
Articles

The Complex and Dynamic Nature of Leisure Experience

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Although leisure experience is characterized as being multi-dimensional, transitory and multi-phased, few empirical studies have explored the complexity and dynamics of leisure experiences. The purpose of this study is to expand current understanding of this phenomena. The self-initiated-tape-recording method (SITRM) was used to measure immediate leisure experiences. In-depth interviews were conducted to help interpret the SITRM data and explore the definitional perspective of leisure for 16 informants. Data analysis from the SITRM and in-depth interviews revealed various experiential characteristics of leisure experiences yet to be reported in the literature. The multi-dimensional, transitory and multi-phased nature of leisure experience was demonstrated.

KEYWORDS: *Leisure experience, qualitative research methods, SITRM*

Knowledge gained through a particular paradigm reflects a profession's perceptions and interpretations of the reality studied (Kuhn, 1970). The paradigm also directs what is important in the profession and even defines research questions to study (Masterman, 1970). Prior to the 1970s, researchers viewed leisure as either time after work or engagement in particular types of activities. More recently, researchers have begun to conceptualize leisure as a state of mind. The change in the operationalization of leisure reflected a shift from viewing leisure via an objective paradigm to a subjective one. This paradigm shift in conceptualizing leisure

This paper is partially based on the first author's doctoral dissertation written under the direction of Dr. Howard while they were at University of Oregon. The manuscript was developed while the first author was at The University of Georgia as a Post-Doctoral Associate under the direction of Dr. Dattilo. Correspondence concerning this paper should be addressed to Dr. Youngkhill Lee, Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, University Park, GPA 243, Florida International University, Miami, FL 33199. Many thanks must go to the anonymous reviewers and Dr. Doug Kleiber for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

has expanded opportunities for leisure research (c.f., Ingham, 1986, 1987; Iso-Ahola, 1988).

One indication of this paradigm shift in studying leisure is that many researchers now use the phrase "leisure experience" in their writings. The concept has been applied to various areas of leisure research such as tourism (e.g., Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987), consumer behavior (e.g., Bloch & Bruce, 1984), therapeutic recreation (e.g., Dattilo & Kleiber, 1993), women's issues (e.g., Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw & Freysinger, 1989), programming (e.g., Rossman, 1989), leisure education (Dattilo & Murphy, 1991), and outdoor recreation (e.g., Driver & Brown, 1978). The main thrust of these works is that professionals must facilitate leisure experience, rather than merely provide recreation opportunities.

Considering the broad application of the concept of the leisure experience, it is valuable to review how existing literature explains the nature of the underlying concept. Researchers have noted the *multi-dimensional nature* of leisure experience (e.g., Kelly, 1987; Tinsley & Tinsley, 1986) in which leisure is characterized by a variety of experiences, including positive experiences as well as stressful or unpleasant ones. Some researchers have identified the *transitory nature* of leisure experience (e.g., Kelly, 1987; Mannell, 1980; Tinsley & Tinsley, 1986). These researchers claim that leisure experience takes place in short, interrupted episodes, rather than occurring for extended periods. In addition, Clawson (1963) provided evidence of the *multi-phase nature* of leisure experiences. He suggested that leisure experience involves five distinct and yet interacting decision "packages:" (a) an anticipation, (b) travel to the site, (c) the on-site activity, (d) return travel, and (e) a recollection. In this multiple stage experience, each stage entails different kinds of leisure experience.

Studying the multi-dimensional, transitory, and multi-phase nature of leisure experience is challenging. The majority of existing studies examining leisure experience have not attempted to explore the complexity and dynamics of the leisure experience. Rather, attempts have been made to understand the characteristics of the leisure experience. Researchers have reported that when people participate in recreation activities, they experience involvement, fun, enjoyment, pleasure, spontaneity, freedom, timelessness, relaxation, sense of separation, adventure, positive mood states, positive feedback, and many other positive experiences (e.g., Gray, 1983; Gunter, 1979, 1987).

