

Divergent Experiences of Family Leisure: Fathers, Mothers, and Young Adolescents

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Mothers, fathers, and young adolescents in 55 European American families carried pagers for one week and reported on their experience at random times when signaled. All family members indicated high levels of freedom during family and home leisure activities, but they differed on other dimensions. Mothers reported less positive affect than fathers. Mothers' role of family caretaker may make it harder to enjoy family leisure, while fathers, whose family role is often defined as 'primary breadwinner', may find it easier to use this time for diversion and self-expression. Adolescents experienced lower intrinsic motivation and less positive affect than parents during family leisure. Adolescents have a larger, more rewarding arena of non-family leisure that may better serve their developmental needs.

KEYWORDS: *Family leisure, adolescents, women, men, experience*

Introduction

Family leisure is held in high esteem in North American society as an important and essential component of family life (Holman & Epperson, 1984; Orthner & Mancini, 1990). It is promoted in family magazines, on television programs, and by park and recreation programs as a means of improving family well-being (Shaw, 1992). Holman and Epperson (1984) conclude that "both families and professional family helpers see joint leisure time as an important element in promoting marital and family quality." (p. 285). Yet despite this high esteem, there is increasing research evidence that family leisure activities may not always be a positive experience for all family members. For mothers, family leisure is often inter-mixed with the role of caring for children and managing the home, which may compromise their experience of enjoyment and freedom (Henderson, 1990, 1991; Shaw, 1992). For children, the early adolescent age period is associated with increased conflict with family (Collins & Russell, 1991; Steinberg, 1981, 1987) and with less positive affect in daily interactions than is experienced at earlier or later age periods (Larson, Richards, Moneta, Holmbeck, & Duckett,

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1996). This suggests that early adolescence may be an age when children's family leisure is not a consistently positive experience.

This article provides systematic data on what mothers, fathers, and young adolescents actually experience during daily family and home leisure activities. We present findings from an experience sampling study in which family members provided repeated self-reports on their subjective states during their ordinary lives. For each member—mother, father, and young adolescent—we ask whether family and home leisure activities are associated with the subjective experiences, such as freedom, intrinsic motivation, and positive affect, that are typically identified in psychological conceptualizations of leisure (Kelly, 1996; Mannell, 1980; Samdahl, 1988). In order to provide an holistic view of each family member's experience, we evaluated family leisure in relationship to the rest of their daily activities.

Because we are interested in examining leisure in the context of day-to-day life, this article employs a broad definition of family leisure activities. This definition encompasses a range of daily activities that might contain the expressive functions of leisure, including eating, talking, watching television, and resting, as well as active leisure. We also include all occasions when these activities occur with family members *or* at home. This decision to include all home leisure activities, even in instances when other family members are not participating in the same activity, was based on a number of interrelated considerations. First, home and family are closely linked in the feelings of family members (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). Second, during daily interactions at home, the boundaries defining when a person is engaging in a leisure activity with someone are quite vague—family members often do different activities in close proximity to each other; they often may move in and out of interactions (Shaw, 1992), and frequently they do not agree when they are together (Larson & Richards, 1994). Lastly, occasions when all family members actually share the same activity are not a very frequent parts of daily life, especially when children enter adolescence (Holman & Epperson, 1984); situations in which family members are near but not sharing the same activity are more common.

Hypotheses

The core hypothesis of this study was that family and home leisure activities would be associated with differing experiences between mothers and fathers, and between parents and adolescents. The basis of this hypothesis is a recognition that the experience of family leisure is affected by differing family roles and life stages (Altergott & McCreedy, 1993; Freysinger, 1995). We also recognized that the experience of family leisure activities is affected by what happens in other parts of people's lives; and what happens in the rest of lives differs for fathers, mothers, and young adolescents (Larson & Richards, 1994).

