

Occupations of Chilean adolescents: level of importance according to gender

Summary

An occupational view of public health takes care of the lifestyles of specific groups of people and how they influence their health and quality of life. Adolescents are positioning themselves as a group with their own needs from all areas of health, betting that the well-being of young people is an investment for the near future. Little is known about the nature of adolescents' occupational choices and how routines and lifestyles are installed. The challenges of this stage of life condition participation in occupations, to such a level that, from becoming involved in them, the interests and roles of adolescents are defined. The level of importance they attach to their activities would define their occupational routine based on the preferences of some activities over others. This research aims to define the differences in the level of importance that Chilean adolescents give to their occupations according to their gender. This study is quantitative in descriptive design. 109 Chilean adolescents who defined their daily occupations and the level of importance for each of them were evaluated. The Mann Whitney U test that compares two non-parametric samples was used. Regarding the results of this study, there are significant differences in the Play, especially in the play with friends, being the male adolescents those who give a higher level of importance to this type of play than their female peers. No significant differences were found by gender in Social Participation and Leisure activities, therefore, it could be said that adolescent men and women give the same level of importance to these occupations.

Keywords: adolescent, play, social participation, leisure activities, occupational therapy, gender

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Introduction

Adolescents must learn to make choices of activities and occupations that give them satisfaction and meaning, as they meet the expectations of the environment. Consequently, they actively engage in social participation occupations with peers, due to the need to define their identity, so it would be logical to find that they give a high degree of importance to this type of activities, as well as to leisure activities that also contribute to this task, to the extent that they are activities in which they explore their abilities. The interests of adolescents also undergo a fundamental change, as they move out of the family context, therefore, the interests that arise will depend on the social context in which adolescents are immersed.¹ There appear to be certain socio-structural factors that would critically influence the daily activities of children and adolescents.²

Adolescents begin to have control over the use of their time, defining the distribution and frequency of participation in their occupations, so it could be inferred that part of these definitions are also due to the importance that it attributes to one or another activity. Adolescents use about 44% in personal needs activities, almost a third of their day is spent in school and related activities; and 21% of their time in leisure activities, including socializing, playing sports, watching television, and participating in hobbies.^{3,4} Late adolescents use more time, than the rest of the population, in activities such as bathing or grooming, as well as in activities of free time and social participation such as talking and sharing with family, partners or friends during free time. Within the group of leisure and social activities, this activity has the highest participation rates.⁵ Participation in leisure activities

is important for a positive psychological development of adolescents, these psychological processes need satisfaction, and especially the need for competence, which is experienced in activities of this type, which turns out to be beneficial for well-being of adolescent.⁶

When it comes to gender differences, girls spent much more time on personal care and household duties, while boys spent more time on leisure and free time activities.^{7,5} In a study of time use in Spanish adolescents, the result on gender differences is very powerful, there are gender differences in all activities, except for "watching TV" and "listening to the radio." The activities "study", "home" and family tasks "gather", "active leisure", "computer" and "reading" are more likely for women than for men. For example, adolescent women are 16 percent more likely to participate in "Housework and family" than men.⁸ On the other hand, men participate more in "sport" and "hobbies" activities than women, with a difference of 8 and 14 percentage points, respectively; adolescent women prefer lower intensity physical activities to those that boys usually practice, therefore they are usually more inactive.⁹ Occupations are defined as "Daily activities of life, named, organized and to which the individual and a culture give value and meaning, that is, participation in occupations structures daily life and contributes to health and well-being", for On the other hand, these activities are considered to be carried out as individuals, in families, and with communities to occupy time and give meaning and purpose to life.¹⁰ Occupations are classified into seven categories, described in Table 1. Paid work and health maintenance are excluded from this classification by the age range of the sample.

Table 1 Classification of Occupations according to OTPF.¹⁰ Own elaboration

Activities	Category	Examples
Activities daily life	Activities oriented to the care of the own body and carried out in a basic routine	Dressing, eating, personal hygiene and grooming, among others.
Instrumental daily life activity	Activities that support life at home and in the community.	Community mobility, pet care, communication management, cleaning and housework, driving and community mobility, among others.
Health Management	Activities related to developing, managing, and maintaining health and wellness routines, including self-management, with the goal of improving or maintaining health to support participation in other occupations.	Social and emotional health promotion and maintenance, physical activity; medication management; nutrition management.
Rest and sleep	Activities related to obtaining restful sleep and rest to support healthy and active participation in other occupations.	Rest, Sleep Preparation, Sleep.
Education	Activity required to learn and participate in educational settings.	Participation in formal and informal education, interests exploration, among others.
Play	Activities that are intrinsically motivated, internally controlled and freely chosen and which may include reality suspension, exploration, humor, risk taking, contests and celebrations.	Exploring the play and participating in a play.
Leisure	Nonobligatory activity that is intrinsically motivated and engaged in during discretionary time, that is, time not committed to obligatory occupations such as work, self-care, or sleep.	Exploration and participation in leisure.
Social participation	Activities that involve social interaction with others, including family, friends, peers, and community members, and who support social interdependence.	Participation in the community, family participation, with peers, with friends and couple relationships, intimate partner relationships, among others.

