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V.A. Ivaniushina & D.A. Aleksandrov

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V.A. IVANIUSHINA AND D.A. ALEKSANDROV

Socialization Through Informal Education: The Extracurricular Activities of Russian Schoolchildren

The paper presents the results of a large-scale study on the scope of extracurricular education services and an assessment of the potential role of education outside the classroom and informal education in solving children's socialization issues. The study was carried out by questioning students as consumers of education services. A new instrument was developed and tested to allow for a detailed description of various aspects of extracurricular activities and their correlation with studies and social and psychological characteristics of students.

An extensive set of statistics (over 6,000 questionnaires filled out by schoolchildren from several regions of Russia) was used to analyze the degree of engagement of children of different ages in out-of-class

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Valeriia Aleksandrovna Ivaniushina, candidate of biological sciences, is a senior research fellow at the Research and Study Laboratory “Sociology of Education and Science,” National Research University–Higher School of Economics (St. Petersburg). Email: ivaniushina@hse.ru. Daniil Aleksandrovich Aleksandrov, candidate of historical sciences, is deputy director of the National Research University–Higher School of Economics in St. Petersburg, and head of the “Sociology of Education and Science” Research and Study Laboratory. Email: dalexandrov@hse.ru.

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activities; the most popular types of activities of specific age groups; the age range when children are most engaged in such activities; the reasons for nonparticipation in extracurricular activities; the infrastructure of education beyond the classroom; the relative frequency of structured and nonstructured activities; the correlation between out-of-class activities and development of self-esteem, a feeling of community, and satisfaction with school. Age- and gender-related profiles of various activities are described. It appears that structured extracurricular activities, unlike unstructured ones, correlate with higher self-esteem (both overall and academic), and a stronger sense of belonging in and better satisfaction with school.

Extracurricular activities, or education beyond the classroom, are a powerful resource for the development of the personality and social competencies of children and adolescents. A special section of the “Development of Education” Federal program, adopted in 2012, is devoted to the development of extracurricular educational activities for children. It sets objectives to increase the enrollment of children in extracurricular education programs with a view to ensuring that they are positively socialized and providing equal opportunities for all children independent of family income, thereby creating modern infrastructure for informal education.

Relevant data about children’s extracurricular educational institutions (CEEI) were collected during the Monitoring of the Economics of Education on the basis of survey results of 400 directors of CEEI. However, any large-scale investigations of the actual extracurricular activities of children and adolescents in Russia have not yet been carried out. Our study is based on a large-scale survey of consumers of these services—that is, schoolchildren—concerning their participation in extracurricular activities.

This study is relevant due to the need to obtain reliable and sufficiently broad-based empirical data that can be used to generate recommendations for the improvement and development of the extracurricular activities of students. These recommendations are needed to modernize the education system in Russia.

This study seeks to address the following objectives: (1) to assess the number of students enrolled in extracurricular activities while taking into account age, sex, and place of residence; (2) to identify the most popular and sought-after types of extracurricular activities; (3) to analyze the degree of correspondence between the needs of students for extracurricular activities and the availability of such activities, that is, offering different kinds of extracurricular activities in different cities across Russia; (4) to identify the reasons for nonparticipation by students in extracurricular activities; (5) to assess the relationship between structured and unstructured extracurricular activities; (6) to establish whether there is a connection between extracurricular activities and a number of sociopsychological characteristics (a sense of belonging in school, a sense of satisfaction with school, general self-esteem, physical and academic self-esteem).

The impact of extracurricular activities on the development of children and adolescents has been confirmed by numerous studies conducted predominantly by foreign scholars, and in particular by Jacquelynne Eccles, Bonnie Barber, Reed Larson, and Joseph L. Mahoney. The American sociologist of childhood Annette Lareau has made a great contribution to the development of the theory. Researchers separate extracurricular activities into structured and unstructured ones. Structured activities include all types of activities that take place on a schedule and are supervised by experienced adults; as a rule, such activities aim to develop some specific skills or abilities in children. Unstructured activities are not scheduled, are unsupervised, and have no well-defined groups of participants: Adolescents can play football in residential courtyards, bicycle together, or simply spend time together in neighborhood clubs.

In many countries, children's participation in extracurricular activities is very broad. Thus, according to D. Mahoney (Mahoney, Schweder, and Stattin 2002), in Sweden, about 75 percent of pupils aged fourteen are involved in structured extracurricular activities; in Australia the participation rate among schoolchildren aged twelve to sixteen is 91 percent (Blomfield and Barber 2009).

Extracurricular activities, especially structured ones, present a special environment for socialization and create conditions for the acquisition of different social skills, which may not always be developed in the course of normal studies in school (Feldman and Matjasko 2005). Among the most important skills that are developed in particular during extracurricular activities, D. Hansen et al. identify time management, persistence in achieving goals, independence, ability to build relationships and interact with adults, and an ability to work on a team (Hansen, Larson, and Dworkin, 2003; Hansen, Skorupski, and Arrington, 2010). The Soviet Union had a developed system of extracurricular activities; it provided infrastructure for sports, arts, and music schools, institutions and “Young Pioneers’ Palaces,” clubs, and cultural centers. Most of the teams and clubs were free. It is a cultural tradition in our country for children to participate in various clubs and teams; this practice is still widespread. However, when speaking about modern Russia there are no data about how many children are enrolled in extracurricular activities or at which institutions, what is the ratio of free to paid activities, or to what degree certain activities are available to groups in the population from diverse places of residence or socioeconomic status.

The present study partly fills this gap. Empirical data were collected using a questionnaire given to students in grade 9 living in diverse locales (large, medium, and small cities and rural communities) and studying at various types of schools (large and small, affluent and disadvantaged).