Although these studies provide important insights into characteristics of the leisure experience, there is little understanding of the complexity and dynamics of the elusive nature of leisure. Two recent studies provide insight into the dynamic nature of leisure experience (Hull, Steward, & Yi, 1992; Steward & Hull, 1992). Steward and Hull (1992) investigated how people appraised their perceptions of leisure at different times. The study compared several on-site real-time perceptions from post-activity appraisals at two different times to a day-hike activity. Using a paper-pencil survey method, the researchers reported that the appraisals of leisure experience

of the same activity fluctuated across time and context. Hull, et al. (1992) investigated individuals' experience patterns, defined as the dynamic nature of a recreation experience. Although the study focused on examination of the stability and interpretability of the experience patterns, the findings suggested that mood changes over the course of recreation engagement.

The purpose of this study is to expand current understanding of the leisure experience. Mannell and Iso-Ahola's (1987) three perspectives on leisure experience (i.e., definitional perspective, immediate conscious experience, and post-hoc satisfaction approach) were considered to examine not only the transitory nature but also the multi-phase nature of leisure experience¹. In our study, definitional and post-hoc perspectives were assessed using in-depth interviews, while immediate conscious experience was measured by applying the self-initiated-tape-recording method (SITRM), a new qualitative assessment technique of immediately recalled experience (Lee, 1990, 1992). To reveal the multi-dimensional nature of leisure experience, this study attempts to describe what Gray (1983) called "extraordinary" experiences in leisure.

Measurement Issues

Since measuring the elusive nature of leisure experience is challenging, several measurement issues were considered in this study. First, qualitative methods were employed to examine the complex and dynamic nature of leisure experience. Qualitative methods allow researchers to understand "respondents' level of emotion, the way in which they have organized their world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions" (Patton, 1980, p. 28). In addition, qualitative methods emphasize the importance of (a) participants' internal perspective, (b) conducting research in natural settings, and (c) being free from pre-determined conceptual categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1980). Lofland (1974) suggested that researchers must explore individuals' perceptions rather than impose upon them a preconceived or outsider's scheme of what they are about. The insider's perspective may be useful in examining the complex and dynamic nature of leisure experience. A more detailed rationale and description of applying qualitative methods in studying leisure experience is documented elsewhere (Henderson, 1991; Howe, 1985, 1990).

Second, the experience sampling method (ESM), designed to measure immediate experiences in naturally occurring situations (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1987; Larson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1983), was carefully examined. When employing the ESM, investigators ask participants to wear electronic

¹Adopting Mannell and Iso-Ahola's (1987) approach, rather than Clawson's (1963) multi-phase concept, occurred because many recreation activities do not require extended time and cannot be adapted to Clawson's model. Mannell and Iso-Ahola's (1987) perspectives are more consistent with the intent of our study.

paggers during a specified period of time. During the time participants wear the paggers they also carry self-report booklets. Participants are requested to respond to a series of questions whenever they receive signals activated by the investigator at random times. The primary strength of the ESM is that it allows investigators to collect participants' immediate experiences in naturally occurring situations.

Other benefits as a result of immediate measurement is minimization of memory decay and mood bias (Larson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1983). The ESM has been used primarily for quantifying various psychological states through a self-administered questionnaire. Although open-ended questions used with the ESM may allow the assessment of qualitative information, using the paper-pencil method obviously restricts respondents' ability to report qualitative aspects of experiences. That is, people can easily complete the forced-choice questions, but they may encounter problems responding to open-ended questions with paper and pencil. Problems with open-ended questions may arise because of participants' difficulty in expressing their thoughts clearly in written form and the perception that it is inconvenient and time consuming. Beyond the difficulty of the ESM to assess qualitative information, Wheeler and Reis (1991) identified the limitation of the signal-contingent approach in the ESM. That is, the random signals and significant episodes may not coincide. For example, random signals may not capture many important leisure experiences that occur throughout the day.

