcom H. (2002). Stepanov et al. (2000) have noted that out-of-lesson-time activity is gaining increasing role in students' socialization. In many European countries: Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Hungary, Czech Republic etc. students' informal education or students' socialization takes place in the activity of various clubs, organizations and associations. By the initiative of the European Council out-of-school activity of children and youth has started to be coordinated, the concern has been shown towards the readiness of the growing generation for independent political, cultural and educative activity. European Association for Leisure Time Institutions of Children and Youth (EAICY) has also been established. According to Rene Clarijs (2003), the president of the European Association for Leisure Time Institutions of Children and Youth (EAICY), uniting 74 members from 19 countries of the world, only formal education is not enough to educate children and youth as good and responsible citizens. Already in 2000 the European Council noted that informal education for the development of personality is not less important than formal. Preparing a legal document for children it is necessary to consider children's opinion – wishes and needs.

Aim of the research – to analyze the situation of out-of-lesson-time activity and present the guidelines about the organization of this activity in Šiauliai Town.

Objectives of the research: On the basis of literature studies to perform the analysis of the concept and organization of out-of-lesson-time activity. To analyze suggested models of out-of-lesson-time activity in mainstream school of Siauliai Town and out of school. To investigate supply and demand of out-of-lesson-time activity. To investigate the motives of students' participation and non-participation in out-of-lesson-time activity.

Methods of the research

Theoretical: theoretical analysis of documents and scientific literature.
Empirical: quantitative research (questionnaire survey). Qualitative research (interview method). Comparative analysis. Graphical interpretation of the obtained data using Microsoft Excel programme.

Statistical methods of data analysis

In one-time survey 344 students of 7 (N=203), 9 (N=141) forms of Siauliai Town schools participated, out of them there were 212 girls and 132 boys. The

researches were performed in mainstream schools of Siauliai Town. Statistical data analysis was performed with SPSS 11.0 programme. The reliability of differences was evaluated according to the indicator of Pearson Chi-Square, the strength of relation between indicators was evaluated calculating the Spearman correlation coefficient (r). All differences commented in the text are statistically significant, the threshold of significance is 0,05.

Administration of the questionnaire. The respondents were given the questionnaires. The questionnaire was modified according to the questionnaire created by the Laboratory of Sociological Education Research of Vilnius Pedagogical University. The questionnaire consisted of 37 questions. By them it was attempted to find out the respondents' attitudes towards the organization of out-of-lesson-time activity at school, its influence on students' learning, self-expression, communication. The respondents participated in anonymous research, they were briefly introduced with the aim of the research, then the questionnaires were handed out. Analyzing the results the percent distribution of the responses and statistically significant differences among them, correlation coefficient, data analysis and interpretation have been calculated. Popularity index (PI) shows which place is taken by a concrete evaluated object in the list created in the order of decreasing scores (Bitinas, 2007).

Analysis and interpretations of the results of the research

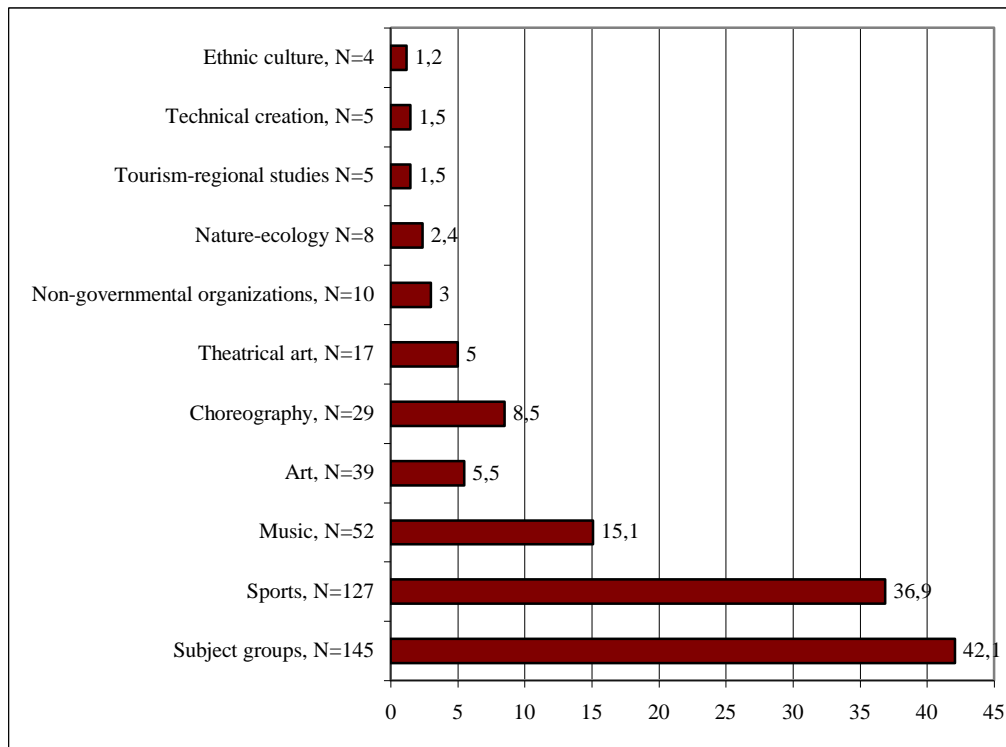
Students of 7, 9 forms (13-16years of age – 344 students, out of them 212 (61,6 per cent) girls, 132 (38,4 per cent) boys) participated in the research, their demographical indicators have been presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Form	Gender		N
	Girls	Boys	
7	109	94	203
9	103	38	141
In total	212 (61,6 per cent)	132 (38,4 per cent)	344 100 (per cent)