Differences in family leisure were expected between fathers and mothers. The classic conception of leisure as a respite from a strenuous work life was largely based on the lives of men, thus we predicted that fathers' lives

would best fit this paradigm. The great majority of men in two parent families are employed full time, and, even when their wives are employed, they are usually defined by the family as the "primary breadwinner" (Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990). Because of their exertion of energy at their jobs, and this breadwinner role, fathers in most families feel entitled to take less responsibility for daily family and household maintenance tasks and use the family as a context of personal renewal and leisure (Ferree, 1988; Pleck, 1976; Repetti, 1989). Men are also more likely than women to view family leisure as an opportunity for attachment and affiliation with their children (Freysinger, 1995). Thus we hypothesized that family leisure for fathers would best fit the paradigm of leisure as relaxation, diversion, and an opportunity for self-expression and affiliation. We predicted that fathers would report high levels of freedom, intrinsic motivation, and positive affect during family and home leisure.

The organization of mothers' lives is more diverse than fathers. In the majority of two parent families women are now employed, either part-time or full-time. But irrespective of their employment status, most mothers are still viewed as holding primary responsibility for the day-to-day care of the children and family (Hochschild, 1989; Skolnick, 1991). As a result, the home and family sphere is less clearly a context of leisure for them than it is for fathers (Deem, 1982; Shaw, 1992). They spend much more of their home and family time engaged in housework and care for family members (Pleck, 1985; Thompson & Walker, 1989). Even during shared family leisure activities, mothers are more often called upon to put aside their own leisure interests and play effortful, instrumental roles (Freysinger, 1995; Shaw, 1992). Interview and diary studies suggest that they may experience more constraint and less enjoyment during family leisure, since they often put the needs of others before their own (Henderson, 1991; Shaw, 1992; Wearing & Wearing, 1988). Given these findings, the question has been raised whether the term "family leisure" is an oxymoron for women (Hunter & Whitson, 1991). In this study, we predicted that moment-to-moment experience sampling would confirm that mothers would feel less free, less intrinsically motivated, and experience less enjoyment than their husbands during family and home leisure.

The organization of young adolescents' daily lives is different than that of their parents. Adolescents' schoolwork, like their parents' jobs, is demanding and stressful. Unlike their parents, however, young adolescents have a great deal of free time to cultivate leisure involvements outside the family. School typically affords them a substantial amount of time for interaction with peers, and young adolescents have large amounts of time after school and on weekends for discretionary activities, many of them carried out away from home and apart from the family (Carnegie Corporation, 1992; Larson & Richards, 1991a; Medrich, Roizen, Rubin, & Buckley, 1982). Given this time with friends, family leisure may have a diminished role in young adolescents' lives. While the family and home are the primary context of parents' leisure activities (Horna, 1989), this is less true for young adoles-

cents (Holman & Epperson, 1984). Young adolescents often do spend a substantial amount of free time at home and with their families—because constraints on their mobility at this age keep them home (Hultsman, 1993; Jackson & Rucks, 1995)—but family and home leisure may be less psychologically central for adolescents than for their parents. The most salient segment of most adolescents' leisure is with their peers (Kelly, 1983; Kleiber & Rickards, 1985). In fact, in studies that have asked young adolescents to discuss their leisure preferences, activities with family are not even mentioned (McMeeking & Purkayastha, 1995; Smith, 1987).

Leisure may also have different functions for young adolescents than for their parents. One function is excitement. Young adolescents report boredom for one quarter of their waking hours—much more frequently than adults (Larson & Richards, 1991b)—and they may choose leisure activities to obtain what Hendry (1983) calls an "arousal jag" (p. 161). A second function of leisure for adolescents is to fulfill their changing developmental needs for social interactions and attachment to peers (Fine, Mortimer, & Roberts, 1990; Marsland, 1982; Smith, 1987). A third function is to address Erikson's developmental task of identity (Kleiber & Rickards, 1985; Willits & Willits, 1986). While this task is typically associated with later adolescence, in early adolescence youth may begin this process by using leisure to experiment with differing life styles (Hultsman, 1993). All three of these functions for leisure in early adolescence may be more difficult for youth to achieve with their parents because: 1) parents are at an age where the desire for excitement and sensation seeking is less (Zukerman, 1979); 2) parents cannot fulfill adolescents' need for acceptance by peers; and 3) parents often resist and discourage adolescents' attempts to exert individuality (Hauser, 1991).

