

A day in the life of a South African teenager

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Introduction

This paper focuses on teenagers, defined here as young people between the ages of 10 and 19 years. It provides background statistics about the characteristics of teenagers from the labour force survey of February 2001. It then uses data from the time use survey of 2000 to discuss the households in which they reside, the amount of time they spend on various activities, and the times of the day in which they engage in those activities.

Characteristics of teenagers

This section uses data from the labour force survey (LFS) of February 2001, which is a six-monthly panel survey focusing on labour market issues. Each round of the survey covers 30 000 households from around the country, and collects demographic information about all members of these households. The results are then weighted so as to be representative of the total population.

Table 1 shows the numbers of males and females in the whole population and in the 10-19 age group. As one can see, 22% of males and 20% of females are teenagers, and together they make up 21% of the total population. Although there are slightly more male than female teenagers, there are more females than males in the total population. (The individual items shown in this and other tables do not always add up exactly to the given total, because particular data are sometimes missing.)

Table 1: Distribution of teenagers in the total population

Sex	10-19 years	Total population	% 10-19 years
Male	4 722 971	21 160 000	22
Female	4 678 436	22 880 000	20
Total	9 401 407	44 404 000	21

Table 2 shows the distribution of teenagers, adults (people aged 20 or older) and younger children living in urban and non-urban areas. It shows that 55% of the whole population lives in urban areas. These urban dwellers include just under half (48%) of all teenagers, the same percentage of younger children, and 61% of adults. Further calculations reveal that teenagers make up 18% of the urban population and 21% of the non-urban population.

Table 2: Distribution of the population by age group and location

Location	Children 0-9		Teenagers		Adults		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Urban	5 012 689	48	4 485 146	48	14 780 000	61	24 277 835	55
Non-Urban	5 468 658	52	4 917 757	52	9 318 078	39	19 704 493	45
Total	10 480 000	100	9 402 903	100	24 100 000	100	43 982 903	100

Table 3 shows a range of characteristics of teenagers, which provide the background to the analysis of their use of time. For example, over two-fifths (82%) of them are

African. Boys and girls differ little with respect to population group and location. They do, however differ in respect of their highest educational qualification. Girls of this age tend to have higher qualifications than boys: 52% of girls, but only 45% of boys, have achieved grade 7 or higher. Almost all teenagers (97%) can read and write in at least one language.

Table 3: Number and distribution of male and female teenagers according to location, population group and education

		Male		Female		All	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Location	Urban	2 225 327	47	2 258 644	48	4 483 970	48
	Non-urban	2 497 645	53	2 419 792	52	4 917 437	52
Population group	Non-African	866 888	18	856 718	18	1 723 607	18
	African	3 856 083	82	3 821 718	82	7 677 800	82
Educational qualification	No formal	92 112	2	58 655	1	150 767	2
	Grade 1-6	2 484 517	53	2 169 085	46	4 653 601	49
	Grade 7-11	1 997 832	42	2 242 243	48	4 240 075	45
	Matric plus	137 557	3	189 237	4	326 795	3
Total		4 722 971	100	4 678 436	100	9 401 407	100

Table 4 reveals that over a fifth (22%) of teenagers live in KwaZulu-Natal, 18% in Eastern Cape, and 15% in Northern Province (now Limpopo). Teenagers are, therefore, more concentrated than adults in the poorer provinces.

Table 4: Distribution of teenagers and adults by province

Province	Teenagers		Adults	
	Number	%	Number	%
Western Cape	768 713	8	2 570 910	11
Eastern Cape	1 728 405	18	3 409 181	14
Northern Cape	187 381	2	502 763	2
Free State	578 298	6	1 619 151	7
KwaZulu-Natal	2 038 095	22	4 803 625	20
North West	761 901	8	1 977 406	8
Gauteng	1 217 936	13	5 101 865	21
Mpumalanga	682 513	7	1 588 206	7
Northern Province	1 439 660	15	2 524 463	10
Total	9 402 903	100	24 100 000	100

Characteristics of households in which teenagers reside

In this section we use data from the time use survey to describe characteristics of the households in which teenagers reside. This was the first national time use survey in the country, and was carried out with financial support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation and technical assistance from Statistics Norway. It was conducted in three tranches, in February, June and October of 2000. It covered a total of over 8 500 households in all parts of the country, and obtained information from over 15 000 individuals aged 10 years and above about their activities on the previous day. Of those interviewed, 3 573 (unweighted) were between the ages of 10 and 19 years. The results were then weighted so as to represent the profile of the total population aged 10 years and above.

