

Possibilities Ways of Effective Organization of Military Lyceum Cadets' Leisure Time

Можливості та шляхи ефективної організації дозвілля курсантів військового ліцею

Aytan Nagizade

Айтан Нагізаде

Adjunct researcher, English Language Teacher, e-mail: aytanagizada@gmail.com, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-7387-1212>

Ад'юнкт-дослідник, викладач англійської мови, e-mail: aytanagizada@gmail.com, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-7387-1212>

Military Scientific Research Institute of the National Defense University, Baku, Azerbaijan

Військовий науково-дослідний інститут Національного університету оборони, Баку, Азербайджан

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Purpose. To identify the pedagogical possibilities and effective ways of organizing the leisure time of cadets in military lyceums of Azerbaijan, as well as to examine its impact on their comprehensive development, the formation of national and moral values, and the enhancement of psychological resilience and professional training.

Method. The study employs theoretical analysis, a comparative approach, and generalization methods. Relevant scientific literature, pedagogical approaches, and practical experiences in the field of military education were reviewed, and the current state of leisure time organization in military lyceums was evaluated.

Theoretical implications. The research substantiates the educational and developmental potential of leisure time from a scientific perspective. It has been determined that leisure time is not merely a means of rest, but also an important pedagogical tool in shaping cadets' personalities, developing their value systems, and strengthening their psychological preparedness. This perspective expands theoretical views on the role of leisure time in military pedagogy.

Practical implications. The study identifies key challenges in organizing leisure time in military lyceums, including limited time, insufficient material and technical resources, and the lack of an individualized approach. To address these issues, concrete recommendations and practical models are proposed, such as the "Military Lyceum Leisure Time Club," project-based activities, leadership programs, and the integration of digital technologies. Additionally, applicable recommendations are provided for administrative and teaching staff.

Value. The scientific and practical significance of this research lies in proposing innovative approaches and models for the more effective organization of leisure time in military lyceums. The findings can contribute to improving the educational and training processes, enhancing cadets' development levels, and increasing the overall quality of education in military institutions.

Paper type. Theoretical.

Мета дослідження. Визначити педагогічні можливості та ефективні шляхи організації дозвілля кадетів у військових ліцеях Азербайджану, а також дослідити його вплив на їхній всебічний розвиток, формування національних і моральних цінностей, підвищення психологічної стійкості та рівня професійної підготовки.

Метод дослідження. У дослідженні використано методи теоретичного аналізу, порівняльний підхід та метод узагальнення. Проаналізовано відповідну наукову літературу, педагогічні підходи й практичний досвід у сфері військової освіти, а також оцінено сучасний стан організації дозвілля у військових ліцеях.

Теоретична цінність дослідження. Дослідження науково обґрунтовує виховний і розвивальний потенціал дозвілля. Встановлено, що дозвілля є не лише засобом відпочинку, а й важливим педагогічним інструментом формування особистості кадета, розвитку його ціннісних орієнтацій та зміцнення психологічної готовності. Такий підхід розширює теоретичні уявлення про роль дозвілля у військовій педагогіці.

Практична цінність дослідження. У дослідженні визначено основні проблеми організації дозвілля у військових ліцеях, зокрема обмеженість часу, недостатній рівень матеріально-технічного забезпечення та відсутність індивідуалізованого підходу. Для їх подолання запропоновано конкретні рекомендації та практичні моделі, зокрема створення «Клубу дозвілля військового ліцею», впровадження проектної діяльності, програм розвитку лідерства та інтеграцію цифрових технологій. Крім того, надано практичні рекомендації для адміністрації та педагогічного складу.

Цінність дослідження. Наукова й практична значущість дослідження полягає у запропонуванні інноваційних підходів і моделей для більш ефективної організації дозвілля у військових ліцеях. Отримані результати можуть бути використані для вдосконалення освітнього та навчально-виховного процесів, підвищення рівня розвитку кадетів і загальної якості освіти у військових закладах.

Тип статті. Теоретична

Key words: Military Lyceum, Cadets, Leisure Time, Pedagogical Opportunities, National and Moral Values, Patriotic Education, Innovative Models, Military Education.

Ключові слова: військовий ліцей; кадати; дозвілля; педагогічні можливості; національні та моральні цінності; патріотичне виховання; інноваційні моделі; військова освіта.

Introduction

In the modern system of military education, the comprehensive development of cadets is not limited to the formal instructional process. The intensive military training regime, combined with the significant physical and psychological demands placed on adolescents and young adults studying in military lyceums, makes the effective organization of leisure time a critical pedagogical task. When leisure time is not properly structured, negative consequences such as fatigue, decreased motivation, weakened social skills, and insufficient development of national and moral values may emerge. Conversely, well-organized leisure time contributes to the harmonious development of personality, strengthens patriotic sentiments, and enhances teamwork and leadership qualities.

Military lyceums in the Republic of Azerbaijan are strategic educational institutions that lay the foundation for the preparation of future military officers. Although these institutions operate within strict disciplinary frameworks, the organization and quality of out-of-class time play a decisive role in shaping cadets' moral and psychological resilience and professional preparedness. In this context, the organization of leisure time should not be viewed merely as a form of rest but rather as an essential pedagogical opportunity for the systematic formation of national and moral values, including patriotism, awareness of statehood, moral responsibility, and historical awareness.