A further issue that might compromise young adolescents' experience of family leisure is conflict with parents. Early adolescence is an age period when autonomy from parents is a central issue (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986) and conflict between children and parents often peaks (Steinberg, 1990). Kelly (1983) speculates that "conflicting needs for autonomy and acceptance may make familial leisure interactions less than harmonious during much of adolescence" (p. 62). All of these considerations led to a prediction that young adolescents would experience family and home leisure as more constrained, less intrinsically motivating, and less enjoyable than their parents.

In sum, we predicted that the differing conditions surrounding family and home leisure would dispose fathers, mothers, and young adolescents to differences in their subjective experience of it. In this paper we focus on three subjective elements of leisure that have often been discussed in the literature (Mannell, 1980; Samdahl, 1988, 1991; Shaw, 1985). First, we were concerned with the amount of choice versus constraint that mothers, fathers, and adolescents experience in family and home leisure activities—with the degree of freedom they felt. Second, we were concerned with the extent to which family members wish to be participating in the activity, a dimension which represents degree of intrinsic motivation. Third, we were concerned

with their affect, which is an indicator of the degree to which the experience is pleasurable and emotionally rewarding.

The specific hypotheses were:

#1: Fathers will experience greater freedom, intrinsic motivation, and positive affect during family and home leisure than mothers.

#2: Young adolescents will experience less freedom, intrinsic motivation, and positive affect during family and home leisure than their parents.

#3: These differences between fathers and mothers and between parents and young adolescents will also be evident for a narrowed definition of family leisure that includes only occasions when family members are participating together in the same activity.

#4: Differences in the experience of family leisure will be associated with differences in what family members experience in other domains of their daily lives. We expected that fathers will report less positive experiences and young adolescents will report more positive experiences apart from the family sphere.

In order to compare the experiences of differing family members, our focus in this study was upon two-parent families.

Methods

Sample

The sample consisted of 55 two-parent, European-American families from one working class and one middle class Chicago suburb. These families were recruited from a larger study of a random sample of young adolescents, carried out through the schools in the two communities (Larson & Richards, 1989). Families were recruited by a stratification procedure to provide equal representation by community and by child's gender and grade (5th-8th). The final sample represents 45% of the families initially asked to participate.

In each family the mother, father, and one child took part. The mean age of the mothers was 38 (range: 29-52); of the fathers was 39 (range 29-53); and of the young adolescents was 12 (range 10 to 14). All but four of the parents were in their first marriage. The median household size was four. Nearly all mothers (96%) had completed high school and 22% had completed college. All but one father had completed high school and 38% had completed college. Approximately equal numbers of mothers were employed full time (14), employed part time (22), and not employed (19).

Comparison of these families with two-parent families in the larger study of young adolescents indicated that the sample was representative of families in the two communities (Larson & Richards, 1994). It did not differ significantly from the families in the larger study in terms of parents' occupational status, fathers' education, mother's job satisfaction, and child's level of depression. However, mothers in the current sample reported significantly higher levels of education (96% vs 91% had completed high school) and children reported more positive mean affect (5.32 vs 5.15 on a scale from 1

to 7 with 7 representing the highest possible value; $SD = .76$). Given that these differences were small, we do not believe they had a major effect on the findings.

Procedures

The study employed the Experience Sampling Method (Larson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1983; Samdahl, 1988). Mothers, fathers, and their young adolescent children each carried a pager and a booklet of self-report forms for one week. Their instructions were to carry the pager with them at all times when they were awake and to fill out one report form each time the pager signaled. The self-report form asked for information about their activity and subjective states at the time of the signal. All family members received signals at the same time.

