

Exploring the leisure motivations of college students – The case of a junior college in southern Taiwan

Ming-Kuei Chien

Assistant Professor, Department of Leisure, Recreation and Tourism Management, Tzu Hui Institute of Technology

Abstract: *The objective of this study is to devise a leisure motivation scale that is suitable for local college students in Taiwan. The participants of this study were students recruited via purposive sampling from a junior college in southern Taiwan. 500 questionnaires were administered and 326 responses were recovered. There were 304 valid responses after omitting 32 invalid responses, indicating an effective response rate of 90%. The students' basic information was analyzed and converted into descriptive statistical data, and t-tests were performed to analyze the students' leisure motivations. The results indicated that the female students had a significantly higher mean score than their male counterparts with regard to the four dimensions of intellectual development, stress relief and relaxation, psychological well-being, and physiological well-being. The male students had a significantly higher mean score than their female counterparts with regard to the two dimensions of inducing escapism and social skills.*

Date of Submission: 01-11-2020

Date of Acceptance: 13-11-2020

I. Introduction

Research background and motivations

Iso-Ahola (1989) pointed out that leisure motivations drive an individual to engage in leisure behaviors. Leisure motivations consist of two dimensions – seeking and escaping. Kelly (1990) categorized leisure motivations as either intrinsic motivations or extrinsic motivations. The former refers to an individual's behaviors that are driven by their intrinsic psychological needs or desires in order to satisfy their inner self; the latter refers to an individual's attributes that manifest in response to external scenarios and stimuli, factors, or other people. Motivations are generally viewed as the intrinsic factors that drives an individual's behaviors in order to attain their own expected goals or conditions (Recours, Souville & Griffet, 2004). Leisure motivations change over time and throughout an individual's lifetime. Every individual has their own distinct leisure motivations, and one may also develop stereotypical perceptions toward leisure cultures when they are influenced by the social groups that they belong to.

Hung (2011) opined that university students are the most energetic population in society. Different experiences and environmental influences shape the distinct needs of every individual. Comparatively speaking, the approaches taken to seek a certain performance and attain satisfaction varies greatly across individuals. The study developed a model to describe the leisure motivations of university students, which comprised four dimensions – intellectual development, social skills, competency and proficiency, and inducing escapism. Wu (2015) empirically demonstrated that engaging in leisure activities can facilitate university students to pay attention to their physical health and acquire leisure benefits and incentives on the psychological level; in this manner, they were able to achieve the objectives of maintaining a work-life balance, enriching their lives, and enhancing their quality of life. The study categorized leisure motivations into four levels: intellectual, social, psychological, and relaxation. Guo, Liu, Lin, and Liu (2011) concurred that students engage in leisure activities as they not only want to kill time, but are also motivated by the actual benefits such of leisure such as improving their physiological health, psychological health (by relaxing, calming down, and engaging in compensatory behavior), and social health (by expanding their experiences in life, acquiring new knowledge, and developing their social skills).

The aforementioned studies have shown that the leisure motivations of college students vary and differ in response to environmental and regional differences. Therefore, there is a need to quantify these experiences. In short, the objectives of this study are as follows:

- (1) To understand the factors that influence the leisure motivations of college students;
- (2) To provide references for relevant entities to study and promote leisure activities to college students.

II. Research method

1. Research participants

The participants of this study were students from a junior college in southern Taiwan, who were recruited via purposive sampling. 500 questionnaires were administered to the students, and 336 responses were recovered. After removing 32 invalid responses, there were 304 valid responses, indicating an effective response rate of 90%.

2. Research content and research tools

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of two sections - one was the basic information of the students and the other entailed the scale items. The scales used in the studies of Hung (2011), Guo, Liu, Lin, and Liu (2011), Wu(2015), and Chung and Tseng (2015) served as a basis for developing the leisure motivation scale in this study. The participants' subjective responses to the questionnaire items were graded on a seven-point Likert scale, in which 1 represents "strongly disagree"; 2 represents "mostly disagree"; 3 represents "disagree"; 4 represents "neutral"; 5 represents "agree"; 6 represents "mostly agree"; and 7 represents "strongly agree." The scale covered the six dimensions of intellectual development, social skills, stress relief and relaxation, inducing escapism, psychological well-being, and physiological well-being.

3. Reliability analysis

The reliability of the scale is represented by its Cronbach's α , which was 0.927. This shows that the leisure motivation scale of this study had a good construct validity and a good internal consistency reliability. The data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability analysis table of leisure motivation

Dimensions	Cronbach's α
Intellectual development	0.905
Social skills	0.924
Stress relief and relaxation	0.908
Inducing escapism	0.925
Psychological well-being	0.913
Physiological well-being	0.918
Overall dimension	0.927

III. Research Results And Analysis

SPSS statistical software was used in this study to analyze the descriptive statistics of the sample. The Independent Samples T Test tool (a part of the Compare Means function) was used to analyze the gender differences in the students' leisure motivations.

1. Description of sample

The results of the 304 valid responses are presented in Table 2. In terms of gender, the number of female and male students was 188 (61.84%) and 116 (38.15%), respectively. In terms of grade, the number of Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, and Year 5 students was 20 (6.57%), 69(22.69%), 76(25.00%), 53(17.43%), and 86(28.28%), respectively.