Beyond the ESM, Steward and Hull (1992) and Hull, et al. (1992) used a series of surveys to assess immediate leisure perceptions of a day-hike activity. These researchers asked participants to complete a questionnaire as they reached 12 pre-marked points along the 2-km hiking trail. In addition, participants were further asked to respond to the questionnaire when they arrived at the destination of the trail. Although the use of multiple questionnaires facilitated immediate measurement of moments as well as perceptions of the entire event, the frequent disruptions of the natural flow of the hiking activity may introduce potential bias and be intrusive.

The SITRM was originally devised to take advantage of the strengths of the ESM yet overcome limitations in collecting qualitative data (Lee, 1990, 1992). Instead of being asked to write their thoughts, respondents in our study were asked to carry a tape-recorder and report their experiences associated with specific events directly to the tape-recorder. Since the SITRM is an event-contingent approach, the method attempts to avoid losing important leisure experiences. Because respondents report their perspective immediately after they complete the event, the SITRM creates less disruption to the respondents as compared to the ESM and the survey method. However, as a result of the SITRM being event-contingent in nature, it is not as immediate as signal-contingent method (i.e., ESM) or the survey method (i.e., Steward & Hull, 1992; Hull, et al., 1992). The

SITRM is designed to capture “immediately recalled conscious experience” (Lee, 1990, p. 28).

Methods

Selecting Participants

Participants ($N = 16$) were recruited via purposive sampling, a strategy used when a researcher desires to explore and understand underlying phenomenon and is not concerned to test theory for the purpose of generalizing findings to a large sample (Patton, 1980). Friends and colleagues were told about the nature of the study and were asked to recommend people who: (a) were verbally fluent and able to communicate their feelings, thoughts and perceptions, (b) showed a willingness to be open to the researcher, (c) had no exposure to formal leisure theories, and (d) were able to be contacted by the researcher at a later date to discuss, check, and confirm the provisional results. The demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected during two different stages, following the framework that Mannell and Iso-Ahola (1987) provided. The first stage required the collection of immediately recalled leisure experience through the SITRM. The second stage was designed to assess definitional aspects of leisure and post-hoc interpretation of past leisure events through in-depth interviews. In this study, the definitional perspective was assessed via in-depth interviews completed after the SITRM procedure. This sequence was followed to reduce the possibility of biasing the respondents during the SITRM procedure.

During the first stage, the first author met each participant individually to explain the study and the process of research participation. The open-ended questions and statements were discussed and clarified. In this study, the researcher did not impose the definition of leisure, but encouraged each participant to self-define leisure. After answering each participant's questions, the researcher gave the participant a tape recorder on which the open-ended items were attached (refer to Table 2), a blank tape and batteries.

Finally, the participant was strongly encouraged to record the leisure experience within at least 20 minutes of its occurrence to enhance the accuracy of the recollections. If the recording did not occur within 20 minutes after participation, the participants were directed to answer only the first three questions of the questionnaire. This procedure was established to encourage the identification of all leisure events yet avoid data contamination via memory decay. Each participant was encouraged to call

TABLE 1
Demographic Characteristics of Participants

	Frequency	Percent
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	9	56%
Female	7	44%
<i>Age</i>		
20-30	3	19%
31-40	7	44%
41-50	4	25%
51-60	0	0%
60+	2	12%
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	4	25%
Married	11	69%
Separated/Divorced	1	6%
<i>Education</i>		
Some College	7	44%
College Graduate	6	37%
Graduate Work	3	19%
<i>Occupation</i>		
Managerial	2	12%
Professional	4	25%
Homemaker	3	19%
Student	5	32%
Retired	2	12%

TABLE 2
Questions/Statements Attached to the Tape-Recorder

1. What activity are/were you involved in?
2. Where does/did it take place?
3. When is/was it? (date, day and time)
4. Describe what you are/were experiencing in as much detail as you can.
5. What are the most exciting/pleasurable things about this experience?
6. What do you dislike about this activity?
7. Describe in as much detail as you can the social setting where you are/were participating in this activity.
8. Additional comments?

the researcher whenever questions arose. The researcher called each participant two days after initiation of the investigation to resolve any problems.

