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ABSTRACT

A major premise in this inquiry was that leisure, as well as work, family, and self, is an accepted value in contemporary life and is periodically reassessed along with other traditionally held values by the individual. Another premise is that because leisure has such meaning in one's life it becomes a social influence from which one makes life choices in accordance with leisure-centered self-concepts. Data for the study were generated from a previous study examining the relationship between affinity toward leisure and selected variables associated with middle age. Respondents consisted of 745 adults between the ages of 30 and 57. Life satisfaction was measured by the Adams modified Life Satisfaction Index-A. In addition, respondents indicated the number of hours per week spent in leisure, the number of different leisure-related activities participated in weekly, and completed the Leisure Ethic Scale. Results are discussed in the light of the developmental and transitional stages of the subjects of the study. (JD)

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF LEISURE TO LIFE SATISFACTION DURING ADULTHOOD

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The notion of transitional points, stages, or phases during adulthood is well supported in the literature in the works of Charlotte Buhler, Carl Jung, and Erik Erikson. Patterns are noted among varied respondents in different studies that suggest transitional points and periods. Certain periods in adulthood tend to cause the individual to question traditionally held values. For example, a 45 year old career person sensing the need for a better balance between work and family, or an individual's oldest child marries and leaves the home, can stimulate the reassessment of one's home life.

That adults continue to develop throughout adulthood has gained wide acceptance. Developmental changes most often noted in the literature evolve from the individual's reassessment of traditionally held values in relationship to family, work, and self (Levinson, 1978, and Lowenthal et al., 1976). In addition, social influences and life events often call upon the individual to reassess previously made life choices and decisions (Knox, 1977). An adult's adequacy in achieving resolution during this assessment process can affect one's life satisfaction.

A major premise in this inquiry was that leisure, as well as work, family, and self, is an accepted value in contemporary life and is, therefore, reassessed along with the other traditionally held values by the individual. It is another premise in this inquiry that because leisure has such meaning in one's life (Neulinger, 1977) and facilitates personal development (Dumazadier, 1967), it becomes a social influence from which one makes life choices within what Roberts (1970) suggests is in accordance with leisure-centered self-concepts.

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Various aspects regarding leisure have increasingly been examined and add to accumulated empirical knowledges relative to leisure. Among the more researched have been leisure attitude, leisure pursuits, and time spent at leisure. Information identifying aspects of leisure which may have particular importance during specific adulthood stages has not been purposefully undertaken. The purpose of this inquiry was to identify preliminary data relating precisely to that need.

Procedures. In order to identify whether certain aspects regarding leisure (specifically leisure attitude, leisure pursuits, and time spent at leisure), contributed more to life satisfaction during specific adulthood stages, a statistical analysis of existing data was conducted. The data was that of the researcher's, generated from a previous study examining the relationship between affinity toward leisure and selected variables associated with middle age (Carpenter, 1980). The respondents consisted of seven hundred forty-five (80.1%) adults between the ages of 30 and 57. Of these, 40.3% were ages 30-40 (n=300), 41.2% were ages 41-50 (n=307), and 18.5% were 51-57 (n=138).

Life satisfaction was measured by the Adams (1969) modified Life Satisfaction Index-A (LSIA). In addition, respondents were asked to indicate the number of hours per week spent in leisure, the number of different leisure-related activities participated in weekly and to complete the Leisure Ethic Scale (LES) developed by Slivken (1978). Respondents, ages 30-57, were grouped into three age categories which coincided with Levinson et al. transitional periods or stages during middle adulthood. These categories were ages 30-40 (age thirty transition and settling down), 41-50 (mid-life transition and entering middle adulthood), and 51-57 (age 50 transition).

Data were analyzed using correlational techniques thus identifying the extent to which variations in one factor (variable of life satisfaction)

correlated with variables in one or more other factors (variables of average hours in leisure, number of leisure activities and leisure attitudes). In order to determine if differences noted between life satisfaction and other variables were statistically significant, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used.

Results and Conclusions. Multiple regression analysis revealed, and Table 1 illustrates, that there was a significant relationship between life satisfaction and the three leisure variables used, number of leisure activities, leisure attitude, and average hours in leisure. A significant relationship was also noted to exist with two other variables used in the original study, total household income and average hours spent working. Each was tested at the .05 level of significance. Analysis, again at the .05 level, verified significant relationships between life satisfaction and differing leisure variables by transitional periods or stages during middle adulthood. Table 2 depicts these findings. Average hours in leisure was the sole leisure variable of significance ($r^2 = .07744$) during ages 30-40. This period of a person's life is typically very busy establishing one's career or family pattern. Number of leisure pursuits ($r^2 = .06640$) and leisure attitude ($r^2 = .10129$) were found significant during ages 41-50. It is at this stage that the individual often experiences the most potent periods of reassessing traditionally held values of work, family and self. Balance in one's life is questioned and it appears leisure may take an important meaning. These preliminary data suggest one's positivity toward leisure increases as does one's number of leisure pursuits. And number of leisure activities ($r^2 = .10992$) was significant for ages 51-57. Here, a concern on having enough leisure options can emerge for an individual nearing retirement but fearing idleness or boredom.

TABLE 1
VARIABLES SIGNIFICANTLY RELATED TO
LIFE SATISFACTION DURING MIDDLE AGE
(n = 745)

Step	Variable	Significance	R-Square
1	Number of Leisure Activities	0	.04648
2	Total Household Income	.000	.06599
3	Leisure Attitude	.003	.07712
4	Average Hours in Leisure	.011	.08511
5	Average Hours Spent Working	.048	.08996

Significant at the .05 level.

TABLE 2
VARIABLES SIGNIFICANTLY RELATED TO
LIFE SATISFACTION BY AGE GROUPINGS

Age Group	Variable	Significance	R Square
Early-Middle (n=300)	Total Household Income	.000	.05286
	Average Hours in Leisure	.005	.07744
	Ethnic Background	.037	.09097
	Average Hours Spent Working	.028	.10566
Middle-Middle (n=307)	Number of Leisure Activities	.000	.06640
	Leisure Attitude	.001	.10129
Later-Middle (n=138)	Total Household Income	.001	.07807
	Number of Leisure Activities	.030	.10992

Significance at the .05 level.

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