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CURRENT PARENTS AND CHILDREN'S LEISURE TIME

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Abstract. This paper presents research focused on investigating contemporary parents and selected aspects of their influence on children's leisure time, emphasizing how and to what extent parents organize their children's leisure time. Parents from different regions of Slovakia participated in the research, and we processed the results using descriptive statistics. For comparison, we used the Student T-test, Mann-Whitney Test (for comparing two groups), and Kruskal-Wallis Test (for comparing three or more groups). The research showed that respondents judge current parenting as different and significantly more challenging compared to the past. They perceive differences in the sphere of leisure time of families, especially in the fact that parents give fewer responsibilities to children than the previous generation of parents. The research also shows that the problem of contemporary families is the absence of time spent together by parents and children, the absence of family communication, and the high level of organization of children's leisure time by parents. The authors point out that parents in a postmodern society have to deal with the difficulties of ensuring the family's economic stability, which is why two-career marriages are a reality in contemporary families. It has been proven that today's parents are busier with work and are more engaged outside the family, as a result of which they spend less time with their children, which negatively affects their upbringing, there is a lack of quality family communication, and children feel lonely and deprived of parental attention. It was also found that in the modern family, students are involved in housework much less than in the past, so they mostly have no experience of work in this aspect. It is emphasized that the compensation of parental influence with other means of education - media, technology (smartphones, tablets, computers), and the virtual world (social networks) is alarming. The decline in the development of reading interests in the family is outlined, and the tendency of parents to replace the joint reading of children's books with modern technologies is revealed.

Keywords: family, parents, children, leisure time, leisure-time activities, family upbringing.

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of leisure time is given wide attention in scientific circles because the concept relates to pedagogical, sociological, economic, cultural, biological, and other approaches. Leisure time is an integral part of every person's life, plays a significant role in the process of overall personality development, and largely determines the quality of social functioning in society. It plays a special role in a child's life and determines personality development's physical, emotional, and social spheres.

The length and quality of leisure time have varied in each historical period. In the postmodern

reality, we see a change in the standard of living of the family, the social status of the family has changed, including the need for leisure time. The amount of leisure time, the preferred leisure activities, and the possibilities of spending leisure time are changing. As stated by Kožuchová and Čavojský (2021), nowadays, there is an increasing variety of ways to use leisure time. New forms of entertainment and communication, multifaceted offers of consumerism and mass media, games, sports, and diverse ways of disseminating culture and education appear.

Although leisure is a normal part of our everyday life, as Kraus (2017) writes, it is nevertheless specific in each family. By exploring the issue of leisure time in contemporary families, we can discover the vital role that parental guidance plays in shaping a child's extracurricular activities.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The changes that society has undergone in recent decades have affected the life of families, their structure, functioning, relationships, and the sphere of parental education. In principle, the processes of social change impact the lives of families, and therefore also on how parents bring up their children, what they consider important in their upbringing, and what importance they attach to organizing or spending leisure time together.

Parents and their children find themselves in a new reality that determines, to a significant extent, the parental role and the way of raising a child. Today's parents face many more obstacles to family functioning than in the past. The new societal situation has brought many threats, including neoliberalism – absolute freedom and independence. The individual is, first and foremost, a free person; what is essential are one's needs, ambitions, and plans at the expense of the relational sphere in family life. Another feature of contemporary parenting is the infantilization of behavior, consisting of the proliferation of behavior in adults that has hitherto been characteristic of children. This infantilization includes volatility, impulsiveness, emotional instability, and the violation of generally accepted norms. One of the fundamental changes in contemporary parenting is the consumerist way of life, which reflects the excessive material consumption that has become the primary purpose of life. Values that in the past were considered superficial and useless are now recognized and preferred in today's society. Judging oneself and others through a material prism has become an indicator of human worth. Success and money have become the criteria for judging modern people. As a result of the pursuit of success, family life is taking a back seat, and relational ties within the family are weakening (Dobrołowicz, 2018).

Postmodern parents must overcome the difficulties of ensuring the family's economic stability. As Azudová (2000) mentions that „the financial income of parents influences the everyday life of the family, material security and spending of leisure time“ (p. 65). The family's economic stability is related to the pressure on parents' employment and uncertainty in the labor market, taking away from the parents' potential to invest time and energy in raising children and intimate relationships. As Potočárová (2008) states, „parents' time spent together with their children is decreasing, but parents' involvement outside the family, especially in employment, is increasing, due to the ever-increasing demands for high workloads and demands on the length of working hours“ (p. 76). Similarly, Kraus et al. (2020) say that work is a „catalyst“ of family life. Parents are exhausted, overloaded, have a permanent fear of losing their jobs, and therefore work even in the time reserved for the family. There is less time for the child and leisure time together. Parents compensate for their inability to devote time to the family by buying children whatever they ask for, which we call „monetizing childhood“.

The reality of today's families is two-career marriages, whether because of economic necessity or because women want to pursue careers outside the private sphere of the family. As stated by several authors (Mendelová & Pavličková, 2020; Gasparez, 2018), today's parents have a strong

orientation toward career success, which is associated with a lack of time for raising a child. In some cases, emotional deprivation of the child may be a consequence. As Zakrzewska (2013) writes, women's workload changes the whole family's lifestyle. Working women are much more mobile (they have a driving license and a car) than before; they engage in various social activities, develop themselves, and improve their leisure time. As a result of higher work activity, women naturally spend less time at home, in the company of their family.