Research Design

This survey of schoolchildren was conducted in four regions of Russia (St. Petersburg, Leningrad rayon, Pskov rayon, and Tomsk rayon) across different types of localities: a large city (St. Petersburg), medium-sized cities (Tomsk and Pskov), small cities, and villages. Stratified random sampling of schools was conducted in large- and medium-sized cities with a proportional

selection of higher-level and regular schools. Thus, the proportion of higher-level schools in the sample corresponded to what exists in the general population. In small towns and villages surveys were sent to all schools. The total number of schools where surveys were conducted and the number of surveyed schoolchildren are shown in [Table 1](#).

All students enrolled in grade 9 were surveyed at the schools included in the sample. The questionnaire designed for this study included several sets of questions, most devoted to various aspects of extracurricular activities. Schoolchildren were presented with a list of 45 possible types of activities, including: sports, artistic expression (music, dance, visual arts), and academic and hobby clubs). Survey participants were asked to comment on how many hours per week they engaged in an extracurricular activity, at what level, and where, such as in schools, clubs, cultural centers, and arts centers. A series of questions addressed what other activities students would like to

Table 1

Sample of Schools and Number of Surveys by Type of Locality

| Locality | Number of schools | | Number of surveys completed by schoolchildren |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|---|
| | In locality | In sample | |
| St. Petersburg | 700 | 100 | 3,932 |
| Tomsk | 90 | 25 | 1,275 |
| Pskov | 25 | 15 | 772 |
| Small city 1 (Leningrad raion) | 8 | 8 | 352 |
| Small city 2 (Leningrad raion) | 6 | 6 | 378 |
| Small city 3 (Tomsk raion) | 4 | 4 | 140 |
| Village 1 (Tomsk raion) | 1 | 1 | 33 |
| Village 2 (Leningrad raion) | 1 | 1 | 55 |
| Village 3 (Leningrad raion) | 1 | 1 | 17 |
| Village 4 (Leningrad raion) | 1 | 1 | 38 |
| TOTAL | | 162 | 6,992 |

engage in and why they were not able to. The questionnaire included questions to measure social and psychological characteristics: general self-esteem, academic self-esteem, sports self-esteem; satisfaction with and attachment to school. In order to measure social skills developed by certain extracurricular activities, the questionnaire included a Russian translation of the YES (Youth Experience Studies) survey, developed by American sociologists (Hansen and Larson, 2002). In addition, students were asked about school grades as well as educational and career plans. The sociodemographic section included questions about the education and jobs of parents, native language, and migration history.

The survey was conducted during class and took 25 to 45 minutes to complete. The quantitative data obtained was sufficient to permit statistical procedures of analysis.

The initial data analysis was performed for each locality separately. Range of extracurricular activities, participation in activities, number of children in different types of activities, and relative frequency of activities were evaluated. The results of these parameters was very similar. Therefore, during the next stage of analysis localities were grouped into four categories: large cities, major cities, medium and small cities, and villages. Separate types of analyses were carried out on a category-by-category basis or across the entire data set.

The collected data cover a long period for each student (from preschool through 9th grade, with detailed information about each year) and include an extensive range of extracurricular activities (45 types). Such detailed data made it possible at the analysis phase to group extracurricular activities by various criteria, such as type of activity, years of training required, level of participation, and institutions where these activities are pursued. A number of indexes were created for analytical purposes: average number of activity hours per week per person, average number of clubs per person per year, and average number of years during which an activity was pursued. For certain types of analysis the data were binary (“participated”—“did not participate”).

Categories of Extracurricular Activities and Their Popularity

Extracurricular activities are grouped into the following categories:

- (1) Sports activities (20 types of sports)—“sports” category;
- (2) Music, dance, and visual arts lessons (9 different types)—“art” category;
- (3) Activities in scientific and technical clubs, hobby groups devoted to particular subjects (10 types)—“hobby clubs” category;
- (4) Classes in foreign languages;
- (5) Other activities.

Categories 1, 2, 3, and 5 include several kinds of clubs; in view of their importance, classes in foreign languages are given their own separate category.

Children rarely limit themselves to one extracurricular activity; during the year they are able to attend up to five different groups, clubs, and sections. Frequently children’s range of extracurricular activities changed significantly over time. The average number of clubs per person per year was 1.5–2, although a small proportion of children participate in significantly more activities.

Table 2 presents data on the frequency of various types of extracurricular activities for different types of localities. All kinds

Table 2

Frequency of Different Types of Extracurricular Activities (by types of localities), %

| | Large city (N = 3,932) | Large and medium cities (N = 2133) | Small cities and villages (N = 867) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--|---|
| Sports | 55.5 | 57.0 | 57.3 |
| Foreign languages | 9.7 | 6.1 | 7.9 |
| Dance, music, and visual arts | 25.2 | 27.3 | 25.7 |
| Hobby clubs | 6.5 | 4.9 | 5.3 |
| Other activities | 3.1 | 4.8 | 3.8 |

of extracurricular activities in which students participate from preschool age to the 9th grade were considered. When comparing data from metropolitan, large, medium and small cities and rural localities, it was discovered that the ratio of frequencies of different types of extracurricular activities was extremely stable. **Figure 1** shows the frequency of distribution of different types of extracurricular activities for the whole sample.

The most popular among children of all ages are sports activities—almost 60 percent of all extracurricular activities. In second place (25 percent) are activities associated with the arts, such as playing musical instruments, singing, visual arts, and theater. Similar figures were obtained from a sample of Australian schoolchildren: 62 percent participate in sports clubs and sections, and 29 percent are active in clubs connected with the arts (e.g., dance, theater) (Blomfield and Barber 2009).