Occupations, being symbolically constructed within a culture, makes people interpret what they do according to their life stories and context. This is why when interpreting the meaning regarding the homogeneity that exists in the social participation and free time of the adolescent, the subjective experience that implies the meaning or the personal importance that each one gives to a specific phenomenon cannot be ignored, defining the occupational choice.¹¹ This study aims to determine the relationship between gender and level of importance that adolescents attach to their daily occupations.

Material and methods

The focus of this research is quantitative in descriptive design. The sample is made up of 109 adolescents aged 11 years and 5 months to 14 years 4 months, from three schools in the Metropolitan Region of Santiago de Chile (Table 2). One sample was collected per convenience group. For the purposes of this study, the indications and ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki were respected.¹² All the members of the sample had the corresponding Informed Consent from their parents or guardians and the verbal consent of each adolescent to participate in the study. The information was processed safeguarding the identity of the participants and confidentiality, it was used only for research purposes. This research was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the Central University of Chile.

Table 2 Characterization of the sample by Gender and Age (measured in years and months). Own elaboration

Gender	N	%	Average age
Woman	58	53.20%	12.9
Man	51	46.70%	12.7
Total	109	100%	12.9

Data collection was performed using a written survey type instrument, in which the adolescent recorded the activities he / she carried out during a typical day of the week (between Monday and Friday) and then defined the level of importance of these occupations on a scale of Likert from 1 to 5, with 5 being "very important", 4 "important", 3 "moderately important", 2 "not very important" and 1 "not at all important". The survey was subjected to content validation based on the Moriyama criteria through a questionnaire sent to four experts who evaluated the items and assigned a value to each of the criteria according to the following ordinal scale: 3 much, 2 sufficient, 1 little and 0 nothing.¹³ The pertinent modifications were incorporated, according to the experts' recommendations, for the creation of the final survey that was applied in a pretest. The pretest was applied to 22 individuals with characteristics similar to the study population, in order to evaluate the understanding of the items by the respondents and assess the estimated time of application.

Statistical analysis

Non-parametric statistical (descriptive-inferential) analysis was performed considering the nature and size of the sample, since this analysis accepts non-normal distributions. Therefore, statistical tools will be used as a variable, the absolute frequency being the number of times that a certain value appears in a statistical study, under the levels of importance that occupations have for the adolescent, fashion, such as the value that is repeated most frequently and median, which is the central variable in a data set. For the calculation of the variables, the Mann-Whitney U test was used, which compares two non-parametric samples. Significance was considered $p < 0.05$ in all tests. SPSS version 19 software was used for the analysis described above.

Results

The activities are grouped according to the classification of the occupations in Table 1. The results are expressed below in percentages,

passing through the various occupations studied and their respective activities, namely education, ADL, play, free time and rest and dream, the results are presented for the level of general importance and then, the distinction is made, by gender.

Importance levels according to occupation

Level of importance for education

Regarding the occupation of Education, four activities were defined: formal education, break with play, recess with colleagues and review of material at home. Of all of them, the most important activity was recess with colleagues, 69% of the total sample assigned a high level of importance (very important and important). On the other hand, 7% of the sample registered the activity of reviewing material at home with less importance.

Level of importance for education by gender

Next, the gender variable is added for the level of importance. In this analysis, 26% of adolescent women give the highest level of importance to the activity of “recreation with partners”. On the other hand, for 18% of men, “playtime” is the activity that gained the most importance.

Level of importance for basic and instrumental ADLs

The Activities of Daily Living (ADL) defined as basic are bathing, dressing, eating and feeding, minor hygiene; the instrumentals are simple food preparation, house cleaning and order, pet care and transportation and transportation. For the total of adolescents surveyed, 91% of the sample indicates that the activity “bathing” is a very important and important activity. Another activity that 63% of the sample considers very important is “minor hygiene”. On the contrary, 22% and 24%, respectively, consider instrumental or “housekeeping” and “housekeeping” activities to be “not very important”.

Level of importance for ADL by gender

According to the variable by gender, in general they behave similarly between men and women. Both give the activity of “bathing” a very important score, followed by the activity of “minor hygiene”.

