

## DIAGNOSIS ABOUT THE USE OF LEISURE AND FREE TIME AMONG THE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL EXPERIMENTAL DEL TÁCHIRA

DIAGNÓSTICO ACERCA DEL USO DEL OCIO Y EL TIEMPO LIBRE ENTRE LOS  
ESTUDIANTES DE LA UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL EXPERIMENTAL DEL TÁCHIRA

DIAGNÓSTICO SOBRE O USO DE LAZER E TEMPO LIVRE ENTRE ESTUDANTES  
DA UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL EXPERIMENTAL DEL TÁCHIRA

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**ABSTRACT:** Leisure and free time are two concepts of great importance in today's world.

On one hand, every day's rhythm poses the challenge of successfully completing all activities resulting in exhaustion at the end of the day. On the other hand, technology has invaded every facet of life through its many applications, since many tasks can be performed within reach of a click. This reality was also especially found among students from The Universidad Nacional Experimental del Táchira (UNET); these students often complain about the limited availability of time to engage in recreational activities. Often they choose to seek alternatives in order to release the tension. They usually express inability to properly manage their time, neither their university has managed to define precise lines to frame this time. For this reason, the present study -whose main objective was to assess the use of leisure and free time by UNET students- was outlined. A quantitative paradigm for research was used, giving the descriptive nature of the study. A random sample of 365 students was taken, out of a 7145 UNET student's population from Engineering and Architecture majors. As data collection technique a questionnaire was used and the motivation and use of leisure and free time variables were established, both supported by corresponding sub-indicators. The questionnaire was validated by expert judges, and the reliability was determined through Cronbach's Alpha obtaining a value of 0.72, which determined high reliability. The data were processed using the statistical program SPSS 15.0. Regarding motivation, the results showed that the need for achievement was not high, and the need for power, in relation to leisure activities, did not seem to be determinant in the sample. The need for affiliation prevailed, and recognition is strongly linked to academic and intellectual aspects. Going out with friends was the most often performed activity during

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	<p>leisure and free time; while reading posed the lowest interest. Leisure time occurred more often during weekends and students spent one to three hours per day in leisure time which they considered as sufficient. There were no major differences related to gender and degree in the selected options. The interpretation of these results provided the proposition of guidelines to start developing programs for the proper use of leisure and free time.</p>
<p><b>PALABRAS CLAVE:</b>                  ocio                  tiempo libre                  motivación                  comportamiento                  estudiante</p>	<p><b>RESUMEN:</b> El ocio y el tiempo libre son dos conceptos de suma importancia en el mundo actual. Por un lado, el ritmo del día representa un reto para el cumplimiento exitoso de todas las actividades que al final de la jornada derivan en agotamiento; frente a esto, la tecnología, que invade cada espacio de la vida, ha facilitado a través de sus diferentes aplicaciones, que al alcance de un clic puedan realizarse muchas tareas. Esta realidad se da también entre los jóvenes universitarios, especialmente, los de la Universidad Nacional Experimental del Táchira (UNET); estos estudiantes suelen quejarse de la poca disponibilidad de tiempo para involucrarse en actividades que les remitan al esparcimiento. Con frecuencia optan por buscar alternativas con el fin de liberar sus tensiones. Habitualmente manifiestan incapacidad para manejar adecuadamente su tiempo; tampoco su universidad ha logrado definir líneas precisas para enmarcar ese tiempo libre. Por esta razón, se delineó el presente estudio cuyo objetivo principal fue diagnosticar el uso del ocio y el tiempo libre en los estudiantes de la UNET. Se utilizó un paradigma cuantitativo para la investigación, dándole al estudio un carácter descriptivo. De una población de 7145 estudiantes de la UNET cursantes de las carreras de Ingeniería y Arquitectura, se tomó con una muestra aleatoria de 365 estudiantes. Se utilizó el cuestionario como técnica de recolección de datos y se establecieron las variables motivación y uso del ocio y tiempo libre, ambas apoyadas en sus subindicadores. Fue validado a través del juicio de expertos, y la confiabilidad quedó determinada a través del estadístico Alfa de Cronbach, con un valor obtenido de 0,72, que determina una alta confiabilidad. Los datos se procesaron mediante el estadístico SPSS versión 15.0 Con respecto a la motivación, los resultados manifiestan que la necesidad de logro no es muy alta, y la de poder, en relación con las actividades de ocio, parece no ser determinante en la muestra. La necesidad de afiliación predomina, y la de reconocimiento está fuertemente ligada a lo académico y a lo intelectual. La actividad que más suelen realizar durante el tiempo libre y de ocio es salir con los amigos; frente a la lectura que representa el menor interés. Los momentos de ocio se dan con mayor frecuencia durante los fines de semana, de una a tres horas diarias, considerado por ellos como suficiente. No hay mayores diferencias en las opciones seleccionadas por género y carreras. El desglose de estos resultados permitió proponer pautas para iniciar el desarrollo de programas dirigidos al buen uso del ocio y el tiempo libre.</p>
<p><b>PALAVRAS-CHAVE:</b>                  lazer                  tempo livre                  motivação                  comportamento                  estudantes</p>	<p><b>RESUMO:</b> O lazer e tempo livre são dois conceitos importantes do mundo atual. Por um lado, o ritmo do dia representa um desafio para a conclusão com êxito de todas as atividades no final do dia resultando em exaustão; Contra isso, a tecnologia que invade cada área da vida, tem facilitado através de suas diferentes aplicações, disponíveis a um clique muitas tarefas que podem ser executadas. Esta realidade ocorre também entre os estudantes universitários, especialmente os da Universidad Nacional Experimental del Táchira (UNET); Esses estudantes muitas vezes se queixam da falta de tempo disponível para participar em atividades que lhes encaminhe ao diversão. Muitas vezes optam por buscar alternativas a fim de liberar suas tensões. Geralmente manifestam incapacidade de gerir adequadamente o seu tempo; a universidade não conseguiu definir linhas precisas para enquadrar o tempo livre. Portanto, o presente estudo tem como principal objetivo foi avaliar a utilização de lazer e estudantes em tempo livre UNET marcados. Paradigma de pesquisa quantitativa foi utilizado, dando ao personagem de um estudo descritivo com um design campo. De uma população de 7145 estudantes da UNET de Engenharia e Arquitetura, tomou uma amostra aleatória de 365 alunos. Foi utilizado um instrumento consistente para coletar dados em um questionário estruturado com perguntas preparadas; umas das alternativas das respostas fechadas dicotômicas; outros, de múltipla escolha, e algumas abertas. As variáveis motivação e uso do tempo de lazer foram estabelecidas, ambas apoiadas em suas subindicadores. Foi validado através de pareceres de peritos e confiabilidade foi determinada através do Alpha de Cronbach estatística com um valor de 0,72 obtido, que determina alta confiabilidade. Os dados foram processados usando SPSS versão 15.0 estatístico e apresentados em tabelas de resumo e gráficos de barras com análise e interpretação, bem com tabelas de contingência. No que diz respeito a motivação, os resultados mostram que a necessidade de realização não é elevado, e a energia, em ligação com as atividades de lazer, parece ser crucial na amostra. A necessidade de afiliação predomina, o reconhecimento está fortemente ligada à acadêmica e intelectual. A atividade mais freqüentemente realizado durante o tempo livre e de lazer está fora com os amigos; contra esse a leitura representa o menor interesse. Os tempos de lazer ocorrem mais freqüentemente durante o fim de semana, uma a três horas, considerados por eles como suficiente. Não há grandes diferenças de gênero e raça selecionada opções. A composição desses resultados permitiu propor diretrizes para começar a desenvolver programas para o uso adequado de lazer e tempo livre.</p>