At the same time, our data from surveys of schoolchildren who participate in extracurricular activities differ strikingly from those of the survey of directors of extracurricular educational institutions that provide these services. The most clubs and sections at CEEI are devoted to artistic activities (33 percent of participating children). Only 27 percent of children at CEEI participate in sports sections. A possible explanation is that a significant part of extracurricular activities offered at schools

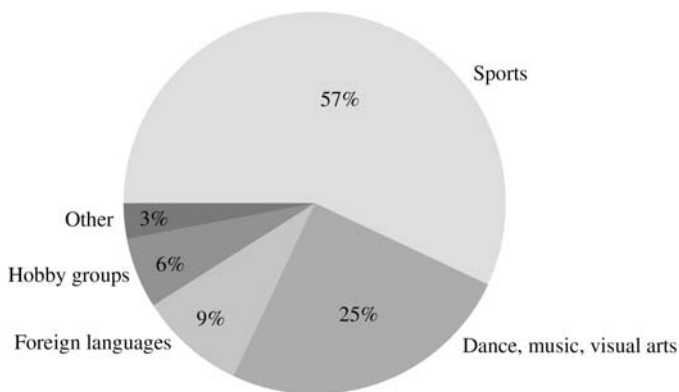


Figure 1. Frequency of Different Types of Extracurricular Activities

have not been included in the cited study, conducted as part of the Monitoring of the Economics of Education.

Foreign-language classes (9 percent) are among the most popular activities, along with football, swimming, and dancing. The least popular activities are hobby clubs and science and technology clubs (6 percent).

The structure of the range of extracurricular activities is virtually no different for large, medium, or small cities and even for villages, although one would expect that various types of localities would provide children with different opportunities.

As the questionnaire contains questions about specific names of clubs and sections, it is possible to conduct a detailed analysis of the relative popularity of individual activities within the categories “sports,” “art,” “hobby clubs,” and so forth. This type of analysis was carried out initially and separately for each locality and demonstrated stable results regardless of the type of locality, meaning that the results can be combined

As many clubs and sections are gender-specific, the frequency of individual types of activities has been analyzed separately for boys and girls. The results are presented in [Figures 2 and 3](#). For

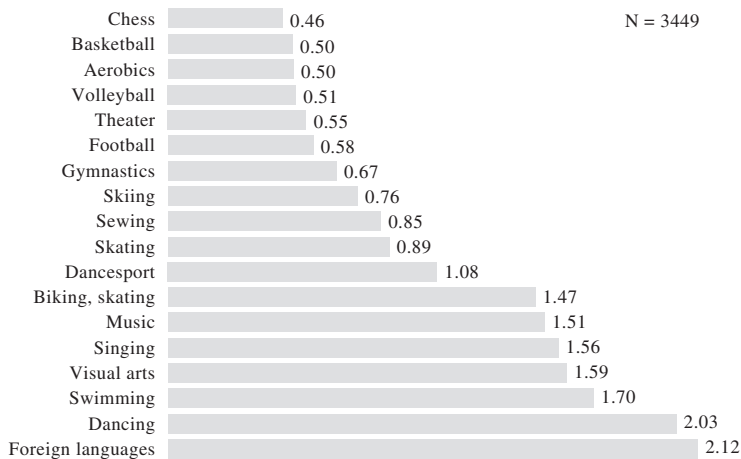


Figure 2. **Most Popular Activities Among Girls** (average number of years spent pursuing activities over ten years)

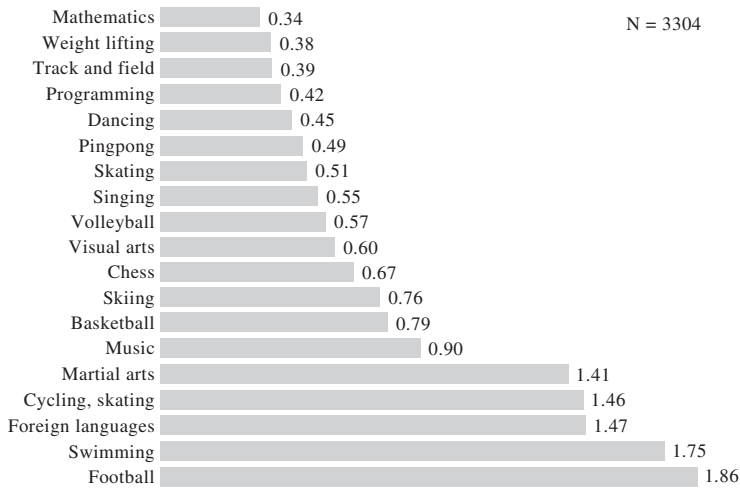


Figure 3. **Most Popular Activities Among Boys** (average number of years spent pursuing activities over ten years)

reasons of clarity, only the twenty most popular activities were selected.

Both boys and girls widely participate in swimming and study foreign languages. In addition, dancing, singing, playing musical instruments, and various types of visual arts are popular with girls. The favorite pastimes of boys include football, martial arts, biking, rollerskating, and skateboarding.

Next, we conducted a comparative analysis of the frequencies within each category of extracurricular activities. In the “sports” category the most common activity is swimming; boys and girls participate equally in this sport. The second most popular sports include bicycling, rollerskating, and skateboarding, and the third most popular sport is football. The least popular sports are rowing and fencing.

Among the activities in the “arts” category we encounter playing musical instruments and dancing with almost equal frequency; singing/choir and visual arts are somewhat less frequent. The least popular clubs in this category are graphics design and photography.