Given the strategic importance of training highly qualified military personnel, cadets are exposed to both intensive academic programs and considerable psychological pressure. Therefore, their holistic development cannot be ensured through formal education alone. The effective organization of leisure time becomes particularly significant, as it provides opportunities for developing physical endurance, intellectual engagement, and social competencies while simultaneously fostering a value-based worldview.

Furthermore, in the context of the contemporary digital environment, there is an increasing risk that young people's leisure time may be directed toward passive and unproductive activities, such as excessive use of mobile devices and engagement in virtual forms of entertainment. In highly regulated educational environments such as military lyceums, preventing such tendencies and ensuring the purposeful and active use of leisure time are essential for strengthening cadets' moral and psychological readiness and patriotic consciousness.

The purpose of this study is to identify the pedagogical opportunities and effective approaches to organizing the leisure time of cadets in Azerbaijani military lyceums, to analyze the existing organizational challenges, and to substantiate innovative models and methodological approaches aimed at enhancing cadets' comprehensive development, psychological resilience, leadership qualities, and national and moral values.

Literature review

The issue of leisure time organization has attracted increasing scholarly attention within the fields of pedagogy, psychology, and military education. Contemporary educational research emphasizes that leisure time should not be regarded merely as a period of recreation but as an important pedagogical resource contributing to personality development, socialization, and the formation of professional competencies. This approach is particularly relevant in military education, where extracurricular activities complement formal instruction and contribute to the holistic development of future military personnel (Rasulova, 2026).

Within military educational institutions, leisure activities are considered an essential component of moral, psychological, and physical development. According to materials published by the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, properly organized leisure activities improve cadets' motivation, strengthen discipline, promote teamwork, and support psychological recovery after intensive military and academic training (Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2024; 2026).

The pedagogical significance of leisure time has also been emphasized in Azerbaijani educational thought. Heydar Aliyev regarded the meaningful organization of leisure time as an important condition for the development of the individual, the family, and society, stressing that education should foster patriotism, civic responsibility, and national consciousness alongside professional knowledge (Heydar Aliyev, 1997).

International studies confirm that structured extracurricular activities positively influence adolescents' behavioural regulation, emotional stability, leadership development, and social adaptation. Samara (2019) demonstrated that leisure activities function as an effective pedagogical intervention capable of preventing behavioural problems while promoting informal learning. Similarly, RAND Corporation (2015) concluded that participation in extracurricular activities significantly contributes to leadership development and successful adaptation in military academies.

Studies devoted to military education further indicate that leisure time should be systematically integrated into the educational process. Hitchcock (2004) emphasized the importance of self-directed learning and internal motivation in military leadership education, whereas Tsymbal (2020) demonstrated that properly organized leisure activities improve the psychological readiness and professional formation of future officers.

International military academies have accumulated considerable experience in organizing cadets' extracurricular activities. The Army and Navy Academy (2022), Delaware Military Academy (2024–2025), Marion Military Institute (2025–2026), and Massanutten Military Academy (2025) implement comprehensive systems of clubs, leadership programmes, sports, creative activities, and project-based learning that enhance cadets' leadership skills, teamwork, civic responsibility, and psychological resilience.

Recent methodological publications also emphasize the growing importance of digital technologies in leisure time organization. Methodological recommendations on children's leisure activities (Effective Organization of Children's Leisure Time, 2025) and studies on educational digitalization (Stages of Development in Education, 2024) indicate that virtual reality, digital educational platforms, and interactive learning environments substantially increase learners' motivation and engagement.

Despite the growing body of research devoted to extracurricular education and military pedagogy, relatively limited attention has been paid to the systematic organization of leisure time specifically within Azerbaijani military lyceums. Existing studies mainly describe individual activities or general educational approaches without proposing comprehensive organizational models adapted to military secondary education. Therefore, further research is needed to develop scientifically grounded organizational and methodological approaches capable of integrating leisure activities into the overall system of military education.

Materials and Methods

This research employs a qualitative research design based on theoretical and comparative pedagogical analysis. The study aims to investigate the pedagogical potential of leisure time organization in military lyceums and to identify effective organizational approaches applicable to military education.

The methodological framework combines several complementary research methods.

Theoretical analysis was applied to examine contemporary pedagogical theories, military education concepts, and psychological approaches related to extracurricular activities, personality development, leadership education, and patriotic upbringing.

Comparative analysis was used to compare leisure time organization practices implemented in Azerbaijani military lyceums with those employed by military educational institutions in the United States and other countries. Particular attention was devoted to leadership programmes, extracurricular clubs, project-based learning, sports activities, and digital educational technologies.

Document analysis was conducted using official publications of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, methodological guidelines, international military education documents, official regulations and manuals of military academies, as well as scientific publications addressing military pedagogy, leisure time organization, youth development, leadership education, and patriotic upbringing.

Content analysis was applied to identify the principal pedagogical approaches, organizational models, recurring challenges, and innovative practices described in the reviewed scientific and methodological literature.

The empirical basis of the study consists of official publications of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, scientific publications on military pedagogy, methodological guides, and documentation from foreign military academies. The reviewed sources cover both national and international experience in organizing cadets' extracurricular activities.

