

eISSN: 1989-9742 © SIPS. DOI: 10.7179/PSRI_2018.32.05 http://recyt.fecyt.es/index.php/PSRI/ Versión en español: https://recyt.fecyt.es/index.php/PSRI/article/view/63948/40605

ATTITUDES OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN TOWARDS SHARED FAMILY LEISURE

ACTITUDES DE PADRES E HIJOS HACIA UN OCIO COMPARTIDO EN FAMILIA ATITUDES DE PAIS E FILHOS FACE A UM LAZER COMPARTILHADO EM FAMÍLIA

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Received date: 18.111.2018 Reviewed date: 27.111.2018 Accepted date: 19.1V.2018

KEY WORDS:

leisure family youth son parents perception ABSTRACT: The family institution is a very important agent in the construction of its members' entertainment, given its potential to make shared time become educational and valuable. It has been shown that shared family activities, including leisure, provide significant benefits to those who practice it, which leads us to link personal and social growth, as well as family welfare, with the time shared in the family. This study aims to analyze the attitude and predisposition of Spanish students and their parents to family conciliation and shared family leisure, considering variables such as the participation of each of its members in family activities, satisfaction about sharing free time, the amount of time they spend with the family, and the degree of perceived pressure to spend more time together. A quantitative methodological approach was carried out through the application of the Spanish adaptation of the FACES IV questionnaire to a sample from Spain of 1764 students and 839 parents. This instrument gathers information about cohesion and flexibility perceived within the family. The results show that most Spanish students of post-compulsory secondary education and their parents perceive that all the family members participate in family activities, showing a high degree of satisfaction with shared leisure, which reveals a positive family atmosphere and very favorable attitudes of parents and children toward the practice of leisure activities within the family.

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FINANCIACIÓN: El texto que presentamos se vincula al Proyecto de Investigación "De los tiempos educativos a los tiempos sociales: la cotidianidad familiar en la construcción del ocio físico-deportivo juvenil" (EDU2012-39080-C07-05), y configura los inicios del proyecto de I+D+I "Ocio y bienestar en clave intergeneracional: de la cotidianidad familiar a la innovación social en las redes abuelos-nietos" (EDU2017-85642-R); ambos cofinanciados en el marco del Plan Nacional I+D+I con cargo a dos ayudas del Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad, y por el Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional (FEDER).

PALABRAS CLAVE:

ocio familia hijos joven padres percepción RESUMEN: La institución familiar se constituye en un agente de primer orden en la construcción del ocio de sus miembros, dada su potencialidad para hacer del tiempo compartido un tiempo valioso y educativo. Se ha evidenciado que las actividades compartidas en familia, incluidas las de ocio, reportan importantes beneficios a quienes las practican, lo que orienta a vincular el crecimiento personal y social, así como el bienestar familiar, con el tiempo compartido en familia. Este estudio pretende analizar la actitud y predisposición de los estudiantes españoles de educación secundaria postobligatoria y sus progenitores hacia la conciliación familiar y el ocio compartido en familia, atendiendo a variables como la participación de cada uno de sus miembros en actividades familiares, la satisfacción por compartir el tiempo libre, la cantidad de tiempo que pasan en familia y el grado de presión percibida para estar más tiempo juntos. Se adopta un enfoque metológico de carácter cuantitativo, desarrollado mediante la aplicación de la adaptación española del cuestionario FACES IV, que recoge información sobre la cohesión y la flexibilidad percibida en el seno familiar, a una muestra de 1764 estudiantes de todo el territorio español, también participaron 839 de sus progenitores. Los resultados evidencian que la mayor parte de los estudiantes y sus padres perciben que todos los miembros de sus familias participan en las actividades familiares, mostrando un alto grado de satisfacción respecto al tiempo libre que comparten, lo que descubre un ambiente familiar positivo y actitudes muy favorables de padres e hijos para la práctica de ocio en familia.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