Although participants were directed to answer all the questions, they were urged to describe and elaborate as much as they could in response to the fourth item. Furthermore, regarding the fourth item, the first author explained that:

“There is no such thing as a dumb response. It is not unusual to use the same words again and again. Just describe whatever comes to your mind regarding the leisure event or episode you are involved in.”

In this research, participants carried a tape recorder for 1-3 weeks (average = 2 weeks). The time period of their involvement in the SITRM varied depending on their willingness to participate.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the participants approximately 2-3 months after completion of the SITRM. The primary purpose of interviewing was to probe leisure experiences reported in the SITRM. Another important purpose of the interviews was to help the researchers understand how participants defined their leisure events. Statements and questions to probe initial analysis of the SITRM data were: “Tell me about the experience you reported in the tape-recorder,” “What do you mean by that?,” “Would you elaborate on what you just said?” and “Anything else?” In an attempt to understand participants’ definition of the leisure event, the following question was asked: “Would you describe how you define your leisure?” The similar probing questions mentioned previously were also used to clarify each participant’s description. Most interviews lasted approximately 60-90 minutes at a place where each participant felt comfortable (typically at their home). The rationale for this interview was not only to understand participants’ post-hoc interpretation of leisure events reported with the SITRM, but also to help interpret the data from the SITRM.

Data Analysis

Analysis was based on verbatim transcriptions from the SITRM and the in-depth, open-ended interviews. A total of 240 pages (114 pages from the SITRM and 126 from in-depth interviews) of single spaced, typed verbatim transcriptions by a professional transcriber were gathered. When the transcription was completed, each audiotape was reviewed carefully and every verbatim transcription was read. While reading the data, a preliminary list of coding categories (e.g., types of activities, settings, characteristics of experience) was developed. The preliminary coding categories were continuously modified through the analysis. Throughout the coding process, each unit in a category was marked and underlined. The meticulous examination of each sentence was used to determine the suitability for a coding category.

The next phase was the "cut-up-and-put-in-folders approach" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Each unit of data was cut and placed in a folder which had been labeled with one provisional coding category. After each unit had been cut and placed in appropriate files, application of Glaser and Strauss' (1967) "constant comparative method" occurred. The researchers selected each file, and read each cut unit to determine if the content of each unit was internally consistent with the provisional category. This process involved checking the content of each unit in terms of its "look-alikeness" or "feel-alikeness" with the category. When necessary, modifications of categories occurred by reshuffling the units. In addition, memoing was performed to (a) capture the main ideas of the categories, (b) delineate category properties, and (c) devise a covering rule of the concept of each category. While the first memos brought an initial description of the nature of the category, the second memos refined and extended the first memos by including raw data to illustrate the analytic points.

Results

Participants' Views on Leisure: Definitional Perspective

Participants' definitional perspective was assessed during the in-depth interviews after the SITRM procedure. Analysis of interview data provided three salient defining elements of leisure. The most frequent element reported by these participants was the element of *enjoyment* and/or *fun*. Leisure was most commonly defined as an opportunity "just to enjoy what I am doing." "Pure enjoyment" was the key element for participants' leisure. Similarly, an element of "fun" also emerged. Participants described leisure as "It's got to be fun," and "It is an activity that's just for fun." The second salient element was *relaxation*. "Leisure is something relaxing not stressful" was a common description among the participants. Other statements were that during leisure, "I feel relaxed, and that's good," and leisure is "making you feel relaxed." The third prominent element was the condition of *freedom of choice*. Participants commonly described leisure as "doing what one wants to do," "my own choosing," "something you don't have to do," or "optional." These three salient aspects in defining leisure are congruent with previous observations (e.g., Iso-Ahola, 1979; Neulinger, 1981; Shaw, 1985; Tinsley & Tinsley, 1986)

