

Theatre and leisure in the uk assignment

[Art & Culture](#)



Select one of the following activities: computer gaming, bingo, theatre (suspecting and participation), cycling and music festivals. For your selected topic you are required to undertake detailed research in order to complete the following task: Describe the role of leisure in society and then specifically comment on your selected activity and how it is influenced by changes in society. Discuss the key changes both in participation and also resource provision for this leisure activity. This should focus on the activity in a I-J context and only consider the post-war period.

Use specific examples and data to support your discussion. Leisure is a complex subject, which is part of our day-to-day life. The word 'leisure' comes from the Latin word 'licker', which means to be free'. Along time, specialists tried to find a suitable definition, but they faced several difficulties because 'one person's 'leisure' may be another person's Work! ' (Worth, 1997, p. 1). According to Webster Revised Unabridged Dictionary, leisure is freedom from occupation or business; vacant time; time free from employment'.

On the same hand, George Lundeberg et al (1934) mention that leisure refers to the time we are free from more obvious and formal duties'. These two definitions are more focused on work and Job, rather than being more personally specific, as is the definition from Oxford Dictionary, where the time spent in or free for relaxation or enjoyment' is attributed to leisure. Moreover, Haywood et al (1995) divide leisure into four categories: leisure as residual time, leisure as activities, functional (beneficial) leisure and leisure as freedom (state of mind).

According to this division, more definitions were introduced, such as 'time not taken up with duties and necessities' (Ward, Hanson and Campbell, 1994), referring to leisure as residual time; or 'cluster of activities which are voluntary and pleasurable' (Goodbye, 1999), linked to leisure as activities. The last category mentioned, leisure as a freedom (state of mind), is more complicated because it involves both leisure and free-time, as separate areas. From this point of view, Degraded (1964) has said 'Leisure and free-time live in two different worlds... Anybody can have free time. Not everybody can have leisure...

Free time refers to a special way of calculating a special kind of time. Leisure refers to a state of being, a condition of man, which few desire and fewer achieve. All these definitions and many others have tried to explain the necessity of leisure in human life and how it can be perceived and achieved. Most people associate leisure with entertainment, which is true only in a small percentage. Above this, leisure has not only the role to entertain but also to educate people, to reduce mental stress, to maintain and improve health and fitness, to educate social behavior and, probably, most important it gives a sense of freedom.

In order to explore the roles and benefits of leisure, it is easier to approach the benefits of the play. In Bull et al (2003, paper) there are mentioned 4 areas in which the play has important roles. First of all, it induces physical development as it involves muscles, bones and nerves. Secondly, it has an important role in the cognitive development, using risk-assessment skills and emphasizing intellectual development. Moreover, emotional development is encouraged, gaining play involves social development, as well, giving people

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the chance to achieve information about culture values and practices and about roles within society.

Leisure influence humans social behavior by encouraging people to volunteer; and it also enlarges social networks and reduces criminal activity. For example, one of the most common forms of leisure is doing physical exercises, meaning going to the gym or taking a sport. Usually, in both cases, you get to know other people and build friendships. Some people decide to involve volunteering in leisure. As a personal example, when I was in high school, I used to be member of a club, which involved volunteering in order to raise food for prisoners; I was doing this as part of my leisure activities.

Not to be forgotten is that leisure plays an important role in reducing criminality and aggressive behavior. After doing something they like, people think more realistic and have better feeling. Humans will communicate with those around, will offer help to those who need it and will feel that they are integrated in the society they belong to. Leisure activities play an important role in people's education. These may involve traveling, reading, learning a new language, going to theatres and art galleries and many others, which have the role to enlarge knowledge and develop new skills.

For example, nowadays, for many people traveling is part of their leisure. First of all, they escape from their daily bases, but, at the same time, this broadens their mind and improves their knowledge about different cultures and epistyles. A good example of combining traveling with leisure and education can consist of visits to farms and spending a couple of days there.

In this way, individuals can enjoy the beauty of the scenery, but also gain information about life in the countryside. The most common word linked with leisure nowadays is 'entertainment'.

Going to restaurants, pubs and clubs have become usual activities done by people in their leisure time. Meeting friends or relatives in a friendly environment reduces stress and makes you enjoy free time more. In a strong relationship with entertainment stays freedom. People choose the activities they would like to perform in order to feel free and gain more self-confidence. The process of choosing these activities reveals their personality, reducing the fear of being criticized by others. As mentioned above, leisure concerns also physical activity.

