Peoples’ Different Views About Leisure Essay, Research Paper

During the time, leisure and recreation have been always an important part of man’s life and occurred in many different forms. In the ancient Greece, people used to entertain themselves by participating outdoor games, which contributed into both physical and mental development. In the middle of ninetieth (19th) century people used to spend more time together socializing and learn about and from each other. Nowadays, at the beginning of twenty-first (21st) century, where everybody is trying to achieve the most possibly, free time has become a scarce phenomenon. During this assignment, the following study was contacted in order to collect information on how people spend their free time, in particular their leisure time, and what particular factors influence their behavior. Four (4) persons, representing three different ethnic groups and both genders, were interviewed and asked about decision making in terms of their leisure time. After the interviews took place, the data was compared and classified into categories. At this point, it is important to be mentioned that the names of the interview subjects were changed in order to protect their identity.

The first person I interviewed was named Steven, a Caucasian male at the age of thirty-two (32). He is a college graduate and is currently working as a Human Resources analyst in South San Francisco. He has been to the Bay area almost for ten (10) years and even though he owns his own house, he shares it with one roommate. He was more than happy to participate at this interview and answer all the questions. According to him (personal communication, September 12, 1999) leisure is something relaxing, which does not require a lot of thought and energy. The “Leisure in Three Parts” definition of leisure is applying to Steven’s own definition of leisure (Bammel & Bammel, 1996). According to the definition, leisure has three parts: relaxation, entertainment and personal development. Steven thinks that leisure can be those three parts. He can relax, by having a nice and quiet day, he can be entertained, by watching his favorite televisions shows and at the same time broaden his knowledge and aspects about life. He believes that it is very important for him to spend his leisure time, by choosing to do activities, which are different from the ones he does during a regular day. The” compensatory theory”, which suggests that whenever an individual does not have to do something usual, he will seek a totally different activity, matches exactly his opinion (Bammel & Bammel, 1996). Steven emphasized the fact that he never does anything related to work at home. When he was asked, what other factors influence his choice of leisure, besides having to go to work, he answered that in order to enjoy his leisure time, having no pressures and constraints is very crucial. Also, he mentioned that sleep is a very essential part of his leisure, because he spends time thinking and relaxing and therefore a comfortable bed is necessary. He concluded this interview by adding that many times social commitments and things that he is obligated to do, as the everyday chores are, have interrupted or postponed his leisure time

The second person I interviewed was Amy, a twenty-one (21) years old Caucasian girl. Amy is currently a college student majoring in cinema studies. She has been to the Bay Area for a three (3) year period of time and rents her own apartment in Daly City. She works part-time on a campus facility at San Francisco State University. She believes leisure is a something that she does when she is not busy. She likes to enjoy the process of doing something and every single moment of it (personal communication, September 14,1999). Her definition of leisure matches with the definition of “Leisure as Nonutilitarian”, which suggests that leisure is doing things for the pleasure of doing them (Bammel & Bammel, 1996). And that is what Amy likes to do. She likes not only the results of cooking a nice meal, but the whole process of doing it. From choosing the ingredients to the way the food will served. Even when she watches television, she likes to enjoy every moment of each show, analyze its different parts and every time find something different to talk about. As she mentioned, she only does these activities when she is not at work or when she doesn’t have to do any schoolwork at home. Her opinion is identified with the “compensatory theory”, which was mentioned above. This theory is one of the most common ones and the majority of people identify with it. They try to avoid including activities related to their work as part of their leisure time. Besides work and school, which take a lot of time, many other factors influence her leisure time. Amy mentioned that whether she is with some friends or not influences her leisure choice. Typically, she likes to do relaxing activities with friends, as just watching a movie and chatting is, because she likes to get to know them better. Also, when she feels stressful and tired she does not enjoy doing any activities and that’s why she doesn’t engage herself in any kind of leisure.

Daniel is the name of the third person I interviewed during this assignment. Daniel is a twenty-one years old African American, who has been to the Bay Area for about four (4) years. He is a college student and only works during the summertime when school is closed. He just moved to a new apartment, which shares with two other roommates. He is a very easygoing person and always speaks in undertones and that made guess in a way his answers. He defines leisure as an activity that requires no physical, but only mental energy (personal communication, September 18, 1999). He likes to do activities that give him the opportunity to relax and at the same time think and reconsider things about himself, other people and various situations in life. He can achieve those things, as he said, by just going for a walk and observing the surroundings. Daniel’s definition of leisure is similar to the “Classical Perspective” one by Aristotle (Bammel & Bammel, 1996). In this definition, leisure is closely related to the mental developments of one’s mind and character. Thought is a very important part of this definition and of Daniel’s leisure time as well. He spends a lot of time thinking, reevaluating and gradually improving himself. He believes that learning is a continuously and therefore he tries to “grab” every single moment and learn from it and this becomes part of his leisure. Aristotle’s theory of “Leisure as the Goal of all Human Activity” suggests the same thing. Mental development through leisure is something ongoing that can be achieved only when the individual pursues it on a daily life bases. The only factor that differentiates Daniel’s opinion about leisure from Aristotle is time. Daniel believes that the lack of free time stresses him and makes him feel anxious, having as result him not to be able to concentrate and think. Aristotle believed that leisure is totally unrelated with time and can be achieved anytime. Money for Daniel is not a factor, which could influence his leisure choice, because most of the leisure activities he involves require either small or no amount of money.

The fourth and last person I interviewed was Katherine. She is an Asian American girl at the age of twenty-six (26). She is currently going to school, majoring in fashion design, and her part time job is related to her major. She has been to the Bay Area for about four (4) years and she lives in an apartment, which shares with her partner and another roommate.

Bibliography

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