

## FREE TIME OR TOURISM'S TEMPORAL DIMENSION

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**Abstract:** *The present article promotes the free time or tourism's temporal dimension. Today we are witnessing and participating in the shaping of a series of new trends in the use of leisure time of the population, of which the most characteristic are increased interest in cultural activities, recreational development concerns, in various forms, tourism and sports practice. Mentioned trends have implications for the development of tourism, which has become, in many countries, the main form of use of leisure time. This paper focuses on some aspects of evolution, characteristics and temporal dimension tourism adjacent historical evidence and providing objective and Romanian tourist itineraries of the whole area. Education through tourism activities is one way of education that is defined by its location in space responding to this question where is the educational act?. Free time education makes its goal to diminish, and why not, eliminate these anomalies.*

**Key words:** *free time, tourism, temporal dimension.*

### 1. Introduction

The idea of free time has been on people's minds even from Antiquity. Aristotel believed that free time does not mean the end of work, but on the contrary, work means the end of free time. The latter must be dedicated to activities that imply recreation, creation, science, literature, art, philosophy, sport. Today, the concept of free time gains a much richer content including, besides the time destined for rest, recreation, fun and tourism, the time destined for professional improvement and development that is the time destined to inform and form oneself after all the professional, social and family obligations have been fulfilled.

At the present time we are the witnesses and the participants in the same time at the outlining of a new series of tendencies in the population's free time, of which the most specific are the increasing interest in cultural actions, the development of recreational preoccupations (be it any type of form), practicing tourism and sports as well as spending some part of the free time outside one's place of birth. Thus, the tendencies mentioned above have implications in the developing process of tourism which has become, in many countries, a main form of using free time.

The psychological and sociological side of free time is being outlined to the extent in which the individual distinguishes bonds – consumes different ways of life or imagines his/her road in life rationally and

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symbolically, practically projecting him/her self immediately or in the near future.

Joffre Dumadizer highlights in his papers the three functions of free time as follows:

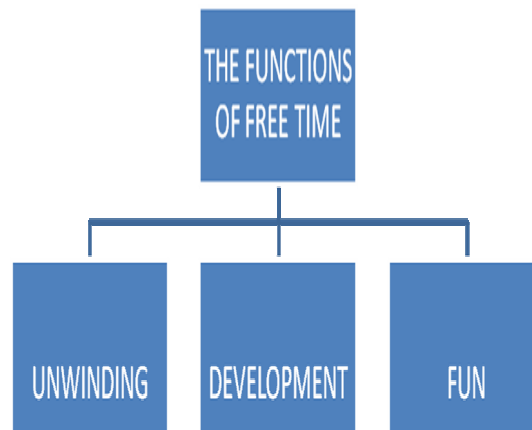


Fig. 1. *The functions of free time*  
(Joffre Dumazedier, 1990)

Establishing these three functions, Joffre Dumazedier shows that free time activities are done pleasantly and their choice is made individually. The unwinding function regards the organism's regeneration after a day's of work, of school, regenerating the physical capacities by activating the relaxation button. The latter are faster obtained at a qualitative level as well through active rest. Trying to discard exhaustion only through inactive rest leads to opposite effects than the ones bargained for, at the apparition of boredom and different disagreeable psychological states of mind. The fun function of free time regards creating an optimal life climate and is done through fun activities, but activities that can lead to a great amount of energy consumption and time; putting this along the exhaustion produced by school and work it can lead a negative consequences. The development of personality represents a preoccupation especially for the faculty, for the parents

and for the society in general for it implies *par excellence* an educative and self-educative function. The latter aims at satisfying interests, dispositions, artistic and technical skills and enriches the spiritual life through reading, road trips, theatre, museum visits, creation activities, etc. As a consequence, free time is constituted beyond the school, professional, family or social obligations. Free time differs from one type of society to the other, generally depending on the level of socio-economical development. The individual and the institutions are responsible of free time. Naturally we have no clue what to do with this free time, there is no culture of free time, of diversifying the ways of spending it: television is our primary free time activity. A distinction is necessary when analyzing free time: daily free time, weekend free time, and holiday. To what free time is concerned, things can be approached from two different angles: what the individual

must do and what the institution must do. A way of triggering the individual's interest is more through the culture of free time and less through material stimulation. Naturally, if you have more money you can afford satisfying a lot more needs of spending your free time.