The objective of the procedure was to sample the daily experience of family members. One signal was sent at a random moment within each two-hour block between 7:30 AM and 3:30 PM and within every one and one half hour block between 3:30 PM and 9:30 PM. We specified this greater density of signals in the evening hours in order to obtain a more intensive sampling of family life. For one set of analyses below where we are concerned with showing family members' normative patterns of mood and time use across all of their experience (Figures 1-3), we have differentially weighted the daytime and evening self-reports to adjust for the differences in density. This weighting gives all hours of the time period from 7:30 AM to 9:30 PM equal representation.

Participants responded to the great majority of signals by filling out a self-report. We instructed participants to turn the pager off if they went to bed before 9:30 or planned to sleep beyond 7:30 AM. Excluding these occasions, they were eligible to have received 8,616 signals; and they responded to 7,073 of them by providing usable ESM reports. Mothers responded to a mean of 84% of the signals they were eligible to receive ($SD = 12.9$); fathers to a mean of 80% ($SD = 13.8$); young adolescents to a mean of 81% ($SD = 14.2$). For a subset of 36 participants whom we questioned closely about each signal, we determined that 6% of signals were missed due to the pagers' failure to receive the signal. This suggests that the sample, as a whole, responded to 86-90% of the signals. Data collected regarding when the participants turned the pager off or were "out of touch" indicated that the missed self-reports occurred across a broad range of activities and thus do not introduce a major bias into the analysis (Larson, 1989; Larson & Richards, 1994).

Measures

Activity contexts. At each ESM self-report, participants responded to open-ended questions asking what they were doing and where they were, as well as to a fixed response item asking whom they were with. Coding reliability for the open-ended items was 94% and 99%, respectively. Based on

response to these items, we first divided all reports according to whether a person was in the family sphere or in the public sphere. A person was defined as being in the family sphere if they were: a) at home, b) away from home but with at least one family member, or c) away from home and carrying out a household task for the family (e.g., grocery shopping). The public sphere includes all remaining reports; and we have subdivided these according to whether a person was at work or school versus in "other public" contexts (e.g., at a park or movie theater, in a car) (Larson, Richards & Perry-Jenkins, 1994). Within each of these three domains (family, work/school, other public) we have then divided the reports as to whether the person was engaged in an obligatory activity (e.g., work at a job, driving to work, housework, personal care) versus a discretionary or leisure activity. We defined the latter category broadly to include (non-work) conversation, eating, and daytime resting. For our analysis of family/home leisure, we looked separately at subjective experience for five inclusive sub-categories of family leisure: eating, resting, talking, media, and active recreation.

Subjective experience. Items on the ESM report form assessed each of the three subjective dimensions of leisure experience, using the same measures employed in a prior ESM study of leisure experience (Kleiber, Larson, & Csikszentmihalyi, 1986). The experience of *freedom* was obtained from participants' response to an item asking, "How much choice did you have about doing this activity?" Responses were made on a 10-point scale from "not at all" to "very". The experience of *intrinsic motivation* was obtained from an item asking, "Do you wish you had been doing something else?", to which responses were made on the same 10-point scale. For purposes of presentation, we have reversed values for this scale, so that high values indicate a wish to be in their current activity. The dimension of *affect* was derived from the sum of responses to three 7-point semantic differential items (happy-unhappy, cheerful-irritable, friendly-angry; $\alpha = .82$).

In order to make these three measures comparable across people, we standardized each scale within person. This was done by subtracting a person's mean for the scale from each raw value then dividing by the person's standard deviation. This transformation creates z-scores, for which each individual has the same mean and standard deviation ($mean = 0$, $SD = 1$), thus eliminating unwanted variance due to personality differences and response tendencies. It also has the advantage of allowing us to examine individuals' experience in a given context *relative* to the rest of their experience: a positive value indicates that they have rated it above the norm for the rest of their self-reports, a negative value indicates that it is below the norm.