In the “science, technology, and hobby clubs” category, children prefer mathematics, programming, and other computer clubs (e.g., computer literacy courses). Clubs in all other subjects are mentioned about one-fifth as frequently.

In the “other” category, children most frequently attend clubs dedicated to needlework, embroidery, macrame, beading, weaving, and so on. A very small proportion participated in military-patriotic clubs or clubs organized around religion or faith, and still fewer participated in role-playing and historical reenactment clubs.

Age Dynamics of Extracurricular Activities

Different types of extracurricular activities differ significantly in their age dynamics. There are several typical profiles of activities.

The most common activities among the youngest school-children include singing, dancing, visual arts, gymnastics, swimming, and chess (Figure 4). The level of participation in these clubs peaks in elementary school, after which it decreases monotonically.

The frequency of participation in team sports (football, basketball, volleyball) as well as biking, rollerskating, and skateboarding gradually increases and reaches its maximum in

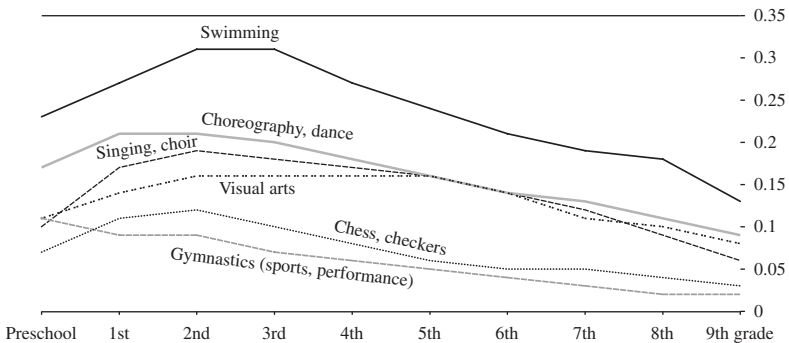


Figure 4. Participation Trends in Extracurricular Activities by Year. “Elementary School” Profile (proportion of participating children)

middle school (grades 5–7), but by 8th and especially 9th grade it declines (Figure 5).

A separate group of activities includes fitness and aerobics for girls, and bodybuilding and fitness facilities for boys. These activities promote the development of adult attitudes about physical fitness, concern for personal health, and keeping in shape. The frequency of such activities sharply increases by 9th grade (Figure 6).

Playing musical instruments and foreign-language classes are among the most popular activities: at the specified age 20–30

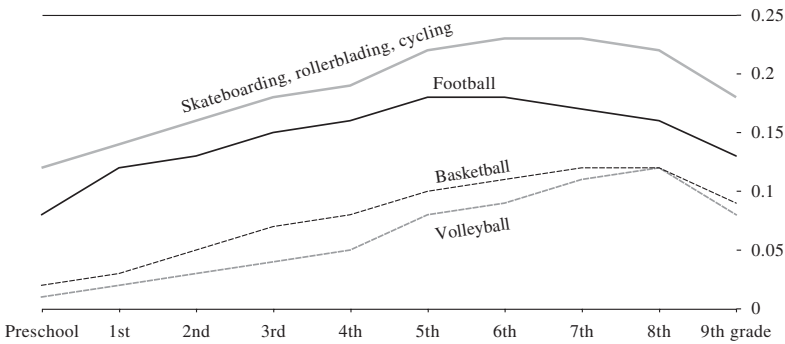


Figure 5. Participation Trends in Extracurricular Activities by Year. "High School" Profile (proportion of participating children)

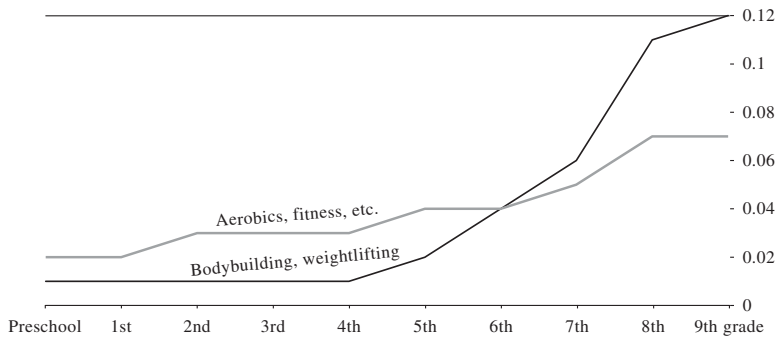


Figure 6. Participation Trends in Extracurricular Activities by Year. "High School" Profile (proportion of participating children)

percent of schoolchildren participate. Music is perhaps the most stable of all types of activities; its popularity varies less depending on age. The frequency of foreign-language classes increases during elementary school and reaches a plateau by 5th grade, then remains virtually unchanged (Figure 7).

In order to determine the age at which children participate the most in clubs, we developed frequency graphs by year separately for boys and girls and for each locality. Here we present data for St. Petersburg (Figure 8).

In elementary and middle school girls participate in clubs and sections much more actively than boys: In 3rd and 4th grades each girl participates in 2.5 clubs and each boy participates in fewer than 2 clubs on average. However, by 7th grade the frequency by which girls and boys participate in clubs evens out, and by high school boys are ahead of girls in this indicator. The most active children participate in clubs and sections between the 5th and 8th grades. In 9th grade the level of participation in extracurricular activities decreases markedly for both boys and girls alike. These recorded patterns are the same for all types of localities.