According to the obtained results of the performed research it has become clear that hobby groups at school are attended by 228 (66 per cent), out of school – by 213 (62 per cent). Students most often choose hobby groups of a subject, which are mostly attended at school. Subject hobby groups are less attended out of school. Sports groups are popular among students both at school and out of school. As the research shows out of school such educational institutions as sports groups 83 (24,1 per cent), music 13(3,8) and art 10(2,9) schools, choreography 13(3,8) groups, etc. are the most attended (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Percentage of students who attend hobby groups at school and out of school



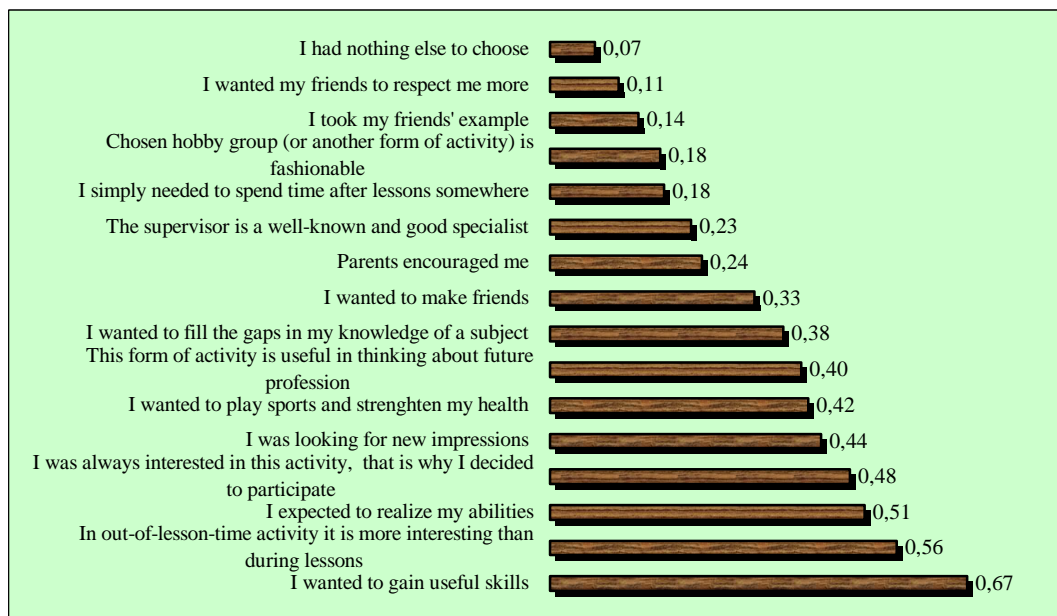
In Figure 1 general attendance of hobby groups by students both at school and out of school has been presented according to the respondents' answers. The research has shown that the most attended are subject groups (42,1 per cent), sports groups are in the second place (36,9 per cent), also the most attended are choreography (8,5 per cent), music (15,1 per cent), art (5,5 per cent) hobby groups. Ethnic culture (1,2 per cent), technical creation and tourism and regional studies (1,5 per cent) are less popular.

Having compared the attendance of out-of-lesson-time activity sessions at school and out of school according to gender the results have shown that girls' and boys' choice of hobby groups is similar. The differences are observed in choosing certain hobby groups: a bigger number of girls attend subject groups, 65,3 per cent at school and 36,7 per cent out of school, but a smaller number of girls than boys attend sport groups; girls participate in the activity of non-governmental organizations (9,3 per cent), boys do not participate there at all. Girls more actively attend hobby groups of artistic character while boys attend those of sports and technical character. Having compared the attendance and choice of out-of-lesson-time activities according to gender it is possible to observe the tendency that a bigger number of girls than boys participate in out-of-lesson-time activity at school and out of school.