Immediately Recalled Leisure Experience

Analysis of the SITRM data revealed various characteristics of immediately recalled leisure experiences. These characteristics included: social bonding, escaping, communion with nature, physical stimulation, intellectual cultivation, creative expression, introspection, relaxation, fun, and enjoyment. Although these results are similar to previous findings, other characteristics of leisure identified in this investigation, which have not been reported thoroughly in existing research, merit additional explanation.

A feeling of *exhaustion* is one characteristic reported by participants. The exhaustive feelings (e.g., "tired," "exhausted," "worn out," "drained") were reported by participants when they described physical efforts in various sporting events. "I became tired," and "I am exhausted" are the typical descriptions of this experience. For example, in reporting his experience with jogging, one participant immediately recalled the event as "a very tiring run." This feeling did not come as a result of physical exertion, but was purposefully achieved. In another example, one participant exerted herself when exercising so that she could exceed her record in weightlifting, saying "I was exhausted, because I was anxious to meet the challenge. . ." A participant who stated after jogging: "it's very invigorating to push your body to the point of exhaustion. . ." is yet another example of the association between the leisure experience and exhaustion.

Apprehension was also identified as a recurring feeling among participants. This feeling, commonly described by "scary," "frightening," or "fearful," very often occurred during adventurous leisure events (i.e., water rafting, canoeing, rock climbing). During a river rafting trip, for example, one participant described rafting as not only fun, but also bringing feelings of apprehension: "It's really apprehensive. I don't know what it's going to be like. My heart is pounding, I'm having a little shortness of breath because I am excited but then on the other hand it's apprehensive." As one participant approached challenging situations during canoeing, he reported it was "scary" initially, and then the experience was "frightening" as the canoe passed the "devil's passage."

Nervousness refers to those feelings commonly described by "nervous," "on edge," or "anxious." The nervous feeling occurred when participants engaged in outdoor adventure, where risk was often present. During canoeing, for example, one participant reported that "I was nervous because these waters around here are a lot bigger than in a lake." Feeling "on edge" was also reported while one participant attempted rock-climbing.

Disappointment emerged when participants were defeated through personal errors or poor performance. An example of this experience came from one avid softball player, who reported: "We lost! What can I say? We got slaughtered. I had some errors. I'm not thrilled. . ." This experience became prominent when the event involved direct competition, in which winners and losers are clearly distinguished (c.f., Fait & Billing, 1978).

The feeling of *frustration* also emerged. Situations where this experience was reported were similar to disappointing experiences. Frustration, like disappointment, is intimately associated with defeat and poor performance. When a team lost a baseball game, one participant stated "It was frustrating that the other team had to win this way. . ." Frustration was not always restricted to a competitive team sport. In playing golf, one participant, for example, reported that "I felt frustrated when I didn't do very well. . ."

Guilty feelings were also reported by some participants. This feeling, although not reported often, was closely related to one's social role and

the work ethic. With regard to social role and guilty feelings, a participant's description illustrates this dilemma. While watching her son's baseball game, she expressed in the beginning of the event that "I'm definitely guilty as a mom because I haven't been to enough of them. . ." Later, during the game, she further reported that "I feel kind of guilty again in a way because the other mothers are there, and they're there every time, and I haven't been that attendant." The work ethic also seemed to be associated with guilty feelings. After going to a restaurant with her husband, one participant reported: "I was feeling a bit of guilt about leaving all of a sudden. We really hadn't done very much this morning, and ordinarily if I'd worked very hard I would have felt more fun out of it."