## 1. Introducción

The concepts of leisure and free time are closely related and refer to a lot of possibilities for people's actions. Today's society – imbued with mechanization and automation in its various fields – discourages people to make great efforts to mobilize, study, work, and even function at home.

This increasingly gives individuals more free time, a time that has awakened so much interest since the second half of the twentieth century. Cuenca, Bayón and Madariaga (2012) report that present investigations are giving greater importance to these topics, especially due to the possibilities experiential leisure has to offer.

When referring to the concepts of leisure time and free time, Sarrate (2011) signifies the first as the continent and leisure as the content, so that free time becomes leisure when employed by people to seek pleasure, recreation, and nurture. In this sense, leisure is part of free time, but only when characterized by free choice and for activities that meet the students' needs and preferences. Also, when it is a time whose purpose is, among others: escaping from civilization, routine, and responsibility, and used for rest, exercise, spend time with family, have fun, do altruism, enjoy nature, or for the individual's personal growth and recreation.

González (2015), Rodríguez and Agulló (2008) in Spain; Fernández (2012) and Moraga (2011) in Chile; Huertas, Caro and Vásquez (2008) in Colombia show that the most preferred leisure activities or daily habits between adolescents and young university students are the so-called passive or audiovisual leisure (surf the web, chat, listen to music and watch TV), the recreational or sport leisure (important sources of health that allow to meet a good physical shape) and leisure with an obvious social part (the use of time for activities they like, "share with family and friends", hang out, go to bars / pubs).

These activities come after those related to cultural or performing leisure, based on the reading of books, magazines, comics, and the performing of artistic activities. Other findings from these authors refer to the short time students have to carry out activities and the habits related to the consumption of harmful substances, including occasional consumption of alcohol, frequent smoking and sporadic use of illegal drugs, says Fernandez (2012). Studying leisure and free time in young college students leads to the consideration that the way these concepts behave in their lives has to do with their motivations and needs, among other aspects.

Murray (Carver & Scheier, 1997) defines needs as "an internal state of disequilibrium: the lack of something required to reach a well-being state" (op.cit, p. 94.). First, he describes the need for achievement, defined as the reason to overcome obstacles and achieve goals. Then he incorporates the need for power referring to the desire to have influence over others.

Finally, the need for affiliation is "the desire to spend time with others, to develop and keep up social relationships." This trend of high need for affiliation responds to social influence since people spend a proportionally large part of their time communicating with others and possibly consider being with someone else when they are alone.

On the other hand, the secondary or psychogenic needs have also been described in the behavior of human beings. McClelland (1989) has pointed out that the desire for success is the main reason behind human behavior and he claims the need for recognition as part of social motivations. The author defines them "as an ego or self-esteem need". This group represents the need of every person to feel appreciated, have prestige and stand out within their social group and equally includes self-worth and self-respect.

Ahola in 1980 (Llull, 2001) suggests that it is necessary to consider the needs for leisure from different levels of causality. By linking with Maslow's theory, he states that at the base of the pyramid rests all leisure behavior related to satisfying some basic biological needs, along with socialization experiences that mark the behavior of human beings. These primary needs refer to rest, physical and mental regeneration, escape from everyday problems, lack of stress, chances in social relationships and friends membership, among others.

Once these requirements are covered, people have to reach in his opinion, a start-up level according to the dynamics of participation they consider most acceptable and to their personality and interests. The start-up level will depend on the subjective estimation of what people consider as active or passive.

The next level of stimulation responds to the intrinsic reward and to the feelings of self-determination that a person believes he/she enjoys when performing an activity. Finally, the needs of leisure are at the highest level, resting on all the preceding factors that explain directly why leisure activities are considered positive or beneficial for oneself.

According to the process that starts from the base, the leisure needs vary for every person, depending on their previous biological dispositions, their level of socialization, the degree of a more

or less dynamic activation or a series of intrinsic motivations through activities that represent satisfaction.

To end the explanation for this pattern of behavior on leisure, Ahola (Llull, 2001) argues that the attitude of the individuals in their free time would also be motivated by two simultaneous lines of action that converge on the pyramid: the desire to escape the routine and stressful environments, and a search of recreational opportunities involving intrinsic rewards. He also proposes that all motivational levels are overall influenced by the social settings and situational conditions, so a person's leisure needs are not completely stable but modifiable according to various causes such as the individual's growth process, a change of residence, new improvised leisure needs, and changes in needs while they participate in an certain activity.

In addition to the internal states of need, external pressures can influence the decisions or desires of young college students which are in turn, expressed as overt behavior (i.e., in leisure and free time activities).

Murray (Carver and Scheier, 1997) uses the term pressure to refer to these external influences "as external stimulus conditions that create the desire to get or avoid something and that represent a motivational influence, just as a necessity would do".