Having compared the responses among girls and boys it is possible to observe that for girls in out-of-lesson-time activity it is more interesting than during lessons (62,5 per cent), they expected to realize their abilities (64,8 per cent), this form of activity is useful in thinking about future profession, it is more characteristic for girls (70,5 per cent), for boys it is not very relevant (29,5 per cent). Girls were looking for new impressions (67,3 per cent, boys – 32,7 per cent), they expected to fill gaps in their knowledge (66,7per cent, boys respectively – 33,3 per cent). For boys it is more

characteristic to be respected by friends (71,1 per cent, for girls – 28,9 per cent), supervisor’s authority, that he/she is a good and well-known specialist is more important for boys (57,7 per cent), the motive of a random choice – there was nothing else to choose (64 per cent), they needed to spend time somewhere after the lessons (57,1 per cent of the boys). Both boys and girls had similar motives when they took their friends’ example (boys – 53,1 per cent, girls – 46,9 per cent), wanted to play sports and strengthen their health (girls – 52,5 per cent, boys – 47,5 per cent).

Attending the chosen activities the expectations of those students were fulfilled the most who had chosen out-of-lesson-time activity purposefully, knowing what they are striving for in this activity and what they expect from it, the activities met the expectations of about 45-55 per cent of the students, i.e. of those who had striven there for the realization of abilities and interests. The expectations of those students who had chosen the activity incidentally, that there was nothing else to choose, who took their friends’ example, who wanted to spend time somewhere were approved to a lesser extent. In Figure 2 the most popular students’ responses expressed in popularity index have been presented (PI).



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Figure 2. The most popular students’ responses in choosing activities

The most popular motive of students’ choice is that they wanted to gain useful skills (PI=0,67), in out-of-lesson-time activity it is more interesting than during lessons (PI=0,56), they expected to realize their abilities (PI=0,51), they were looking for new impressions (PI=0,44), the supervisor is a well-known and good specialist (PI=0,23).

The most important reasons of non-attendance in out-of-lesson-time activity are related to objective reasons including the load of lessons: 27,9 of the respondents indicated that they lack time to prepare for lessons, 22,8 per cent and 7,3 per cent of the students do not attend hobby groups anymore because of a mismatch of interests and not getting anything useful respectively, 11,9 per cent of the respondents do not attend hobby groups anymore because they did not like the supervisor, 8,7 per cent of the respondents found a new activity.

Comparing the respondents’ answers according to gender and form almost equal number of the respondents answered that the load is a little too big, the data are

statistically significant $p < 0,05$, the correlation coefficient according to gender – - 0,21, according to form – -0,29, according to both parameters there is a weak reverse correlation.

As the research has shown, only a small number of the respondents participate in informal youth groups, 1,7 per cent are punks, 0,9 per cent are goths, 0,9 per cent are heavy metal fans, 2,3 per cent are rappers, the students more actively participate in the meetings of skateboarders – 7,8 per cent. The motives of participation are the following: it is a chance to socialize, to make friends (7,6 per cent), they simply spend their leisure time this way (8,4 per cent), they emphasize their idiosyncrasy this way (3,2 per cent), they do not have any other activity (0,9 per cent), out of curiosity (1,5 per cent), 2,9 per cent of the respondents participate in the activity of organized youth groups (scouts, Maironis Society).

As the research has shown, if the students were directors or organizers of out-of-lesson-time activity they would improve out-of-lesson-time activity, the respondents would pay more attention to students' needs (59 per cent), students would wish very much more organization of excursions, travels and trips at school (48,8 per cent), in schools there is lack of interesting and creative supervisors of hobby groups (39,8 per cent), they would establish new activities, strengthen material base, involve the parents in out-of-lesson-time activity (9,9 per cent), 4,4 per cent of the respondents are not interested in out-of-lesson-time activity at all. Distribution according to forms and gender. The model of out-of-lesson-time activity suggested by the respondents according to forms has shown that the seventh form (70,6 per cent) students are less interested in out-of-lesson-time activity than the ninth form (29,4 per cent) students. The respondents in both groups would strengthen material base (Form 7 – 47,7 per cent, Form 9 – 52,3 per cent). The seven-formers would wish new and interesting activities more (66,3 per cent), all the respondents would similarly pay attention to students' needs (Form 7 – 55,1 per cent, Form 9 – 44,9 per cent). The students would organize more festivals, discos, olympiads. The students would wish more interesting and newer hobby groups: figure skating, electrotechnics, break-dance, wrestling, swimming, skateboarding, yoga, etc.