Rumination was occasionally reported. Rumination occurs when a person's attention is diverted from the immediate activity and the individual thinks about something else (McIntosh & Martin, 1992). While talking with friends at a party, one participant reported that "I am concerned about getting a lot of things done, and I'm behind and this was one of those things that just brought together my resolve to take some time off and then go back and work hard." After a luncheon with her husband, one participant reported that ". . . trying to figure out whether or not we had the money to do this or not, and all of the pressure. I was thinking 'is it something we should do?' Or maybe we should try to eat something at home and might be able to save money. . ." During dancing with his wife and friends, one participant said he enjoyed rock and roll music and dancing, but:

I worried about tomorrow. I was thinking that when you're done for the evening you've probably stayed up much later than you should have because you lose a lot of sleep and you're kind of tired the next day when you get up. . . there are a few things that I would like to accomplish tomorrow. Otherwise, it's a lot of fun.

It was clear that many of these characteristics of leisure experience were intimately connected to outdoor adventure or sporting events. One important point is that participants actively chose these "stressful" and "unpleasant" experiences, rather than avoiding them. Participants reported that those feelings accompanied by outdoor adventure or sport events (i.e., nervousness, apprehension, exhaustion) were familiar prior to participation. It appears that these experiences seemed to be motivators, and participants found intrinsic meaning in these experiences, actualizing these motivators by exposing themselves to stressful situations (c.f., Bass, 1990).

Participants reported what appears to be stressful experiences along with pleasant experiences during recreation participation. Further, these characteristics emerged from immediately recalled experience through the SITRM. These experiences were only a portion of their entire experience. Evidence of these reported experiences and other characteristics consistent with the existing study help to clarify the nature of leisure experience.

Complexity of Leisure Experience: The “extraordinary” feelings reported here did not emerge in isolation; rather, these experiential characteristics *always* occurred in conjunction with other characteristics traditionally reported in the literature. For example, after running several miles, a jogger reported that “That was very invigorating, although I got very tired, but when I’m all finished I just really feel good, and it’s very positive results, physically, mentally and emotionally.” As illustrated by this participant, invigoration and exhaustion appear to be salient during participation, but the different feelings were expressed as the person completed the task. In another example involving a combination of apprehension and excitement, a river rafter’s statement is notable: “. . . I’m really kind of apprehensive . . . I am excited . . . So it’s mixture for me of fear and anticipation and a feeling of excitement.” Although losing a game was frustrating and disappointing, one participant reported fun and enjoyment “to be with friends and do things as a team.” Further, one participant felt good about her play during softball game, saying “I hit the ball real well, I was so excited, I finally hit the ball, yeah! . . .” Then, she went on to say “But we lost. I wanted to win. I was disappointed. . .” In the beginning of playing golf, one participant felt “energized,” and then reported “I felt a little frustrated when I didn’t do very well.” The participant ended by saying “I felt really good when I learned some new things that I could do better at the sport.”

As illustrated above, leisure experience is very complex and transitory. The interpretation of feelings fluctuates at different times. The experience is not only pleasurable in nature, but also stressful and often associated with tension. Participants consistently reported that those stressful characteristics reported in this study coexisted with many traditionally reported characteristics of leisure experience.

Experience Transformation From Immediate Recollection to Retrospection

Probing the findings of the SITRM data during the in-depth interviews generated interesting data. People’s interpretation of leisure experiences often changed with the passage of time. Some participants’ immediately recalled reports of leisure experiences, as indicated by the SITRM data, were interpreted differently when they viewed the experiences retrospectively during in-depth interviews. Although stressful experiences were reported immediately following a leisure event, participants consistently did not identify these stressful experiences later during the in-depth interviews. For example, one participant identified a disappointing feeling during the SITRM: “We got slaughtered. I had some errors. I’m not thrilled. . .” But several weeks later, the participant recalled that particular event as the most exciting and memorable experience that occurred during the course of the study. The participant reported that “It was the first time we’d lost, and we played well. We were all kind of in shock. But I had great time, I played well, and we all hit the ball. We just had a wonderful time. I think they just played a little better than us that night.”