The principles of neoliberal society and the related democratization of relations have negatively influenced contemporary family education. With the coming of the 21st century, as Hajzler (2021, p. 103) mentions, „we are witnessing a turquoise model of the family, where parents view children as equals, education is built on the search for consensus, and the child gradually becomes a protected demigod“. Similarly, Dobrołowicz (2018) writes that „child-centrism“ has brought about a change in the status of the child, who has become an equal member of the family; what is essential is his or her individuality and uniqueness, which the parent respects. On the other hand, the child in the neoliberal world constantly competes with other values important to parents, e.g. entertainment, job prosperity, and a comfortable lifestyle.

These contemporary parenting and child-raising phenomena affect the family's way of life. A fundamental issue in the life of today's families is „having family time“ and the ability to use it. Although the time parents and children spend together should be enriching, many people consider it exhausting. The causes are disproportions in the amount of free time, excessive work and school responsibilities, the information explosion and negative aspects of technological progress, unhealthy lifestyles associated with constant stress and rush, and others (Kraus et al., 2020).

Various factors determine how families spend their leisure time. As Kraus et al. (2020) write, the family's social status and lifestyle (value code, family relationships, activities, and interests) determine the choice of leisure activities in families. An equally important component of the quality of leisure time of the family is the amount of leisure time of parents and children. At present, we can observe a time disproportion in leisure time. On the one hand, many families have an excess of free time (e.g. unemployed parents) which they do not use efficiently and appropriately. One of the reasons for this is the lack of financial resources for leisure activities. On the other hand, some families suffer from a time deficit in leisure time. The most common causes are parents' excessive work obligations or children's school overload.

Parents play a significant role in the organization, quality, and extent of the family's leisure time. According to Sowa-Behtane (2015), the following criteria appear to be significant: parents' profession, their opinions, traditions, values, and attitudes towards education. These criteria influence parents' leisure time behavior, hence the choice of leisure activities. The main task of parents is to show children the importance of effectively spending leisure time and how to use it. According to the findings of Durka (2011), up to 70 % of parents stated that their children prefer similar interests as they do. The imitated leisure activities were: reading books (36 %), watching TV (22 %), and computer activities (20 %). Kowalczyk (2015) states that parents' education, family's material conditions, income, household furnishings, and the amount of parents' free time influence the ability to guide a child to spend leisure time effectively. Research by Durka (2011) confirmed that parents' education and interests determine family leisure time and influence the choice of leisure activities.

The children's personality traits can determine the family's leisure time and its members. According to Przygońska (2018), children's abilities, interests, temperament, attitudes to the environment and themselves, and intelligence level appear significant. Psychological personality traits such as dutifulness, openness, experience, helpfulness, extraversion, and emotional sensitivity also determine children's free time. According to Sowa-Behtane (2015), the child's age plays a significant role in family leisure time. With preschool children, the family prefers different leisure time ways than with adolescent children. The children attend interest groups at preschool

age, often based on the parent's choice. In contrast, as children grow, they increasingly choose their extracurricular activities according to their interests.

The family structure also influences the leisure time of parents and children. As Kalil et al. (2014) found out, children living with single mothers or in a nonbiological cohabiting family structure (stepparent families) receive a lower total time investment than those in two biological married parent families. Stepparents invest less time and motivation in childrearing. In a single-parent household, one parent has to manage all household, childrearing, and work responsibilities; therefore, the time spent with the child is shorter.

The family's place of residence is crucial regarding the variability of leisure activities. As Łukasiewicz-Wieleba (2019) found, compared to urban settlements, there is less choice of activities and extracurricular activities in rural settings, which limits the development of children's special skills. A significant problem for parents is distance, which discourages enrolling children in music schools or sports clubs, as these extracurricular activities occur several times a week. On the other hand, the author found that some parents overburdened their children in the urban environment by implementing different types of extracurricular activities.

In many families, the family budget is the determining factor for leisure time. As Tubbs et al. (2005) state, all families, regardless of economic circumstances, have room for routine daily activities that positively influence the building and strengthening of parent-child relationships. Low-income households are at risk of absent family time. Mothers are often overburdened by work commitments and the time demands of employers, so they do not give enough time and attention to the family, experiencing increased depression, anxiety, and sleep deprivation. However, sufficient material provision for the family and parental time will not ensure that parents spend leisure time effectively with their children. More frequent visits to shopping malls and material consumption do not create space for parental interaction with the child. Similarly, parents' long working hours, even if associated with higher financial remuneration, can be detrimental to time for relationship building within the family. For developing parent-child interaction, it is necessary to create space for conversation within the family's leisure time, whether during mealtimes, cleaning, walks, bathing, reading, or bedtime.

Several studies have mapped leisure time in contemporary families. The first group of findings draws attention to the extent and quality of parents' and children's leisure interactions, while the second group of studies maps children's leisure time in families.

Gamrat (2021) investigated how much time parents spend with their children during weekdays and weekends. On weekdays, 43 % of parents spend more than two hours a day with their children. During the weekend, up to 64 % of parents spend more than three hours a day with their children. Preferred activities are walks and trips (79 %), sports activities (47 %), board games (40 %), and reading books (37 %). The most common extracurricular activities are language and sports clubs. Similarly, Žumárová (2015) found that parents spend 2 to 3 hours daily with their children. Widawski et al. (2017) investigated the family's most frequent forms of leisure time. The most frequent activities were bicycle trips, playing computer games, or watching television. Then, there followed visiting family, hiking, and swimming. Kraus et al. (2020) report similar findings. According to them, the most frequent leisure activities of the family include: watching television, gardening, visiting the theatre, friends, trips, walks, and playing board games.