Prior to conducting the primary analyses, we evaluated whether mothers', fathers', and young adolescents' mean z-scores for freedom, intrinsic motivation, and affect during leisure in the family sphere varied as a function of family size, parents' ages, adolescent's grade and sex, parents' level of education, and the SES ranking of parents' jobs. In total 81 correlations were computed and only four were significant. We found significant correlations between fathers' age and both mother's, $r(54) = .30$, $p = .03$, and adoles-

cent's, $r(54) = .30$, $p = .03$, average freedom during family leisure; and between mother's education level and mother's, $r(54) = .31$, $p = .02$, and adolescent's, $r(54) = .32$, $p = .02$ freedom during family leisure. Since 4 of 81 is not above chance levels, we felt that there was insufficient justification to consider these variables as moderators for the primary analyses.

Results

Subjective Experience During Family/Home Leisure Activities

Hypotheses #1 and #2 predicted differences between family members in the experience of home and family leisure activities. Tables 1 and 2 present the mean levels of freedom, intrinsic motivation, and affect reported by family members. In order to test the significance of the differences between these values, we employed multi-level regression (Goldstein, 1987) a procedure similar to hierarchical linear modeling developed by Byrk & Raudenbush (1992). This regression procedure uses the individual self-report as the unit of analysis but adjusts for differences in mean responses between individuals. It is well-suited to analyses of ESM data because it takes into account the nested structure of the data without sacrificing degrees of freedom (Larson et al., 1996; Moneta & Csikszentmihalyi, in press). To evaluate Hypothesis #1 and #2, in these regressions we evaluated dichotomous independent variables for two contrasts—fathers vs. mothers and parents vs. adolescents. Dummy variables for four of the five family leisure activities were also included as independent variables in order to control for the effect of activity. Freedom, intrinsic motivation, and affect were tested as dependent variables. The pool of data was all self-reports during leisure in the family/home sphere.

These analyses showed significant differences in family members' experience of family and home leisure for intrinsic motivation and affect but not for the experience of freedom (Table 1). For all family members the

TABLE 1
Family Members' Subjective Experience During Family and Home Leisure

	Father		Mother		Adolescent	
N. of Self-reports	632		887		849	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Freedom	.42	.78	.40	.87	.41	.81
Intrinsic Motivation	.09	.82	.11	.86	-.13***	.87
Affect	.17	.93	.07*	.98	.00**	.93

Note. Table displays mean z-scores for each family member. Significance figures are based on multilevel regression analyses and show the contrasts between mothers vs. fathers and parents vs. adolescents.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

mean z-scores for freedom were positive during family/home leisure, and these means did not differ between family members. For the other two subjective variables differences were significant. Consistent with Hypothesis #1, mothers reported significantly less positive affect than fathers during family/home leisure. Consistent with Hypothesis #2, young adolescents reported significantly lower intrinsic motivation and affect than their parents during family/home leisure. In fact, adolescents' mean value for intrinsic motivation was negative, indicating that their level was below the norm for the rest of their lives. Follow-up analyses indicated that young adolescents' affect during family/home leisure was significantly lower than the affect of their fathers, $\beta = .170$, $SE \beta = .050$, $p < .001$, $df = 1481$, but not their mothers, $\beta = .071$, $SE \beta = .047$, $n.s.$, $df = 1736$.

To more fully elucidate the differences, we recomputed the analyses within each activity, focusing only on intrinsic motivation and affect (Table 2). Findings reinforced what we had already seen. Fathers and mothers reported positive values for intrinsic motivation for all family leisure activities, with no significant differences between them. Young adolescents showed negative mean values for intrinsic motivation in four of the five activities, and these values were significantly different from their parents' for all four of these activities: eating, talking, media, and active recreation. Patterns for affect were similar. Fathers and mothers did not differ significantly in affect during these activities, although there was a close-to-significant difference for active recreation, with fathers reporting more positive affect. Young adolescents reported significantly less positive affect than their parents during eating, resting, and active recreation.