In addition, the salience of those feelings associated with outdoor adventure (e.g., nervousness, apprehension) were reduced and at times, these feelings were transformed in different ways. Participants' experiences of nervousness and apprehension from river rafting were salient at the time of the SITRM report. For example, one participant's immediately recalled description was: "I was really nervous, because I got to play infield this time and because my coach says I'm needed in the outfield." However, reports of "fun" and "excitement" dominated the description of the same event during in-depth interviews. The participant reported that "... I was a bit nervous, but it turned out really well. It was really exciting. It was so fun." A previously reported feeling of frustration from a golf lesson identified during the SITRM, "I felt frustrated when I didn't do very well," was described during the interview as a "learning experience" and "relaxation" for one participant. In recollecting an exercise class, another participant stated: "... I was feeling a little tired and had to really push myself. ... then in answering the questions, I reflected more on the kind of feelings I was having. ... I think four or five weeks and I have wondered whether or not it was something I liked. ... Now I realize that I really enjoy it and it's good for me, and I would keep it up. ..." Interestingly, a participant who reported rumination via the SITRM during dancing asked the interviewer: "Did I really report that? Well, it was a really relaxing and fun social event." A notable feature of retrospective descriptions of leisure experience is that participants often provided definitional characteristics of experience. Many participants often described retrospective experience as "fun," "enjoyable," and "relaxing."

Discussion

This study reveals the multi-dimensional nature of leisure experience and expands what has been reported in the literature using Mannell and Iso-Ahola's (1987) three approaches of examining leisure experience. Patterns identified in this study provided insights into the dynamic and complex nature of leisure experience. That is, although the definitional and retrospective views of leisure were often expressed by the pleasant nature of experiences (i.e., "fun," "enjoyment," "relaxation"), the immediately recollected experience were reported as containing pleasant as well as stressful experiences. However, the stressful experiences reported immediately after a leisure event did not emerge during the retrospective description, nor was reflected in the definitional perspective of leisure.

Readers are cautioned when interpreting results of this study. Since most stressful experiences emerged from outdoor adventure and sporting events, they may be unique to those activities. Therefore, it is not clear whether similar findings would have emerged if participants were engaged in other types of leisure events. Further, since the SITRM allows assessment of self-report verbal data from participants' recollection of an event im-

mediately after it occurs, findings should be interpreted as immediately recalled experience.

Several conceptual and methodological points are worth mentioning to explain the results. On a conceptual level, some of Denzin's (1984) interpretive framework of emotions are useful to consider when interpreting findings. Among Denzin's four modes of lived emotions (i.e., sensible feelings, lived body feelings, intentional value feelings, and self- and moral feelings), those feelings unique to this study appear to parallel "sensible feelings" (bodily sensations at hand), whereas the traditionally reported experiences (i.e., Gray, 1983; Gunter, 1979, 1987) appear to parallel "intentional value feelings" (moral values of sensible and lived feelings). Sensible feelings, according to Denzin (1984), are physical sensations located in the body that can be experienced as part of an individual's immediate activity. Denzin added that these feelings cannot be transformed by intentions. Bass (1990) provided examples of sensible feelings during sailing: fear, dryness of mouth, sense of weakness, tenseness, and pounding heart. Perhaps those feelings given in particular parts of the lived body during participation in this study (i.e., physical pain, exhaustion, nervousness, fear, apprehension) may be sensible feelings (visceral bodily experiences during leisure participation). As stated previously, leisure experience reported by other investigators (i.e., Gray, 1983; Gunter, 1987) may reflect intentional value feelings. Intentional value feelings:

... refer to conditions and forms of emotionality, such as being attractive, not being in pain, or being in control of one's own emotions. These are socially shared value conceptions of "intended" emotionality. These kinds of feelings are not given as factual states of the body. . . Rather, they arise from meanings directed by the person himself. (Denzin, 1984, p. 121).