By linking the needs with the concept of leisure, it is then assumed that - while intrinsic motivation is an essential quality of leisure- there are many activities and leisure experiences in which someone acts by extrinsic reinforcements, that is, by achieving a goal unconnected to the mere satisfaction derived from a particular activity.

In 2000, Deci and Ryan (Cuenca, 2006) present their views on leisure conception and point out that once the basic need for autonomy in intrinsic motivation is included, it is also understood that people engage in many behaviors by extrinsic reinforcements but that the variability on the autonomy's direction will be essential.

A graphical way to synthesize the relationship between the activities carried out by university students in their leisure and free time, along with the needs and the environment pressure, are shown in the following diagram:

**Diagram 1. The internal states of necessity and the external pressures**



Source: Sandoval (2009)

In order to better understand the behavior of leisure and free time in young college students, it is necessary to refer that most institutions offer their students spaces to carry out certain activities, such as reading, playing sports, and spaces to share with peers, watch film or screenings, which obligingly allows them to enjoy more of their free time.

In Venezuela, specifically in Táchira state, leisure and free time have been considered as a waste of time, perhaps by a tradition of the ancestors who were men dedicated to doing hard and permanent work. They confused it with laziness and as something that must be battled with work or sport and not as an opportunity for people to grow and improve their quality of life. Perhaps, this is why there have not occurred significant efforts in educational research in the region to find out how leisure and free time are understood, what students and parents think about it, or what activities could students do during that time. Much less has been studied yet about valid alternatives

or courses of action that the university could offer, apart from the basic cultural and sports activities.

In the case of the Universidad Nacional Experimental del Táchira (hereinafter identified as UNET), students are provided in the most traditional way, spaces for conducting activities ranging from places to study and read up to sports facilities, plus those for community or school-based groups. This contributes in some ways to positively cultivate the student's use of leisure and free time which also has a high significance, especially when this action results in relieving school-related pressure and stress.

However, there is a contrasting reality that aims to point out that UNET somehow has become a kind of tolerance zone. During the evenings and weekends, young people form small groups and stay in the surrounding areas or in the free parking lots nearby to drink alcohol and listen to loud music, and it has even become commonplace the use of illicit drugs by some. They stay there until late at night even to dawn regardless of whether

this affects the academic activities they have at UNET or at their corresponding colleges.

Another important aspect to consider is that the city does not provide young students with enough amenities to spend their leisure or free time. There are only eateries and places to go drinking alcohol; there are very few cinema options and few cultural events. They can't afford low-cost trips within the region. All this reinforces risky behaviors such as drinking alcohol, doing drugs, having unprotected sex possibly leading to unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections; low academic performance caused by procrastination behavior which does not effectively lower what they term 'the academic pressure'.

A global education system should also consider the use of leisure and free time besides strictly technical educational training as it seems commonly accepted that to fit right, both personally and academically, it is essential to alternate periods of activity and rest (Ponce de León, 1998). Alonso Lopez-Aguado, González, Fernández (2012), with reference to Garcia-Cue and Santizo (2010) indicate that college students should merge not only resources to manage their study time but also their time for leisure. Young people consider leisure as one of the most important aspects of their life, not only for its evasion function but because it is, at this time, where they build their network of closer social relations.

As it is then necessary the formal incorporation of leisure and free time in the college students' general education, it is valid to refer to Cuenca (2006) who says that the Teaching of Leisure will aim to contribute to the development, improvement and life satisfaction of people and communities through knowledge, attitudes, values and skills related to leisure. Similarly, he defines it as a necessity when assumed as an area of human development. Therefore, autotelic leisure (a positively lived leisure as an end in itself), freely chosen, satisfying, suitable for age and life circumstances, rich and varied, it is the framework for routing the various educational activities of leisure to fundamental values and approaches, even though leisure is a phenomenon with a broad spectrum of possibilities, both positive and negative.

Puig and Trilla (2000) show that to explain the resort of an educational intervention, it was important to study a number of factors that turn out to be decisive for leisure. These are, first, some external to Pedagogy itself referred to those of economic, demographic, urban, political and cultural type; and second, some related to educational circumstances to precisely determine leisure's pedagogy emergence.

Regarding the first, the authors continue mentioning that the geography of today's cities lead to the need of creating spaces for leisure and free play, which means, to carry out spontaneous activities or the recovery of already lost urban and rural areas. The author would refer to this as to changes in the environment.

Family and changes in family structure are also linked to the pedagogy of leisure, since it somehow influences the use of leisure as well as the emergence and adherence to youth groups. In 1997, Ariel (cited in Tejedor, 2001) stated that these aspects play a formative role because they offer citizen participation, generate healthy habits, allow social integration processes, claim and care for the environment and generally do activities that promote quality of life.

### 1.1. Research objectives

Based on the exposed panoramic, the article aimed to provide a glance of the kind of activities that young UNET students develop in their leisure and free time to define a work proposal that, once implemented, would be established as a pilot that allows the university to define policy-oriented interventions to meet the students' specific needs.

Research objectives are detailed as follows:

1. Describe the behavior of students in their leisure and free time.
2. Set the frequency of behaviors observed in students in their leisure and free time.
3. Identify the behaviors and habits of students by sex and major.
4. Propose guidelines to start developing programs for the proper use of leisure and free time based on the diagnostic results and according to the needs of the UNET student population.

### 1.2. Justification

Over time, some authors (Lemon, 1994; Muñoz, 1983; Pedró, 1984; Puig and Trilla, 2000; Racionero, 1983; Weber, 1969) have stressed how important the right to leisure is for college students. This means ensuring access to community life, parties, recreation, natural areas and joint action. The authors consider that leisure plays an important preventive and rehabilitative function in the subject and that the practice of some planned leisure activity is critical, not only to train certain cognitive or physical abilities and lower the effect of certain psycho-physical impairments, but also to keep interaction with the environment, guiding the action itself to find meaning in that stage of life.

Having considered all these aspects, the study described in the article intends to have a first diagnosis in the region on the variable's behavior in college students, which allows proposing guidance strategies for leisure time. At the same time, this makes up a path for future research on other levels and populations, in order to generate definitive policy-oriented interventions for the proper use of leisure and free time.