As indicated by the above research findings and the research of Henryk (2015), parents' and children's time together is often filled by electronic media. Technological progress has become one of the most critical threats to the family. It causes more frequent passive spending of family leisure time, which results in the limitation of creativity and negatively affects the intellectual sphere of individuals. As Durka (2011) found, the dominant leisure activity of the family is watching television programs (60 %). Correspondingly, Tubbs et al. (2005), and Kowalczyk (2015) write that the modern ritual of today's family is the „TV diner“. Television viewing is often the primary

source of family entertainment, which can weaken intergenerational transmissions and the demise of the intra-family bond.

The authors Andrews and Yee (2006) highlight the importance of how children spend their leisure time. According to these authors, spending leisure time in families develops the child's „funds of knowledge“ they transfer to school education. Similarly, King et al. (2011) say that family leisure forms a kind of „superstructure“ of the child's education, influencing the child's aspirations for further studies. Many families invest in family holidays and trips that develop several types of capital in the child (human – travel experiences, social – insight into a different culture and life abroad, cultural – learning foreign languages, and developing intercultural awareness).

According to Kowalczyk (2015), children of younger school age have an average of four hours of free time every day. An alarming finding is that almost 70 % of children watch television in their free time. Up to 40 % of these children spend 1 to 2 hours a day watching television, and 16 % of the children surveyed spend more than 2 hours a day watching television. Sowa-Behtane (2015) found that the most frequent activities of children at home are creative activities – painting, drawing, modeling with plasticine (58 %), watching TV (41 %), helping with parental activities – cooking, washing, ironing (33 %) and using the computer or laptop (25 %). 16 % of respondents mentioned other ways of spending leisure time, namely dancing, singing, reading, talking to grandparents, and building with Lego blocks. Outside the home, the most common activities for children and parents were entertainment (79 %), physical activity – walking, skating, ball games, cycling (54 %), visits (37 %), additional activities – swimming lessons, gymnastics, language learning, ballet, karate (29 %), and attending religious events (20 %). As Kasprzak (2014) reports, the most frequent leisure activities of pupils aged 10-14 are: watching television and communicating with friends using the Internet. Less frequent forms of leisure were trips to the cinema or theatre, participation in interest groups, and other social activities.

Worryingly, as research findings by Wais (2014) suggest, there has been a decline in children's active leisure time in recent years, particularly in their physical and artistic development (music, physical and artistic extracurricular activities). Similarly, Mendelová and Pavličková (2020) write that passivity increasingly characterizes children's free time. One of the leading causes is the child's consumerist lifestyle, which is subject to advertising pressure from the media from early childhood. Children perceive advertisements for toys, games, and clothes, so shopping malls become their focal point for leisure. The passivity of leisure time and less spontaneous movement weaken the child's motor skills. More often, we observe a lower level of motor and manual skills, a lack of independence, and an absence of creativity.

Several authors (Durka, 2011; Kromka & Ptašník-Cholewa, 2016; Matějček, 2017; Mendelová & Pavličková, 2020; Kožuchová & Čavojský, 2021; Woźniak & Adasiewicz, 2021) agree that parents should organize and control children's free time for its full enjoyment. According to Woźniak and Adasiewicz (2021), appropriate free time stimulates the child's overall development and arouses the need for activity within the framework of physical culture and general activity. Similarly, Wais (2014, p. 106) states that „well-organized free time develops the child's interests and minimizes the emergence of deviant behavior and the effects of negative peer group influence“. Widawski et al. (2017) say that parents, by organizing their children's free time, significantly influence the educational aspect of their development and shape their behavior. They teach their children to use their free time usefully, motivate them to be active, and deepen their interests. As Budnyk et al. (2020) write, properly organized leisure time for children allows the development of cognitive aspects of personality and satisfies their social, recreational, physical, or aesthetic needs.

As research findings by W. Fan, C. M. Williams (2009) organizing children's leisure time reduces the risk of passive leisure (e.g., by using digital technologies). It is possible to observe better learning outcomes if parents restrict their child's access to digital devices. Unrestricted use of electronic technologies can cause a child to have „no time“ for other activities. When guiding

leisure time, the children are more likely to engage in constructive and learning activities of their choice. Similarly, Jakubowicz-Bryx (2015) suggests that watching television crowds out other activities from a child's time, such as self-education, playing with peers, reading books, sports, and other interests.

Although the child's organized leisure time is a favorable prerequisite for developing the child's personality, it is necessary to consider the degree and extent of parental guidance. Parents make a well-intentioned effort to plan their child's extracurricular activities to prevent misuse of free time. Every parent must remember that we can arouse and destroy a child's interest. If parents force a child into an activity, it may achieve the opposite effect of what they originally planned (Sowa-Behtane, 2015). Excessive planning of the children's life and rearranging extracurricular activities negatively impact their development, motivation in personal interests, rest, and regeneration. Nowadays, we are increasingly seeing over-scheduled parenting. Parents tend to over-plan, conceiving in the long term about what life goals and achievements their children should attain. They adapt the children's free time to their ideas and plans (Helus, 2004).