Table 5 shows the percentage of teenagers in households that are within 30 minutes walk, or 2 km, of schools. It also shows the percentage of teenagers in households with relatively easy access to a car or to public transportation such as a bus, train or taxi. As can be seen, more urban than non-urban households have access to transport, but the large majority of both have access to some form of transportation. Moreover, nearly three-quarters of urban households are within 2 km of a secondary school, and just over half (55%) of non-urban households. A little over three-quarters of non-urban teenagers and more than four-fifths of urban teenagers live within 2 km of a primary school.

Table 5: Percentage of teenagers in households with access to transport and within 2km of schools

Facility	% Non-urban	% Urban
Transportation	88	98
Within 2 km of secondary school	55	73
Within 2 km of primary school	77	83

Table 6 shows that over four-fifths (83%) of all urban teenagers live in households with access to radio, and three-quarters (75%) have access to television. The percentages are lower for non-urban teenagers, at 75% and 42% respectively.

Table 6: Percentage of teenagers in households with access to television and radio

Amenity	% Non-urban	% Urban
Television	42	75
Radio	75	83

Table 7 reveals that 53% of non-urban teenagers but only 15% of urban teenagers live in households with no access to electricity. The most common sources of domestic water for non-urban teenagers are off-site sources such as dams, pools, stagnant water sources, wells, springs and water from vendors. On the other hand most (57%) of urban households where there are teenagers use mainly indoor water sources.

The households of about 10% of non-urban and 38% of urban teenagers have a monthly income of R1 800 or more. Two-fifths of all non-urban teenagers live in households with an income of between R400 and R1 799 a month, and a further 29% of them live in households with even lower incomes than this.

Table 7: Distribution of teenagers in households with various characteristics

Characteristics		% Non-urban	% Urban
Electricity	Access	47	85
	No access	53	15
Domestic water source	Dwelling	7	57
	Yard	20	30
	Off-site	71	11
	Unspecified	2	1
Monthly household income	R0-399	29	15
	R400-799	40	21
	R800-1799	21	27
	R1800 or more	10	38
Total		100	100

Time use patterns among the youth

The time use survey asked respondents to report what they had done during every half-hour on the previous day. By averaging the data from these diaries, we derived a typical day for various groups of teenagers.

Overall activity pattern

One can distinguish between three broad groups of activities formulated in accordance with the System of National Accounts (SNA).

SNA productive activities are activities which are included in calculations of the gross domestic product (GDP) and which are generally conceived of as constituting 'economic work'. They include paid work in the formal and informal sectors, as well as subsistence production. Collecting fuel and water for household use, although not usually considered by the layperson to be economic work, is considered to be SNA productive activity.

Non-SNA productive activities include housework, care of other people including children, and community activities. These activities produce goods and services and are thus productive, although they are not included in the calculation of GDP and are not usually paid.

Non-productive activities are all other activities including eating, sleeping, participating in cultural and social activities, learning and leisure.

Table 8 shows the distribution of these three types of activity over the 1 440 minutes of a typical day for younger and older teenagers. Where the columns do not add up to exactly 1 440, this is because some data was not provided. Also note that the total number of minutes spent on a category of activity are averaged over all those

teenagers with specific characteristics, whether or not each of them engages in the particular activity or not. As expected, teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19 tend to spend more time on SNA and non-SNA production than their younger counterparts do. The older teenagers spend an average of 48 minutes on SNA production and 117 on non-SNA production, as compared to 30 minutes and 77 minutes respectively spent by their younger counterparts. The younger ones spend almost all their time on non-productive activities such as learning, social and cultural activities, mass media use and personal care such as sleeping and eating.