família filhos jovem pais perceção RESUMO: A instituição familiar é um agente de primeira ordem na construção do lazer dos seus membros, dado o seu potencial para tornar o tempo compartilhado num tempo valioso e educativo. Tem-se demonstrado que as atividades compartilhadas em família, incluindo as atividades de lazer, proporcionam benefícios importantes para aqueles que as praticam, o que permite vincular o crescimento pessoal e social, bem como o bem-estar da família, com o tempo compartilhado em família. Este estudo tem como objetivo analisar a atitude e a predisposição dos estudantes espanhóis e dos seus pais para a conciliação familiar e o lazer compartilhado em família, tomando em consideração variáveis como a participação de cada um de seus membros nas atividades familiares, a satisfação de compartilhar o tempo livre, a quantidade de tempo que passam em família e o grau de pressão percebido para passarem mais tempo juntos. Foi adotada uma abordagem metodológica quantitativa, desenvolvida através da aplicação da adaptação espanhola do questionário FACES IV, para recolher informação sobre a coesão e a flexibilidade percebida no seio da família, numa amostra que incluiu 1764 estudantes de todo o território espanhol, e também 839 dos seus progenitores. Os resultados evidenciaram que a maioria dos estudantes espanhóis do ensino secundário pós-obrigatório e os seus pais percebem que todos os membros de suas famílias participam em atividades familiares, mostrando um alto grau de satisfação em relação ao tempo livre que compartilham, o que revela um ambiente familiar positivo e atitudes muito favoráveis de pais e filhos face à prática de lazer familiar.

1. Introduction

The family institution is a privileged space for the transmission of fundamental knowledge linked to socialization, coexistence, acquisition and consolidation of attitudes, values and habits deriving from shared experiences within the family (Elzo, 2004; Valdemoros, Ponce de León, Sanz & Caride, 2014). This way, the family institution becomes a prime agent for the construction of leisure for its members, turning shared time into potentially educational time (Muñoz & Olmos, 2010).

Shared family leisure includes both daily activities and non-daily activities, highlighting free time, considered as a moment for yourself, free of normal duties, which is used to perform desired activities and is characterized by the opportunities that it brings in order to learn and share moments, implying a willingness to do something that provides pleasure and well-being (Lobo & Menchén, 2004). In our society, free time allotted to leisure activities has been gaining ground in recent decades, establishing itself as a right recognized equally for

both parents and children (Aristegui & Silvestre, 2012) and as a guarantor of human development (Cuenca, Aguilar & Ortega, 2010).

Different empirical researches claim that shared time within the family, including leisure time, brings multiple benefits to those who share it, such as well-being (Maynard & Harding, 2010; Offer, 2014), intellectual, psychological and social development of individuals (Craig & Mullan, 2012; Shaw, 2008), improvement of health in its holistic conception (Grosso et al., 2011; Pinxten & Lievens, 2014; Veenstra & Patterson, 2012), and positive contribution to participation of children in future leisure activities (Devos, 2006). This shared time also helps to increase the degree of satisfaction of young people regarding family life (Agate, Zabriskie, Agate & Poff, 2009; Barnes, Hoffman, Welte, Farrell & Ditcheff, 2007; Offer, 2013; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001, 2003). This leads to the fact that sharing more time within the family enables parents and children to enjoy these benefits, which turn shared time within the family into a suitable indicator of family welfare that depends

on the amount, kind and quality of shared activities (Offer, 2014). Other authors (Agate et al., 2009; Barnes et al., 2007; Crouter, Head, McHale & Tucker, 2004; Offer, 2014; Zabriskie et al., 2003; Zaborskis, Zemaitiene, Borup, Kuntsche & Moreno, 2007) relate positive perception of the household's quality of life with those families spending more time together.