Figure 9 shows the total (for girls and boys) frequency of participation in extracurricular activities by year for all localities in which the survey was conducted. In large cities (St. Petersburg and Tomsk) the level of participation in activities across the entire

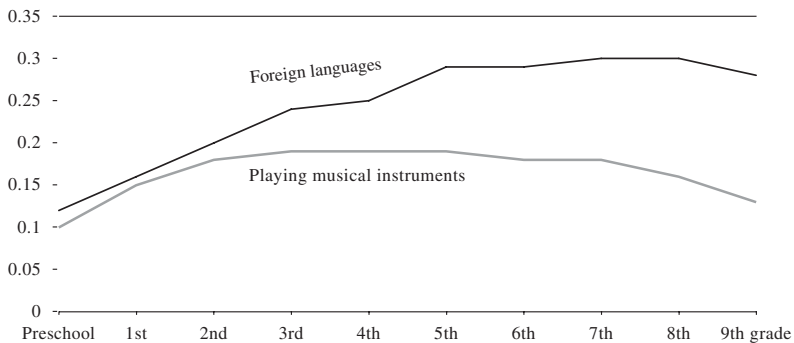


Figure 7. Participation Trends in Extracurricular Activities by Year. Music and Foreign Languages (proportion of participating children)

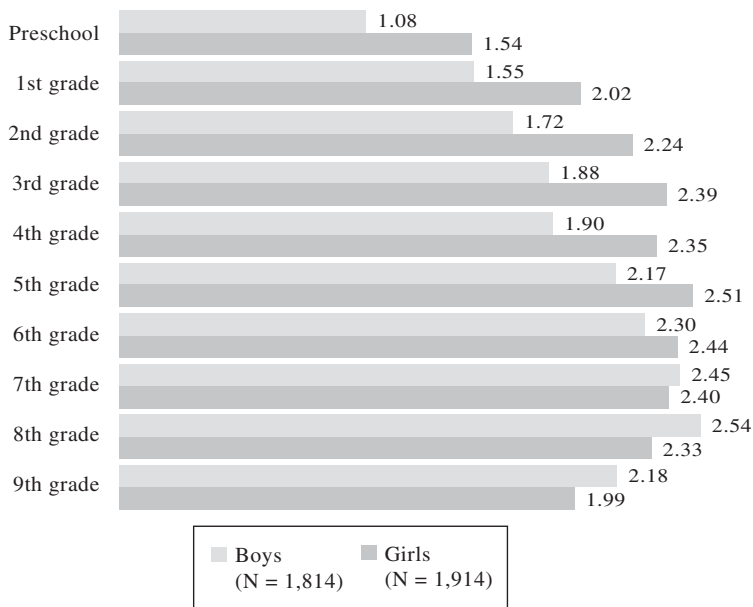


Figure 8. **Frequency of Participation in Extracurricular Activities in Different Grades at Schools in St. Petersburg** (number of clubs per person)

school is significantly higher than in medium and small cities and in villages, though the trend is the same: the level of participation in activities increases from elementary to high school and falls in the 9th grade. It is clear that such a decline in the focus on extracurricular activities is due to increased course loads. As will be shown below, many 9th graders indicated lack of time as preventing them from participating in clubs and sections.

Number of Children Participating in Extracurricular Activities

The vast majority of children participate in various clubs or sections during their school-age years. In large cities that provide the most opportunities for extracurricular activities, only 4% percent of children have never been involved in any clubs or sections. In small and medium-sized cities, the proportion of

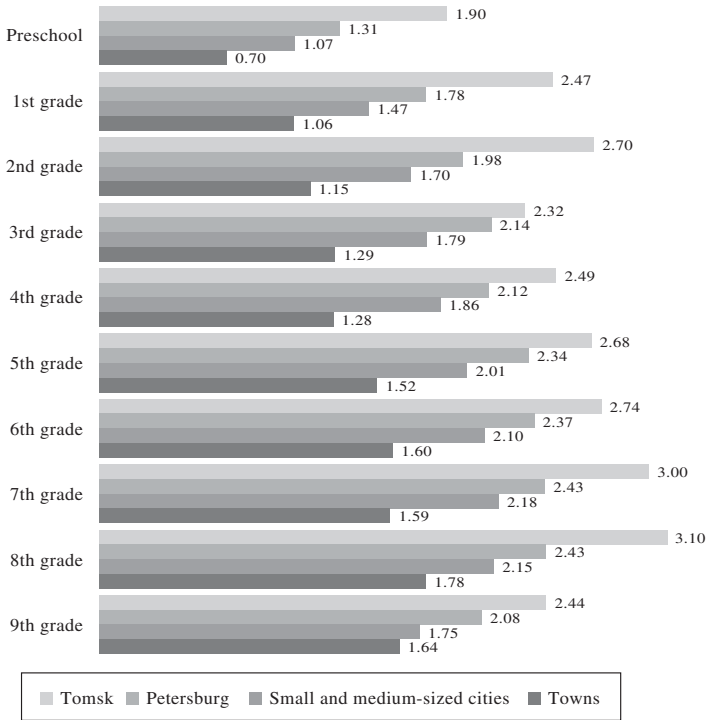


Figure 9. Frequency of Participation in Extracurricular Activities in Different Grades at Schools in Various Localities (number of clubs per person)

children who never participated in extracurricular activities is 7 percent, and in villages it is 15 percent. This can be explained by the underdevelopment of extracurricular activity offerings in rural areas, where there is probably unmet demand for such activities.

The proportion of children who are not involved in any clubs in elementary school varies from 10 percent in large cities to 29 percent in villages; in middle school this percentage becomes even smaller (Figure 10).