Table 8: Average number of minutes per day spent on SNA categories of activities by younger and older teenagers

Activity	10-14 years	15-19 years	All teenagers
SNA production	30	48	38
Non-SNA production	77	117	95
Non-productive	1332	1275	1306
Total	1439	1440	1439

The three-way SNA grouping of activities can be further subdivided into ten broad categories of activities. SNA production can be divided into three categories: work in establishments, primary production not for establishments, and other non-establishment work. Non-SNA production can be divided into household maintenance, caring for people, and community service. Non-productive activities comprise social and cultural activities, mass media use, and personal care.

Table 9 reveals that younger and older teenagers tend to spend similar amounts of time on learning, while those aged 10-14 years tend to spend less time than older teenagers on mass media use, work in establishments, and household maintenance.

Younger and older teenagers tend to spend the same amount of time on primary production. This is probably explained by the fact that primary production includes collection of fuel and water, which are common activities for younger teenagers.

Table 9: Average number of minutes per day spent on the 10 activity categories by younger and older teenagers

Activity	10-14 years	14-19 years	All teenagers
Work in establishments	2	18	9
Primary production	26	26	26
Work in non-primary non-establishments	2	5	3
Household maintenance	71	104	86
Care of persons	4	11	7
Community service	1	2	1
Learning	265	265	265
Social and cultural activities	236	198	219
Mass media use	93	109	100
Personal care	737	703	722
Total	1438	1440	1439

Leisure

Leisure activities include social and cultural activities and mass media use. Table 10 reveals that, in all types of settlement area, younger teenagers tend to spend more time on leisure than those aged between 15 and 19. The biggest difference between the two age groups is seen in commercial farming areas. Compared to teenagers in other settlement areas, those in formal urban areas tend to spend the most time on leisure activities, while those in ex-homeland areas have the least leisure.

Table 10: Average number of minutes per day spent on leisure activities by teenagers in each type of area

Age	Formal urban	Informal urban	Ex-homelands	Commercial farms
10-14	382	333	288	339
15-19	351	320	265	296

The columns showing percentages in the following tables indicate what percentage of teenagers with specific characteristics engage in a particular activity. Unlike in previous tables, the total time spent on a particular activity is averaged over only those who engage in that activity.

Table 11 reveals that, among younger teenagers, boys are more likely than girls to engage in socialising with family and friends. But, of those who do engage in socialising, boys tend to spend about the same time as girls do. Thus 45% of boys aged 10-14 years engage in socialising and spend on average 56 minutes per day doing so, whereas 37% of girls engage in this activity and spend on average 55 minutes doing so.

More boys than girls participate in and watch sport, play games and attend other events. This reflects the greater likelihood of males being involved in activities taking place in public spaces. Although fewer girls than boys are engaged in sports, those girls spend more time on them than boys.

Table 11: Percentage of boys and girls aged 10-14 engaging in social and cultural activities and average number of minutes spent

	Boys		Girls	
	% engaging	No. of minutes	% engaging	No. of minutes
Social & cultural activity				
Socialising with family/friends	45	56	37	55
Sports games and other events	50	87	23	93
Other socialising activities	28	52	17	51

Table 12 is similar to Table 11, but reflects the situation for older teenagers. Among this age group, girls are about as likely as boys to socialise with family and friends. Boys are again more likely than girls to engage in sports, games and other events. However, only 22% of boys and 10% girls in this age group engage in sports and games – fewer than their younger counterparts. The difference between girls and boys with regards to time spent on sports and games is also much larger in this older group than in the younger group.

Table 12: Percentage of boys and girls aged 15-19 engaging in social and cultural activities and average number of minutes spent

Social & cultural activity	Boys		Girls	
	% engaging	No. of minutes	% engaging	No. of minutes
Socialising with family/friends	47	60	49	60
Sports games and other events	22	88	10	79
Other socialising activities	29	56	24	65

Table 13 shows that girls and boys aged 10-14 years are equally likely to watch video and television, and listen to music or the radio. In addition, girls are more likely than boys to read or visit the library. Each of the other activities is reported by very few boys and girls. A small percentage of boys reported using the computer, but no girls did so.