Just as children's over-organized leisure activity adversely determines their development, motivation, and future direction, so can children's unorganized and uncontrolled leisure time have an equally adverse effect.

The organization of a child's leisure time is made more difficult for parents by the reality of everyday life in our society (different value systems, changes in the range of roles, different preferences in parenting styles, a broken symbiosis between work and family). The excessive burden of school duties is also a problem, and children have neither the motivation nor the opportunity to engage in extracurricular activities (Przygońska, 2018). Many families are affected by material poverty, and parents are busy with current problems of providing for the family. Thus, they ignore what their children do and how and where they spend their free time (Cęcelek, 2016).

Insufficiently organized extracurricular activities cause the children to have an „excess“ of free time. They do not use this time effectively and therefore choose (even unconsciously) the wrong ways of spending their free time – most often in a passive form (Kowalczyk, 2015). The children feel bored and lonely, so excessive leisure time becomes a danger to their development. Several authors point out the consequences in the form of the emergence of socio-pathological phenomena (Wais, 2014; Kowalczyk, 2015; Kominarec, 2022; Cęcelek, 2016; Woźniak & Adasiewicz, 2021; Budnyk et al., 2020).

The risks are visible not only in the emergence of socio-pathological phenomena in the children's behavior but also in their personal motivation and future aspirations. Sowa-Behtane (2015) writes that improperly organized leisure time causes the absence of opportunities for developing a child's interests and talents. Parents ignore the children's needs and interests, thus jeopardizing their development and future direction.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE, METHODOLOGY, AND DATA

The above theoretical background points to the fact that despite the changes in the contemporary family's lifestyle, leisure is still an essential and integral part of every family's life. Changes in the socio-economic factors and changes within the family determine the current parenting role. These have also resulted in a change in the parental role, which is reflected, for example, in the amount of leisure time available to parents and children, in the way of spending leisure time in families, in parents' opinions, ways, and degree of control over children's leisure time. For this reason, we focused our research on investigating selected aspects of leisure time in contemporary families. In the context of the issue under study, we focused on two selected aspects of contemporary parenting: 1. parents' evaluation through statements about parents, 2. the extent

and way of parents' organization of children's leisure time.

The aim of the research was:

1. to map respondents' views of current parents;
2. to investigate the extent and ways of organization of children's leisure time by parents;
3. to determine whether the selected demographic characteristics of respondents (education, residence, income, and age) determine their opinions about contemporary parents.

For the needs of our research, we set out the research questions:

- How do respondents rate current parents? Are they the same as in the past? Is parenting now perceived as more challenging compared to the past?
- Do parents have enough time for their children?
- Do they organize and plan their children's leisure time?

Are there differences in respondents' views of current parents concerning selected demographic characteristics?

The research sample consisted of 205 parents from different regions of Slovakia with at least one child. To obtain the research data, we used a non-standardized questionnaire. The questionnaire involved bipolar scales that contained opposite adjectives at extreme points. The questionnaire also contained Likert scales for measuring the respondents' attitudes and opinions to specify their level of agreement or disagreement with the given statements on a 5 – degree scale: 1 – I totally agree, 2 – I rather agree, 3 – I cannot express myself, 4 – I rather disagree, 5 – I disagree.

The results obtained by the questionnaire method, we evaluated by using descriptive statistical methods: number, average, percentages, and standard deviation. To compare the research data, we used the statistical methods Student t-test, Mann-Whitney Test (for comparison of two groups), and Kruskal-Wallis Test (for comparison of three or more groups).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the context of the above research objectives, we investigated the respondents' views of their current parents and how parents organize their children's leisure time. At the same time, we verified whether the opinions of the respondents (parents) concerning their socio-demographic indicators (income, education, age, place of residence) on the statements presented by us are significantly different.

The first group of questions was formulated in the form of bipolar scales with opposite adjectives on both sides of the scale, on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 – very, 2 – rather, 3 – undecided, 4 – quite, 5 – very). We intended to find out how respondents rate current parents, whether they think they are the same as in the past, and whether parenting is more challenging now compared to the past. We verified respondents' views through statements and presented their mean values on a scale of 1 to 5 in Tab. 1.

Tab. 1

Parent rating – all respondents together

Statements about parents / Descriptive Statistics	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
1 Current parents are the same as in the past	205	1	5	4,03	1,098
2 Being a parent today is more challenging than ever	205	1	5	*2,205	1,2115
3 Parents pursue their interests more than those of the child	205	1	5	*2,922	1,2772
4 They tend to do everything instead of the children to have peace of mind	205	1	5	*2,220	1,655
5 They give children fewer responsibilities than the	205	1	5	1,541	0,8428

previous generation of parents					
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Source: author

From the data in Tab. 1, we can see that respondents expressed a relatively high level of disagreement (4.03 on a scale of 1 – 5) with the statement „Current parents are the same as in the past“. This attitude implies that they perceive differences between current parents and parents of previous generations. The rating of another statement „Being a parent today is more challenging than ever“ shows that they consider the current parenting role more challenging than in the past. Respondents expressed partial agreement (2.205 on a scale of 1 – 5) with the above statement.