## 2. Methodology

Using the quantitative research model as a basis, this study was descriptive. To this end, Tamayo and Tamayo (2002) characterize descriptive research as “the description, recording, analysis and interpretation of current nature, composition or processes of phenomena.” At the time of its completion it was possible to diagnose the use of free time and leisure by UNET students as well as

obtaining an overview of activities and behaviors developed in these spaces of time without establishing causal relationships or linking with other study variables.

This was a fieldwork study, which according to Risques (1999, p. 41) “it is based on methods to collect data directly from a reality occurred at the site of the event”, which for the purposes of this study, it was the UNET. The population considered for the research was UNET students of Engineering and Architecture majors enrolled for the semester 2009-1. It reached a total of seven thousand one hundred forty-five (7145) students. The sample size was calculated with a formula by Sierra Bravo (1995). The study sample included 365 students randomly selected by using a confidence level of 95%, a 50% of probability and a standard error of 5%, taking a proportional sample of each. The sample distribution by race and sex is shown in Table 1.

<b>Table 1. Population and Students by major sample</b>				
Major	Students	Sample	Gender	
			F	M
Industrial engineer	1.432	73	37	36
Agricultural engineer	538	27	13	14
Mechanical engineer	1.285	66	13	53
Arquitecture	650	33	16	17
Electronics engineer	650	42	20	22
Animal production engineer	640	33	17	16
Computer engineer	855	44	21	23
Environmental engineer	739	38	20	18
Civil engineer	176	9	4	5
Overall total	7.145	365	161	204
Source: Control Studies. UNET. Period 2009-1.				

Motivation variable, supported by needs indicators (sub-indicators: *achievement, power, affiliation, recognition*) was established in line with social needs arising in the theory of motivation by McClelland (1989) and *environment pressure* (sub-indicator: *external influences*) defined by Murray (Carver and Scheier, 1997) in his assumptions about motivation.

Moreover, the use of *leisure and free time* variable was supported in social indicators

(sub-indicators: *meaning of leisure and free time, daily activities, planned activities, family structure, voluntary social participation and impact on quality of life*); demographic (sub-indicators: *surroundings and time*); urban (sub-indicators: *citizens/urban spaces and university spaces*); political (sub-indicators: *rules of citizen behavior and media*) and economic (sub-indicator: *money*), which are considered as factors by Puig and Trilla (2000) in their conception of pedagogy of leisure.



To collect data, the survey technique was used along with an instrument. The instrument consisted of a questionnaire created by the researcher based upon the theoretical contributions of the various authors cited in the study. The questionnaire had thirty items, nine for measuring the *motivation* variable through the indicators *needs and environment pressure* and twenty for measuring the *use of leisure and free time* variable through *social, demographic, urban, political and economic* indicators. The items were presented as structured questions with closed dichotomous answers alternatives, other with multiple choice answers and some were open questions.

Technical expert judgment was used by selecting three experts who judged independently the benefits of the instrument in terms of relevance or consistency of the items with variables and objectives. They also determined the clarity in the wording to avoid ambiguity. As a result of this validation the author obtained relevant observations from each judge which were considered to create the last version of the questionnaire.

To determine the instrument reliability, a pilot test was given to a group of 10 students with similar characteristics to the study population in terms of age, sex, race and majors criteria. Cronbach's Alpha statistic was used and the value obtained was 0.72, which lies in the range of high reliability. The instrument was given in classrooms prior teachers and students permission, during a two-week period.

The data was processed with statistical software SPSS 15.0, which allowed a descriptive analysis of information through the use of frequency distribution tables and bar graphs for further analysis and interpretation. Similarly, contingency tables were used to name the behaviors and habits of students by sex, which were used to record and analyze the relationship between two or more variables, usually of qualitative nature (nominal or ordinal). Finally, the results were analyzed based on the contributions of various theorists and according to the findings of other investigations

### 3. Results

The study results are structured into three sections. The first presents the sample's profile; the second shows the *motivation* variable based on *needs and environment pressure* indicators, and the third includes the *use of leisure time and free time* variable supported by the *demographic, urban, political, economic and social* indicators to explain the research objectives.

#### 3.1. Sample profile

Regarding the sample profile, there was a greater amount of Industrial Engineering (with a 20% proportion in the final chosen sample) and Mechanical Engineering students (with 18.1%) in comparison to Civil Engineering (9%), Agricultural Engineering (7.4%), Animal Production Engineering (9%) and Architecture (9%).

In terms of age, 71% of young students' ages ranged between 17 and 20 years old. With regard to sex, 55.9% of all surveyed graduates were men and 44.1% were women. This percentage differences occur because Mechanical Engineering is a male-dominated degree. It was possible, however, to achieve balance in the choice of the sample in terms of sex criteria to identify the behaviors and habits of students per variable. Students were mainly at the first four terms of their majors (72.1%).

#### 3.2. Motivation Variable

##### 3.2.1. Needs Indicator

The need for achievement was not high among the students interviewed, judging by the answers given by 65.2% of them who expressed they do not do activities out of the ordinary. This is confirmed in the selection they made for their preferred activities and supported by McClelland (1989) who defines students with low levels of this type of motivation. This aspect should be considered carefully when designing new and different educational proposals.

As for the results obtained in the *power* sub-indicator, it is shown that most of those surveyed students do not like to be alone in their leisure time. On the contrary, they invited other partners to do some activity as noted by 43.3 % of respondents. Even 26.3% admitted that they get invited by others which shows that at least 69.6% share with other students some kind of activity during their leisure time and that it can be individually determined (58.4%) or by the group (38.4%). Therefore, it is possible that - even when most do not consider themselves as group leaders (only 6.6% think so)-, some can impose or decide what should be done in their leisure time by meeting their own needs, so unilateral decisions could influence group behavior when they pursue any activity.

With regard to the needs for affiliation, it was found that 44.7% of students seek for others company when they do activities in their leisure time; 17.8% try to make friends, that is, at least 62.5% feel a high need for affiliation compared to 29.1% who only seek to meet their own desires. For this

reason, only 38.9% admitted that individual activities predominate during their leisure time; in other case, it was the opposite because the activities undertaken required the presence of others to be enjoyed.