Table 13: Percentage of boys and girls aged 10-14 using the mass media and average number of minutes spent

Mass media use	Boys		Girls	
	% engaging	No. of minutes	% engaging	No. of minutes
Listening to music/radio	56	135	55	143
Watching TV /videos	19	55	21	60
Computer use	0	42	-	-
Reading/visiting the library	5	67	7	62
Other media use	2	57	1	25

Note: In this and other tables, '0' indicates less than 0,5%, while '-' indicates no observations.

Table 14 shows that, among older teenagers, slightly more boys than girls listen to music or the radio. However, both girls and boys who do so spend the same amount of time on this activity. Compared to other mass media use, listening to music or the radio is the most popular activity for older teenagers. It is also the activity on which they tend to spend the longest time. They tend to spend more time listening to music than watching television. Among the teenagers in the 15-19 age group boys tend to spend more than twice as much time per day as girls using computers, although very few report this activity.

Table 14: Percentage of boys and girls aged 15-19 engaging in mass media use and average number of minutes spent

	Boys		Girls	
	% engaging	No. of minutes	% engaging	No. of minutes
Mass media use				
Listening to music/radio	56,0	136	53,0	136
Watching TV /Videos	35,8	85	31,4	77
Computer use	1,2	123	0,6	50
Reading/visiting the library	6,9	58	10,2	88
Other media use	1,5	27	1,3	34

Learning

The demographic section of the time use questionnaire did not ask respondents whether they were currently studying. However, a question put to those who were not economically active asked why the respondent was neither working nor looking for work, and one of the given choice of responses was 'in education or training'. Table 15 classifies these respondents as 'students', and examines whether males differ from females or students differ from non-students with regard to the time spent on learning activities. In this table, the minutes are averaged over all teenagers in a particular category rather than over only those who engaged in learning. As expected, the table shows that students tend to spend more time than non-students on learning activities, but this difference is relatively small. The difference between boy and girl students and non-students is even smaller.

Table 15: Average number of minutes per day spent on learning by male and female students and non-students aged 10-19

Sex	Students	Non-students
Male	280	258
Female	278	265

Table 16 focuses on the different learning activities of younger and older teenagers. Among the younger group, girls tend to spend slightly more time on homework than boys do, whereas the opposite is true for older teenagers. This could reflect the fact that older girls are more likely than boys to be engaged in household maintenance and therefore have less time for homework. Teenagers report almost no work-related training activities.

Table 16: Average number of minutes per day spent on different learning activities by younger and older girls and boys aged 10-19

Activity	10-14 years		15-19 years	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
School attendance	190	195	173	174
Homework/studies/course review	27	35	56	49
Additional study	2	1	2	2
Work related training	-	-	-	1
Travel related to training	39	38	35	36
Learning not elsewhere classified	1	1	-	-

Table 17 provides information on where teenagers engage in their learning activities. In both urban and non-urban areas, 25-30% of teenagers engage in some learning activities in educational establishments. Similar percentages spend some time on learning-related travel. The average time spent on learning in educational establishments is longer than the average time spent elsewhere.

A significant percentage of urban and non-urban teenagers also spend some time learning in their own dwellings. The average time spent learning there is over an hour a day in both non-urban and urban areas.

Table 17: Percentage of urban and non-urban teenagers engaging in learning activities in different places and average number of minutes spent

	Urban		Non-urban	
	% engaging	No. of minutes	% engaging	No. of minutes
Own dwelling	19	74	18	71
Someone else's dwelling	0	71	1	216
Other workplace outside dwelling	0	117	-	-
Educational establishment	30	246	25	277
Public area	1	149	0	100
Travelling/waiting to travel	26	62	24	58
Other location	-	-	0	30

Personal care

Table 18 shows that over three-quarters of the teenagers' personal care involves sleep and related activities. The next most common activity for both boys and girls is eating and drinking. This accounts for an average of 72 and 67 minutes of boys' and girls' days respectively. Other common activities are hygiene and health and 'doing nothing'. 'Doing nothing' covers rest and relaxation time for which the respondent reports no other activity. Boys and girls differ little in how they spend their personal care time.