The differences between the current generation of parents and parents of previous generations were ascertained through the statements „Parents pursue their interests more than those of the child“, „They tend to do everything instead of the children so that they have peace of mind“, „They give fewer responsibilities to the children than the previous generation of parents“. Respondents agreed with all the statements. The highest level of agreement (1.541) was with the statement „They give children fewer responsibilities than the previous generation of parents“. Corresponding with this finding was a weaker agreement (2.220) with the statement „They tend to do everything instead of the children so that they have peace of mind“. When evaluating the statement „Parents pursue their interests more than these of the child“, the ambivalent, ambiguous attitude of the respondents was revealed.

The above data corresponds with the practice of current upbringing in families. Current parents are quite liberal in the upbringing of their children, do not set clear rules for children, do not require the fulfillment of obligations, or require from children fewer obligations than the previous generation of parents.

In the context of the above statements, we investigated whether there were statistically significant differences in respondents' views of current parents concerning their selected demographic characteristics. We tested the statistical significance of the differences in respondents' opinions of the statements we presented for their education, residence, income, and age. Statements where statistically significant differences emerged are marked* in Tab. 1.

When evaluating statements 2, 3, and 4, there were statistically significant differences; however, each statement was about a different variable, i.e., a different demographic indicator of the respondents.

According to Tab. 2 and Fig. 1, respondents partially agree with statement 2 „Being a parent today is more challenging than ever“. When evaluating this statement, statistically significant differences concerning the respondents' place of residence (urban, rural) emerged. Respondents from the city expressed a higher level of agreement with the statement, i.e. they firmly believe that the parenting role is more challenging now than in the past. They consider parenting in the city more challenging than in the countryside.

Tab. 2

Parent rating – respondents by place of residence

Statements about parents / Descriptive Statistics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
2 Being a parent today is more challenging than ever	City	108	2,037	1,1595	0,1116
	Village	97	2,392	1,2463	0,1265

Source: author

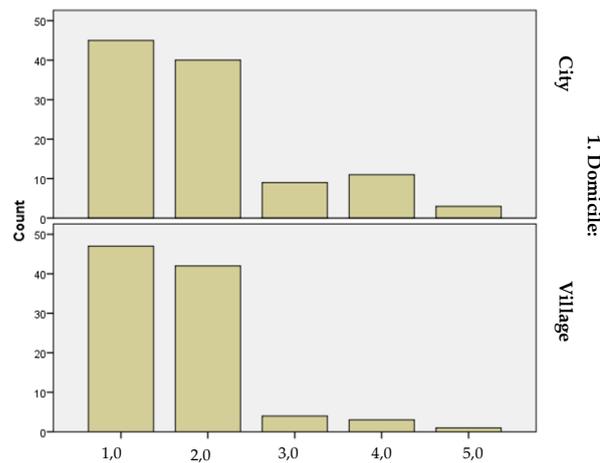


Fig. 1. Being a parent today is more challenging than ever – city and village

Source: author

Table 1 shows that statement 3 „Parents pursue their interests more than the interests of the child“ revealed an ambivalent, ambiguous attitude of the respondents towards current parents (2.922 on a scale of 1-5). When we evaluated the statement concerning the demographic characteristics of the respondents, there were statistically significant differences in the income of the respondents. Respondents with the lowest income (below €500) expressed the highest level of agreement with the statement. In contrast, respondents with the highest average income (above €2001) expressed the lowest agreement with the statement. We can conclude that the slightest positive opinion about parents' values and interests was shown by respondents with the lowest income, as shown in Figure 2.

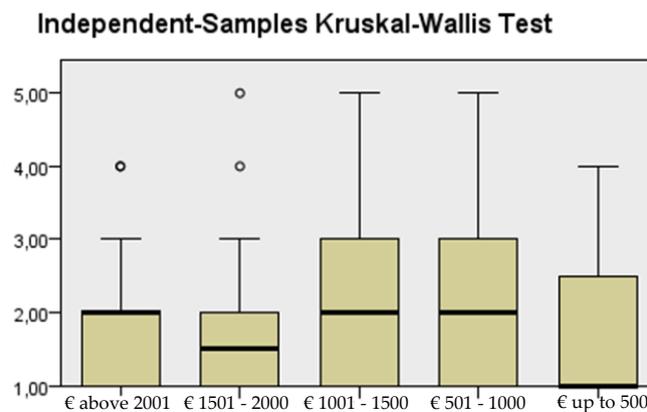


Fig. 2. Parents pursue their interests more than those of the child – by the income of respondents

Source: author

Table 1 also shows that statement 4 „They tend to do everything instead of the children so that they have peace of mind“ showed a partial level of agreement with the statement (2.220 on a scale of 1 – 5). When we evaluated the statement concerning the demographic characteristics of the respondents, statistically significant differences were evident for the age of the respondents. The age group of respondents below 50 years expressed a higher level of agreement with the statement, while the highest age group of respondents (above 51 years) took a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards the statement about the tendency of parents to perform duties instead of children. We illustrated these findings in Figure 3.