During the next stage of the study, the number of children who did not participate in extracurricular activities was analyzed and broken down by type of activity. Some differences between large and small cities were revealed, but the differences between types of activity were more pronounced: There were several times more

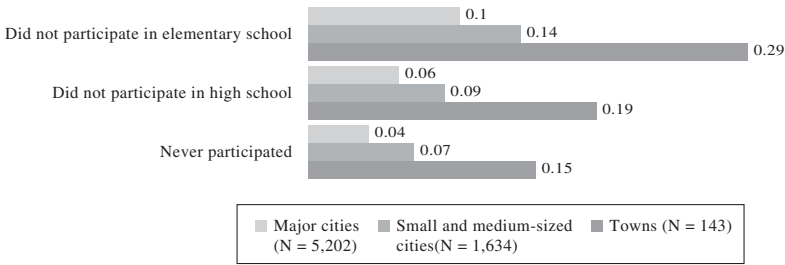


Figure 10. Proportion of Children Not Participating in Extracurricular Activities (by age)

children who never studied foreign languages outside of class or in clubs (academic clubs) than had never played sports (Figure 11).

Thus, for all categories of extracurricular activities, children were less active in small and medium-sized cities than in large cities, and they were less active in villages than in small to medium-sized cities. The differences between the types of localities are observed for all kinds of extracurricular activities: sports, arts, scientific and technological clubs as well as hobby and foreign-language clubs. In all types of localities the largest percentage of children did not participate in scientific, hobby or foreign-language clubs. There were considerably fewer children

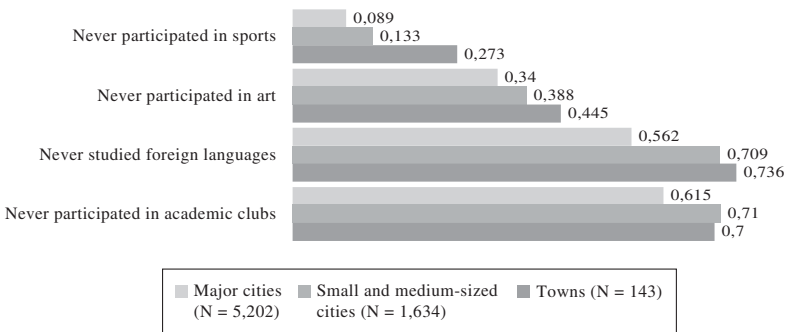


Figure 11. Proportion of Children Not Participating in Extracurricular Activities (by category of activity)

who never participated in sports: only 9 percent in large cities and 27 percent in villages.

In order to find out why students did not participate in clubs, the questionnaire included the following question: “Are there any activities that would you like to participate in, but do not go to? Write in the activity (you can provide up to three options). For each activity indicate the most important reason why you do not participate.” We provided the following answer choices: health reasons; parents did not allow it; these activities are too expensive; there are no such activities offered where I live; there is no time due to studies. Seventy percent of children answered this question, which shows that students expressed great interest in extracurricular activities: even those who already participated in clubs and sections expressed a desire to take part in other activities.

The analysis was conducted separately for different localities, since we initially assumed that the answers would differ for large and small cities as well as for villages. Insofar as the results for St. Petersburg and Tomsk were practically identical, the data for these cities were merged. The results are shown in Figure 12.

The most common reason that respondents gave for not participating in extracurricular activities was lack of time: 70 percent of schoolchildren in large cities and 55–60 percent in small cities and villages gave this answer. Indeed, in the 9th grade

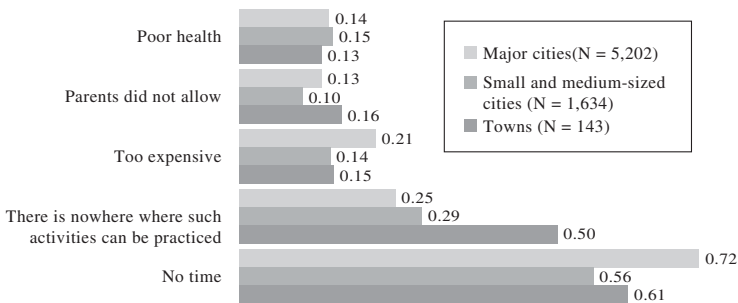


Figure 12. Reasons That Students Do Not Participate in Clubs

the level of participation in activities dropped for almost all types of clubs, apparently due to increased academic workload.

The second most common reason that children did not participate in clubs and sections was lack of appropriate infrastructure for extracurricular activities in a particular locality. Here we notice the biggest differences between cities and villages: whereas 25–28 percent of children in cities chose this answer, 50 percent in villages indicated this reason.

The reason “these activities are too expensive” was more important for children from big cities (22 percent) than for students from small and medium-sized cities and villages (15 percent). Obviously, there are more paid activities in the city than in the countryside.

The reasons “for health reasons” and “parents did not allow it” were indicated quite rarely: in 10–16 percent of cases there were no differences regardless of the types of localities.

Infrastructure of Extracurricular Education

In order to describe the infrastructure of extracurricular education, the questionnaire asked where exactly students pursued a particular type of activity. In order to obtain the most complete information, we did not limit answers only to formal institutions. [Figure 13](#) presents the total distribution of extracurricular activities at institutions. The main institutions where extracurricular activities are pursued are regular and specialized schools, including sports, music, and art schools. Quite often, children pursue activities at art centers and at clubs or houses of culture, and they also pursue hobbies with teachers, on their own or with friends. Commercial courses, classes at summer camps or with parents constitute only a small part of extracurricular activities. The share of activities pursued at religious churches/communities, museums/theaters or on the Internet is negligible.