Shared time within the family has also been identified as one of the main protective factors against the development of risk behaviors (Barnes et αl., 2007; Crouter et αl., 2004; Wong, 2005), in such a way that young people who spend more time with their relatives are less likely to develop behavioral problems as consumption of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. Due to that fact, leisure experiences shared within the family can be considered a strategy which contributes to reduce harmful leisure, which includes experiences that turn out to be harmful to people who practice them, as well as to their physical and social environment (Cuenca, 2014). On the other hand, regarding family reconciliation, difficulties appear to exist derived from cultural, ideological, social and economic transformations: excessive working hours, presence of women in the labor market or delay in the age of emancipation, situations that affect the family institution and cause many challenges for its organization and for community life. These issues have a major impact in the quantity and quality of shared time between parents and children, causing distress and disappointment within families (Caballo, Gradaille & Merelas, 2012; Fraguela, Lorenzo & Varela, 2011).

Besides, 21st century society needs to reinvent the family institution and identify its varying configurations; thus, the diversity of structures and the coexistence of different types of families could be factors linked to shared activities between parents and children, despite the discrepancies spotted in other studies regarding this idea and the incidence of the number of siblings belonging to the family unit (Zaborskis et al., 2007; Offer, 2014). This places the focus of attention on variables related to family dynamics, given that a good organization, with positive, real and effective interactions, promotes shared family time (Pérez, Martínez, Mesa, Pérez & Jiménez, 2009).

The same problem applies to variables as the educational and / or economic level of the family, the role model provided to children or the educational style of parents, since some researches relate them to family activities when others disassociate them (Valdemoros et al., 2014). However, general agreement exists in scientific literature when considering proper

family functioning as a conditioning factor of positive family leisure activities. This proper management of the household unit can become a reality through suitable family cohesion and flexibility (Hornberger, Zabriskie & Freeman, 2010; Smith, Freeman & Zabriskie, 2009) and smooth communication between parents and children (Sharp, Graham & Ridenour, 2006; Smith et al., 2009), leading to enriching experiences in common which promote family welfare (Agate, Zabriskie, Agate & Poff, 2009). It therefore follows that "the improvement of the family organization is linked to an improvement of the cohesion among the members of the nuclear family, as well as to an improvement of communication and collaborative problem solving" (Orte, Ballester & March, 2013, p. 21).

Likewise, difficulties for family reconciliation led in many cases to situations where many relatives who do not belong to the nuclear family are actually part of the daily family life, emphasizing the importance of grandparents, who acquired a relevant role within the family and a valuable social and educational function. According to data from the European survey SHARE (Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe) 36,8% of grandparents aged 50 or more claim to support the family, fundamentally in the care of their grandchildren (Mari-Klose & Escapa, 2015), which leads them to assume the role of caregiver more often than they should in order to satisfy the needs of parents, leaving behind their needs as grandparents (González & De la Fuente, 2007).

On the other hand, Post-Compulsory Secondary Education students are in a life stage characterized by a yearning for freedom, a need for autonomy and a desire to enjoy an independent life. They usually spend more time with friends, partners or even entering the labor market, generating a certain distance and disconnection from the family (Bell & Bell, 2005, 2009), usually resulting in a shrinkage of shared time spent within the family. In this regard, the findings of Muñoz et al. (2010) state that Compulsory Secondary Education students spend more free time with their families in the primary levels of the stage, and the shared time in the latest years decreases significantly, although the level of satisfaction during the free time spent within the family does not differ, given that they claim to be quite satisfied. This spurs us to consider that shared time within the family tends to decrease as students move forward in the phases of schooling, although the level of satisfaction regarding the activities carried out together tends to remain positive.

Studies carried out by the Office for Sociological Investigation of the Basque Government (2012-2016) gather public opinion on family life. Regarding how frequently people meet their families, a majority of the survey takers claimed to be very satisfied (49%) or satisfied (40%), displaying a high degree of satisfaction with the frequency of shared activities too (40% very satisfied; 38,5% satisfied). With reference to this time shared in common among all the members of the household, researches confirm that daily activities such as chatting, having breakfast, lunch or dinner, as well as watching television, are performed almost every day or several times a week; however, in terms of the distribution of household chores there is a lot of variability, with the following responses: almost never or never (33%), everyday (33%), occasionally (19%), once or twice a week (9%), on holidays (3%). On the other hand, the frequency of performance of other non-daily activities such as watching a movie at home, going to a museum, sharing a hobby, playing sports or playing cards, tends to happen mostly from time to time or almost never.