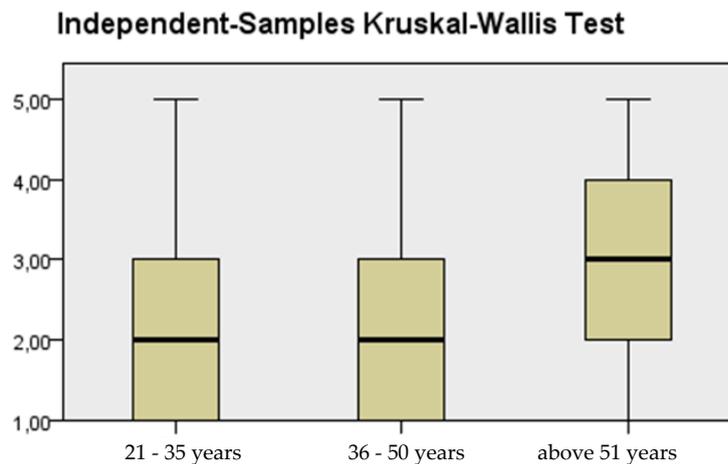


Fig. 3. Parents tend to do everything instead of the children to have peace of mind – according to age
Source: author

The second group of questions, also formulated in the form of Likert scales, focused on the respondents' views on the extent and ways of parents' organization of children's leisure time. The Likert scale contained five levels (1 – completely agree, 2 – rather agree, 3 – cannot express an opinion, 4 – rather disagree, 5 – completely disagree). We intended to determine whether parents devote enough time to their children and whether they tend to organize and plan their children's free time. We collected the respondents' opinions through statements (No. 6 – 11) and presented their average values in Table 3.

Tab. 3

Parents and children's leisure time – all respondents together

Statements /	Descriptive Statistics	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
6 They do not have time for children and do not spend enough time with them		205	1	5	2,273	1,1305
7 Parents behave extremely towards their children: they give them too little or too much time		205	1	5	*2,171	1,1398
8 There is a lack of quality communication between parents and children in families		205	1	5	*2,146	1,1194
9 They hardly read to their children. Instead, they play them something on pc, tablet, phone...		205	1	5	*1,590	0,9691
10 Parents do not ask children to participate in household chores		205	1	5	2,273	1,2301
11 They organize children's leisure time through clubs, school, sports ...		205	1	5	*1,810	0,9640

Source: author

From the data in Table 3, we can see that respondents expressed partial agreement with all the statements we presented. The highest level of agreement was for statement 9 „They hardly read to their children. Instead, they play them something on pc, tablet, phone...” (1.490 on a scale of 1 – 5). The respondents' opinions show that parents „Do not have time for their children; they do not spend enough time with them”. This approach, in turn, is reflected in the lack of communication between parents and children, as expressed by the partial agreement with statement No. 9 – „There is a lack of quality communication between parents and children in families”. As a result of the above findings, or for this very reason, parents „organize their children's leisure time through clubs, school, sports ...”.

The data in Table 1 show that parents give children fewer responsibilities than the previous

generation of parents or tend to carry out the responsibilities instead of the children. This finding corresponds with the partial agreement with statement 10 „They do not ask children to participate in household chores“, which showed a value of 2.273 (on a scale of 1 – 5).

In the context of the above statements about parents and children's leisure time, we investigated whether there were statistically significant differences in respondents' views of current parents concerning their selected demographic characteristics. We tested the statistical significance of the differences in respondents' opinions of the statements we presented for their education, residence, income, and age. Statements with statistically significant differences are marked* in Table 3*.

There were statistically significant differences when evaluating statements 7, 8, 9, and 11. However, each statement was about a different variable, i.e., a different demographic indicator of the respondents. More detailed findings are presented differentially in the following tables and figures.

According to Table 4, as well as figures 4 and 5, we can see that there is a partial agreement with the statements „Parents behave extremely towards children: they give them too little or too much time“ and „They organize children's leisure time through clubs, school, sports ...“. Statistical analysis of both statements showed statistically significant differences concerning the respondents' place of residence (urban, rural). Respondents from the city expressed a higher degree of agreement with the statement „Parents behave extremely towards children: they give them too little or too much time“, while respondents from the countryside are more convinced that parents „Organise children's free time through clubs, school, sports ...“.

Tab. 4

Parents and children's leisure time – respondents by place of residence

Statements about parents /	Descriptive statistics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
7 Parents behave extremely towards children: they give them too little or too much time	City	108	2,037	1,1943	0,1149
	village	97	2,392	1,0454	0,1061
11 Parents organize children's leisure time through clubs, school, sports ...	City	108	1,954	1,0798	0,1039
	village	97	1,649	0,7911	0,0803