Shared Leisure Activities

Hypothesis #3 predicted that we would find the same differences between family members when we included only those occasions when all three family members were together and doing the same activity. This resulted in a much reduced pool of self reports ($N = 53$), which was not sufficiently large to allow use of multilevel regression nor to conduct separate analyses by activity category. Within this pool the most frequent activities were media (58%) and eating (30%). It should be noted that the mean subjective states that mothers, fathers, and young adolescents reported during these instances of shared family leisure did not differ significantly from the states that each member reported during other occasions of family/home leisure. In other words, the experience of shared family leisure was not any more positive than the experience of non-shared family/home leisure.

To evaluate whether family members differed between each other during shared family leisure activities, we conducted paired t-tests, first, between mothers' and fathers' subjective states during these occasions, and, second, between adolescents' and the mean of mothers' and fathers' subjective states. The findings were similar to those obtained when we considered a larger pool of family leisure, although the small sample size reduced statistical

TABLE 2
Family Members' Subjective Experience During Specific Family and Home Leisure Activities

	Father		Mother		Adolescent	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Eating						
N. of Self-reports	92		116		102	
Intrinsic Motivation	.25	.72	.12+	.78	-.12***	.82
Affect	.23	.96	.35	.86	.04*	.93
Resting						
N. of Self-reports	61		115		99	
Intrinsic Motivation	.06	.87	.20	.85	.05	.90
Affect	-.08	.97	-.09	1.04	-.42*	1.12
Talking						
N. of Self-reports	129		293		136	
Intrinsic Motivation	.11	.84	.06	.88	-.18**	.95
Affect	.28	1.00	.10	1.14	.07	.95
Media						
N. of Self-reports	284		288		356	
Intrinsic Motivation	.00	.83	.05	.88	-.17**	.86
Affect	.7	.85	-.06	.85	.05	.89
Active Recreation						
N. of Self-reports	70		83		160	
Intrinsic Motivation	.16	.77	.31	.76	-.08**	.80
Affect	.47	.91	.25+	.92	.10**	.84

Note. Table displays mean z-scores for each family member. Significance figures are based on multilevel regression analyses and show the contrasts between mothers vs. fathers and parents vs. adolescents: + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

power for detecting significant differences. The difference between mothers' and fathers' affect was consistent with the difference reported above, however, due to the smaller N , it was not significant. Young adolescents reported significantly less positive affect than their parents during these times ($z = .07$ vs. $.30$, $t(52) = 2.09$, $p = .04$). Adolescents' intrinsic motivation was also lower, though the difference was not significant ($z = -.01$ vs. $.20$, $t(52) = 1.45$, $p = .15$). No differences occurred for reported freedom.

Surprisingly, we also found that there was little correlation between the subjective states reported by family members during these occasions of shared family leisure. The correlations between mothers' and fathers' affect was $r(52) = -.04$, n.s., and between adolescents' and parents' mean affect was $r(52) = .20$, $p = .18$. All the correlations for freedom and intrinsic motivation had a negative sign, though none approached significance. This absence of significant correlations reinforces the thesis that family members have divergent experiences of family leisure.

Family and Home Leisure in Comparison to the Rest of Life

In order to examine the relationship between family/home leisure and other segments of daily life, we created graphs that show both the *quantity* and subjective *quality* of each family member's experience across daily domains. To do this, we focused on affect and looked at six inclusive domains: time in obligatory and discretionary activities in each of the three contexts of work/school, other public, and family. The widths of the bars in Figures 1-3 indicate the amount of time family members spent in each domain. These time estimates were determined by the percentage of self-reports for each family member in each domain—because the ESM signals occurred at random, the percentage of reports in each domain (with weighting to adjust for the greater density of signals during evening hours) provides an estimate of the amount of time family members spend in that context. The *heights* of the bars in Figures 1-3 show the mean z -score for affect reported by fathers, mothers, and young adolescents for each domain. In order to test Hypothesis #4 we evaluated whether the mean affect reported by family members in each domain differed from $z = 0.0$ using t -tests. In considering these findings, it is important to keep in mind that, within each family member, the heights of these different bars are interrelated. Since we are using z -scored values for affect that are normed around a mean of 0.0, the values for one domain of daily life are necessarily related (as a mirror image opposite) to the sum of what is experienced in other domains of their lives.