Level of importance for play

The play for adolescents is of great importance, 48% of the sample consider that “technological games” are one of the most important and important activities; “play with friends” is located in the same percentage and level of importance; However, it is striking that 20% consider this activity as little and nothing important.

Level of importance for play by gender

According to the variable, level of importance by gender, it was found that 14% of adolescent women give it an intermediate level of importance, a score of 3 and 6% that say that this occupation is not important to them. On the other hand, adolescent males consider this occupation as one of the most significant for them, almost 20% of the sample, gives it the highest level of importance Figure 1.

Level of importance for leisure

As for the level of importance for leisure, this is classified in “activities within the house” activities outside the house “. For activities inside the house, 30% give it an intermediate level of importance (score 3).

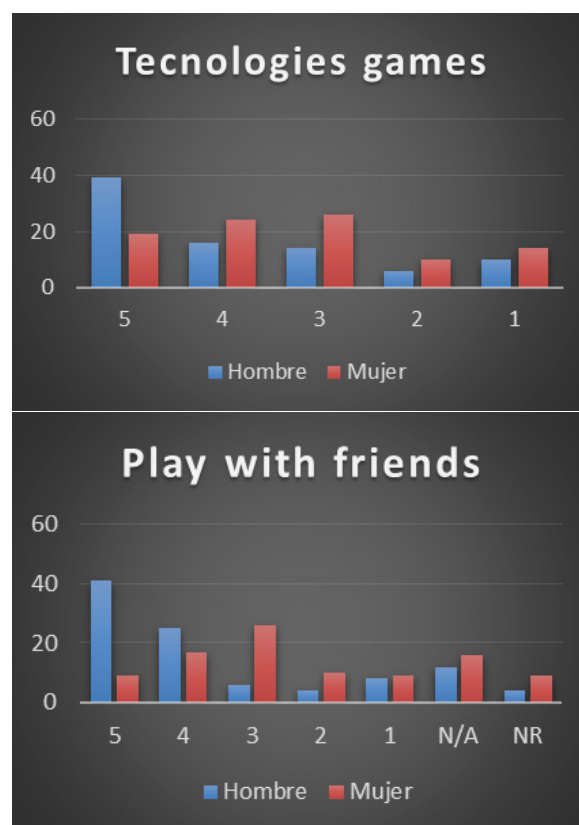


Figure 1 Percentage distribution of importance level of playing activities by Gender. Own source.

Level of importance for leisure time by gender

The occupation of leisure in relation to gender, 18% of women give a score of 3, to activities inside the house, while 2% give a level of minimum importance with a score of 1. Regarding the masculine gender, almost 16% give a score of 5 to activities outside the home, while 2% carry out activities inside the house, with a score of 2, this occupation being of little importance to them.

Level of importance for social participation

Regarding the level of importance in social participation, almost 30% of the sample uses social networks and group walks, giving it a score of 4, while participation in religious activities and participation in scout groups only obtained a percentage 15%, being the least important.

Level of importance for social participation by gender

The level of importance for social participation according to gender, reflects that 16% of the female population participates mainly in parties, walks and plays and family conversations, giving a score of 4 being important to them, and a percentage close to 1%, shows that group walks and use of social networks is not important to them, giving it a score of 1. As for the male population, parties, walks and family conversations 18% find it very important and important, 11% think Moderately important and group walks, use of social networks giving it a score of 5 and 3, on the other hand, and reflects that participation in religious activities is the least important with a score of 1. So regarding participation in this area of occupation, men give a

greater importance to this occupation in relation to women, but even so the difference is not so noticeable.

Leisure, social participation and play in relation to gender

For the occupation of leisure, no significant differences were found in the gender variable ($p=0.699$). No statistical difference was found in social participation by gender ($p=0.209$). In this research, statistically significant differences were found in the occupation of gambling, $p=0.0040$ with respect to gender, that is, male adolescents give greater importance to gambling than female adolescents (Figure 2). Finally, for the play with friends, a difference was also found when the importance level and the gender variable were related, with a significance level of $p=0.001$. Men place more importance on playing with friends than adolescent women (Figure 3).

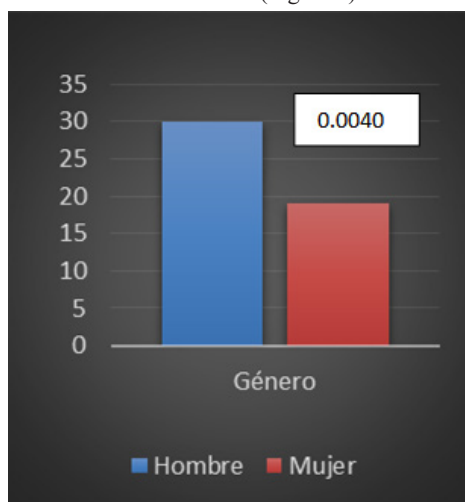


Figure 2 Level of importance of the Play according to gender. Significance level $p=0.004$.