The statistical results for items related to the *recognition* sub-indicator show that 60.8% of surveyed students say they choose to perform intellectually challenging tasks during their leisure

time. Only 29.9% expect to be recognized or taken into account by others but mostly in terms of intellectual capacities. This is because UNET is a university known for its high academic standards and, therefore, its graduates stand out in the job market.

Results for *motivation* variable, *needs* indicator and *achievement*, *power*, *affiliation*, and *recognition* sub-indicators, are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2. Variable: Motivation. Indicator: Needs. Subindicators: Success, Power, Affiliation and Recognition**

Subindicator Success	ITEMS	YES		NO	
		Fi	%	Fi	%
	3. You perform unusual activities in your free time	127	34.8	238	65.2
	4. It's easy for you to decide which activities you want to do and how to do them in your free time	287	78.6	78	21.4
Subindicator Power	ITEMS	Fi		%	
5. In your free time:	a. You remain alone	87	23.8		
	a. b. You ask someone else to do some activity	158	43.3		
	b. c. Others ask you to do some activity	96	26.3		
	c. d. You are the leader of the group in the activity	24	6.6		
6. Activities you perform during your free time:	a. Are chosen by yourself	213	58.4		
	b. are chosen by somebody else	10	2.7		
	c. the decision is taken by a group	140	38.4		
	d. the decision is taken always by the same person	2	0.5		
Subindicator Affiliation	ITEMS	Fi		%	
You perform activities in your free time seeking for:	a. new friends	65	17.8		
	b. Not being alone	163	44.7		
	c. support	31	8.5		
	d. satisfaction of your needs	106	29.1		
Activities prevailing in your free time:	a. merit few people	135	37.0		
	b. you can do them alone	142	38.9		
	c. require a couple	45	12.3		
	d. help others to feel good	43	11.8		
Subindicator Recognition	ITEMS	Fi		%	
In your free time you perform activities that involve:	a. Gaining recognition	109	29.9		
	b. being rejected	0	0.0		
	c. help to improve your CV	34	9.3		
	d. increase your knowledge	222	60.8		

### 3.2.2. Environment pressure indicator

The results for this indicator started with findings from the sub-indicator *external influences*. It showed that the activities undertaken by the students in their free time are the result of the options they had at that moment, as reported on 86.3% of responses. This demonstrated the limited influence external media such as advertising, fashion and social circles have in the choice of the activity they perform.

46% also prefer to sleep many hours in their leisure time, while 24.9% like to go drinking with

friends. These two are the most preferred activities by students consulted; however, there is no evidence that friendships are a determining pressure cause in the use of leisure time.

### 3.3. Use of Leisure and Recreation Variable

#### 3.3.1. Social indicator

The responses for the *meaning of leisure* and *free time* sub-indicator were classified as follows: When the student gave a satisfactory definition of the terms free time and leisure time the letter



“c” was scored with 3 points. When the definition only approached, the letter “b” was scored with 2 points and when the definition was far removed from the concept, it was scored with the letter “a”. It is remarkable that for the definition of leisure, 73.7% of the answers were far removed from those found in the literature. The following are statements the students used the most: “It is the time one wastes on unproductive things”, “I define it as lost time, a time used for nothing useful”, “We do not do anything productive for others or for ourselves”.

**Table 3. Variable: Use of leisure and free time. Indicator: Social. Subindicator: Definition of leisure and free time**

	ÍTEMS	Fi	%
1. Definition of leisure:	a.	269	73.7
	b.	75	20.5
	c.	1	0.3
	d. no answer	20	5.5
2. Definition of free time:	a.	152	41.6
	b.	197	54.0
	c.	4	1.1
	d. no answer	12	3.3

Regarding the definition, 20.5% referred it as an activity they carried out voluntarily, which is implicit in the sense of leisure but gave the activity a negative connotation. 0.3% gave a definition according to the concepts found in the literature, and 5.5% did not answer the question. In connection with the definition of free time, 54.0% gave an answer that accounts for “a time interval in which you do not have any occupation” but without going beyond the definition and without giving it the negative connotation they gave the term leisure, leading to the conclusion that they have a greater understanding of the concept of time as opposed to leisure. 41.6% did not approach a suitable response since they included mandatory things, which did not correspond to a correct definition of the concept. 1.1% gave an answer similar to the ones found in specialized books on the subject and 3.3% did not answer the question.

The study results opposed the analysis presented by Aristegui and Silvestre (2012) who

described that European citizens – referring to leisure time – find it as an extra free time out of work or study hours, not with leisure itself. In fact, the leisure aspect is the most linked with the idea of relaxation, rest or lack of connection, both in Europe, Spain and in the Basque Country, while the most active and productive option – linked to learning – is the least related to the idea of leisure. This use is most related to people who have higher education.

Considering the results of the study in this current article, the author concluded that for the purposes of proposing programs of leisure and free time, it is required an educational starting work that allows the students to better understand the idea of leisure, so they can feel more comfortable about it and actually enjoy it. The results can be seen in Table 4.

With regard to the daily preferred activities in the leisure time of UNET students, a high tendency to socially engage with friends was reported, of which 28.8% praised as very important. This is similar to the findings by Gonzalez (2015), where the social leisure practices related to hanging out with friends got more relevance during the week (Monday to Thursday). It was different during the weekends in which the percentage (87% on weekends vs. 63.5% during the week) increased.

The study results are similar to the reality of the Lasallian university students. In Huerta *et al.* (2008) the students also dedicated most of the time – based on the number of hours spent – to hang out with friends. It is important to note that regardless of cultures and time when the studies have been conducted, friends play a significant role when choosing activities during leisure time. It would be worthwhile to investigate what is the meaning that young UNET students give to hang out with friends.

Continuing with activities of preference (see Table 4), the data indicated that watching television, going to the movies, spending hours on the computer or doing nothing, are activities of medium preference in contrast with the lack of interest in reading which is one of the greatest weaknesses shown in the diagnosis. This represents a divergent aspect to the findings in the opinion and situation poll called *Gente Joven 2014* published by the *INJUVE* (2015). It was found that leisure activities – whose practice in the Spanish population are significantly growing – are: playing sports (45.4 %), traveling (22.9%), reading books (29.6%), using the computer (20.6%), considering that these were based on an average rate. All these results show the evidence stated in *Gente Joven 2007*.