The second approach would be changing the individual's mentality and the educational aspect of the concept of "free time", fact that is born in the classroom and in the family and continues in the institution you work for. Free time does not signify the daily free time, outside the schedule, for this is a very short, but the time we allot for sport, tourism, theatre, concerts, walks, road trips or for reading a book in order to satisfy a hobby. An adequate education is essential, nevertheless. In order to solve a problem, like the one of stress and free time, it is necessary that the individual be educated to recognizing the problem, to becoming aware of the fact that the lack of free time can infallibly lead to stress and a low efficiency. Maybe we should approach free time from a different perspective paying much more attention to priorities than to emergencies. Planchard E. (1976) indicates the directions to which we should orientate our steps to give a certain value to our free time. The author suggests we should guide ourselves by the compass, searching for the "true north", and not by the clock. The first represents "our vision, our values, our principles, our beliefs, our conscience – what we truly feel is important and the way we guide our lives".

The clock represents "the commitments, the answers, the plans, the purposes, our activities – what we do with our time and the way we manage it". Problems arise when the two elements are no longer overlapping and we spent our time doing things that are not important.

Thus, education of free time is essential, at least for the following reasons:

- To answer every teenager's question: "how do I manage my time so that I can relax as much as possible?"

- Because the core of the social attention has shifted from the social globally to the individually social and on the latter's well being.

- For the need of entering the market's mechanisms that include education centered on the individual's needs by assuming certain values:

- Individuality
- Free initiative
- Competence, competitiveness and loyal competition

- The responsible assumption of risk

Free time education should be transferred from the family level, the school level and the society level for:

- Most of the current families have no idea where society is going to.

- Transition is reflected in the family lives that are mostly unprepared for transition.

- Some families lack the necessary "time" to educate their children.

- Some families do not have the ability of managing their own available time so that children can benefit from it.

Most times, youngsters and children lack the role model example and the fulfilled life sensation. Nevertheless, social reality and mass-media constantly offer counter-examples of "role models" and personal fulfillment. School is also affected by the major changes in the characteristics of Romanian's society. Counseling program in the Romanian school is also a development program of organizing one's free time based on clear objectives for sustaining the child's personal, educational and social development. In order to help the solicitants appreciate time and improving their organization skills one needs to develop the "self-esteem" as

personality and a harmonious and efficient “way of life” thus making the process of projecting one’s free time much more easier through personal communication and cooperation qualities, initiative and cunningness, mutual respect and civilized behavior. Projecting and organizing free time makes us understand that every action of unwinding and fun follows three steps:

1. Preparing the activities according to the intellectual and motivational capacities
2. Deploying personal and free time activities by cultivating initiative, innovation and civilized behavior.
3. Capitalizing the forms of spending free time at the end of the week and during holidays.

Understanding free time varies according to age: primary school children, pre teenagers and teenager, students and other young categories. The youngster acknowledging his succession and orientation actions tries to satisfy his need for movement, affirmation and affection manifestation. Engaged in movement games (dance, sport, tourism) he actually learns to respect the rules and to develop his sense of time. He went from the need of movement to the feeling of joy and self responsibility. In organizing his time the youngster is being trained in an “active state of rest”: reading, knowing the ambient environment, art, culture, and sport – within these activities he discovers other components of his own personality. Familiar with the tasks and their fulfillment he develops a sense of joy in deploying his own activities that unites with his interest in participating in the latter. But from here to “organizing” free time there is a long way based on the reasoning categories: comprehension and action decision. The youngster, in order to organize his free time, must identify first the resources of “time” as his “own” time and want to improve the performance of

his actions – then he has won “time” and has understood it. The ways of organizing time are numerous: various forms of tourism, sport, tourism, music, reading, road trips, computer, television, magazines, cultural and artistic circles, etc. all are sources of information and development of a person’s knowledge and intelligence. To all the transformations presented previously (understanding free time) the teenager brings the feeling of “self responsibility”, meaning a habit of rationally using his free time, thus his actions become those ways of personal relaxation for rebuilding his affective and optimistic tonus. These steps of life, biological and cognitive development present as naturally as possible a “self understanding” to what organizing time is concerned based on education and personality.

