

The relationship among leisure attitude, satisfaction, and psychological well-being for college students

SUNYOONG KIM, JUNMO SUNG, JAEAHM PARK & STEPHEN W. DITTMORE

Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation, University of Arkansas,
UNITED STATES

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship among leisure attitude (e.g., behavioral, affective, cognitive), satisfaction and well-being (e.g., stress, loneliness, personal self-esteem) for college students. A total of 207 undergraduate students enrolled in a major public university participated in this study. Results indicated that leisure attitudes are positively associated with leisure satisfaction. The satisfaction derived from participation in leisure activities with positive leisure attitudes effects psychological well-being by decreasing stress and loneliness, while also enhancing personal self-esteem. These findings expand existing research regarding leisure attitudes, satisfaction, and well-being by providing evidence that having positive attitudes toward leisure activities can enhance social and psychological well-being through a mediating effect of satisfaction. Finally, college students may use their free time in order to enhance physical and psychological condition by doing leisure activities.

Key words: leisure attitude, satisfaction, stress, loneliness, personal self-esteem

Introduction

In general, leisure activities are defined as non-obligatory and non-work activities based on individuals' enjoyment and interests in their free time (Hills & Argyle, 1998; Holder, Coleman, & Sehn, 2009; Ragheb & Tate, 1993). Chen, Li, and Chen (2013) explained that leisure plays a significant role of having pleasure and a sense of achievement for individuals in global society. The amount of time people spend on leisure activities is increasing. According to the Statistics Portal report (2015), about 95 percent of population in the United States was engaged in leisure activities in 2013. In particular, 40 percent participate in individual activities (e.g., watching TV, reading a book), 20 percent on team activities (e.g., basketball, football), and another 40 percent on outdoor activities (e.g., running). The importance of leisure participation has been to have positive effects on individuals' physical and psychological conditions (Shin & You, 2013).

Over the past decades, several scholars (e.g., Caldwell, 2005; Lloyd & Auld, 2002; Ragheb & Tate, 1993) have examined the benefit of leisure participation. Caldwell (2005) provided evidence that leisure activities are positively associated with physical and psychological well-being. Lloyd and Auld (2002) indicated that individuals who are highly involved in leisure activities have a higher quality of life, a growing concern for individuals, communities, and governments.

This is consistent with the studies conducted by Ragheb and Tate (1993) and Teixeira and Freire (2013) indicating that participating in leisure activities with positive attitude can enhance level of well-being and life satisfaction.

Leisure attitude

Ragheb and Beard (1982) revealed that attitude toward leisure activities can be one of the important elements to determine individuals' willingness or predisposition to participate in leisure activities. Ragheb and Tate (1993) mentioned that leisure attitude was positively related to leisure participation. Moreover, leisure attitude can increase leisure participation which results in developing leisure satisfaction (Freire, 2013; Teixeira & Freire, 2013). This parallels findings from Haworth and Lewis (2005) which indicated that positive attitudes toward leisure activities are interrelated with individuals' satisfaction derived from participation in leisure activities. According to Ragheb and Beard (1982), leisure attitude contains three components including cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. They defined the cognitive component as "general knowledge and beliefs about leisure, its characteristics and how it relates to the quality of the individual's life", the affective component was explained as "feelings in relation to leisure, the degree to which the individual likes or dislikes

leisure activities and experiences”, and the behavioral component was defined as “past, present and intended actions regarding leisure activities and experiences” (Ragheb & Beard, 1982, p. 158).