2. Motivation and objectives

It has been shown that activities shared within the family provide important benefits to those who practice them and guidance to personal and social growth, as well as family welfare to those who share more time with family members. Despite the existence of many studies on young people and free time, there are just a few researches specifically focusing on Post-Compulsory Secondary Education students outside the school environment, which motivates the interest of this study in its search for answers to some questions: How do Spanish students and their parents perceive the participation of each family member in family activities? Do they think that time shared is too much? Do they feel pressure from their families to increase that time? In addition to the members that belong to the nuclear family, do they share their free time with some other relatives?

3. Methodology

The object of this work consisted in students registered in Post-Compulsory Secondary Education in an educational center in Spain during the 2013-2014 school year and their parents.

Being aware of the difficulties in defining the group of parents given the existing variety regarding the number of living parents, we decided to take as a population unit each student of Post-Compulsory Secondary Education and one of the parents.

The sample size was identified from the data reflected in the Statistical Study on Non-University Education of the General Subdirectorate of Statistics and Studies of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports. A total of 1.055.532 students were studying a degree in Post-Compulsory Secondary Education during the 2013-2014 academic year.

Given that the group of people under study is finite but large enough to consider each population unit, the present investigation was carried out through a representative sample selection. The representative sample size for a sampling error of \pm 2,3 sigmas, a confidence level of 95% and assuming that p=q=0,5, gathered 1764 students.

It was decided to apply a stratified probability sampling with proportionate allocation reflecting the representativeness of the students distributed throughout Spain. For that purpose, the whole national territory was defined by 6 territorial areas, taking as a reference point the 'Nielsen-areas', established by the eponymous market investigation company (table 1) and, trying to maintain a proportionate allocation in each one of these 6 areas, a simple random sampling of the population was conducted. Likewise, we strive to find a representativeness of each province within every geographical area, as well as of the gender of the students group, the type of study included in the General Education System (Baccalaureate degree, Intermediate Vocational Training and Basic Vocational Training), the ownership of the educational centers (public / private) and the number of sampled classrooms in each center.

Table 1: Territorial grouping for the sample	
Denomination/ Localization	Comunidades y/o provincias
A1- Northeast	Catalonia, Aragon (except Teruel) and Balearic Islands
A2- East	Valencian Community, Murcia and Albacete
A3- South	Andalusia, Canary Islands, Ceuta and Melilla
A4- Centre	Madrid, Castilla-La Mancha (except Albacete), Castilla-León (except León, Palencia and Burgos), Cáceres and Teruel
A5- Northwest	Galicia, Asturias and León
A6- North	Cantabria, Basque country, La Rioja, Navarra, Burgos and Palencia
Source: own ellaboration.	

The average age of the 1764 students participating in the sample was 17,60 \pm 1,60 years, being 50,1% women (n = 885) and 49,9% men (n = 879); 67% studied Baccalaureate, 32,7% Intermediate Vocational Training and 10,3% Basic Vocational Training. The vast majority of Spanish Post-Compulsory Secondary Education students during the 2013-2014 academic year were Spanish citizens (89,6%; n = 1581).

We gathered information from the parents of 47,56% of the students participating in the sample (n = 839). The average age of parents was $49,45\pm1,60$ years; 66,6% of them were women (n = 559) and 33,3% men (n = 280). The vast majority were Spanish citizens (86,29%; n = 724).

We established four instrumental variables defined by Olson (2008), which enabled this study to analyze the attitude and willingness of Post-Compulsory Secondary Education students and their parents towards family reconciliation and shared family leisure and one variable that identifies the family role of the survey respondent.

