



Recreational strategies to meet the needs of children and young people in situations of Covid-19 in the Morón municipality (Cuba)

Estrategias recreativas para suplir las carencias de niños y jóvenes en situaciones de la Covid-19 en el municipio Morón (Cuba)

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ABSTRACT

Sports, entertainment and recreation activities are significant to ensure that children and young people can achieve adequate development in their psycho-social components. This research aimed to design activities plan capable of covering both physical and recreational activities, choosing to raise the quality of life of children and young people in the municipality of Morón. The investigation occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, a moment characterized by confinement or restrictions on going out to public places and the need to practice activities related to sports and healthy recreation. One of the negative consequences during this stage was the motivational and psychological affectations caused in a considerable group of people, an aspect in which inappropriate behaviors in their social and behavioral development were evidenced. To find that, a mixed approach was used in search of a more precise representation of the phenomenon and a more comprehensive vision. The main result is incorporating children and young people to active participation in their spaces, thus contributing to their extensive entertainment and improving their quality of life as a simultaneous element of community and experiential development.

Keywords: sport, education and leisure, active life, recreation.

JEL classification: I51; I58.

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RESUMEN

Las actividades vinculadas al deporte, al entretenimiento y la recreación son de suma importancia para lograr que niños y jóvenes puedan alcanzar un adecuado desarrollo en sus componentes psico-sociales. El objetivo de esta investigación consistió en diseñar un plan de actividades capaz de abarcar, tanto actividades físicas como recreativas, optando por elevar la calidad de vida de niños y jóvenes en el municipio de Morón. La investigación tuvo lugar durante los marcos de pandemia de COVID-19 sucedida durante el año 2020, momento caracterizado por el confinamiento o restricciones de salida a los lugares públicos y la necesidad de la práctica de actividades vinculadas al deporte y a la recreación sana. Una de las consecuencias negativas durante esta etapa fueron las afectaciones motivacionales y psicológicas provocadas en un grupo considerable de personas, un aspecto en el que se evidenciaron conductas inadecuadas en su desarrollo social y conductual. En pro de dar con eso, se empleó un enfoque mixto, en busca de una representación más precisa del fenómeno y una visión más integral. Como principal resultado se destaca la incorporación de niños y jóvenes a la participación activa desde sus espacios, contribuyendo así a su entretenimiento integral y al perfeccionamiento de su calidad de vida, como elemento concomitante al desarrollo comunitario y vivencial.

Palabras clave: deporte, educación y ocio, vida activa, recreación.

Clasificación JEL: I51; I58.

INTRODUCTION

When alluding to all the components that address or systematize the category of physical activity, it can be seen how this encompasses dissimilar tendencies of the human body, which, in turn, are executed for small and medium periods (Luarte et al., 2016). As a result, regulated energy consumption is expressed, referred to as the metabolism. On the other hand, recreation is considered an action whose objective is manifested in the scope of relaxation of human beings caused



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by fatigue from work activities. This way, it can induce changes focused on fun and recreation to replenish energy to face daily work actions (Chamorro, 2021).

In today's society, sports as part of Physical Culture has become a social phenomenon (Camargo et al., 2013). The reason is manifested in the interrelation of man with elements of utmost importance, among which social and cultural elements stand out. This relationship is so evident that the standards of sports behavior can sometimes become more complex. That is why, at the primary and secondary school levels, the practice of activities related to recreation and sports should be aimed at solving the social and economic situations of the territory itself. In this sense, they would be guaranteeing self-development in the communities. Therefore, these activities could be carried out as part of sports and socio-cultural projects in each community.

Physical culture plays a determining role through the components of physical activity (Aguayo, 2010). These should be focused on raising the quality of life and the well-being of people in general. In turn, they function as mediators in the processes aimed at people's spiritual and physical enrichment. Likewise, Cuban social policy, since its implementation in January 1959, has made it clear that its objectives are aimed at mass participation, justice, solidarity, and social equity. It advocates consolidating and strengthening its social project, where the community plays a leading role.