The activity distribution profiles at elementary, middle, and high school levels are extremely similar. Differences were found in the relative importance of various institutions: younger schoolchildren spend more time at regular and art, music, and

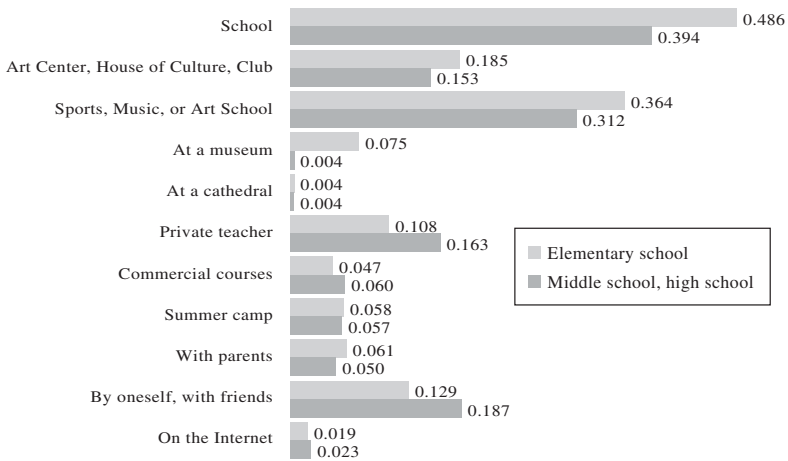


Figure 13. **Frequency of Participation in Extracurricular Activities by Institution** (share of those participating)

sports schools; secondary school students pursue more activities with tutors, independently or with friends.

The most important institutions that offer extracurricular activities are regular schools, where 40–50 percent of the children pursue such activities, and special music, sports, or art schools (about 30 percent). Those who attend arts centers, houses of culture, and clubs are a much smaller group. These data must be considered when collecting statistics on the scope of extracurricular education for schoolchildren.

Team sports (football, volleyball, and basketball) are most often pursued in clubs or teams at school. They are much less frequently practiced in sports schools or independently with friends, and students pursue these activities even less frequently in summer camp. The visual arts are most frequently pursued in art school, and fairly often in creative clubs in schools, arts centers, clubs, and at museums. Foreign languages are the only kind of extracurricular activities that are often pursued with a private teacher, and the second most common answer are classes at school (electives that are in addition to the core curriculum). Commercial classes, although present, are much rarer.

Structured and Unstructured Extracurricular Activities

Generally speaking, structured extracurricular activities include visits to clubs, sections, and courses at institutions where classes are taught by teachers. This type of activity is most often understood to be an extracurricular activity. However, unstructured extracurricular activities are also important in children's development. Unstructured activities are what children pursue themselves, sometimes organizing themselves into groups, teams, or communities in the process: Playing football in the courtyard, skiing for fun, playing chess on the Internet, and so forth. In our study, unstructured activities include all kinds of activities that a child pursues alone, with friends, with their parents or on the Internet. Figure 14 shows the frequency of structured and unstructured activities for different types of extracurricular activities.

The most common type of unstructured extracurricular activity is sports, and in particular cycling, rollerblading, and skateboarding. Children engage in unstructured sports activities 3 times less frequently than structured ones. The next most common type of unstructured activity are activities in the arts, the most common of which is playing a musical instrument. The frequency of other types of unstructured activities is very low and ranges between 2 to 5 percent.

The effects of structured and unstructured activities were analyzed through sports activities, since this was the area with the

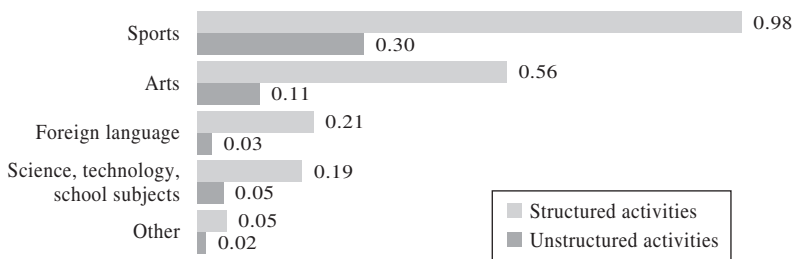


Figure 14. Relative Frequency of Structured and Unstructured Extracurricular Activities by Category of Activity

greatest share of unstructured activities. In order to assess the relationship between extracurricular activities and a number of sociopsychological characteristics, the multiple linear regression method was used. A series of regression models was created, in each of which the dependent variable was one of the following sociopsychological characteristics: general self-esteem, academic self-esteem, sports self-esteem, a sense of belonging in school, school satisfaction. Independent variables were the frequency of participation in structured or unstructured sports activities. Family characteristics (mother's education) and the type of school were used as control variables in the models.

The regression results of the analysis are presented in Figure 15. Based on the regression coefficients, the strongest correlation exists between sports and physical self-esteem. This result is completely expected. The effect of structured activities is significantly stronger, although it is statistically significant for unstructured activities as well. Sports activities were also significantly correlated with high academic self-esteem, and the effect is stronger for structured activities. As far as overall self-esteem is concerned, it is positively correlated with structured sports activities, although the effect in this case is rather weak; no correlation was discovered for unstructured activities. Similar correlations were detected for satisfaction with school and a sense of belonging in school. It can be assumed that this correlation will be stronger in cases where students play sports in school and not at

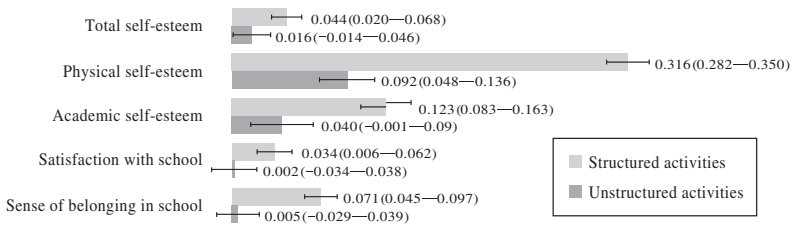


Figure 15. The Regression Coefficients of the Relationship Between Structured and Unstructured Sports Activities and Sociopsychological Characteristics of the Child, Controlling for Mother's Education and Type of School (95 percent confidence interval for each coefficient)

other institutions. We would need to conduct a subsequent study of the data in order to test this hypothesis.

