



A review of interventions on leisure, self-management, youth and wellbeing

Idurre Lazcano Quintana, María Jesús Monteagudo, Joseba Doistua Nebreda, Ángel Rubén Ramos Rubio

University of Deusto / Institute of Leisure Studies, Spain

Abstract

In the current context of reduced levels of wellbeing and increased mental health issues among young people (Blanchflower et al., 2025; Pierce et al. 2025), the potential of leisure to enhance overall wellbeing (Dodge et al. 2012; Huppert, 2017; Mansfield et al., 2020; Mansourian, 2024) and the analysis of interventions where such potential is harnessed become particularly relevant. This presentation will focus on good practices aimed at improving the wellbeing of young people -both vulnerable and non-vulnerable youth- through leisure-based interventions. A systematic review of the literature in this field is provided, with the objective of examining the predominant theoretical and methodological approaches in the literature on good practices where leisure enables improvements in youth's wellbeing, particularly those seeking those interventions with a self-management component.

The proposal presents the results of the systematic review which was conducted in May 2026, following the PRISMA protocol by which a search in the main databases was conducted with the keywords "leisure", "self-management", "youth" and "wellbeing" as well as "intervention", "practice" and "vulnerability", in Spanish and English. Based on criteria of relevance, quality, and full-text access, articles published in indexed scientific journals were selected and analysed. Main findings from the analysis revealed features or processes in leisure-based practices by which wellbeing outcomes are achieved, which allowed identifying several aspects which make interventions in leisure more effective in terms of wellbeing improvements. Some literature highlights self-managed leisure as a key factor which develops autonomy, intrinsic motivations, skills to self-regulate barriers to leisure and, ultimately, increases the levels of wellbeing among youth. Conclusions point at the need for further research addressing some identified gaps by expanding age ranges, follow longitudinal designs, or diversify methods and geographic contexts; ultimately, such research would inform agents in practice and empower youth as decision-makers in their leisure and beyond.

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