That is why several ideas and criteria can be emphasized when the term recreation is approached, allowing each person to identify it differently. In turn, recreation should be a form of escape from work activities where people can get the most out of it and constitute creative tools for new ideas, tasks, or goals that motivate the individual. That is why the use of free time is presented through activities not only physical but also cultural and cognitive, among others (Pérez Gamboa et al., 2019).

Physical activities with recreational functions

In any context, any activity can help and lead to a recreational function; for this, it must be able to compensate for the following principles: the essential that guarantees the recreational elements belonging to a given activity do not reside in the activity itself, that is, it will be residing in the specific attitude with which people face it. The type of activity and its durability will be defined by the individuals themselves, according to interests, capabilities, and levels of information (Quintana & Juanes, 2021). In such a scenario, it should be taken into account that:

- It is born from the will of each person.
- It is part of an attitude of participation linked to enjoyment.
- It does not expect a monetary retribution.
- It renews energies used in work or learning activities; it leads to an integral rest of the individual.
- It makes possible the creative expression of individuals through culture and their link with nature.
- It contributes to a healthy life for the human being.
- It is considered a system of life, all because it makes the most of free time.
- It is a fundamental complement to the educational process, where the usefulness of free time is prioritized.

Reference is made to the distinctive characteristics of the activity to be carried out since they are elemental to the human being and not from outside him, so it could be considered the same recreational or work activity depending on how it is approached. Amid the current pandemic situation, where the world faced the coronavirus, Cuba and its professionals work to keep children and young people taking advantage of free time from different spaces so that, in this way, they can achieve a healthy and safe entertainment with the progressive participation of family members in recreational sports activities, developed from their spaces, without putting at stake their lives and those of their loved ones.

In the case of the municipality of Morón, specifically in children and young people, it was determined the need for them to be able to practice healthy recreational and sports activities, which could provide recreation, as well as renewal of their physical, psychological and mental capacities due to the prevailing exceptional situation. In this context of the pandemic, children and young people have limited options for healthy recreation and enclosed public spaces, which is why terraces, halls, protected rooftops, and patios are recommended. Therefore, the objective is to design a plan of physical recreational activities to satisfy the interests of children and young people in the municipality of Morón.

METHODS

A mixed approach was used as a methodology based on collecting, analyzing, and linking quantitative and qualitative data in the same research to respond to the problem statement (Gómez et al., 2022). Its scope does not consist of collecting data in different ways, but rather, it involves combining inductive and deductive logic from the problem statement. This type of research can accurately represent the phenomenon, enabling a more comprehensive, complete, and holistic view of it (Hernández et al., 2014). The study was of a descriptive exploratory type, and its emphasis is expressed in the qualitative phase, in which interviews were conducted with 15 Physical Culture specialists in the municipality of Morón, including directors of primary and secondary schools; the analysis of documents and emphasis was placed on participant observation to corroborate the results of the survey.

RESULTS

It must be kept in mind that time and space are expressed as states of existence of reality. They are changeable, yet persistent and lasting. Therefore, the family in these conditions should take advantage of all the spaces in the home to keep children and young people active and protected from Covid-19 using various activities such as:

Table 1.

Recreational activities in protected areas

Activities	Space frame	Time frame	Social framework
Board games	Space Terraces, roof terraces and other spaces in dwellings	Time off	Children in families.
Games with animals	Space Terraces, roof terraces and other spaces in dwellings	Time off	Individuals and couples always with the family.
Dancing	Space Terraces, roof terraces and other spaces in dwellings	Time off	Boys and girls in family.

Source: Own elaboration.

Plan of physical recreational activities according to the interests of children and young people

- To develop the physical assets of individuals. Stimulate physical motor skills through a set of exercises that help the development of the human body, among these activities include cycling, cardiovascular activities such as obstacle courses, etc.
- Stimulate everything related to the cognitive. To increase the cognitive spectrum, either scientific or technical, among others.
- To develop creative thinking styles. To solve problems through games, inciting creativity.

Table 2.