1. In the support of organizing time the tourist in charge with the organization is based on the intellectual activity, on health and the desire to explore the two acmes: man and nature.

2. Deploying the tourist activities based on initiative and innovation presents a great desire for youngsters to relax practicing various forms of tourism around the country and within the Romanian society. The innovation of every young tourist determines an original way of organizing free time. To be unique and creative, the teenager builds “a style” in spending his free time, compatible with his personality and interests. Art is inherent to free spirit and with a lot of imagination tourism and sport are inherent to competitive spirit, while informatics and mathematics are specific to logical spirit. The teenager’s personality finds time to manifest itself for every discipline and cultural area.

3. In order to give value to young tourist activities one must give value to the teenager himself and one must consider

him a person capable de know and richen his own interests. If during holiday time seems limitless reading, road trips, shows and concerts are optimal for broadening one's cultural horizon; at the end of the week time is limited as a relaxation option so therefore much more short and dense as tourist periods. Achieving de organization habits of free time and tourism makes way to a positive attitude of action and decision in the social life – as a self evaluation in the fight with time in order to experience “the joy o knowing how to live”.

Attracting teenagers to practicing mass sports has great benefits on the long run and contributes to the development of a healthy generation form the physical and psychological point of view, a generation capable to cope with society's increased requests.

The concept of education represents a socio-human process present in the life of societies even from its primitive and incipient forms of social organization, being permanently involved in social changes aiming at the integrity of the human being (Allport G., 1981). E. Planchard defines education as a systematic action exerted by adults on children and teenagers with the purpose of preparing them for the life they may and can lead in a given environment. Etymologically speaking, the word comes from the Latin *educare*, with the sense of growing, taking care and going from one state of mind to another. This definition proves that education has a purpose in mind. The values that are about to be transmitted are being selected, as well as the best methods and means, ensuring an adequate activity organization according to a certain social command and respecting certain well known principles and norms and applying them with a certain degree of relativity (Lesne M., 1977).

Education is a necessary thing for it helps youngsters adapt to their professional

and social responsibilities, helps them guide themselves and helps them find ways of solving life's issues.

In professional literature there are hundreds of definitions given to education, generally, and to different types of education, specifically. In order to understand the formative educational and personality development process a psycho-sociological and sociological approach of the personality is necessary. From this point of view, education is an assembly of social actions that transmits culture and moreover an assembly of generating, organizing and leading social individual or collective actions. Depending on the degree of organization, specialists distinguish three types of education: formal, informal and non formal. The most representative type remains the formal one.

In the notion of education gathers all the conscious influences guided in the individual's development. The main characteristic of the educative process is its purpose. It is done with a goal. Education signifies guidance and help from the educator, but also self effort from the one being educated. Education is neither training nor reclamation, but the individual's guidance and the necessary means of instructing and forming its personality for the future professional activity. It represents a conscious activity of socialization, of transmitting the accumulated experience with deliberately pre established purposes.

The psychological and pedagogical currents have mainly insisted on the dimensions of the educative act.

The new acquisitions from the age and learning psychologies prove the need for sustained and consistent action, for continuity. Education is a core request of the contemporary didactics occupying an important part in the current psycho-pedagogical area of forming new generations (Stoica A., Cosmovici A.,

1972). What seems less familiar and especially insufficiently scientific – from the psychosocial and pedagogical point of view – is the achievement of the stability and continuity principles to what educative human interaction in the diversified environment of education is concerned. Education within this environment acquires a more pragmatic character being an integrated process of educational influences in various ways.