Leisure satisfaction

Leisure satisfaction was explained as positive personal evaluation derived from participation in leisure activities (Ragheb & Tate, 1993). Campbell (1981) expressed satisfaction as a linkage between individuals’ belief and expectation. He also found that individuals would be less satisfied when the gap between belief and expectation is large. This result parallels findings from Stock, Okun, and Benin’s study (1986) which indicated a sense of satisfaction is based on individuals’ expectation what they need or want from the circumstances. Along with the important role of satisfaction in leisure studies, Mancini (1978) proposed that there was positive relationship between satisfaction of leisure activities and psychological well-being. Moreover, leisure satisfaction is highly related to life satisfaction by decreasing students’ stress and encouraging social activities (Berg & Neulinger, 1976; Folse, Darosa, & Folse, 1985; Riddick, 1985; Russell, 1987; Sneegas, 1986). While many studies have revealed that leisure participation contributes positively to adolescents’ well-being (Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter, 2003; Kang, 2004; Kim, 2003; Onishi et al., 2006; Sacker & Cable, 2006), research has not focused on how often people engage in physical or non-physical leisure activity and how these activities influence overall mental state in terms of satisfaction, self-efficacy, mental well-being, and level of stress.

Well-being

The relationships among attitude, satisfaction, and psychological well-being should be acknowledged because positive satisfaction derived from participation in leisure activities can have a positive correlation with psychological well-being (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Sacker and Cable (2006) indicated that leisure participation enhance adolescents’ well-being. In addition, Shin and You (2013) proposed that active leisure activity can improve level of well-being while passive leisure activity negatively influences level of well-being. For instance, Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter (2003) proposed that level of happiness increased when people participate in outdoor activities with friends while level of happiness was decreased when teenagers participate in individual activities (e.g., reading a book). According to Ma and his colleagues (2012), psychological well-being might be a complex concept due to lots of constructs measuring it (e.g., happiness, life satisfaction, morale, depression, self-esteem, loneliness, perceived stress, quality of life, mentality, mood, affect, self-identity, etc.). This study followed Wann’s study (2004) to measure psychological well-being including self-esteem, loneliness, and perceived stress scale to measure psychological well-being. Social relationships with others and stress of school work are highly correlated with college life (Koo, Sung, & Martinez, in press; Murnane & Levy, 1996; Murray-Harvey & Slee, 2007).

Although many scholars supported a positive association between leisure participation and well-being in adolescence, little research has been conducted to examine the relation for college students. It is necessary to consider how leisure attitude influences college students’ well-being through the mediating effect of leisure satisfaction because college students, away from interference of their parents, have more freedom and responsibility than high school (Ma, Tan, & Ma, 2012; Sylvia-Bobiak & Caldwell, 2006). This study provides an integrated approach to understanding the relationship among leisure attitude, satisfaction, and well-being among college students and attempts to extend the existing theoretical and empirical evidence of the relationship. Finally, in our model, leisure attitude is an independent variable, leisure satisfaction is a mediator, and well-being is a dependent variable. The fit of the model is evaluated using SEM with three research hypotheses as follows:

RH1: Leisure attitude will positively influence leisure satisfaction

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variables	Categories	N	%	Variables	Categories	N	%
Gender	Male	122	57.3	Type of leisure sport	Running	28	13.1
	Female	91	42.7		Soccer	26	12.2
Age	18	12	5.6		Weight training	24	11.3
	19	31	14.6		Baseball	20	9.4
	20	48	22.5		Basketball	19	8.9
	21	49	23.0		Golf	19	8.9
	22	42	19.7		Tennis	10	4.7
	22 <	31	14.5		Etc.	67	31.4

RH2: Leisure satisfaction will positively influence psychological well-being

RH3: There will be a mediating effect of leisure satisfaction on the relationship between leisure attitude and psychological well-being

Material & methods

Participants

A total of 500 undergraduate students from University of Arkansas were invited to participate in the online survey through email. By using the convenient sampling method, an email that has the hyperlink of the online survey was sent to selected students. The survey was administered December 1, 2014 through December 8, 2014. Two hundred fifty-seven participants responded to the online survey, a response rate of 51.4%. Of the 257 surveys gathered, 44 were discarded owing to having missing values through the listwise deletion method. Therefore, finally, a total of 213 surveys were analyzed for this study. Of the research participants, males accounted for 57.3% ($n = 122$) and females accounted for 42.7% ($n = 91$). The greatest number of age group was 21 (23.0%) followed by 20 (22.5%) and 22 (19.7%). Demographic characteristics of Participants are presented in Table 1.