- Participation of each family member in family activities: This variable, using a one-to-five-point Likert scale, identifies the degree to which students and parents perceive that each member of their family participates in family activities. The categories defined are:
- 1: Strongly disagree
- 2: Disagree
- 3: Undecided
- 4: Agree
- 5: Strongly agree
- Liking for spending free time with family members: It includes the grade in which students and parents perceive that they like to spend time with their family members using a fivepoint Likert scale:

- 1: Strongly disagree
- 2: Disagree
- 3: Undecided
- 4: Agree
- 5: Strongly agree
- Perception of shared family time: This variable shows whether students and parents consider that the time they spend with their families is scarce or excessive. For this purpose, a five-point Likert scale is used to indicate the level of agreement with the following statement "we spend too much time together":
- 1: Strongly disagree
- 2: Disagree
- 3: Undecided
- 4: Agree
- 5: Strongly agree
- Degree of perceived pressure to spend more time with the family: This variable, through a five-point Likert scale, examines whether students and parents feel pressure to spend more time with their family. The categories
- 1: Strongly disagree
- 2: Disagree
- 3: Undecided
- 4: Agree
- 5: Strongly agree
- Established family role: dichotomous variable presenting two categories, child (student) or parent.

The data of these variables were obtained through the responses of each student and one parent to the Spanish version of FACES IV questionnaire (Rivero, Martínez-Pampliega & Olson, 2010), which gathers information on the cohesion and flexibility perceived in the family unit.

The application of this instrument was carried out as part of the gathering of information from a more extensive and complex investigation, "De los tiempos educativos a los tiempos sociales: la construcción cotidiana de la condición juvenil en una sociedad de redes. Problemáticas y alternativas pedagógico-sociales", which delved into characteristics of the student, life in the educational center, family life, leisure time, health and quality of life, studies and labor market in the future, entrepreneurship and management of the household unit.

Before the final application of the instrument, a pilot test was carried out with 248 students from eight autonomous regions who were taking different courses of Post-Compulsory Secondary Education. Also, fourteen expert researchers from seven different Spanish universities joined the investigation.

For the final application of the instrument, a cluster sampling plan was used, randomly selecting educational centers from each one of the 6 territorial areas, considering two inclusion criteria: the required participations of one rural center in each territorial area and one private educational center of every three public schools. In every educational center selected, we chose the number of students required to reach a specific quota sampling and made them complete the questionnaire in one single session. Before its implementation, special permission was requested to the General Director of Education of each autonomous region; afterwards, principals of the selected educational centers were contacted in order to be reported on the objectives of the study and requested for potential participation for our questionnaire of some of the students in their centers. Two properly trained researchers attended personally every center to manage, help and coordinate the implementation of the questionnaire, ensuring reliability and reducing experimental mortality.

Analysis and data handling are presented at three levels. The first phase shows a frequency analysis of each variable in the study, enabling the exhibition of the attitude and willingness towards family reconciliation and shared leisure within the family shown by Post-Compulsory Secondary Education Spanish students and their parents. Subsequently, the Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted, determining: when values are less or

equal to ,200 the correlation is very weak; when values are between ,200 and ,400 the correlation is weak: when values are between .400 and ,600 the correlation is moderate; when values are between ,600 and ,800 the correlation is strong; when values are between ,800 and 1 the correlation is strong. This statistical analysis allowed us to identify whether the growth of the perception of students related directly or inversely with the perception of the parents in every variable studied. Finally, we proceeded to calculate the difference between the perceptive values indicated by students and their parents in each sample unit, comparing whether the average differed significantly in order to determine if students or parents showed a significantly higher attitude and willingness towards the family reconciliation and a leisure in family. For that purpose, the comparison of averages was conducted using t-distribution for two related samples.

A p-value of less than 0,05 was set as the level of significance for the whole study.

4. Results

We have found out that 60,5% of Spanish students of Post-Compulsory Secondary Education and 78,4% of parents perceive that all members of their families are involved in family activities; 23,4% of young people and 13% of parents are undecided while 16,2% and 8,6% respectively do not perceive an active involvement of every member of their families in shared activities (figure 1).