The collected materials were systematized according to four analytical dimensions: cultural-educational activities, sports and health-related activities, creative-artistic activities, and socio-psychological development. This classification provided the basis for identifying existing organizational problems and proposing innovative pedagogical models for improving leisure time organization in Azerbaijani military lyceums.

The methodological approach ensures consistency between the research objective, theoretical framework, and proposed practical recommendations while allowing comprehensive evaluation of leisure time as an integral component of military education.

Results

The findings of the study indicate that leisure time in Azerbaijani military lyceums possesses considerable pedagogical potential; however, this potential has not yet been fully realized. The analysis demonstrates that although extracurricular activities such as academic competitions, sports events, excursions, and cultural programmes are regularly implemented, the overall organization of leisure time remains fragmented and lacks a systematic, cadet-centred approach.

One of the principal findings concerns the limited amount of leisure time available to cadets. Owing to the intensive nature of academic instruction, military training, and strict daily schedules, cadets have relatively few opportunities for independent and meaningful engagement beyond compulsory educational activities. This limitation is particularly significant during adolescence, a developmental stage characterized by a strong need for self-expression, exploration of personal interests, and active social interaction.

The study also identifies organizational shortcomings as one of the primary barriers to the effective management of leisure time. In many instances, extracurricular activities are implemented in a formalized manner without sufficient consideration of cadets' individual interests, age-specific characteristics, or developmental needs. Consequently, participation levels decline, and the educational and developmental impact of such activities is substantially reduced. Furthermore, the absence of differentiated and flexible organizational approaches limits the creation of inclusive, motivating, and learner-oriented leisure environments.

Another important finding concerns material and technical limitations. Insufficient infrastructure—including restricted access to modern libraries, creative studios, sports facilities, and digital educational resources—significantly limits both the diversity and quality of leisure activities. In addition, the shortage of qualified personnel, such as psychologists, creative mentors, and extracurricular activity coordinators, further reduces the effectiveness of leisure time organization (Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2026a).

The research also highlights the growing influence of passive leisure patterns among cadets. In the absence of engaging and well-structured alternatives, many cadets tend to spend their free time using mobile devices or participating in low-productivity digital entertainment. Such

behavioural patterns contribute to increased psychological fatigue, reduced learning motivation, and weaker development of social, communicative, and moral competencies.

At the same time, the findings confirm that properly organized leisure time offers broad pedagogical opportunities. These opportunities may be classified into four interrelated domains: cultural-educational, sports and health-related, creative-artistic, and socio-psychological activities. Each domain contributes to different aspects of cadet development, including intellectual growth, physical resilience, emotional maturity, social competence, and value formation.

Comparative analysis with international military education practices demonstrates that integrated models of leisure time organization—such as cadet clubs, leadership development programmes, project-based learning, and interdisciplinary extracurricular activities—produce higher levels of cadet engagement and more sustainable educational outcomes. Similar approaches have been successfully implemented in military educational institutions in the United States, where extracurricular activities are systematically integrated into leadership education and character development programmes (Army and Navy Academy, 2022; Delaware Military Academy, 2024–2025; Marion Military Institute, 2025–2026).

Overall, the results indicate that, although Azerbaijani military lyceums have established a basic framework for extracurricular activities, considerable opportunities remain for further improvement. The implementation of systematic, innovative, and individualized approaches to leisure time organization would significantly enhance cadets' psychological resilience, strengthen their national and moral values, foster leadership and teamwork skills, and contribute to the development of professional competencies required for future military service.

Pedagogical Opportunities of Leisure Time in Military Lyceums

The findings of the study demonstrate that leisure time in military lyceums constitutes an important pedagogical resource for the comprehensive development of cadets. When systematically organized, it contributes to the development of physical endurance, intellectual curiosity, social competence, leadership qualities, and national and moral values. From a pedagogical perspective, leisure time should be regarded as an extension of the formal educational process, ensuring continuity between structured learning and informal personal development.

Within military educational settings, where cadets are exposed to rigorous discipline and intensive daily routines, leisure time performs both compensatory and developmental functions. It provides opportunities for psychological recovery, emotional stabilization, cognitive relaxation, and self-directed learning. Simultaneously, it creates favourable conditions for value-based socialization, interpersonal communication, and the development of professional competencies required for future military service.

The pedagogical potential of leisure time may be classified into four interrelated domains: cultural-educational, sports and health-related, creative-artistic, and socio-psychological activities. Rather than functioning independently, these domains form an integrated educational system that supports the holistic development of cadets.

The **cultural-educational domain** plays a central role in strengthening cadets' intellectual development and patriotic consciousness. Activities such as library sessions, thematic discussions, debates, collective viewing of historical documentaries, essay competitions, literary contests, and meetings with distinguished military personnel strengthen cadets' understanding of national history, statehood traditions, and military heritage. These activities also promote critical thinking, analytical reasoning, communication skills, and civic responsibility while fostering a deeper appreciation of national identity and historical memory (Stages of Development in Education, 2024).

Sports and health-related domain represents an essential component of military education because physical readiness is a fundamental requirement for future officers. Participation in football, basketball, volleyball, athletics, martial arts, swimming, military-applied sports, and outdoor tactical exercises significantly improves physical endurance, coordination, resilience, and

operational readiness. Beyond their physical benefits, these activities reduce stress, improve emotional well-being, and cultivate perseverance, discipline, mutual trust, and collective responsibility—qualities that are indispensable in military service (Military OneSource, 2025b).

