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## **A look at family leisure in the rural context from the level of parental education (Murcia, Spain)**

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## ARTICLE SECTION

### **A look at family leisure in the rural context from the level of parental education (Murcia, Spain)**

*Abstract:* It has been more than confirmed that the rural context is a factor of consideration for personal and family experiences, among them, family leisure. This can be understood as an opportunity or an obstacle depending on sociodemographic variables such as the level of studies, which we understand as part of the culture that is projected in the individual's daily tasks, in addition to the education of parents and children. The main purpose of this research is to determine the influence of the parents' level of studies on the adolescents' perception of their family leisure. A total of 546 students of compulsory secondary education residing in rural areas of the Region of Murcia participated in the study. The results show that adolescents with uneducated parents perceive fewer strengths than those with educated parents, although weaknesses are more recognized in the case of those with a high academic level. There is a preference for cultural or sporting activities among those with educated parents and a preference for popular activities among those without. All this raises the need to establish specific services and programs in rural areas to compensate for the contextual differences in families.

*Key words:* adolescents, rural areas, parent-child relationship, family time.

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## IDEAS CLAVE / HIGHLIGHTS / IDEES CLAU

1. Los problemas de conciliación son más patentes en las madres con estudios superiores.
2. Los padres con estudios primarios tienen un ocio familiar menos variado, divertido y saludable.
3. Los padres con estudios superiores prefieren un ocio cultural, deportivo y turístico.
4. El ocio popular es más propio de padres con estudios básicos.

1. Work-life balance problems are more evident in mothers with higher education.
2. Parents with primary education have a less varied, fun and healthy family leisure time.
3. Parents with higher education prefer cultural, sporting and tourist leisure activities.
4. Popular leisure is more typical of parents with basic studies.

1. Els problemes de conciliació són més patents en les mares amb estudis superiors.
2. Els pares amb estudis primaris tenen un oci familiar menys variat, divertit i saludable.
3. Els pares amb estudis superiors prefereixen un oci cultural, esportiu i turístic.
4. L'oci popular és més propi de pares amb estudis bàsics.

## EXTENDED ABSTRACT<sup>1</sup>

The educational environment, both at formal and informal level, is conditioned by contextual aspects such as the location of residence. The peculiarity of the space is more evident in those environments where there is an important singularity, as is the case of rural areas. The family environment in these areas is in a moment of crisis due to the rural exodus resulting from the search for new opportunities in rural environments, while it has also undergone a process of modernisation in terms of the role of parents, opting for a more co-educational model, and the inclusion of new elements such as technology or recreation. As a result, these families have experienced changes in the way they spend time as a family, although they maintain differentiating features with families living in metropolitan areas.

The social and family development of adolescents in rural environments is not isolated from the harmful effects of leisure, visible in rural and urban areas, although they are in closer contact with nature in a way that brings them closer to a healthy aspect that converges numerous benefits. However, despite the above, the availability of resources and means at the disposal of adolescents and their families for the enjoyment of leisure is one of the most evident weaknesses, undermining the viability of the development of a diversified and, therefore, enriching leisure. Public administrations and institutions in rural municipalities do not allocate sufficient resources to promote quality family leisure for their inhabitants.

Within the rural environment there is also a differentiation in the practice of family leisure according to socio-demographic variables, since there are distinctive features between male and female parents, finding a particular employment situation since most women are still unemployed, but their level of studies is higher, while men have a more active employment profile but a lower academic level. The level of studies, one of the most studied variables from research in different scientific fields, has not yet been widely contrasted in the rural environment and much less from the dimension of family leisure. This leads to the following question: How does the parents' level of studies affect the perception of adolescents living in a rural context of the family leisure they experience? In this way, specifically, according to the parents' level of studies, it seeks to obtain answers to the following concerns that underlie the main question: what benefits are caused by the practice, what obstacles hinder this type of encounters, what typologies are more and less practised and, finally, what agents are promoters of family leisure practices. A multidimensional approach that aims to clarify the inference of the parents' level of studies on the perception of these dimensions of family leisure from the perspective of their children.

For this purpose, a descriptive-inferential, non-experimental and cross-sectional study was designed in which 546 students of Compulsory Secondary Education residing in municipalities in rural areas located in the autonomous community of the Region of Murcia participated. They completed an ad hoc questionnaire entitled: "Evaluation of family leisure practices. Questionnaire for adolescents". This is composed of 41 items which are subdivided into four dimensions: weaknesses (from item 1 to item 10), strengths (from item 11 to item 20), typologies (from item 21 to item 32) and agents (from item 32 to item 41). These are completed using a Likert-type scale from one to four with the following ratio of values: one (not at all), two (somewhat), three (quite a lot) and four

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<sup>1</sup> Traducción exclusiva de los autores / Authors' exclusive translation.

(very much). Once the data were collected and coded using the SPSS version 25 statistical programme, the relevant statistics were applied: descriptive, frequencies, normality test, ANOVA statistic and Bonferroni's multiple comparisons test.

The results reveal the following aspects: in terms of weaknesses, the parents' level of education is not significant in any of the items; however, in the case of the mothers, there are important inferences in the scarcity of time, in the predilection for individual leisure and tradition, which is perceived more by those with higher education. In the case of strengths, diversity of activities, in the case of fathers, healthy lifestyle, diversity of activities and fun and relaxation, in the case of mothers, are the items that have a significant relationship with the parents' level of education, in favour of those with parents with a higher academic level. There is no significant relationship between any of the agents' items and the parents' level of education. Finally, in relation to the typologies, tourist and cultural leisure is significant with the level of studies of both fathers and mothers, and, specifically, sports with fathers and popular leisure with mothers.

The results show the relevance of the contextual in the experience of the family. The cultural, beyond the academic, as a source of temporary ideological significance, finds in the way of experiencing leisure a way of personal, social and family fulfilment and development conditioned by multiple variables. Among these variables, this article takes into consideration the rural as something that transcends the territorial. Thus, it can be affirmed, in general terms and according to the data obtained, that the weaknesses, strengths and types of family leisure perceived by adolescents living in rural contexts are related to the level of parental education, especially that of their mothers.

In conclusion, it is considered that offering a referential framework of the state of family leisure in rural contexts in Spain would be the main contribution of this research. This has been recognised by relevant authors on this subject, such as Trussell and Shaw (2009), a lack of scientific production that promotes and strengthens a specific line of research on it. Thus, helping adolescents to perceive the rural environment with all its potential in terms of leisure requires political and social actions committed to the provision and reorganisation of services for these sectors of the population. In addition to the educational work carried out by families and schools. In the words of Alario et al. (2018) *"the fourth paradigm of rural development, with a rural space that is truly occupied, dynamic, endowed with services and growing, is yet to come"*, which is why studies are required that contribute to making the current reality visible and promoting change.