Measurement

A questionnaire packet contained three sections including leisure attitude, leisure satisfaction, and psychological well-being. To measure leisure attitude, a total of 12 items were adopted and modified from Teixeira and Freire’s (2013) Leisure Attitudes Scale-Short Version (LAS-SV) including behavioral attitude (3 items), cognitive attitude (4 items), and affective attitude (5 items). Items were assessed on a 5-point Likert-scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This scale showed high levels of reliability, with a Cronbach’s alpha of .88 (Teixeira & Freire, 2013). The five items for leisure satisfaction were drawn from Arbaugh’s (2000) study which indicated high reliability, with Cronbach’s alpha greater than .96. Items were assessed on a 5-point Likert-scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A higher score indicates higher level of satisfaction of leisure activity. The scale for psychological well-being consists of three sub-factors such as perceived stress, loneliness, and self-esteem. A total of 13 items were adopted and blended from Perceived Stress Scale 10 (PSS-10) introduced by Cohen, Kamarck and Mermelstein (1983), the UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) Loneliness Scale developed by Russell, Peplau, and Ferguson (1978), and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) developed by Rosenberg (1979). Items showed high reliability, with a Cronbach’s alpha greater than .85. Items were measured on a 5-point Likert-scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A higher score of perceived stress and loneliness indicates lower level of perceived stress and loneliness while a higher score of self-esteem indicates higher level of self-esteem. All items were reviewed through discussion with scholars with expertise in leisure and psychology in younger age group, to ensure the content validity.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using AMOS version 20.0 and SPSS version 20.0 for Windows. Following the two-step approach for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM; Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted first to examine the psychometric properties of the proposed measurement model then structural equation modeling was conducted to test proposed model and the effect of motivations on social media consumption.

The internal consistency of items was evaluated based on Cronbach’s alpha ($>.70$) (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Convergent validity was estimated by construct reliability (CR) with a .70 threshold, and average variance extracted (AVE) with a cut-off value of .50 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Discriminant validity was assessed based on Anderson and Gerbing’s (1988) suggestion that if the confidence interval (\pm two standard errors) around the correlation estimate between the two factors does not include 1.0, the measure is regarded as having adequate discriminant validity. The overall model fit was assessed by the following fit indices: χ^2/df (<5.0), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) ($<.08$), the standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR) ($<.08$), and the comparative fit index (CFI) ($>.90$; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). A bootstrapping procedure with 500 bootstrap samples and 95% confidence interval (CI) was conducted to test the

Table 2. Summary of Structural Equation Modeling

Direct Effect	β	95% CI	
Leisure attitude \rightarrow Leisure satisfaction	.67***		
Leisure satisfaction \rightarrow Perceived stress	.16*		
Leisure satisfaction \rightarrow Loneliness	.24***		
Leisure satisfaction \rightarrow Self esteem	.47***		
Indirect Effect	β	LL	UL
Leisure attitude \rightarrow Satisfaction \rightarrow Perceived stress	.11*	.01	.24
Leisure attitude \rightarrow Satisfaction \rightarrow Loneliness	.16*	.06	.31
Leisure attitude \rightarrow Satisfaction \rightarrow Self esteem	.31*	.10	.50

*** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$, LL= lower limit, UL=Upper limit

proposed mediation effect of team identification (Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010).