Table 18: Average number of minutes per day spent on personal care by boys and girls aged 10-19

Activity	Male	Female
Sleep	573	578
Eat & drink	72	67
Hygiene & health	54	52
Receive medical & personal care from:		
Professional	1	1
Household member	0	0
Other person	-	0
Waiting for care	0	0
Doing nothing	20	19
Individual religious	1	1
Travel	2	1
Waiting for travel	0	0
Personal care not elsewhere classified	0	0
Total	724	719

Activities of teenagers according to the time of the day

Figure 1: A typical day for teenagers aged 10-14

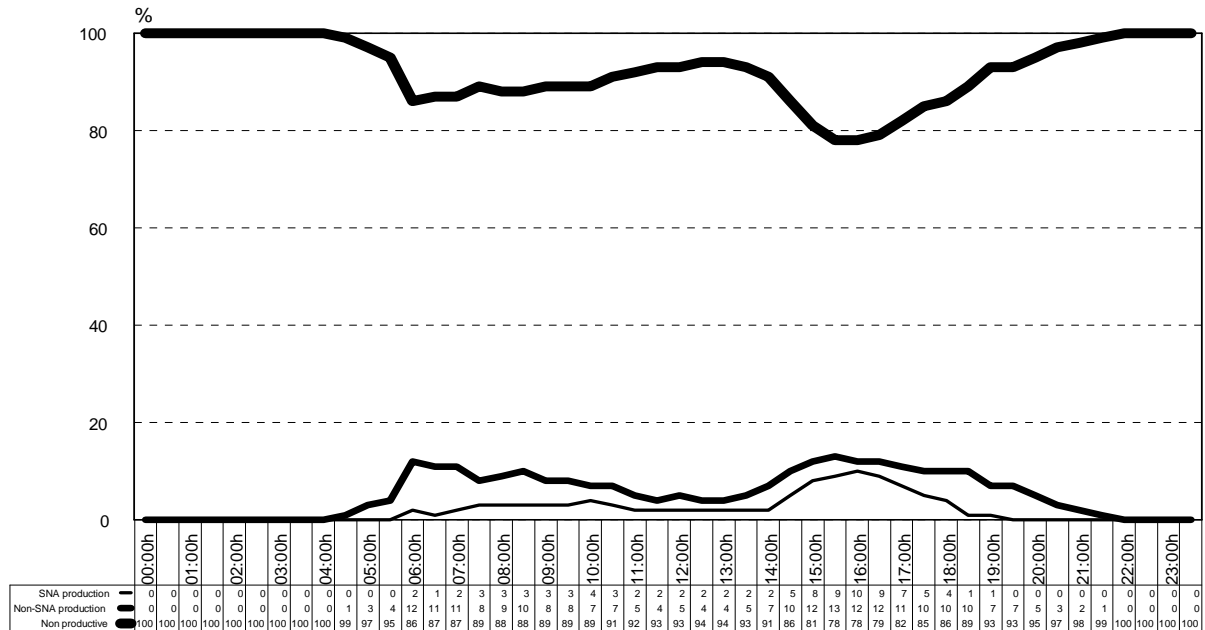
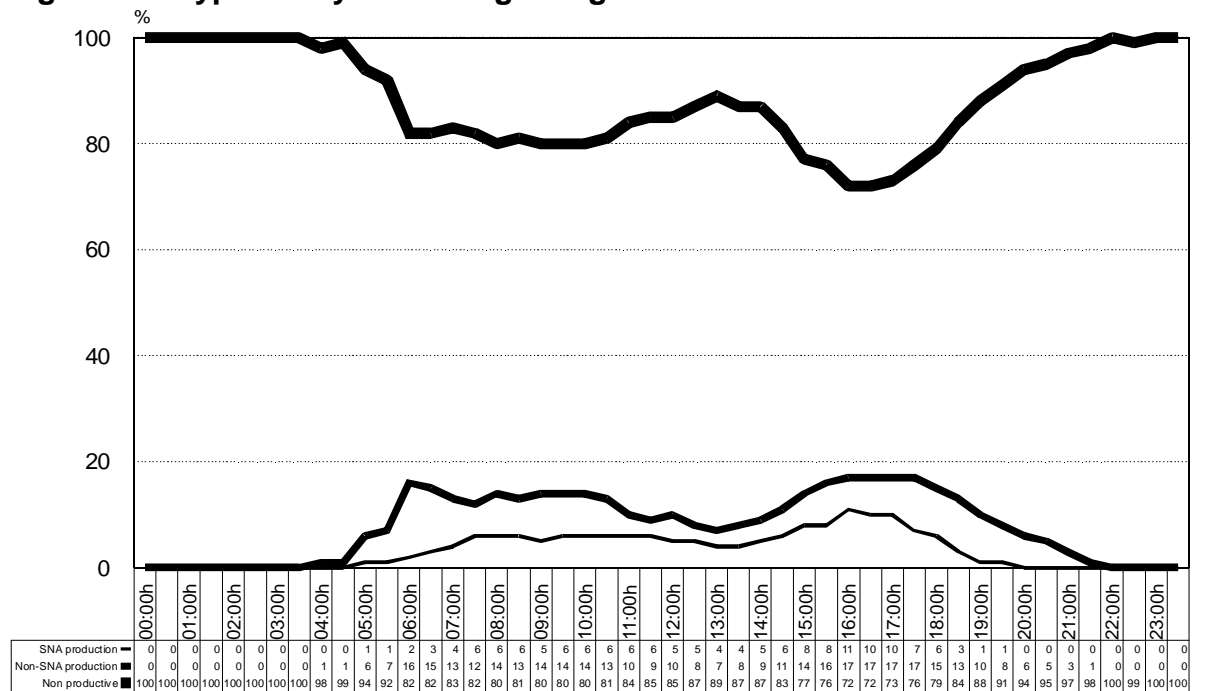