The **creative-artistic domain** contributes significantly to cadets' emotional development and self-expression. Participation in music, theatre, painting, photography, literature, and other artistic activities enables cadets to express individuality, relieve psychological tension, and develop aesthetic awareness. Creative engagement also stimulates innovative thinking, imagination, and problem-solving abilities, competencies that have become increasingly valuable in modern military organizations operating in technologically advanced and rapidly changing environments (Army and Navy Academy, 2022).

The **socio-psychological domain** provides a structured environment for developing leadership, teamwork, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal communication skills. Activities including leadership workshops, role-playing exercises, debate clubs, volunteer projects, peer mentoring, and team-building programmes encourage responsibility, empathy, self-confidence, and sound decision-making. Such activities also facilitate adaptation to group dynamics, improve communication under stressful conditions, and strengthen resilience in challenging situations. Since military service relies heavily on cooperation and coordinated action, socio-psychological development represents a key element of professional military education (Military OneSource, 2025c; RAND Corporation, 2015).

The integration of these four domains produces a synergistic educational effect. When cultural, physical, creative, and socio-psychological activities are systematically combined within a comprehensive leisure programme, cadets experience balanced intellectual, physical, emotional, and moral development. Consequently, leisure time becomes an active educational environment that reinforces the objectives of formal military education rather than merely serving as a period of recreation.

Furthermore, effective leisure time organization supports the formation of lifelong learning skills, self-discipline, intrinsic motivation, and professional identity. By encouraging cadets to participate voluntarily in intellectually stimulating and socially meaningful activities, military lyceums create favourable conditions for developing initiative, independence, and leadership potential. These competencies are increasingly recognized as essential attributes of modern military officers capable of operating effectively in complex and dynamic security environments.

The findings therefore confirm that the educational value of leisure time depends largely on systematic planning, methodological support, institutional commitment, and adequate material and human resources. Without an integrated organizational framework, even well-designed extracurricular activities may lose much of their developmental potential and become fragmented or purely symbolic. Consequently, leisure time should be considered an integral component of military education that contributes directly to the comprehensive preparation of future officers.

Challenges in the Organization of Leisure Time

Despite the considerable pedagogical opportunities offered by leisure time, its effective organization in military lyceums continues to face a number of systemic, organizational, and methodological challenges. These challenges significantly constrain the realization of leisure time as a developmental resource and reduce its effectiveness in supporting cadets' intellectual, physical, psychological, and moral development.

One of the most significant constraints is the limited amount of leisure time available to cadets. The intensive academic curriculum, combined with rigorous military training, physical exercises, and strict disciplinary requirements, leaves only a relatively short period for extracurricular activities. In many cases, this available time is fragmented and insufficient to support sustained participation in educational, cultural, or recreational programmes. Consequently, leisure activities may become superficial and fail to achieve their intended developmental objectives.

A further challenge concerns the organizational and methodological design of leisure activities. In many military lyceums, extracurricular programmes are implemented according to standardized schedules that provide limited flexibility and insufficient consideration of cadets' individual interests, abilities, learning preferences, and psychological characteristics. As a result, participation often becomes formal rather than intrinsically motivated, reducing both engagement and educational effectiveness.

The study also identifies deficiencies in material and technical infrastructure as an important limiting factor. Restricted access to modern libraries, digital learning environments, creative laboratories, multimedia facilities, and well-equipped sports complexes significantly reduces the diversity and quality of extracurricular activities. Moreover, the shortage of qualified specialists—including psychologists, creative instructors, career mentors, and extracurricular programme coordinators—limits opportunities to implement innovative educational approaches (Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2026a).

Psychological and emotional factors represent another important challenge. The highly structured and disciplined nature of military education inevitably exposes cadets to elevated levels of psychological pressure and emotional stress. Although leisure time has considerable potential to facilitate psychological recovery, emotional regulation, and stress reduction, these functions are not always fully realized because structured psychological support and professionally designed recreational programmes remain insufficiently developed. Consequently, some cadets may experience emotional exhaustion, declining motivation, reduced academic performance, and diminished psychological resilience (Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2026b; Tsymbal, 2020).

The rapid expansion of digital technologies introduces additional challenges to leisure time organization. Similar to adolescents worldwide, cadets increasingly devote their free time to passive digital entertainment, including excessive smartphone use, social networking, online gaming, and other virtual activities. Although digital technologies possess considerable educational potential when appropriately integrated into military education, their uncontrolled use may reduce attention span, weaken interpersonal communication, limit physical activity, and negatively affect emotional well-being. This issue is particularly significant within military educational institutions, where discipline, concentration, and effective teamwork constitute essential professional competencies.

Comparative analysis demonstrates that many foreign military educational institutions have developed considerably more systematic approaches to organizing cadets' leisure time. Military academies in the United States and several European countries successfully integrate extracurricular activities into comprehensive leadership development programmes through cadet clubs, project-based learning, sports organizations, volunteer initiatives, mentoring systems, and interdisciplinary educational projects. These approaches ensure close integration between academic education, physical training, leadership development, and socio-emotional learning (Delaware Military Academy, 2024–2025; Marion Military Institute, 2025–2026; Massanutten Military Academy, 2025).