Conclusions

Prevalence of extracurricular activities. The survey, conducted in several regions across Russia, showed that extracurricular activities are very popular among students. Almost all school-age children attend clubs and sections; only a small proportion of adolescents have never participated in these activities.

The most common type of extracurricular activities is sports, accounting for almost 60 percent of all club activities; various fine arts come in second (singing, dancing, visual arts) (25 percent of activities). Scientific and technical clubs account for only 6 percent of extracurricular activities. Obviously, this line of extracurricular education needs additional measures in order to develop further, especially given the fact that the “Development of Education” Federal program for 2013–20 places particular stress on promoting research and development into children’s and adolescent activities.

Differences between different types of localities. Regardless of the size of the locality—a small village with only one school and one house of culture, or a major city (Tomsk) and even a big city (St. Petersburg)—the distribution of extracurricular activities by popularity remains unchanged: Sports account for 60 percent of all activities, artistic activities account for 25–30 percent, and only 5–6 percent are hobby clubs. This distribution most likely reflects the real needs of children and adolescents.

The differences between the types of localities are apparent only in the level of participation: the smaller the locality, the fewer clubs are attended by children. If in the big cities each student attends 2–3 clubs, then in villages each student attends only 0.5–1.5 clubs. It is obvious that in rural areas there is a real unmet demand for extracurricular education: However, in villages the main reason children did not participate in extracurricular activities was that the desired club did not exist.

Reasons for not participating in extracurricular activities. The main reason that 9th graders in cities cited for not participating in extracurricular activities was lack of time. In villages the main reason that children gave (35 percent of respondents) was lack of suitable nearby clubs or sections. In cities the percentage of children citing this reason was significantly smaller. The fact that “activities are too expensive” is a significant reason in urban areas (15–22 percent of respondents), but it is almost not mentioned at all in villages (5 percent).

The number of those who have never participated in structured activities depends on the size of the locality: in large cities only 4 percent of students in the 9th grade responded that they had never attended any clubs; in medium and small cities 7 percent of adolescents fell in this category, and the figure is still higher in villages: 15 percent. This suggests a lack of developed infrastructure for extracurricular education in rural areas and the need for additional efforts for its development.

Age dynamics and gender specifics of extracurricular activities. The proportion of those attending clubs during middle school is slightly higher than during elementary school. In addition, the frequency level of participation in activities grows during middle school: The majority of children combine 2–3 kinds of extracurricular activities, and some attend 5–6 clubs at the same time. In addition, girls everywhere participate more actively than boys.

Certain types of extracurricular activities are characterized by a fairly pronounced “age profile”: Thus, for example, singing, dancing, and drawing are more popular in elementary school, and team sports are more common in middle and high school. The frequency level of almost all types of activities declines by the 9th grade. Exceptions are participating in activities in the gym, fitness and dancesport, whose popularity increases dramatically by the 9th grade. We believe that adolescents at age fifteen begin to assume “adult” attitudes concerning their health, and they begin to pursue regular activities in the fitness club as part of a healthy lifestyle. The age profiles of different types of activities should be considered when planning extracurricular educational infrastructure.

Infrastructure of extracurricular activities. Extracurricular activities often take place in regular schools. The second most frequently mentioned venues are sports, music, and art schools, as well as art palaces, houses of culture, and elsewhere. Classes with a private teacher and commercial courses are relatively rare and are characteristic only for certain types of activities, namely foreign-language classes. The Internet is not considered by schoolchildren as a place where they pursue a particular activity: There are only isolated mentions of the Internet as such a place.

Students rarely mentioned summer camps. This is probably due to the small number who attend formal summer camps. Of course, summer camps represent a powerful resource for the socialization and development of children. Thus, children from low-income families are in special need of them. The “Development of Education” state program for 2013–20 establishes a set of measures to help schoolchildren make the best use of their vacation time in order to pursue informal education.

Structured and unstructured extracurricular activities. The vast majority of extracurricular activities are structured ones: children participate in clubs and sections, and their activities are organized, meaning that they are guided by teachers or coaches. Children who participate in sports as a structured activity have significantly higher sports and academic self-esteem, as well as, more importantly, a sense of belonging in school and higher satisfaction with school. Unstructured sports activities are also associated with high sports and academic self-esteem, but the effect is much less pronounced. Unstructured sports activities have no effect on students’ attitudes about school. Thus, structured sports do not only have a positive effect on health and the physical development of the child, but they also contribute to the formation of positive attitudes about school and academics.

A promising direction for further research is a comparative study of access to extracurricular educational activities by students from different types of localities (especially in rural areas) and from different types of schools and families with

different socioeconomic statuses, which would require the collection of additional empirical data. A detailed analysis of the impact of different types of structured and unstructured activities on academic success, the development of social skills and the molding of the sociopsychological profile of students while taking into account their individual and family characteristics and the characteristics of the school is required. These data make it possible to formulate a reasonable strategy to develop educational infrastructure and create financial and economic mechanisms to ensure equal access to quality extracurricular education services for children from different localities and families with varying incomes.

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