

The Role of Optimism As An Indicator of Overall Satisfaction With A Leisure Activity Package

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the overall satisfaction of a leisure activity package as a function of the participants' attitudes, participation rates, socio-economic characteristics and optimistic (or pessimistic) beliefs. Multiple Discriminant Analysis (MDA) was employed to distill which characteristics were most important in distinguishing members of one group from another. In order to employ discriminant analysis, comparison groups were designated based upon the respondents' attitudes towards 16 leisure activities. Based upon recent research, certain relevant socio-demographic discriminant variables were chosen to be included with optimistic/pessimistic beliefs and participation rates in the discriminant analysis.

The analyses of the study data suggested that the relative importance of a leisure activity is a statistically significant discriminant measure. In addition, when relative importance is combined with stated measures of leisure satisfaction, it indicated a practical utility as a discriminant measure for leisure activities.

This study provided an alternate perspective for studying the attitudes and behaviors of any general population and their complicated relationships with a package of leisure activities. First, the measurement of leisure attitudes appear to be too complex to be defined accurately in one dimension (one place and time). Second, although the relative importance of one leisure activity over another proved to be a good discriminator between the user and nonuser of a "formalized" leisure activity, it does not begin to define what other, (less well defined), leisure activities may be competing for the individual's resources. Last of all, this study underlined the need for the development of a satisfaction model that will allow the comparison of individual attitude profiles to larger, regional or national profiles of leisure activity use. The result of this study concluded that members' optimism has no effect at all on the number or selection of leisure activities that these individuals choose to interact socially. This result appears to be counter intuitive since one would assume that the most optimistic individuals would choose to interact socially more often in leisure settings.