Another significant challenge is the limited degree of individualization in leisure time planning. Cadets possess diverse interests, talents, career aspirations, and personal development needs. Nevertheless, existing extracurricular programmes frequently emphasize standardized activities rather than providing flexible opportunities tailored to individual preferences. The absence of personalized educational pathways reduces intrinsic motivation, limits active participation, and diminishes the overall developmental impact of leisure programmes.

Institutional coordination also requires further improvement. Effective leisure time organization depends upon close cooperation among administrators, teachers, military instructors, psychologists, sports coaches, and extracurricular activity coordinators. In practice, however, collaboration among these stakeholders is often insufficiently coordinated, resulting in fragmented

planning, duplication of activities, and inconsistent implementation of educational objectives. Strengthening interdisciplinary cooperation would significantly improve the coherence and effectiveness of leisure time management.

Overall, these findings indicate that although leisure time possesses substantial pedagogical potential within military education, its current organization in Azerbaijani military lyceums does not yet fully correspond to contemporary educational standards or international best practices. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive institutional approach that combines organizational reform, modernization of infrastructure, expanded human resources, greater individualization of educational programmes, and the systematic integration of innovative pedagogical and digital technologies. Such improvements would enable leisure time to become an integral component of military education, supporting the comprehensive development of future officers and strengthening their professional, psychological, and moral preparedness.

Innovative Models for Leisure Time Organization

To address the challenges identified in this study and enhance the pedagogical effectiveness of extracurricular activities, it is necessary to introduce innovative models that transform leisure time into a structured, learner-centred, and technology-enhanced educational environment. Such models should integrate contemporary pedagogical approaches, international best practices, and the strategic priorities of military education while reinforcing national and moral values.

One of the most promising initiatives is the establishment of a Military Lyceum Leisure Time Club, which would serve as a centralized platform for organizing diverse extracurricular activities. Within this framework, cadets could participate in intellectual competitions, chess and strategy clubs, debate societies, patriotic contests, military history seminars, and interdisciplinary educational projects. Unlike traditional recreational programmes, this model promotes active participation, collaborative learning, and the continuous development of intellectual, social, and leadership competencies.

An important component of this model is the integration of virtual reality (VR) technologies into leisure activities. VR simulations enable cadets to explore historical military operations, battlefield environments, and command decision-making processes in immersive learning settings. Such experiences substantially increase learner engagement, strengthen historical awareness, and facilitate the practical application of theoretical knowledge through experiential learning (Effective Organization of Children's Leisure Time, 2025).

Another innovative approach involves the systematic implementation of project-based learning during leisure time. Under this model, cadets work collaboratively on research-oriented projects related to military science, national history, defence technologies, leadership, and contemporary security challenges. Projects such as *Modern Technologies in the Azerbaijani Armed Forces*, *Military Leadership throughout Azerbaijan's History*, or *Digital Transformation of Modern Military Education* encourage critical thinking, independent research, teamwork, analytical reasoning, and public presentation skills. Furthermore, project-based learning promotes self-directed learning and intellectual autonomy, both of which are essential characteristics of future military officers.

International experience demonstrates that structured leadership development programmes significantly strengthen cadets' personal and professional competencies. Consequently, adapting a Cadet Leadership Development Academy within Azerbaijani military lyceums represents a promising direction for institutional development. This model may include leadership workshops, command simulations, tactical decision-making exercises, mentoring programmes involving experienced officers and alumni, peer coaching, and leadership assessment activities. Such programmes cultivate responsibility, strategic thinking, communication skills, ethical leadership, and decision-making under conditions of uncertainty (Marion Military Institute, 2025–2026).

The integration of digital educational technologies represents another essential direction for innovation. Virtual reality, augmented reality (AR), artificial intelligence (AI)-supported learning systems, digital collaboration platforms, and online educational resources can significantly enrich leisure time activities. For example, AI-supported adaptive learning platforms may recommend individualized educational content according to cadets' interests and professional aspirations, while collaborative online environments facilitate participation in international educational projects and intercultural communication. Such technologies increase accessibility, learner motivation, and educational effectiveness while preparing cadets for the digital transformation of contemporary military organizations (Effective Organization of Children's Leisure Time, 2025).

Equally important is the development of hybrid social models that actively involve families, alumni, military professionals, and community organizations. Activities such as Open Days, family sports festivals, mentorship programmes, military heritage events, and community service initiatives strengthen cooperation between military educational institutions and society. They also reinforce national identity, civic responsibility, family values, and social cohesion while providing cadets with broader opportunities for personal development and professional socialization.

The incorporation of psychological resilience programmes into leisure activities represents another innovative direction. Workshops on stress management, mindfulness practices, emotional self-regulation, resilience training, breathing techniques, and psychological recovery exercises can significantly improve cadets' emotional stability and adaptive capacity. Given the demanding psychological environment of military education, these programmes contribute directly to maintaining mental well-being, operational readiness, and long-term professional performance (Tsymbal, 2020).

Interdisciplinary integration further enhances the educational value of leisure activities. Combining elements of military history, technology, ethics, physical education, leadership studies, and digital innovation within single educational projects enables cadets to develop a comprehensive understanding of military professionalism. Such interdisciplinary learning encourages systems thinking, adaptability, creativity, and the ability to solve complex problems—competencies that are increasingly important in contemporary security environments.