Sports such as football, basketball, and windsurfing have become very popular. People not only improve social skills but also keep fit. Leisure is in a strong relationship with health and fitness, trying to help people maintain a balance between physic and psychic. All the physical activities people enhance in have the role to reduce daily routine. Individuals choose their leisure activities in a relationship with their needs. Leisure also has the role to reduce mental stress and induce a stage of relaxation.

Stress can be reduced by a series of relaxing activities, which will in the end disconnect individual from the mental obstacles they have to face. People design their leisure time as to feel better and gain forces to continue working. Meeting friends, reading a good book, attend cultural events; all these activities reduce the daily stress we all face. During the last decades

the society has experienced a lot of changes; changes which have also influenced the way people perceive leisure and involve in activities.

Evolution of leisure is in a strong relationship with the evolution of culture, civilization, technological development and the way people see life. Haywood (1995) social class, gender, age and race'. Since the World War II finished the society is not based as much on social classes as it used to be before and each individual can select from the same range of activities. Probably the most important changes include the better education available these days, a greater range of alternatives and the way people manage the time they have.

Firstly, during the last years, the educational stage around the world has changed. More people get the chance to study, which gives them the opportunity to select more cultural leisure activities, such as going to theatres and art galleries; compared to the past when only the rich ones were educated and could choose these activities. Moreover, with the introduction of technology more alternatives have been discovered. Now, you can stay home and watch a movie instead of going to the cinema, fact that was not possible years ago.

New sports are being part of leisure and people are more creative when they choose what to do in their free time. Lastly, the 21st century is probably the busiest since the end of the Word War II, so people have less time to enjoy themselves and take advantage of the range of choices available. People used to practice more active and outdoor activities, but the lack of time made them choose more passive and indoor actions, such as watching

movies home with friends or chatting on the internet. Theatre events are a popular part of leisure.

If, in the past, only the rich and educated ones had the chance to participate, nowadays everybody can go to see a play. According to You'll (1995, p. 55) there are 'approximately 130 professional theatres in the UK'. Regarding changes in society, 'attendances at modern musicals grew significantly while traditional musicals, comedies and shows for children all suffered falls in popularity (You'll, 1995, p. 55). In a survey done in November 2003 has been stated that older people are more likely to participate in theatre events because it does not involve a lot of physical activity.

Another point to be highlighted in the same survey is that only 5% of the people participating are part of 'high culture vulture' (p. 12) category, which is a group who might choose to go to the theatre in their leisure time. Figure 1 (see Appendix) show the average minutes per day and participation rate by adults who choose theatre and concerts as leisure activities. As can be seen, more females than males participate in theatre and concert events. The overall statistic shows that each individual spends approximately 1.09 minutes per day involved in this area.

A research done by the Scottish Government has shown that '75% of respondents indicated that they had attended an arts or cultural activity during the previous year'. Theatre participation is located on the 3rd place with 28%, after cinema (52%) and library (31%); and before live music (27%) and museums (26%). According to the survey, the Scottish Screen Regional Film Theatres have been attended by 498,000 people in 2008/09, with an

increase of 1 5, 000 (3%) compared to 2007/08. The Society of London Theatre's Annual Report for 2009 indicated that 14, 257, 922 people attended London theatre performances, resulting in an increase of 5. % from 2008. Furthermore, in January 2008, the Royal Shakespeare Society had faced an increase of 72% in ticket buyers visiting Stratford-upon-Avon over the previous three years, resulting in 1 52, 000 new customers'. The survey showed that 2 out of 5 Londoner who answered went to theatre in 2002. Figure 2 (see Appendix) identifies the attendance of Londoner in 009, from approximately 12, 000, 000 participants to more than 14, 000, 000. Between 1996 and 2006 the numbers have been up and down, but only in small percentages. Most theatres in the I-J, and especially London, are part of the private sector.

Regarding London West End, in 2000, most theatre companies merged and now the three important groups are Cameron Mackintosh, Really Useful Theatres and the Ambassador Theatre Group (Bull, 2003, p. 225). An important operator outside West End is Apollo Leisure Group. With Apollo exception, the rest of the theatre businesses are Very small, in some cases single-person, production companies rather Han theatre owners' (Bull, 2003, p. 225). But some local theatres might be part of the voluntary sector, where people give free performances as a volunteer act.

Theatre venue provision varies from small concert rooms to places such as Sheffield Arena and Humble Stadium. Leisure time should be designed to meet the individuals' needs and necessities, such as relaxation, solicitation or personal development. All the activities people choose, reveal their personality and state of mind. Nowadays, there is a greater range of

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activities people can do in their leisure time, so nobody can say there is not anything that suits him/her. Theatre, particularly, is one of the basic leisure activities people should choose.