Students' education in knowing and appreciating one's self objective and the objectives of others, in improving the teacher's just knowledge and resolving different problems regarding the latter is related as follows: determining the students' skills, individually treating the students in the instructive-educative process bearing in mind the enhancement of the school tonus as well as the enhancement of other professional branches; all of these must constitute a fundamental part in the contemporary education (Revista de Pedagogie - Psihologie, 1987). Through education, the new generation assimilates cultural values created by mankind along the centuries. The educative actions sets its mind to transmit universal artistic and cultural goods having as purpose the formation of the individual within the new generation of his assimilation, interpretation and understanding abilities of the universal cultural values.

The educational factor is the most important in the psychological development and formation of the individual's personality. Education in itself comprises an entire universe of actions exerted intentionally by the adult generation on the developing one, actions through which one directs the psychological and physical evolution of youngsters according to certain social models that come to life through the blending of traditional elements with

psychosocial aspect and with prognosis to what the evolution of society is concerned. Education gains a permanent dimension being necessary for every age and having a formative role as well as a renewal and readapting one in relation with social mutations that occur continuously since the contemporary society is characterized by a more pronounced dynamism (Golu M., 1993). "The ideal purpose of education is the creation of self control power. But the simple dismissal of the external content is no guarantee for producing self control. The impulses and desires that are not triggered by intelligence are tabulated to accidental circumstances" (Dewei J., 1977). Good quality education presumes applying the diversity model by different approaches, initiating projects in which students and different faculties are involved as well as educational partners (parents, civil society, media and community). Studying the professional literature regarding tourist activities one can say that these teach subjects to interpret and analyze the processes and phenomena from the ambient environment by introducing experience, practice and concrete aspects in the educational process. These outdoor extracurricular activities presume triggering the beauty for nature and have the great advantage of embodying unrealizable educational elements in the classroom, generally in closed spaces. They also ensure new communication opportunities by surpassing cultural differences and geographical position, by direct exchanges of knowledge and ideas between the subjects from different countries in a globalised third millennium world. Recent researches (Angelescu C., Grah, 1999) have proved the importance of education by tourist activities on the development of character, cooperative social behavior and health to what the participants are concerned. Nevertheless, the subjects are

familiar with nature, its laws and balance on the elements and on a whole. The subjects' experience in nature stimulates creativity engaging the mind and body and amplifying a better memory of recent activities and experiences, these human qualities being inhibited by the closed and artificial stressful environment of the cities. The vision of education through tourist activities (Angelescu C., Jula D., 1997) shows that the human activity represents more than the linguistic phenomena in itself, three major aspects being at the core of tourist education nowadays:

- What is the significance of natural environment for the human activity and how can one send information within natural learning?
- How can one understand the concepts in a sensuous and experimental way since these concepts do not have their sources in the linguistic context form the profile literature?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of tourist activities?

The didactical identity of this type of education is ensured by the fact that the natural physical and cultural environment offers the framework for learning. Education through tourist activities can be considered complementary to other forms of knowledge, an equivalent to man's most natural needs.

## 2. Conclusions

Education through tourist activities is important from the health point of view, to all ages, the latter being the reason for which "The institute for sport and health" of the University of Grebadin, Sweden sustains and recommends this type of education. The most important argument lies in the fact that "homo urbaniensis" (urban man) has forgotten nature's lesson and riches. For today's urban man this

framework has remained only a recreational fun one. Nevertheless, even from this minimum framework of the urban man it is necessary to start education and the process of learning, more thoroughly the re-learning process regarding the man's relationships with plants, animals and natural season changes, relationships and human contacts that have not ceased to gradually diminish themselves from the glacier period. These permanent contacts man-nature have marked the human existence, ever since, for more than 500 generations. As a result, the uncanny causal chain man-nature has become the one in which the car or the computer replace man thus becoming the most important condition of production. Furthermore, the death of the natural environment replaces life as a model and as a source of scientific knowledge. Free time education makes its goal to diminish, and why not, eliminate these anomalies.

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