Another promising innovation involves the introduction of personalized leisure pathways. Rather than requiring all cadets to participate in identical activities, military lyceums should offer a diversified portfolio of extracurricular programmes aligned with individual interests, talents, and career aspirations. Personalized educational trajectories increase intrinsic motivation, strengthen learner engagement, and improve the overall effectiveness of extracurricular education by supporting each cadet's unique developmental needs.

Overall, the innovative models proposed in this study demonstrate that leisure time can become a powerful pedagogical instrument extending well beyond traditional recreational functions. When systematically implemented within military lyceums, these models contribute to the development of leadership competencies, psychological resilience, critical thinking, national and moral values, digital literacy, and professional readiness. Consequently, leisure time should be regarded as an integral component of military education that actively supports the preparation of competent, resilient, ethically responsible, and adaptive future officers.

Organizational and Methodological Approaches

The effective organization of leisure time in military lyceums requires a comprehensive system that combines strategic planning, methodological consistency, institutional coordination, and continuous evaluation. Rather than functioning as an auxiliary component of military education, leisure activities should be systematically integrated into the educational process to support cadets' intellectual, physical, psychological, and moral development.

A fundamental organizational requirement is the optimization of daily and weekly schedules. Considering the intensive academic workload and military training regime, leisure time should be

formally incorporated into institutional timetables as a structured developmental period rather than unregulated free time. Weekly and monthly activity plans should be prepared through the collaborative efforts of administrators, teachers, military instructors, psychologists, and cadet representatives. Such participatory planning ensures that extracurricular programmes simultaneously address institutional educational objectives and cadets' developmental needs (Military OneSource, 2025a).

Based on the findings of this study, allocating approximately four to six hours of structured leisure time per week appears appropriate, depending on the intensity of academic and military training. Proper scheduling minimizes fragmentation, increases continuity of participation, and enhances the educational effectiveness of extracurricular activities. Structured planning also enables a balanced distribution of intellectual, physical, creative, and socio-psychological activities throughout the academic year (Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2026c).

From a methodological perspective, an effective leisure programme should combine both individual and group-based learning activities. Individual activities—including guided reading, reflective journals, online learning modules, independent research, and personal development plans—promote self-discipline, self-reflection, and lifelong learning skills. Conversely, group activities such as debate clubs, sports teams, research projects, leadership workshops, and volunteer programmes strengthen teamwork, communication, collaboration, and collective responsibility. Integrating both forms of learning provides opportunities to address diverse learning preferences while supporting the comprehensive development of cadets (Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2024).

An equally important methodological principle involves the integration of value-based education into all leisure activities. Extracurricular programmes should consistently reinforce patriotism, civic responsibility, military ethics, national identity, historical memory, and moral responsibility. Volunteer initiatives, commemorative events dedicated to national heroes, historical research projects, and military heritage programmes enable cadets to internalize these values through active participation rather than passive instruction. Such experiential learning strengthens both emotional engagement and long-term value formation.

The incorporation of innovative educational technologies further enhances the effectiveness of leisure time organization. Digital learning platforms, virtual reality simulations, artificial intelligence-supported educational systems, interactive multimedia resources, and collaborative online environments create highly engaging learning experiences while promoting independent learning and technological competence. The proposed Military Lyceum Leisure Time Club could function as a central hub for implementing these technologies, thereby transforming leisure time into an interactive educational environment that supports both academic and professional development (Effective Organization of Children's Leisure Time, 2025).

Project-based learning should become another core methodological approach. Organizing cadets into multidisciplinary teams to conduct research on military history, defence technologies, cybersecurity, leadership, or national security encourages analytical thinking, scientific inquiry, creativity, and collaborative problem-solving. Such projects strengthen the connection between theoretical knowledge and practical application while developing competencies that are directly relevant to modern military service.

Psychological support should also constitute an integral component of leisure time organization. Programmes focusing on stress management, emotional regulation, resilience development, mindfulness practices, relaxation techniques, and peer support contribute significantly to maintaining cadets' psychological well-being. Given the demanding nature of military education, these interventions improve emotional stability, increase adaptive capacity, and reduce the risk of psychological burnout (Tsymbal, 2020).

Continuous monitoring and evaluation are essential for ensuring the long-term effectiveness

of leisure programmes. Military lyceums should establish systematic assessment procedures based on surveys, interviews, participation records, observational methods, and periodic programme evaluations. These mechanisms enable educators to identify strengths and weaknesses, measure educational outcomes, and adapt extracurricular programmes to the changing needs of cadets. Regular feedback from cadets is particularly valuable because it reflects actual participation, motivation, and satisfaction levels (Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2024).

The establishment of a dedicated Leisure Time Coordinator position within military lyceums would substantially improve programme management. This specialist would be responsible for planning, coordinating, supervising, and evaluating extracurricular activities while ensuring consistency with institutional educational objectives and psychological support strategies. Such coordination would also facilitate cooperation among teachers, military instructors, psychologists, sports coaches, and external partners.

Finally, strengthening cooperation with external stakeholders represents an important organizational priority. Partnerships with families, military units, veterans' organizations, universities, cultural institutions, museums, sports organizations, and community associations would significantly expand the diversity and educational value of leisure activities. Mentorship programmes, family-oriented events, educational excursions, and community service projects foster stronger relationships between military institutions and society while reinforcing cadets' civic engagement, national identity, and professional socialization (Marion Military Institute, 2025–2026).