Figure 2: A typical day for teenagers aged 15-19



Differences between the activities of younger and older teenagers can be expected. For example, some teenagers aged 15-19 will be working, or looking for work, while all children under 15 years should, legally, be attending school. Figures 1 and 2 show the percentage distribution of teenagers engaged in production and non-production activities at the different times of day.

At any given time, more teenagers in both age groups are involved in non-productive activities than in any other type of activity. The activity classification system used in the time use survey categorises learning as a non-productive activity, and this accounts for the high percentage of non-productive activities in the middle of the day. As expected, the second most common type of activity is non-SNA production, and the least common is SNA production.

At any given time, there are slightly more 15-19 year olds than 10-14 year olds involved in SNA production activity. However, there is still a significant percentage of children aged 10-14 involved in SNA production activity. South African law forbids employment of children under 15 years of age. But, as the activity classification categorises fetching of fuel and water as SNA production, some of the SNA activity reflected on the graph might involve these household activities.

SNA and non-SNA production by children seem to start at about 04h30 at the earliest for both age groups.

Figure 3: Percentage of teenagers engaged in learning at different times of day

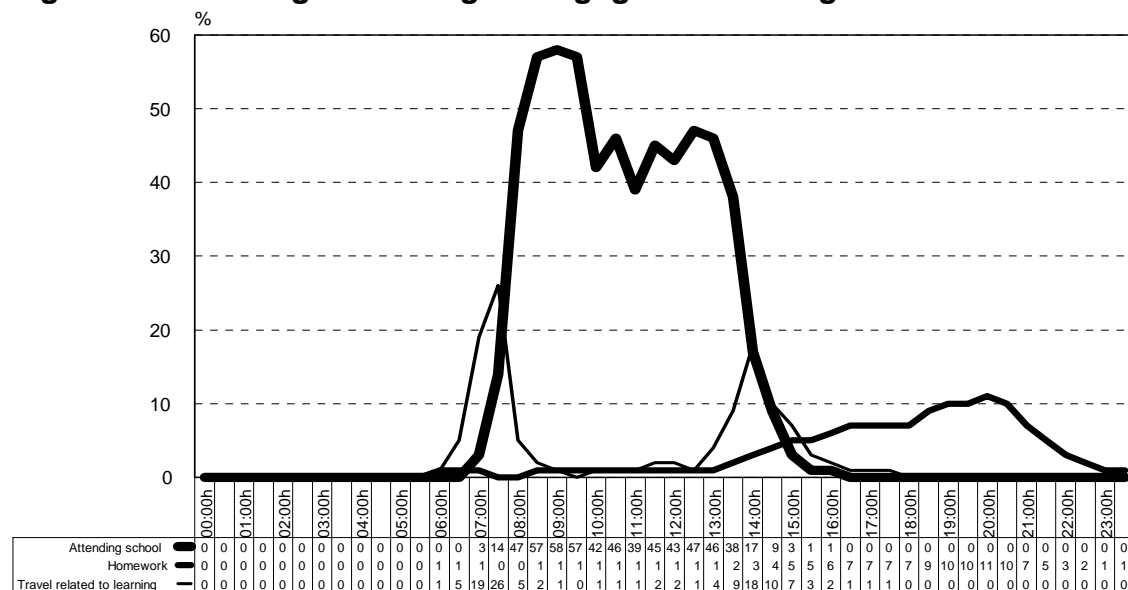
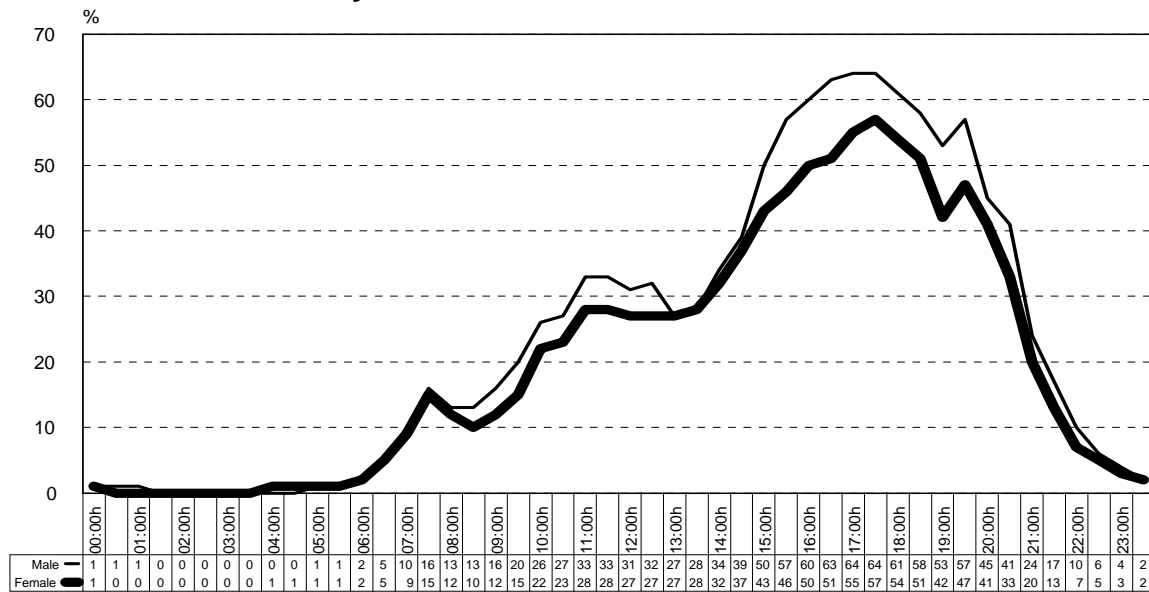


Figure 3 shows that until about 06h00, there is no form of activity related to learning. During the period between 06h00 and about 07h00 there is travel to school, followed by learning until approximately 14h00. At this time there is an increase in the percentage of children travelling from school. Then there is time for homework or studying in the evening.