**Table 4. Variable: use of leisure and free time. Indicator: Social. Subindicator: Common activities**

	ITEM	PERCENTAGES							X
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>12. Preference of activities for your free time:</b>	a. Watching TV	6.0	12.3	18.1	18.6	17.0	18.4	9.6	4.2
	b. Going to the cinema	7.4	17.5	16.4	18.4	12.3	17.8	10.1	4.1
	c. Spending hours in your PC	5.8	10.7	18.4	18.6	18.6	13.4	14.5	4.3
	d. Reading	12.9	22.7	14.5	11.5	14.0	15.3	9.0	3.7
	e. Listening to music	5.5	11.2	19.5	17.8	20.5	16.7	8.8	4.2
	f. Going out with friends	10.7	13.4	8.5	11.0	13.4	14.2	28.8	4.6
	g. Sitting around	52.1	11.5	5.2	3.3	4.7	4.7	18.6	2.9

Legend: (1) Not important, (2) Less Important, (3) Little Importance, (4) Medium Importance, (5) Moderate Importance, (6) Important, (7) Very Important, X = Average of the item.

Moreover, one of the forms of voluntary social participation is associated with how young people join the activity-base or sports groups. In fact, 72.1% of respondents simultaneously belong to one or more of these. At UNET, activity-base groups are defined as groups formed by students of every major with their own headquarters where they conduct activities for various purposes, that is, recreation, leisure, social action, sports, among others. The existing activity-base groups are those from Industrial Engineering, Mechanical

Engineering, Animal Production Engineering, Electronic Engineering, and Architecture.

A percentage of young people take part in sports, others in cultural activities at the university such as choir, dance, theater, brigade rescue, and hiking. Political groups have fewer members (See table 6). This coincides with the research findings by Rodriguez and Agulló (2008) who found that university students show more interest in artistic, cultural, and sports activities than the rest of young people.

**Table 5. Variable: Use of Leisure and Free Time. Indicator: Social. Subindicator: Voluntary social engagement**

	ITEM	Fi	%
<b>13. Indicate the group that you belong to:</b>	a. Cultural	45	12.3
	b. Sports	85	23.3
	c. Career	64	17.5
	d. Political	16	4.4
	e. Cultural and sports	10	2.7
	f. Cultural and career	7	1.9
	g. Cultural and political	3	0.8
	h. sports and career	13	3.6
	i. sports and political	2	0.5
	j. career and political	5	1.4

13. Indicate the group that you belong to:	k. Cultural, Sports and career	9	2.5
	l. Cultural, career and political	1	0.3
	m. Sports, career and political	3	0.8
	n. None	102	27.9

Regarding planned activities, 37% of surveyed students randomly choose the activities to be pursued in their free time. 32.3% constantly change activities, only 25.2% plan ahead what they will do. This shows that most of them do not plan the activities to be carried out in their free time, leaving

it to chance, which confirms other results of this study: students choose what to do depending on what is available for them at that time, endeavoring to not repeat them to possibly avoid monotony. To see details check Table 6.

Table 6. Variable: Use of Leisure and Free Time. Indicator: Social. Subindicator: Scheduled activities			
	ITEM	Fi	%
In your free time:	a. You plan what to do	92	25.2
	b. You leave it to chance	135	37.0
	c. Repeat the same activity	20	5.5
	d. You change the activity constantly	118	32.3

Regarding family structure, 75.1% of students reported sharing with family during leisure time as a most preferred activity that included going for a walk, talking about a particular topic or eating out; however, attending parties or family gatherings, traveling or going for a drink were the least preferred activities to do at least with this social group but they would possibly try it with friends.

Table 7 refers to the results obtained about the *effects* sub-indicator on the *quality of life*. It showed there was a tendency to engage in

activities that enable young people to reduce stress symptoms, as noted by 59.5% of students surveyed. 35.6% prefer healthy activities that provide benefits to their physical and mental health. Therefore, most of the subjects expressed that the activities in their free time have a positive effect on their quality of life by allowing them to reduce the anxiety and stress states. For these reasons, they try to engage in any activity that makes them feel physically and mentally healthy.

Table 7. Variable: Use of Leisure and Free Time. Indicator: Social. Subindicator: Effects in your quality of life			
	ITEM	Fi	%
In your free time you do activities that you consider:	a. Healthy for your physical and mental health	130	35.6
	b. Detrimental for your physical and mental health	12	3.3
	c. Relaxing	217	59.5
	d. Stressful	6	1.6

### 3.3.2. Demographic indicator

51.8% of students indicated that the environment where they spend most of their leisure time was their home or place of residence, followed by college surroundings. Moreover, 68.7% believed that the city offers enough amenities to enjoy leisure

moments. However, 31.2% do not see it that way because places for alcohol consumption and eating predominate in the city. In fact, there is a lack of spaces offering cultural alternatives, and perhaps it only offers more sports facilities (see Table 8).

<b>Table 8. Variable: Use of Leisure and Free Time. Indicator: Demographic. Subindicator: Environment</b>			
	<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>Fi</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>You spend your free time in:</b>	a. Places nearby the University	63	17.3
	b. At home or residence	189	51.8
	c. In the country or outdoor	56	15.3
	d. Inside University	57	15.6
<b>You think that the city offers enough alternatives to spend your free time</b>	a. Yes	251	68.7
	b. No	114	31.2
<b>Which kind of activities do you suggest?</b>	a. sports fields	7	1.9
	b. Recreation centres and cultural venues	12	3.3
	c. sports clubs	11	3.0
	d. Amusement park	7	1.9
	e. Ice rinks	6	1.6
	f. Museums and theatres	22	6.0
	g. Leisure areas	9	2.5
	h. night clubs	15	4.1
	i. Natural parks	22	6.0
	j. Malls	22	6.0
	k. Touristic sites	16	4.4
	l. Coffee shops	12	3.3
	m. Extreme sports	11	3.0
	n. Library	3	0.8
	ñ. Zoo	3	0.8
	o. Cinema	21	5.8
p. No answer	251	68.7	

As for leisure time, 43.8% of students believe that it occurs more often during the weekend, while for the 36.2% it happens during the afternoon. Also, they enjoy about one to three hours of leisure time during the day, as noted by 80.8% of students, that is, not often that exceed more than three hours, which is why 56.7% consider they have enough time for leisure during the week, but a 43.3% say otherwise. That is, they do not often exceed more than three hours because 56.7% consider they have enough time to leisure in during the week, but a 43.3% say otherwise.