Overall, these organizational and methodological approaches demonstrate that systematically planned and professionally managed leisure time constitutes an essential element of modern military education. When supported by effective institutional planning, innovative pedagogical methods, technological integration, and continuous evaluation, leisure activities become a powerful educational instrument that contributes directly to the intellectual, physical, psychological, and moral development of future military officers.

Recommendations and Future Development Perspectives

Based on the findings of this study, several evidence-based recommendations can be proposed to enhance the effectiveness of leisure time organization in military lyceums and to strengthen its role as an integral component of military education.

First, it is recommended to develop and implement a comprehensive institutional programme for organizing cadets' leisure time. Such a programme should be systematically integrated into the educational process and aligned with academic curricula, military training schedules, and the strategic objectives of military education. Planning should be conducted on both weekly and monthly bases and involve administrators, military instructors, teachers, psychologists, and cadet representatives to ensure a balanced, learner-centred approach (Massanutten Military Academy, 2025).

Second, military lyceums should diversify the range of extracurricular activities by ensuring a balanced integration of cultural-educational, sports and health-related, creative-artistic, and socio-psychological programmes. Each domain should operate as a structured subsystem with clearly defined educational objectives, appropriate teaching methods, and measurable learning outcomes. Particular emphasis should be placed on strengthening national identity, civic responsibility, patriotism, ethical behaviour, and leadership development through experiential learning activities.

Third, innovative organizational models should be systematically introduced into military lyceums. The proposed Military Lyceum Leisure Time Club and Cadet Leadership Development Academy represent practical frameworks for integrating leadership education, project-based learning, digital technologies, and interdisciplinary activities into extracurricular programmes. The implementation of these models would significantly enhance cadets' motivation, engagement, and professional development while supporting the modernization of military education.

Another important recommendation concerns the integration of advanced educational technologies. Virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), artificial intelligence (AI)-supported learning systems, online collaboration platforms, and digital educational resources should be incorporated into leisure activities to create interactive and technology-rich learning environments. Such innovations not only increase learner engagement but also prepare cadets to operate effectively within increasingly digitalized military organizations (Effective Organization of Children's Leisure Time, 2025).

The modernization of material and technical infrastructure should also be regarded as a strategic priority. Military lyceums should invest in the development of modern libraries, multimedia learning centres, digital laboratories, creative studios, sports complexes, and psychological support facilities. Simultaneously, greater attention should be devoted to recruiting and training qualified specialists, including psychologists, extracurricular programme coordinators, leadership instructors, sports coaches, and creative mentors, who can provide professional guidance throughout cadets' extracurricular development (Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2026a).

The implementation of systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanisms is equally important. Regular surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, participation records, and educational performance indicators should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of leisure programmes. Continuous assessment enables educational administrators to identify strengths and weaknesses, adapt programmes to cadets' evolving needs, and ensure the continuous improvement of extracurricular activities (Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2024).

The study further recommends expanding individualized approaches to leisure time organization. Rather than requiring all cadets to participate in identical activities, military lyceums should provide flexible educational pathways that accommodate individual interests, talents, abilities, and professional aspirations. Personalized extracurricular programmes significantly enhance intrinsic motivation, active participation, and long-term educational outcomes.

From a broader strategic perspective, military lyceums should move towards establishing a fully integrated leisure time management system in which extracurricular activities are recognized as an essential component of military education rather than merely supplementary programmes. Within such a system, leisure time functions as a structured educational environment that supports leadership development, emotional resilience, intellectual growth, ethical formation, and professional identity.

Another promising direction involves strengthening the digital transformation of military education. The application of artificial intelligence, immersive simulation technologies, adaptive learning systems, and international online educational networks will substantially improve the accessibility, quality, and effectiveness of extracurricular learning while ensuring compatibility with global trends in military education and training.

Future research should focus on developing empirical evaluation models capable of measuring the long-term impact of leisure time organization on cadets' academic achievement, psychological resilience, leadership competencies, physical readiness, moral development, and professional preparedness. Longitudinal and comparative studies involving military educational institutions from different countries would further contribute to refining evidence-based pedagogical models and identifying international best practices applicable to military lyceums.

Overall, the implementation of these recommendations will contribute to the creation of a comprehensive, innovative, and learner-centred system of leisure time organization. Such a system will strengthen the educational mission of military lyceums by fostering the development of competent, psychologically resilient, ethically responsible, and professionally prepared future officers capable of meeting the complex challenges of contemporary military service.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that leisure time should be regarded as an integral component of military education rather than merely a period allocated for recreation. The results demonstrate that systematically organized extracurricular activities contribute to the comprehensive development of cadets by strengthening their intellectual abilities, leadership competencies, psychological resilience, social responsibility, and national and moral values. These findings are consistent with the conclusions of Rasulova (2026), who emphasized that extracurricular educational activities significantly improve the quality of military education by supporting cadets' personal and professional development.

The present study also supports the broader pedagogical perspective that leisure time functions as an effective educational resource. Similar conclusions were reached by Samara (2019), who demonstrated that structured leisure activities reduce behavioural problems and promote informal learning through active participation and social interaction. Likewise, Hitchcock (2004) argued that military education should encourage self-directed learning and intrinsic motivation, while Tsymbal (2020) highlighted the role of extracurricular activities in strengthening the psychological readiness and professional formation of future officers. The current findings extend these perspectives by demonstrating that leisure time should be integrated into military education through systematic organizational and methodological approaches rather than being treated as an isolated component of cadet life.