Figure 4: Percentage of boys and girls aged 10-19 engaged in leisure activities at different times of day



Leisure activities refer to social and cultural activities and using mass media. Figure 4 indicates that the leisure activity patterns of boys and girls are similar. Both boys and girls are most likely to be engaged in leisure activities between 16h00 and 21h30.

Although the leisure activity patterns for boys and girls are similar, at any time during the day and evening more boys than girls are involved in leisure activities.

Figure 5: Percentage of younger and older boys and girls aged 10-19 engaged in household maintenance at different times of day

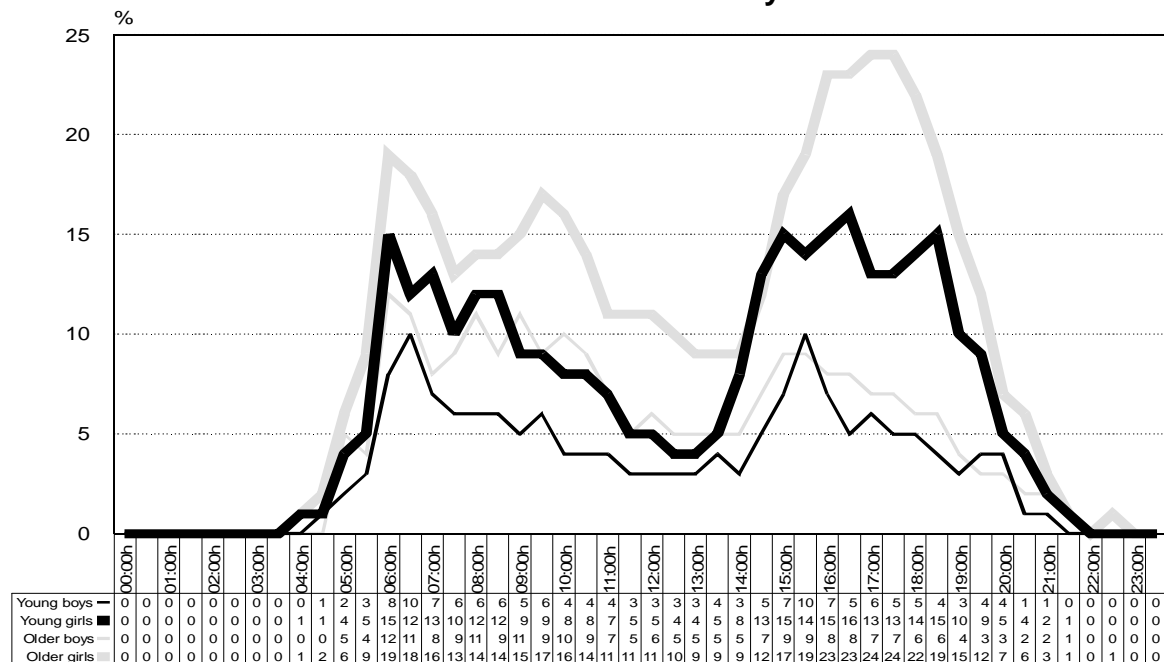


Figure 5 indicates that, at most times of the day, a larger percentage of older girls are engaged in household maintenance than of the other three groups of teenagers. The difference between the four groups of teenagers is most striking between 15h00 and 20h00. The percentage of young girls involved in household maintenance after 14h00 is higher than that of older boys, whereas at other times it is more or less the same. At most times of the day young boys are the least likely of all four groups to engage in household maintenance.

Conclusion

This paper has used data from South Africa's first national time use survey to explore the way in which teenagers spend their time. It looks at the overall time use patterns in terms of different types of productive and non-productive activities; at particular activities, such as socialising, use of media, learning, and personal care; and at what teenagers tend to do at different times of the day.

The findings reveal some differences between younger and older teenagers, between those living in urban and non-urban areas, and between boys and girls. Government and other players, in developing policy and in planning and implementing programmes, may find the overall patterns useful, and those relating to particular sub-groups of teenagers. For example, information about teenagers' access to different forms of media and when different groups of teenagers use them will make it easier to target effective interventions. Similarly, information about patterns of study in terms of time and location may enable government to plan how to improve the effectiveness of education.