### 3.3.3. Urban indicator

Regarding the favorite urban areas, 56.4% of respondents chose those places where they can talk quietly and 27.1% noted places where they can play sports which coincide with the statements by Suárez (2012). He found in his research that the population is increasingly considering doing sports, taking walks, hence, the chosen places related to these activities.

The results for the UNET population (see Table 9) showed that in most cases there is a preference for peaceful and quiet spots to enjoy, but places that provide cultural activities had lower acceptance.

<b>Table 9. Variable: Use of Leisure and Free Time. Indicator: Urban. Subindicator: Urban spaces</b>			
	ITEM	Fi	%
Which place do you prefer to spend your free time	a. Those where you can drink alcohol	41	11.2
	b. Those where you can practice sports	99	27.1
	c. Those where you can have a chat with friends	206	56.4
	d. Those with cultural activities	19	5.2

### 3.3.4. Politics indicator

Regarding the rules of citizen behavior, 67.9% of students expressed that leisure time should be enjoyed at home. This suggests that students are not interested in illegal or community activities; hang out on streets and listening to music but stay at home, possibly to avoid incidents that could go against social norms.

### 3.3.5. Economic indicator

As for the money, 68.9% of surveyed students said their family provided them with economic support to invest in leisure time, compared with 31.8% who do not have this kind of family support. However, only 12.1% does not weekly allocate money for this purpose, either because they lack the resources, or because they really do not consider it right to spend money on it. Similarly, it was found that in the case of having more free time and more money, the leisure activities that students would do most often are: shopping (30.1%), traveling (23%) and going for a walk (20 %).

### 3.3.6. Relationship between gender, major and leisure time

In this sense, no relationship between sex and the tendency to design original and innovative activities associated with the needs of achievement where they could spend their free time and leisure, were found. The same is true for sex relationship and leisure since students prefer to set up social ties before being alone and not for becoming leaders. It was also noted that when they seek to establish these social relations, they are not moved by the needs of power and that the purpose of the activities is associated with satisfying needs for affiliation, all this regardless gender. Finally, no relationship between gender and need for recognition were found. In the case of external influence, the leisure time to share with family and as regards the economic aid received, no relation to students' gender was observed.

According to the importance value, there is a relationship between gender and preference for a type of activity in leisure time. In this case, boys like going for a drink or sleeping long hours, while girls prefer sleeping. Also, it is evident that there is dependence between gender and activities to be performed during leisure time because even

though most subjects consider that these help them to relax, a significant number of boys qualify these activities as good for their body and mental health compared to girls. The relationship between gender and places for leisure time is also observed: girls chose their house or residence, while boys chose different places.

Both genders reported enjoying leisure time to one to three hours. Regarding urban spaces where students prefer to spend their leisure time, it was determined that men look for places where they can play sports or talk quietly, meanwhile, girls prefer only these latter places. Finally, there is no relationship between gender and the rules for citizen behavior.

Regarding major and its connection to each variable, the results were: no relation between major and the need for power was observed; most students do not like to be leaders, instead they prefer to invite someone to do some activity, and even want others to ask them out as Mechanical Engineering and Agricultural Engineering students stated. Regarding the need for recognition, some relationships were observed: in majors like Electronic, Industrial, Mechanical and Environmental Engineering it is shown that many of the students want to be recognized or taken into account in their free time.

There is no relationship between major and the decisions students make when performing certain activities in their leisure time. The same happens with the family financial support to meet this time. This is repeated for the assessment that activities during free time helps improve the quality of life and provides benefits in physical and mental health. The same pattern is seen in relation to the degree and the place they spend leisure time since most respondents indicated they spend it at home. However, it is important to mention that students majoring in Environmental Engineering and Mechanical Engineering also enjoy leisure time at the university surroundings.

Some difference was seen in the amount of hours for leisure time that surveyed students invest studying during the day. They mostly spend an average of one to three hours, however, in the case of architecture it was found that a significant number of students enjoy less than an hour.

Regarding the preferred place to enjoy leisure, no relation to the type of major is observed, perhaps because most students prefer those places where they can talk quietly with their peers, although some students of Mechanical Engineering chose areas where they can play sports.

Finally, there is no relationship between the rules of citizen behavior and their degree because students feel that leisure time should be enjoyed at home and must not be used to commit

wrongdoings, listen to loud music on the streets or to do community activities. Therefore, regardless the students' majors they prefer to act according to social norms at their homes or residences.

#### 4. Conclusions

The investigation described the behavior of UNET students in relation to the use of leisure and free time, also set both frequencies and identified them by gender and major. From these findings the author concluded the following:

The need for achievement is not high in the interviewed students who expressed they do not do activities out of the ordinary. This is confirmed in the selection they made about their activities of choice. According to McClelland (1989), this shows students with low levels of this type of motivation. Therefore, this aspect should be considered carefully when designing new and different educational proposals.

The choice of leisure activities seems to be determined by some desire for power. It is unknown whether the answers would have been the same if, instead of asking for leisure, the author had asked for free time. Membership is a feature that predominates in UNET students and that connects to internal motivations. For this reason, it is important to considerate this aspect for the design of action alternatives because the students can select activities based on their need to be with peers which it is ultimately an affiliation need.

The motivation for recognition in the students interviewed is strongly linked to academic and intellectual reasons. Students expect to get greater knowledge from the activities they perform during free time. However, it is important to consider that the free-time activities to be planned must somehow contribute to personal development and not only to intellectual benefits. A balance to develop a healthy personality is required.

As to external influences for deciding on leisure or free-time activities, advertising or what is fashionable do not seem to be determining factors. It is unclear whether *sleeping many hours* - the most selected alternative - has to do with the fatigue that overwhelms them because of the excessive academic requirements they experience, or for their interpretation of leisure and the performing of unproductive activities.