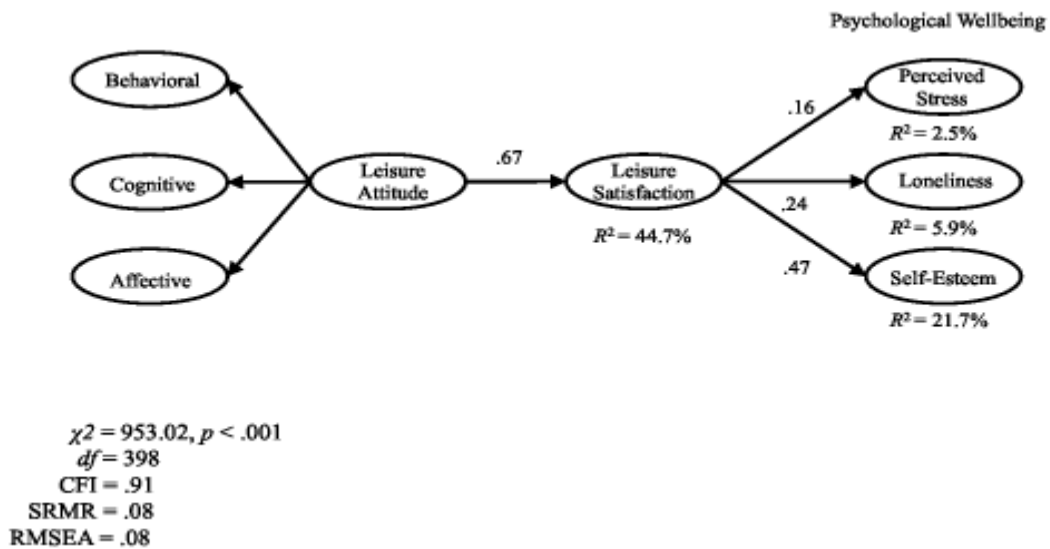
Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Kurtosis and skewness of all items were examined, and no extreme values (exceeding 3.0) were found (Chou & Bentler, 1995). All items were deemed reliable, with Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .82 (perceived stress), to .95 (self-esteem) (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). All items indicated construct reliability (CR) greater than .70 and average variance extracted (AVE) greater than .50 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The confidence interval (\pm two standard errors) around the correlation estimate between the two factors did not include 1.0 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Therefore, the measures for all latent constructs had convergent and discriminant validity (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The CFA with a maximum likelihood estimation revealed that the overall measurement model fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 872.94, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 2.27, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .07, \text{ and } SRMR = .04$). All items had the standardized loadings greater than .70 threshold (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Structural Equation Modeling

The overall structural model indicated good fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 953.02, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 2.39, CFI = .9, RMSEA = .08, \text{ and } SRMR = .08$). The structural equation modeling revealed that leisure attitude affects team leisure satisfaction ($\beta = .67, p < .001$) directly. Leisure satisfaction had a positive effect on perceived stress ($\beta = .16, p < .05$). Therefore, leisure satisfaction decreases perceived stress since a higher score of perceived stress indicates a lower level of stress in this study. In addition, loneliness ($\beta = .24, p < .001$), and self-esteem ($\beta = .47, p < .001$) also had a positive relationship with leisure satisfaction. In terms of indirect effect, leisure attitude had a significant influence on perceived stress ($\beta = .11, p < .05$), loneliness ($\beta = .16, p < .05$), and self-esteem ($\beta = .31, p < .05$) mediated by leisure satisfaction. The summary of structural equation modeling is presented in Table 2.



Discussion

While a number of scholars and practitioners in leisure study have paid much attention to the benefits from leisure participation among adolescents, it is also necessary to examine the benefits from leisure participation among college students because they are more exposed to physical and social activities during their college life compared to high school students (Ma et al., 2012). In addition, college students have more freedom to engage in leisure activities in their free time (Barnett, 2011; Sylvia-Bobiak & Caldwell, 2006). Thus, this study attempted to recognize the relationship among leisure attitude, satisfaction, and psychological well-being for college students. The results provided the support for our research hypotheses: 1) leisure attitude will positively influence leisure satisfaction, 2) leisure satisfaction will positively influence psychological well-being, and 3) leisure satisfaction will have a mediating effect the relationship between leisure attitude and psychological well-being.