Table 2. Basic information of the questionnaire

Item	Target	Number of samples	%
Gender	Female	188	61.81
	Male	116	38.15
Grade	Year 1	20	6.57
	Year 2	69	22.69
	Year 3	76	25.00
	Year 4	53	17.43
	Year 5	86	28.28
Total		304	100%

2. Analysis of gender differences between the students' leisure motivations

The gender differences in the junior college students' leisure motivations were analyzed by means of t-tests. The results, as presented in Table 3, indicate significant gender differences in relation to intellectual development, social skills, stress relief and relaxation, inducing escapism, psychological well-being, and physiological well-being. The mean scores of females were higher than those of males for intellectual development, stress relief and relaxation stress relief and relaxation; while the mean scores of males were higher than those of females in terms of inducing escapism and social skills.

Table 3. Analysis on the Differences of Students of Different Genders

Dimensions	Gender	Number	Average	T value	P value
Intellectual development	Female	188	5.4702	2.666	0.001
	Male	116	5.1698		
Social skills	Female	188	5.1698	2.848	0.000
	Male	116	5.4837		
Stress relief and relaxation	Female	188	5.3822	2.691	0.000
	Male	116	5.0919		
Inducing escapism	Female	188	4.9397	2.545	0.008
	Male	116	5.2863		
Psychological well-being	Female	188	5.0743	2.584	0.010
	Male	116	4.7167		
Physiological well-being	Female	188	5.1521	3.460	0.00
	Male	116	5.5361		

IV. Conclusions And Recommendations

The leisure motivation scale results of this study revealed that female students had significantly higher mean scores than male students with regard to the four dimensions of intellectual development (enhancing creativity, inducing imagination, learning about one’s surroundings, expanding one’s scope of knowledge, etc.); stress relief and relaxation (taking a break to relax, alleviating academic stress and anxiety, etc.); psychological well-being (perceiving a sense of accomplishment, maintaining good interpersonal relationships, finding joy through teamwork, etc.); and physiological well-being (mental and physical relaxation, calming down one’s emotions, engaging in compensatory behavior, etc.). This shows that most female students were able to utilize their free time to engage in normal leisure activities and sports, thereby attaining healthy physiological developments and alleviating stress. Male students, on the other hand, had significantly higher mean scores than their female counterparts with regard to the two dimensions of inducing escapism (seeking rest, escaping from the calamities of daily life, slowing down the pace of life, etc.) and social skills (gaining the respect of others, meeting new friends or different types of people, gaining a sense of belongingness, etc.). The male students’ responses indicate that their motivations for engaging in leisure activities are to induce escapism and strengthen their social skills. We postulate that these gender differences in leisure motivations are a result of time-related and individual differences, and will change throughout an individual’s lifetime. Every individual has their own distinct leisure motivations, and these distinct motivations result in differences in the leisure activities that one engages in or selects. University students display different levels of interest and engagement in different types of leisure activities (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). Therefore, college students who engage in leisure activities during their free time can achieve relaxation and strengthen their social skills, which could help improve their academic performance.

References

- [1] Iso-Ahola, S. E. (1989). Motivation for leisure. In E. L. Jackson, & T. L. Burton (Eds.). *Understanding leisure and recreation: Mapping the past, charting the future* (247-279).
- [2] Kelly, J. R. (1990). *Leisure* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- [3] Recours, R., Souville, M. & Griffet, J. (2004). Expressed motive for informal and club/association-based sports participation. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 36(1), 1-22.
- [4] Hung, S. C. (2011). Construction of Scale for Leisure Motivation of College Students. *Journal of Physical Education Fu Jen Catholic University*, (10), 27-44.
- [5] Wu, C. H. (2015). Study on Leisure Motivation, Leisure Participation and Happiness of Undergraduates in Ping-tung Region. *Journal of Sport and Recreation Management*, 12(4), 89-104.
- [6] Wu, M. T. (2009). A Typical Correlation Study on College Students’ Leisure Obstacles, Leisure Motivation and Leisure Satisfaction. *NCYU Physical Education, Health & Recreation Journal*, 8(1), 1-11.
- [7] Chung, C. W. & Tseng, T. T. (2015). A Study of the Relationship among Leisure Motivation, Leisure Constraints, Leisure Participation and Leisure Benefits for the New Immigrants. *Journal of Leisure and Recreation Industry Management*, 8(1), 1-22.
- [8] Guo, G. X., Liu, L. W., Lin, C. Y. & Liu, W. L. (2011). An Investigation on College Students’ Motivations for participation in Leisure Activities-The Example of the Students from the Aletheia University at Madou in Tainan, Taiwan. *Tai Zhong Xue Yuan Ti Yu*, (7), 37-56.
- [9] Crawford, D. W., & Godbey, G. (1987). Reconceptualizing barriers to family leisure. *Leisure Sciences*, 9(2), 119-127.

Ming-Kuei Chien. “Exploring the leisure motivations of college students – The case of a junior college in southern Taiwan.” *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)*, 22(11), 2020, pp. 48-50.