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Title	Time use, daily activities, and health-related quality of life of school-going late adolescents in Cork city and county: A cross-sectional study
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Publication date	2014
Original Citation	Hunt, E. 2014. Time use, daily activities, and health-related quality of life of school-going late adolescents in Cork city and county: A cross-sectional study. PhD Thesis, University College Cork.
Type of publication	Doctoral thesis
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Download date	2026-11-04 21:16:26
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/1741

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Thesis Abstract

Aim: This thesis examines a question posed by founding occupational scientist Dr. Elizabeth Yerxa (1993) – "what is the relationship between human engagement in a daily round of activity (such as work, play, rest and sleep) and the quality of life people experience including their healthfulness" (p. 3). Specifically, I consider Yerxa's question in relation to the quotidian activities and health-related quality of life (HRQoL) of late adolescents (aged 15 - 19 years) in Ireland. This research enquiry was informed by an occupational perspective of health and by population health, ecological, and positive youth development perspectives.

Methods: This thesis is comprised of five studies. Two scoping literature reviews informed the direction of three empirical studies. In the latter, cross-sectional time use and HRQoL data were collected from a representative sample of 731 school-going late adolescents (response rate 52%) across 28 schools across Cork city and county (response rate 76%). In addition to socio-demographic data, time use data were collected using a standard time diary instrument while a nationally and internationally validated instrument, the KIDSCREEN-52, was used to measure HRQoL. Variable-centred and person-centred analyses were used.

Results: The scoping reviews identified the lack of research on well populations or an adolescent age range within occupational therapy and occupational science; limited research testing the popular assumption that time use is related to overall well-being and quality of life; and the absence of studies that examined adolescent 24-hour time use and quality of life. Established international trends were mirrored in the findings of the examination of weekday and weekend time use. Aggregate-level, variable-centred analyses yielded some significant associations between HRQoL and individual activities, independent of school year, school location, family context, social class, nationality or diary day. The person-centred analysis of overall time use identified three male profiles (*productive*, *high leisure* and *all-rounder)* and two female profiles (*higher study/lower leisure* and *moderate study/higher leisure).* There was tentative support for the association between higher HRQoL and more balanced time use profiles.

Conclusion: The findings of this thesis highlight the gendered nature of adolescent time use and HRQoL. Participation in daily activities, singly and in combination, appears to be associated with HRQoL. However, the nature of this relationship is complex. Individually and collectively, adolescents need to be educated and supported to create health through their everyday patterns of doing.