First, the findings revealed that leisure attitude, including the subscales of cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects, has positive effect on leisure satisfaction derived from leisure participation. It indicated that the more individuals evaluate leisure activities, they tend to satisfy their participation. This phenomenon is consistent with the study conducted by Ragheb (1980) indicating that there is a positive relationship between leisure attitude and leisure satisfaction. In addition, Ragheb and Tate (1993) also found the affective factor of leisure attitude (e.g., engagement of leisure activities) directly influences leisure satisfaction while the cognitive

factor (e.g., social relationships by leisure activities) has an indirect effect on leisure satisfaction through mediating factor, motivation.

Second, leisure satisfaction also has a positive effect on college students' psychological well-being, including subscale for perceived stress, loneliness, and self-esteem. In particular, self-esteem was most influenced factor by leisure satisfaction followed by loneliness and perceived stress. This finding revealed that level of satisfaction by leisure activities is highly associated with increases in personal self-worth because the purpose of the leisure activities is related to promote individuals' physical and psychological health. In addition, while leisure activities encourage social connections with other participations (cognitive and behavioral), leisure activities enhance personal self-worth through positive interaction with them, which may also lead to decrease level of stress as well as loneliness comprising psychological health. The results parallel those of Shin and You's study (2013) indicating that leisure satisfaction has significant improvement of students' life satisfaction as well as decreases in level of stress. They indicated that leisure activities have potential benefits to develop individuals' ability to manage life events as well as individuals' both mental and physical health. Finally, this finding is an evidence to support the leisure satisfaction derived from positive activities promotes the level of psychological well-being.

Lastly, leisure attitude has indirect effect on college students' psychological well-being through a mediating factor, satisfaction. Previous researches in leisure study showed that leisure participation has positive effects on individual physical and psychological health through mediating factors such as leisure involvement or leisure negotiation (Ma et al., 2012; Shin & You, 2013). Therefore, the result of this study provides same consequences with previous literatures in terms of preventing psychological health among college students by having positive attitude toward leisure activities. Moreover, we found that college students who have high levels of attitude toward leisure activities are more likely to engage in leisure activities and to satisfy their leisure participation, leading to enhanced psychological well-being.

The findings suggest that college authorities or faculty members should provide appropriate leisure circumstances to their students in college campus in order for improving the quality of college life. Colleges can provide a variety of leisure activities (e.g., intramural sports, club sports, group fitness, personal training, massage, yoga class, etc.) to their students through college recreation center. College students also have opportunities to watch college sports games (e.g., football, basketball, baseball, etc.) in college campus. Through these activities, students may have not only quality of college life but also a sense of belonging to their colleges. This is because that students' college life may be improved as students become more deeply involved with those leisure activities. Additionally, not only participating in leisure activities but also participating in social activities (e.g., joining club or student organization) may improve students' quality of college life by enhancing their self-esteem and reducing perceived stress and loneliness in terms of interacting with college mates. Lastly, colleges can provide some classes associated with leisure to their students which may improve the knowledge or attitude of leisure activities for students. Through classes such as these students can learn how leisure influences life, family, and society as well as formulate positive attitude toward leisure activities can be built in their mind. This study provides important role of leisure attitude toward leisure activities among college students. However, the study has few limitations which should be considered in future studies. One of the limitations was the lack of generalizability because this study conducted a convenience sampling method from college students at one university. Thus, future research might consider generalizability to examine the relationship among leisure attitude, satisfaction, and psychological well-being. Another limitation was that college students have many chance to engage in lots of leisure activities in their college life but this study did not consider what types of leisure activities make them satisfied. Therefore, future research might include a measure of types of leisure activities in terms of determining what best expresses their satisfaction

Conclusion

The results of this study indicated that college students' positive attitude toward leisure activities was associated with an increase of satisfaction which leads to improvement in their college life by enhanced self-esteem, and decreased perceived stress and loneliness. In terms of improving psychosocial well-being among college students, the current study has a significant implication for scholars and practitioners on how to develop quality of college life activities for students. In addition, this finding provides the guideline to recognize that leisure attitude toward leisure activities can be a useful tool in improving psychological well-being for college students.

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