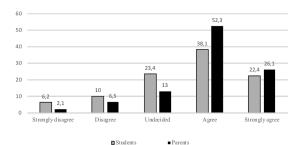


Figure 1. Perception on participation of every member of the family in shared activities

Correlation analysis shows a significant linear relation, albeit slight, between perceptions of students and parents (Pearson's r =,136 p=,000): high values of students correspond with high values of parents.

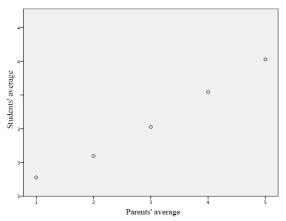


Figure 2. Linear dispersion between perception of parents and children towards the statement "each member of the family participates in shared activities"

While comparing averages, we can point out a remarkable difference (p=,000) showing that parents perceive participation of members of the family in shared activities at a larger extent (\overline{x} students=3,6 \pm 1,121 vs \overline{x} parents=4,1 \pm 1,687).

Figure 3 shows that 57,2% of students and 81,7% of parents perceive that all members of their families enjoy sharing time together; on the other side, 25,5% of young people and 10,9% of parents are undecided while 17,3% and 7,3% respectively feel that the members of their families do not enjoy spending free time together.

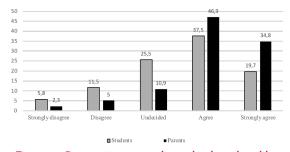


Figure 3. Perception regarding whether they like spending free time within the family

Correlation analysis shows a significant linear relation, albeit slight, between perceptions of students and parents (Pearson's r =,149 p=,000). Again, high values of students correspond with high values of parents.

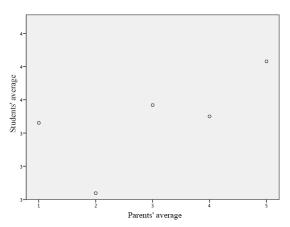


Figure 4. Linear dispersion between perception of parents and children towards the statement "we like to spend some of our free time with other members of the family"

While comparing averages, we can note a significant difference (p=,000), which reveals that parents perceive a greater desire from members of the family for spending free time together (\overline{x} students=3,5 \pm 1,105 vs \overline{x} parents=4,1 \pm 0,930).

As for the perception reported by children and parents regarding time spent together, 20,2% of students and 22,9% of parents perceive that they spend too much time together; on the other hand, 30% of students and 17,2% of parents are undecided while 49,7% and 59,8% respectively do not agree with the statement in figure 5.

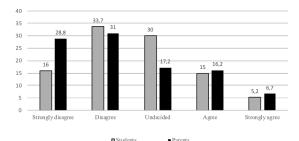


Figure 5. Level of agreement with the statement "we spend too much time together"

Correlation analysis shows an important linear relation, albeit slight, between perceptions of students and parents (Pearson's r=,177 p=,000). In this variable, the correspondence of high values of students and high values of parents is replicated.

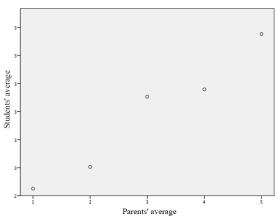


Figure 6. Linear dispersion between perception of parents and children towards the statement "we spend too much time together"

On the other side, the comparison of averages do not pinpoint a significant difference (p=,177), revealing that parents and children show the same disagreement towards the idea of spending too much time together (\overline{x} students=2,6 \pm 1,084 vs \overline{x} parents=2,4 \pm 1,280).

Regarding the pressure exerted by the members of the family in order to spend time together, only 9,8% of young people and 8% of parents perceive pressure; on the other hand, 16,6% of young people and 8,4% of parents are undecided while 73,7% and 83,5% respectively do not feel under pressure (figure 7).

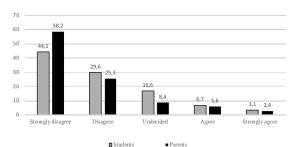


Figure 7. Perception of pressure to spend more time with family members

Correlation analysis shows as well in this case a considerable linear relation, albeit slight, between perceptions of students and parents (Pearson's r=,153 p=,000). In this variable, the correspondence of high values of students and high values of parents is repeated.