Source: author

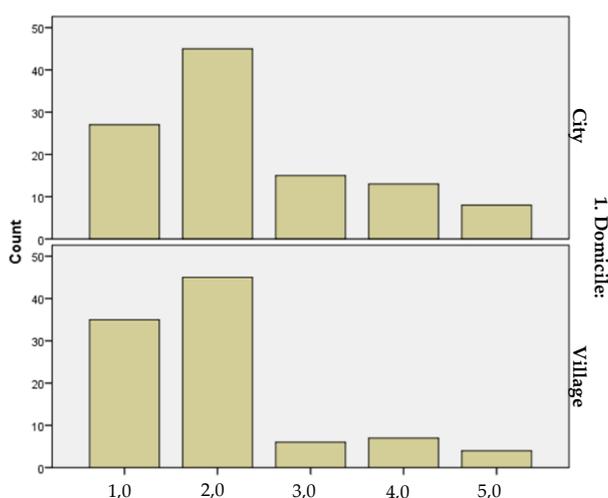


Fig. 4. Parents and children's leisure time – statement 7

Source: author

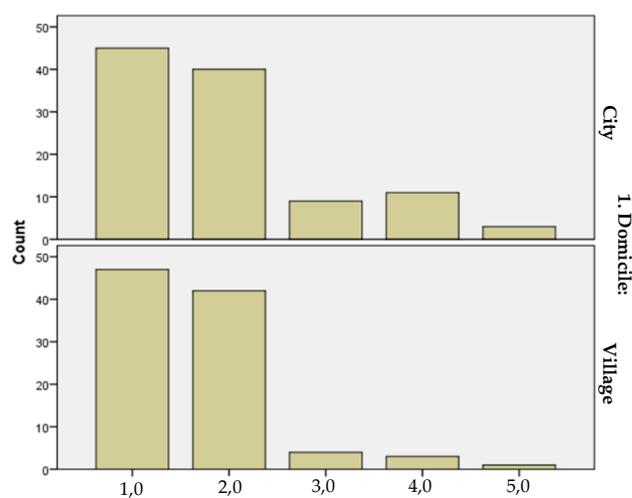


Fig. 5. Parents and children's leisure time – statement 11

Source: author

Another demographic indicator that showed statistically significant differences was the age of the respondents. This variable was evident in the evaluation of statements 7 and 8, as presented in Tables 5a and 5b and Figures 6 and 7. The data show that the oldest respondents (above 51 years of age) have an ambivalent, indeterminate opinion about how much time parents devote to their children. In contrast, the younger respondents (under 50) agree more with the statement „Parents behave extremely towards their children: they devote too little or too much time to them“.

Similarly, when evaluating the statement about the absence of communication in families, respondents above 51 had ambivalent to disagreeing views. In contrast, younger respondents showed a higher level of agreement with the absence of family communication. For both statements, we can observe a more negative view of current parents among younger respondents.

Tab. 5a

Parents and children's leisure time – respondents by age

Statement	Age	Mean rank
Parents behave extremely towards children: they devote too little or too much time to them.	21 – 35 years	100,66
	36 – 50 years	99,24
	above 51 years	136,31
There is a lack of quality communication between parents and children in families.	21 – 35 years	103,79
	36 – 50 years	97,71
	above 51 years	133,28

Source: author

Tab. 5b

Parents and children's leisure time – respondents by age

	Parents behave extremely towards children: they devote too little or too much time to them.	There is a lack of quality communication between parents and children in families
Chi-Square	7,053	6,394
p	0,029	0,041

Source: author

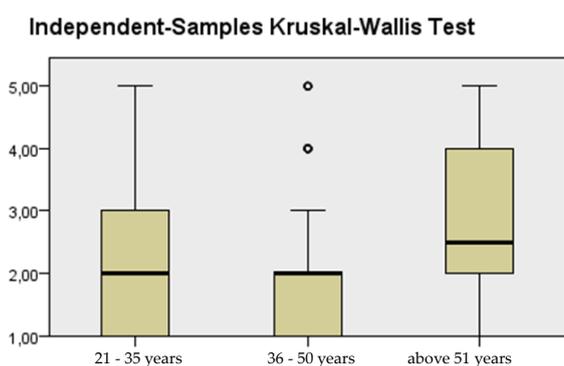


Fig. 6. Parents behave extremely towards children: they devote too little or too much time to them – age

Source: author

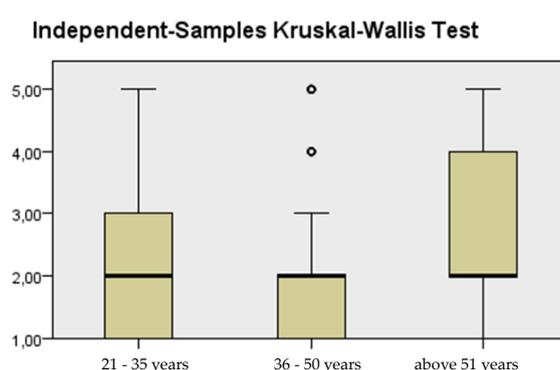


Fig. 7. There is a lack of quality communication between parents and children in families – by age

Source: author

We also tested the statistical significance of the differences in respondents' opinions about the statements we presented concerning their education. When evaluating statement No. 9 „Parents do not read much to their children. Instead, they play them something on pc, tablet, phone“, we found

statistically significant differences in the respondents' answers. Table 6 and Figure 8 shows that respondents with higher education expressed less agreement with the statement than those with lower education. Therefore, parents with higher education place more emphasis on developing their children's reading literacy. They read to them more often or buy books for them, and therefore agree with the statement to a lesser extent.

Tab. 6

Parents and children's leisure time – respondents by education

Statement	Education	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
9 They read little to their children. Instead, they play them something on pc, tablet, phone...	primary and secondary	91	1,429	0,7171	0,0752
	higher	114	1,719	1,1171	0,1046

Source: author

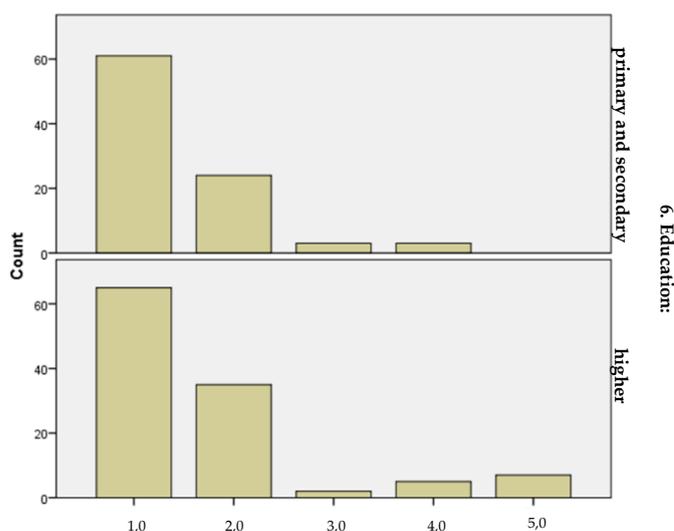


Fig. 8. They read little to their children. Instead, they play something on pc, tablet, or phone – by education
Source: author