The comparative analysis conducted in this study further demonstrates that Azerbaijani military lyceums share many organizational challenges with military educational institutions worldwide. However, foreign military academies have achieved greater success by implementing comprehensive extracurricular systems that integrate leadership development, project-based learning, sports, volunteer activities, mentoring programmes, and digital educational technologies (Army and Navy Academy, 2022; Delaware Military Academy, 2024–2025; Marion Military Institute, 2025–2026). These institutions treat leisure time as an essential element of leadership education and character development, thereby creating a closer connection between formal instruction and personal growth. The comparison suggests that similar approaches could substantially strengthen the educational effectiveness of Azerbaijani military lyceums.

An important contribution of this study is the identification of organizational barriers that limit the pedagogical effectiveness of leisure time. The findings indicate that limited available time, insufficient material and technical resources, inadequate individualization, and the absence of systematic programme coordination reduce cadets' opportunities for meaningful participation. These observations correspond with official reports of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which emphasize the need to modernize educational infrastructure and improve the organization of extracurricular activities (Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2024; 2026). Nevertheless, the present study goes beyond previous descriptive analyses by proposing practical organizational models capable of addressing these challenges.

The proposed models—including the Military Lyceum Leisure Time Club, project-based learning, leadership development programmes, individualized educational pathways, and the integration of digital technologies—represent one of the principal scientific contributions of this research. Unlike previous studies that primarily describe existing practices, this paper presents a comprehensive organizational framework that combines pedagogical theory with practical implementation strategies. Such an integrated approach may facilitate the modernization of military education by creating a more flexible, learner-centred, and competence-oriented system of extracurricular learning.

Another important aspect concerns the increasing role of digital technologies in military education. The study argues that virtual reality, artificial intelligence, digital collaboration platforms,

and adaptive learning systems should complement rather than replace traditional educational activities. This conclusion is consistent with contemporary educational research emphasizing that digital transformation enhances learner engagement and expands educational opportunities when integrated within pedagogically sound instructional models (Stages of Development in Education, 2024; *Effective Organization of Children's Leisure Time*, 2025). For military education, digital technologies also create opportunities to simulate operational environments and develop decision-making skills under realistic conditions.

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations. First, it is based primarily on theoretical analysis, document analysis, and comparative evaluation rather than empirical investigation involving cadets or instructors. Second, the proposed organizational models have not yet been experimentally implemented or quantitatively evaluated in Azerbaijani military lyceums. Consequently, future research should employ mixed-methods designs, including surveys, interviews, experimental studies, and longitudinal assessments, to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed models and measure their impact on cadets' leadership development, psychological resilience, academic performance, and professional readiness.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that effective leisure time organization represents an important strategic direction for the modernization of military education. The integration of innovative pedagogical approaches, individualized learning strategies, digital technologies, and leadership-oriented extracurricular programmes has the potential to improve educational quality while strengthening cadets' preparedness for future military service. These findings contribute to the further development of military pedagogy by expanding theoretical understanding of leisure time as a multidimensional educational resource and by proposing practical mechanisms for its systematic implementation within military lyceums.

Conclusion

The present study confirms that the effective organization of leisure time constitutes a strategically important component of contemporary military education. Within military lyceums, leisure time should not be regarded merely as a period of recreation but rather as a structured pedagogical environment that supports cadets' intellectual, physical, psychological, social, and moral development.

The findings demonstrate that systematically organized leisure activities significantly contribute to strengthening cadets' patriotic consciousness, leadership abilities, teamwork skills, emotional resilience, and professional identity. Properly designed extracurricular programmes also promote the formation of national and moral values while supporting the development of competencies essential for future military officers.

At the same time, the study reveals several challenges limiting the effective organization of leisure time in Azerbaijani military lyceums. These include limited available time, insufficient material and technical resources, organizational and methodological shortcomings, inadequate individualization of extracurricular programmes, and the growing influence of passive digital leisure activities. Collectively, these factors reduce the developmental potential of leisure time and limit its contribution to the overall educational process.

Comparative analysis of international military education practices indicates that successful military academies integrate extracurricular activities into comprehensive leadership development systems through cadet clubs, project-based learning, sports programmes, mentoring initiatives, volunteer activities, and digital educational technologies. These approaches demonstrate that leisure time can become an effective educational instrument when supported by systematic planning, institutional commitment, and innovative pedagogical methods.

The study proposes several innovative models—including the Military Lyceum Leisure Time Club, the Cadet Leadership Development Academy, project-based learning, technology-enhanced

educational environments, and personalized extracurricular pathways—that provide practical solutions for improving leisure time organization within Azerbaijani military lyceums. Their implementation would significantly strengthen cadets' leadership competencies, psychological resilience, critical thinking, digital literacy, and commitment to national and moral values.

In conclusion, leisure time should be recognized as an integral element of military education that complements formal instruction and contributes directly to the comprehensive preparation of future officers. The systematic implementation of innovative organizational and methodological approaches proposed in this study will enhance the quality of military education, strengthen cadets' professional readiness, and support the development of competent, adaptable, and ethically responsible military leaders capable of responding effectively to the evolving challenges of the contemporary security environment.

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