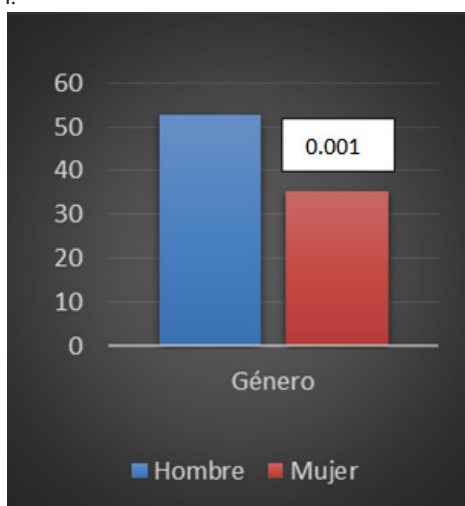


Figure 3 Level of importance of Play with classmates according to gender. Significance level $p=0.001$.

Discussion

Occupations throughout life change according to the challenges imposed by the environment, in adolescence participation and commitment to some activities over others, defines an occupational pattern or behavior.^{14,15} This research aims to determine if there are differences in the level of importance in occupations between male and female adolescents. The sample is distributed with a percentage of

46.8% of male participants and 53.2 of female participants. Average age of 12 years 8 months old. The results found regarding education are expected, adolescents attribute a high level of importance, both women and men, to the social activities associated with belonging to an educational community, such as the time spent at breaks, either with classmates or in play activities. However, in general, adolescents attach importance to education, in all their activities.

Self-care activities in the adolescent population occupy much of the time during the day, most studies of time use in adolescence describe it this way.¹⁶ In this study, all activities of daily life, in men and women, are distributed in the highest levels of importance, bathing and personal care or grooming, food and clothing. These are basic activities that must finally be carried out,¹⁷ which in adolescence is essential due to the high expectations of image projection. Activities related to cleaning the home and moving from one place to another are distributed across all levels of importance. Although there are studies that show differences between genders, girls spend 40% more time on activities related to household chores than boys.¹⁸ In this study, no differences were found between men and women. Regarding the occupation of gambling, adolescents attribute great importance to them, almost 50% of the sample considers both types of play, both technological and with peers, to be very important and important. A finding of this study is the significant difference between genders, male adolescents consider play activity more important and especially peer play. This finding can be understood from the development itself, since the age range of the sample is mainly focused on early adolescence, the stage in which changes occur faster in women, men apparently maintaining gambling as a main occupation.¹⁹ On the other hand, in the search for identity and peers play an important role in this regard. Also, it is striking that this difference occurs in the relationship of play with peers and not in games of a technological nature, which could indicate a trend that despite the fact that virtual occupational forms are so widely used, the importance of contact with peers becomes more relevant among male adolescents.

Leisure activities were considered inside and outside the home, in both groups, most distribute the level of importance in the first two levels of importance, in the two activities, there is a marginal difference in the intermediate importance of women in Activities inside the house. It is striking that for adolescents activities outside the home do not acquire a relative importance, since, it would be expected that this would happen in this way, no decisive results are found in this occupation. The difference in social participation, based on gender, is not statistically significant, therefore, the level of importance that adolescents of both genders give to these occupations is the same.

Conclusion

The importance or meaning, it is understood, as a subjective process in which the person gives a value to each occupation. Knowing how adolescents distribute their meanings in the activities they undertake or in those they participate in, generates new areas for reflection regarding the well-being of this group of people. Interestingly, female adolescents do not attach greater importance to home-related activities than men, despite the fact that time use studies allocate more time to cleaning and cleaning the home, for example. This result could respond to global changes regarding the role of women in today's society. Education is an occupation that adolescents attribute importance to, in all its forms, it would be interesting to study it associated with the educational level of the parents or socio-economic conditions. Adolescents, both in leisure time and social participation, attribute high levels of meaning to it. There are no differences by gender, which seems to be expected due to the characteristics of

this group. The differences are rather marginal in terms of activities inside or outside the home between men and women. It is necessary to investigate new ways of understanding adolescents, actors who are at the center of health promotion and prevention actions, since it allows creating information that allows this population to generate and install sustainable lifestyles. Regarding the limits of this research, it is suggested to increase the sample in order to generalize the results, disaggregate the free time activities and consider in the weekend activities registry.

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Conflicts of interest

None stated by the author.

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