5. CONCLUSIONS

In the present study, we focused on the issue of leisure time in contemporary families from the perspective of the respondents – parents, with an emphasis on the characteristics of contemporary parents and how they organize their children's leisure time. Comparing parenting practices shows that parenting has never been as complicated as today. As Brezinka (1996, p. 134) mentions, its complexity stems from the fact that „we are living and educating in an age of cultural liberalism, i.e. in an age of diversity of ideals and value attitudes“. The results of our research also suggest a perception of contemporary parenting as a more demanding social role compared to the past. As Roskam et al. (2017) say, there has been increased pressure on parents to raise successful and ambitious children in recent decades. Social changes, globalization, and the modernization of life in society have made parenting an increasingly challenging mission.

Parents in a postmodern society have to deal with the difficulties of ensuring the family's economic stability, which is why two-career marriages are a reality in contemporary families. The current era expects parents to perform; parents are busier with work and more involved outside the family, resulting in little time spent with children. Consequently, quality communication is absent in families. The results of our research also confirmed this fact. According to our respondents, current parents do not have enough time for their children, do not devote enough

time to them, but provide them with free time in extracurricular and leisure organizations. At the same time, our findings show that despite the increasing free time of children, parents do not tend to involve children in household chores, or they do chores instead of children. The above corresponds with the findings of several authors, e.g., Puliková (2021), and Besčasnaya (2015), according to whom the modern problems of the contemporary family include the lack of communication between parents and children (children feel loneliness and lack of parental attention). Parents are too busy with their work duties, so children feel emotional deficits and loneliness. The high workload of mothers and fathers (workload, domestic responsibilities, childrearing, active participation in society) means there is no time for the family. A similar observation is made by Dočekal et al. (2019), pointing out the great danger of contemporary families, namely the lack of time. Parents do not have time for their children, and compensating for their absence are the media (the Internet), technology (smartphones, tablets, computers), and the virtual world (social networks).

In addition to the lack of parental time for children, the decline in the development of reading interests in families is an alarming finding. Our research confirmed the tendency of parents to replace shared reading between parents and children with modern technology. Parents with higher education emphasize developing their children's reading literacy, and they read to them more often or buy books. Also, the study by Siedlaczek-Szwed and Jałowicka-Frania (2021) shows that shared reading in families is being replaced by digital technologies, most often watching television.

Overall, we can conclude that our results correspond with previous domestic and foreign research in several observed traits. Their common denominator is the finding that being a parent today is more challenging than ever before, which also impacts the area of family leisure. This situation is due to the increasing demands on parents and the lack of parental time, often caused by parental involvement outside the family sphere.

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Елеонора Менделова, Лібуша Гужикова. Сучасне дозвілля батьків і дітей. *Журнал Прикарпатського університету імені Василя Стефаника*, 10 (1) (2023), 33–48.

У статті представлено дослідження, присвячене вивченню поведінки сучасних батьків та окремих аспектів їхнього впливу на дозвілля дітей, акцентуючи увагу на тому, як і в якому обсязі батьки організують дозвілля своїх дітей. У дослідженні брали участь батьки з різних регіонів Словаччини. Результати проаналізовані за допомогою описової статистики. Для порівняння використовували Т-критерій Стюдента, тест Манна-Уїтні (для порівняння двох груп) і тест Крускала-Уолліса (для трьох і більше груп). Дослідження показало, що респонденти оцінюють нинішнє батьківство як інше та значно більш складне порівняно з минулим. Вони відзначають відмінності у сфері дозвілля сімей, особливо в тому, що батьки покладають на дітей менше домашніх обов'язків, ніж попереднє покоління батьків. Дослідження також показує, що проблемою сучасної сім'ї є відсутність спільно проведеного часу батьків і дітей, брак сімейного спілкування та високого рівня організації дозвілля дітей батьками. Автори зазначають, що батьки в постмодерністському суспільстві зустрічаються з труднощами забезпечення економічної стабільності сім'ї, тому двокар'єрні шлюби є реальністю сучасних родин. Доведено, що сучасні батьки більше зайняті роботою та діяльністю поза сім'єю, в результаті чого мало часу проводять з дітьми, що негативно впливає на їхнє виховання. Відсутнє якісне родинне спілкування, а діти відчувають самотність і нестачу батьківської уваги. Виявлено також, що в сучасній родині вихованців значно менше, як у минулому, залучають до домашньої праці, тому у них здебільшого немає досвіду трудової діяльності в цьому аспекті. Акцентовано, що тривожним сигналом є компенсація батьківського впливу іншими засобами виховання – медіа, технології (смартфони, планшети, комп'ютери) та віртуальний світ (соціальні мережі). Окреслено зниження розвитку читачьких інтересів у родині, виявлено тенденцію батьків замінювати спільне читання дитячих книг сучасними гаджетами.

Ключові слова: сім'я, батьки, діти, дозвілля, родинне виховання.