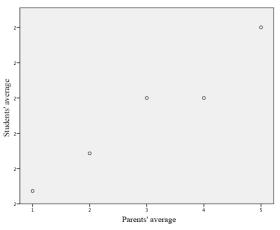


Figure 8. Linear dispersion between perception of parents and children towards the statement "we feel under pressure in order to spend most of the time together"

On the other side, the comparison of averages does not identify a substantial difference (p=,741), revealing that parents and children are not under undue pressure in order to spend more time together (\overline{x} students=1,95 \pm 1,071 vs \overline{x} parents=1,69 \pm 1,008).

5. Discussion and conclusions

The present study reveals that most of Spanish students of Post-Compulsory Secondary Education and their parents perceive that all members of their families are involved in family activities, highlighting the level of agreement in the impressions in this respect of both parents and children, being the former substantially more positive than the latter. These results are consistent with those obtained by the studies conducted by the Office for Sociological Investigation of the Basque Government (2012-2016), which reflect a high level of satisfaction (nearly 80%) regarding the frequency of participation of every member of the family in daily and non-daily activities, even though the population groups under study are different. Buxarrais and Escudero (2014) also corroborate this encouraging situation when confirming that distribution of household chores among all members promotes the reconciliation of family, work and student life, enables personal development of every member of the family and interaction between parents and children and improves family health, generating alongside an increase of opportunities for the promotion of family leisure experiences.

Previous studies, such as the one conducted by Ponce de León, Sanz and Valdemoros (2015), indicate that most of students of Post-Compulsory Secondary Education want to spend time with their families (3 out of 4), which is consistent with the current study, which asserts that the group of young people subject of study confirmed that their families are willing to spend part of their free time together (6 out of 10) and also adds that the proportion of parents wanting to spend more free time with their kids is very high (8 out of 10).

These results are also in line with the findings obtained by Muñoz et al. (2010), who claimed that young people are quite satisfied regarding the free time spent in their family environments, although they also concluded that relationships between parents and children change significantly: quantitatively when young people spend less time at home and qualitatively when they prefer talking about personal issues among peers, although they still need their parents to shape their values.

Besides, this study reflects a linear association between parents and children, given that it has been proven that the more the parents want to spend their free time in family, the more the children want the same.

Another relevant contribution is that parents and children do not consider excessive the free time spent in family; this idea positively supports the potential success of the promotion of leisure activities shared within the family generating welfare (Maynard & Harding, 2010; Offer, 2014), intellectual, psychological and social development to every member (Craig & Mullan, 2012; Shaw, 2008)

and improvement of health in its holistic conception (Grosso et al., 2011; Pinxten & Lievens, 2014; Veenstra & Patterson, 2012).

The current research also reveals an absence of pressure in both groups, Post-Compulsory Secondary Education students and parents, regarding the fact of spending most of their free time in family, which leads to think of a proper family flexibility (Hornberger, Zabriskie & Freeman, 2010; Smith, Freeman & Zabriskie, 2009) which, together with the joy given by shared activities (Muñoz et αl . 2010) promotes an open-minded attitude towards the increase of family moments besides the usual experiences that they already have.

In conclusion, the outcome of this study displays a familiar environment and favorable attitudes of parents and children towards the practice of leisure activities within the family. However, as Berntsson and Rigsberg (2014) have shown, very few young people claim to share other leisure experiences with direct relatives apart from watching TV or going shopping. Due to the lack of research of investigation on this issue, it would be very interesting to identify the factors which prevent or complicate the practice of shared family leisure, providing key features in order to enable its efficient promotion and easy access and encourage the interest of Spanish young people and their parents towards leisure activities shared within the family.

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HOW TO CITE THE ARTICLE

Sanz, E., Sáenz de Jubera, M., & Cano, R. (2018). Actitudes de padres e hijos hacia un ocio compartido en familia. Pedagogía Social. Revista Interuniversitaria, 32 53-64. DOI:10.7179/PSRI_2018.32.05

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