Children and Youth Activities according to their interests

Activities	Objective	Methodological indications	Organizational Forms	Periodicity	%
Canine sports	Stimulate affective aspects through recreational activities involving trained or untrained animals.	To carry out competitions with the children's and youngsters' mascots.	In Family	In leisure time	39.5
Pigeon fanciers	To stimulate affective and recreational capacities with the participation of pigeons.	Observation of the flight of pigeons and linking them to shows.	From home as a family	In leisure time	39.5
Modeling	To stimulate reasoning and logic, as well as skills related to knowledge.	To make constructive explanations and to watch videos.	From home as a family	In leisure time	93
Dancing	Stimulate interpersonal relationships and physical exercise, through activities related to dance and dance.	To carry out exercises through dance and competitions.	From the family home	In leisure time	92.1

Board games.	To stimulate interpersonal relationships and cooperation.	To carry out recreational activities of dominoes, chess, checkers, etc.	Individual, couples, family group.	In leisure time	91.8
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Source: Own elaboration.

For this, pedagogical leadership and the work of tutoring and mentoring the promoters of Physical Education in different communities are vital for this. Marichal (2018) states that educational leadership is manifested in three major dimensions: Pedagogical, Direction, and Psychological, and agrees with the scientific community around the hierarchization of the category of influence, favored or not, by the situation.

It is important to mention that both leadership and the processes of tutoring and mentoring have different manifestations and have been described from different theoretical perspectives. In this regard, traces of studies ranging from authoritarian to distributed styles are evident, shared in the research of Ramos et al. (2015); Marichal et al. (2015); Hernández et al. (2017); Marichal et al. (2017); Marichal (2018); Barrientos et al. (2019); Marichal et al. (2019); Marichal et al. (2021); Barrientos et al. (2022); Rodríguez (2022); Rodríguez et al. (2022); Misas et al. (2022); Navarro et al. (2022); Pérez et al. (2020); Pérez Gamboa et al. (2021); Pérez et al. (2022) and Pérez (2022). These authors state the need and importance of pedagogical leadership and mentoring processes as fundamental elements to be addressed in educational and training contexts. In addition, they recognize in their findings that this directly impacts students' quality of life, which directly translates into comprehensive well-being.

In the evaluation of the quality of the physical recreational activities plan, through its application, it was found that in the canine sport, 39.5% was accepted by the children and young people; in the pigeon fanciers activity, 39.5% was accepted, while in modeling, the acceptance was 93%. In turn, in the activities related to dancing, 92.1% expressed acceptance, and in the board games, acceptance was 91.8%. Thus, the effectiveness of the activity plan could be proved. This result is conceived as a scientific novelty, presenting alternatives to satisfy children's and young people's interests in COVID-19 situations towards practicing healthy physical and recreational activities according to their interests. All this, from their healthy spaces, to strengthen the integral development sustained in the social impact, specifically for the children and young people of the Morón municipality and taking as an important premise to enhance the quality of life of people in safe and protected situations.

The research showed the importance of developing physical activities for the leisure and enjoyment of children and young people during the pandemic. The results were related to those provided by Cañadas and Santos-Pastor (2021) when considering the methodology used for the attention of specialists who teach Physical Education classes in the younger grades of primary education. Similarly, they shared similarities with the results yielded by Sierra et al. (2021), which addressed the work of physical activities to foster relationships between people and sports performance of children and young people. In addition, the few tools available to Physical Culture methodologists were considered. However, it provided the methodology from a system of physical and recreational activities to improve the well-being of children and young people in the municipality of Morón during the pandemic.

CONCLUSIONS

At present, activities related to sports and recreation are a prevailing support that emerges in times of pandemic. Physical Culture's mission is to educate and raise awareness of all individuals under the universal motto that a healthier life is possible, where the pillars supporting it are rooted in improving the quality of life and common welfare. For this reason, the plan of physical recreational activities structured to compensate for the interests of children and young people in the municipality of Morón is in full correspondence with the formative objectives, which are focused on developing and stimulating knowledge, skills, and physical abilities in the community.

In addition to the above, it is essential that, even after the health emergency, the development of these practices continues since their benefits on the students' quality of life have been amply demonstrated. In addition, it is imperative to involve parents and guardians since, as the creation of habits is required, the synchrony of all the actors in the educational process is important. Likewise, it is necessary to continue developing research processes in the area since several lessons require systematization.

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