The statements of the organizers of out-of-lesson-time activity at schools have proved the students' attitudes. The interviewed persons most often mentioned the respondents' aspirations in out-of-lesson-time activity to realize their abilities, interests, to creatively spend their time. In the opinion of the organizers of out-of-lesson-time activity the most attractive are hobby groups of sports and arts because there students have a rest after mental work during lessons, the organizers have also mentioned that every student chooses a hobby group according to his/her individual abilities.

The respondents have noted about unattractive hobby groups that less popular are those hobby groups that are related to a certain subject, they are more popular among very gifted students because they choose them purposefully already knowing what they are going to study after graduation from school. Such hobby groups as safe traffic, regional studies are attractive only to a small number of students.

Organizing out-of-lesson-time activity at school firstly it is attempted to meet students' needs, parents' wishes are also taken in the account. The meetings with students are organized and they express their wishes and needs. The attempts are made according to possibilities to meet the most various needs of students, the space for creativity and expression is given, the awards are given for achievements.

Financing of out-of-lesson-time activity is insufficient, only the work of group supervisor is paid and other expenses such as trips, clothes, other instruments are paid by parents, school does not have money for that, sponsors are looked for but usually they are students' parents too. Theatre groups lack expense for decorations, clothes, the sponsors are the parents as well, sometimes they manage to earn showing performances. It could be solved by complementary financing and introducing the "basket" of out-of-lesson-time activity.

The main obstacles and difficulties in organizing out-of-lesson-time activity is financing, lack of attractive and competent supervisors having management and social abilities.

Therefore, in organizing out-of-lesson-time activity the following is very important: to start the formulation of activity strategy of the institution from finding out clients' needs and creation of demand database; to organize research that would help to reveal what motivates the clients (students) to choose one or another activity of leisure time after lessons and identify the reasons of non-attendance of already suggested activities; to encourage the pedagogues of complementary education to improve their management, social competence; to manage demand responsibly choosing the indicators reflecting the result of the activity of complementary education; to improve the promotion of the service (information, advertisements).

CONCLUSIONS

1. The analysis of scientific literature has shown that the occupation of the leisure time of children and youth is a social problem that should be solved: it is necessary to help students to meet their needs of self-expression, develop abilities. Suitably directed spending of students' organized leisure time is an important factor of early prevention and teenager's self-expression.
2. Students' lack of time is the reason of non-attendance of out-of-lesson-time activity and it is more characteristic for the students of the ninth form, 61,3 per cent of the respondents answered "Yes", while in the seventh form – 38,7 per cent. Although the majority of the respondents have stated that lack of time (budget) is the main reason of non-attendance of out-of-lesson-time activity, however, quite a big number of the respondents participate in some hobby group. 25,7 per cent of the respondents cannot actively participate in out-of-lesson-time activity because of lack of time and too big load of learning, 32,3 per cent because of lack of time for doing their homework, 11,9 per cent of the students did not like the supervisor of a hobby group.
3. The results of the research have shown that students willingly participate in various out-of-lesson-time activities in their class and at school, they attend hobby groups both at school and out of school. In mainstream schools of Šiauliai Town and out of school hobby groups of sports (36,9 per cent), arts (29,1 per cent), school subjects (42,1 per cent) are dominating.
4. Dominating motives encouraging students to participate in out-of-lesson-time activity are related to the formation of skills and improvement of knowledge (67,2 per cent), getting ready for future profession (40,4 per cent), wish to play sports and strengthen health (41,6 per cent), supervisor's competences (22,7 per cent), expectation to realize one's abilities (50,6 per cent). Only a small part of the students (1,6 per cent) participate in informal youth meetings.
5. Organizers of out-of-lesson-time activity often face the following main obstacles: financing, lack of attractive and competent supervisors, sometimes is difficult to

arrange time for out-of-lesson-time activity, because not all students have equal number of lessons.

6. Students admit that out-of-lesson-time activity is quite interesting and useful, however, it needs to be improved, there is a wish of a bigger variety and novelty. If the respondents were directors or organizers of out-of-lesson-time activity they would improve out-of-lesson-time activity, they would pay more attention to students' needs (59,6 per cent), students would wish very much more organization of excursions, travels and trips at school (48,8 per cent), in schools there is lack of interesting and creative supervisors of hobby groups (39,8 per cent), they would establish new activities, strengthen material base, involve the parents in out-of-lesson-time activity (9,9 per cent), 4,4 per cent of the respondents are not interested in out-of-lesson-time activity at all.

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