Denzin explained that intentional value feelings often reflect accomplishment and fulfillment. Perhaps the incidence of generating intentional value feelings may increase if participants are requested to discuss leisure experiences when details of what transpired during these experiences are not clear. Since value feelings are part of individuals' rational interpretation, rather than actual emotional feelings (Denzin, 1984), there is a tendency to report value feelings.

Some stressful experiences reported in this study may be explained through the concept of "eustress" (Harris, 1970). Eustress happens in situations that are antithesis of routine, boredom, stability, and sameness, and are associated with adventure, excitement, thrilling experiences, and pleasant stress. In explaining this concept, Harris stated that "the paradox observed in the stress seeker, that of seeking painful, stressful situations, rather than avoiding them, may be resolved by the fact that pain and pleasure are both drawn from the same reservoir of underlying excitement" (p. 35). As stated earlier, these stressful experiences may well be motivating factors that lead to participation in leisure.

With regard to experience transformation, Berger (1963) stated that "... at least, within our own consciousness, the past is malleable and flexible, constantly changing as our recollection reinterprets and re-explains what has happened" (p. 57). He further suggested that people reconstruct past events or situations in accordance with what is important to them at the time of interpretation. Accessing people's immediately recalled interpretations permits an understanding of leisure experience in the context of actual leisure behavior.

From a methodological perspective, some possible reasons why this study captured some stressful or unpleasant characteristics of leisure experience are worth mentioning. The emergence of experiential characteristics reported in this study may be, as indicated earlier, due to the ability to measure immediately recalled experience through the SITRM. Upon request, participants could recall their experiences more accurately by virtue of their immediate analysis of what happened during leisure participation rather than relying on retrospection after an extended period of time. Participants may not have identified those feelings if they were only requested to recall their past leisure experiences after an extended period of time. Evidence of the advantage of measuring immediately recalled experience emerged during in-depth interviews. In describing the SITRM procedure, a participant expressed that:

In retrospect, I could be looking at it through a colored lens. . . I remember in my favorite activity that there were many times I was kind of nervous and unsure of myself, but it worked out really well, and I will tend to ignore those experiences because it basically turned out really well. . . So these are the kind of things I would just tend to forget because there are enough good events over that weekend that were worth remembering and keeping. So the discomfort, the emotional discomfort I may have experienced was not enough to impact on me that I would reverse it in memory.

An event-contingent approach also merits discussion. An obvious advantage lies in investigating the multi-dimensional nature of leisure experience by measuring the entire leisure event. Participants in this study were asked to recall their experiences immediately after participating in leisure. Therefore, participants could describe many characteristics of leisure involvement. If participants were asked to report their experience based on narrowly defined moments (i.e., when feeling in control and competent, when feeling enjoyment), then gaining access to the multi-dimensional nature of leisure experiences may not have been possible.

The application of the SITRM in this study demonstrated the effectiveness of collecting qualitative data on immediately recalled leisure experience. To date, ESM was the most frequently used method to collect the immediately recalled experiences of naturally occurring human behavior. However, most studies employing qualitative interviews have not assessed effectively people's subjective experience on an immediate basis. The effectiveness of using the SITRM in this study shows promise for

researchers who adopt an interpretive perspective and wish to collect data on naturally occurring human behavior.

Leisure is not a unitary concept, but is often composed of many characteristics. Therefore, an experience that is not always pleasant may be identified by individuals as leisure. The experience of leisure is transitory and complex and people's interpretation of leisure experiences change over time. Based on the findings of this study, researchers are cautioned when examining only pleasant aspects of leisure, and encouraged to consider the totality of the leisure experience. Further research is needed to clarify the complex and dynamic nature of leisure experience. In-depth examination of the interrelationship of each experiential aspect of leisure with many different types of recreation activities may increase understanding of this topic.

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