Students associate the concept of leisure with "a waste of time/loiter" while the free-time activities related more to activities of "productive" nature. Perhaps, the negative connotation of the word leisure has to do with a cultural influence since in this region it is linked to "laziness" and "with doing unproductive things" as most



students said. For the purpose of proposing programs of leisure and free time, it is required an initial work of education that allows students to better understand the idea of leisure so they can feel more comfortable and get to enjoy it.

The lack of interest in reading is one of the biggest weaknesses found in the diagnosis. It is essential to foster educational activities of leisure and free time to stimulate interest and love for reading because it is beneficial for individuals to develop many cognitive abilities. The high voluntary social participation observed in the study can be used for planning leisure and free time activities. Students spontaneously assemble their groups so specific programs can be designed to address each student's needs.

The young UNET students continue acting spontaneously and deciding freely without planning the activities they do in their free time. This is positive in the sense they have the freedom to feel and act as they please in their free time, beyond the severe academic restrictions that require them to be organized and to plan their activities.

Family cohesion is observed in UNET students which is positive because it allows them to have opportunities to enjoy. They also keep a series of values related to the idea of family as the fundamental cell of social organizations.

It can be inferred that students are aware of how important the proper management of leisure time through activities is because it leads to relaxation, a mental and physical health and to a better quality of life. In contrast, students settle to the lack of leisure alternatives that the city offers and there is also some concern about the lack of interest for the few alternatives cultural activities in the city.

The students mostly depend economically on their families, who also give them money for their leisure and free time. In addition, a very low purchasing ability to invest in their leisure and free time is detected.

No gender differences were noted in the options selected of most questions. This may had to do with the changes that have occurred in the last years about the role of women in society and the spaces they have conquered which were purely of interest for men or where these only were allowed.

Students showed a persistent traditionalist behavior and assumed conservative roles about the favorite type of activity to choose. Boys prefer to go drinking with friends while girls decide to sleep long hours. In most of the questions, there were no differences observed on the major criteria in the selected options, perhaps this had to do with the fact that most of the students study engineering majors and architecture (in a lower

percentage). However, neither in this latter degree, the behavior varied.

Architecture students spent fewer hours on leisure time than their partners from other majors. This might be explained by their need to constantly design and make models which prevents them from taking greater leisure and free time.

During the development phase, this study presented some limitations. UNET is a university that only offers engineering majors among its graduate programs, except for architecture and music degrees. There is no information about the leisure and free time that students from other majors had or the way they behave during those times so the research results could allow a broader generalization.

Based on the findings, it is important to consider defining lines of research in leisure and values, taking the opportunity of having the course "needs values and life project", taught at the school of personal development, at the Social Sciences department. This course fosters students from various majors the possibility of meeting and discussing about topics of interest aimed at strengthen the transversal axis of values.

Also, it is necessary to profusely study leisure and free time by using important theoretical and psychosocial approaches, for these are the most relevant methods to address this complex and multidimensional cultural phenomenon (leisure and lifestyles), according to Rodriguez and Agulló (2008).

## 5. Proposal


The research's results laid the foundation for the development of a proposal for the management of leisure and free time concepts from an educational perspective. It is noteworthy that the pedagogy of leisure and free time is a discipline that began its consolidation from the time when societies reached a minimum quality of life. Dumazedier in 1968 (Puig and Trilla, 2000) notes that leisure is a space, an experience, a resource, a source of health, a human right and a characteristic time of today's society, and that is why, it is necessary to define some educational activities that contribute to the expansion and consolidation of leisure.

To this end, there are two alternatives to be implemented by UNET Counseling Coordination to begin actions that will afterwards facilitate the University the design of intervention policies and consistent educational programs to meet the students' specific needs delivered by the various academic institutions. To its final implementation, it is important to initially administer as pilot proposal and assess it subsequently.

## 5.1. Workshop for Teachers

Figure 2. Structure of workshop for teachers

**Workshop for Teacher Training**



**Purpose:** To make teachers aware about the importance of leisure and free time in the individual's life. Provide teachers a conceptual basis that allows them to begin as facilitators in induction workshops on leisure and free time management for educational purposes.

**Method:** 16-hour workshop.

**Participants:** it must be carried out with small groups of teachers (12 to 15 participants) to provide individual and group participation.

**Strategy:** generate a permanent reflection and discussion from the reading of certain materials and the diagnostic results. Group dynamics will be used to ensure the active participation of teachers so they can gain experience. Activities will be flexibly organized during the workshop, according to the wishes and requirements of the participating teachers.


**Activities:** To create an individual and group definition of leisure and free time. Give an adapted survey version about leisure for teachers. Analyse and discuss the individual and group results of teachers. Read and discuss resources related to the current state of the art regarding leisure and free time. Present the most important results of leisure and free time diagnosis among UNET students. Discuss on new information and communication technologies as an option for the enjoyment of leisure and free time. Recommend action alternatives. Organize induction programs for students.

Source: Sandoval (2009)

## 5.2. Workshop for Students

Figure 3. Structure workshop for students

**Induction workshop on leisure and free time aimed at students**



**Purpose:** To provide UNET students an opportunity to change their perspective on leisure and free time. Make them aware about the importance of proper leisure and free time management for their mental and physical health.

**Method:** A six hour in-site workshop distributed as follows: a first four-hour session and a two-hour follow-up session a month later.

**Participants:** Groups of twenty students.

**Strategy:** discussion workshop supported by group dynamics.

**Activities:** *First session:* Present dynamics to achieve integration of the participants. Explain the activity's goals. Conduct a brainstorming to identify the students representation on leisure and free time concepts. Present various DEFINITIONS of both concepts to be submitted to a group discussion. Discuss points of agreement or disagreement between the definitions of participants and the conceptual definition of terms. Differentiate formal leisure and casual leisure. Identify the type of leisure practiced by students.

**Sort the activities depending on the types of leisure. Identify other activities to do according to the type of entertainment. Generate commitment regarding the registration of activities during one month in order to track and identify changes during the next session.**

**Second session:** individual and group review about the activity log performed. Discussion on the achievements, progress and setbacks in relation to its design or the use of time and leisure. Check obstacles that had prevented the implementation of learning at induction phases.

Source: Sandoval (2009)

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