For fathers, positive affect during family/home leisure was balanced against below-average affect in other segments of their lives (Figure 1). Hypothesis #4 predicted that fathers would report less positive experience outside of family leisure, and this was the case. Their mean affect was significantly lower than average in obligatory activities at their jobs and obligatory activities in the 'other public' domain (which consisted mostly of driving to and from their jobs). Fathers did report positive affect during discretionary

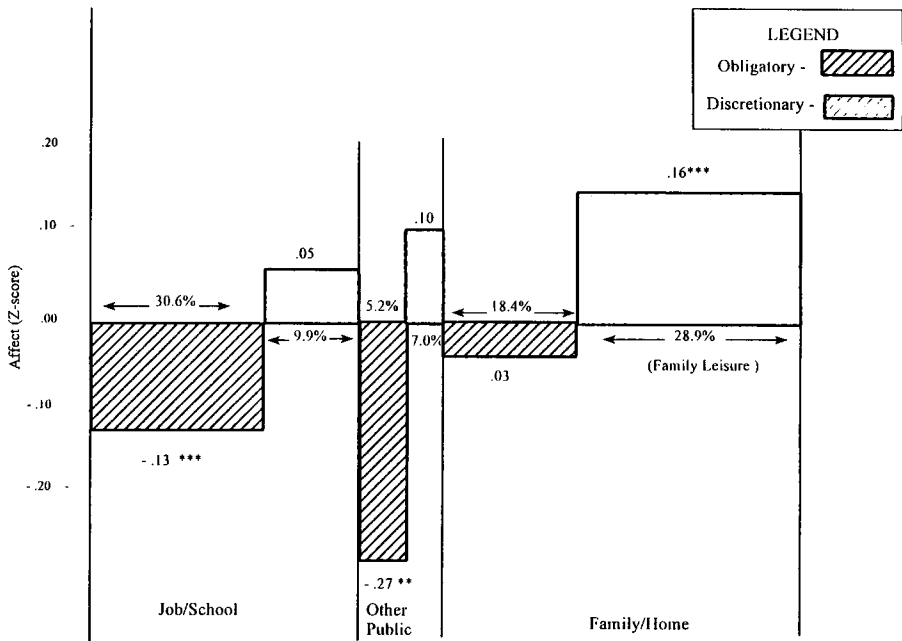


Figure 1. Fathers' affect across domains of their daily experience ($N = 2282$ weighted self-reports). Note. The width of the bars indicates the percentage of self-reports in each domain (the actual percentages are also reported in the figure). The height of the bars indicates average affect in each domain. Decimal numbers in the figure identify the height with asterisks indicating whether it significantly different from 0.0: * $p < .01$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

activities at their jobs and in public, but this affect was not significantly different from the mean of 0.0; plus the amount of time in these activities was comparatively small.

For mothers, the experience of family and home leisure was balanced against a differing pattern for the other parts of their lives. Mothers reported above average affect in all domains apart from the family/home sphere (Figure 2). In fact, unlike fathers, they were significantly happier than their average when working at a job. For mothers, the positive experience of family leisure is counterbalanced against their negative experience of obligatory activities in the family sphere, which consisted mainly of housework and child care.

For young adolescents, family and home leisure was not associated with distinctly positive affect. Part of the reason is that their affect in other parts of their lives was not substantially below their mean (Figure 3). Their affect during schoolwork was significantly, but modestly, more negative than their average. However, this lower affect was counterbalanced, not by family leisure, but by substantial quantities of time when they experienced favorable

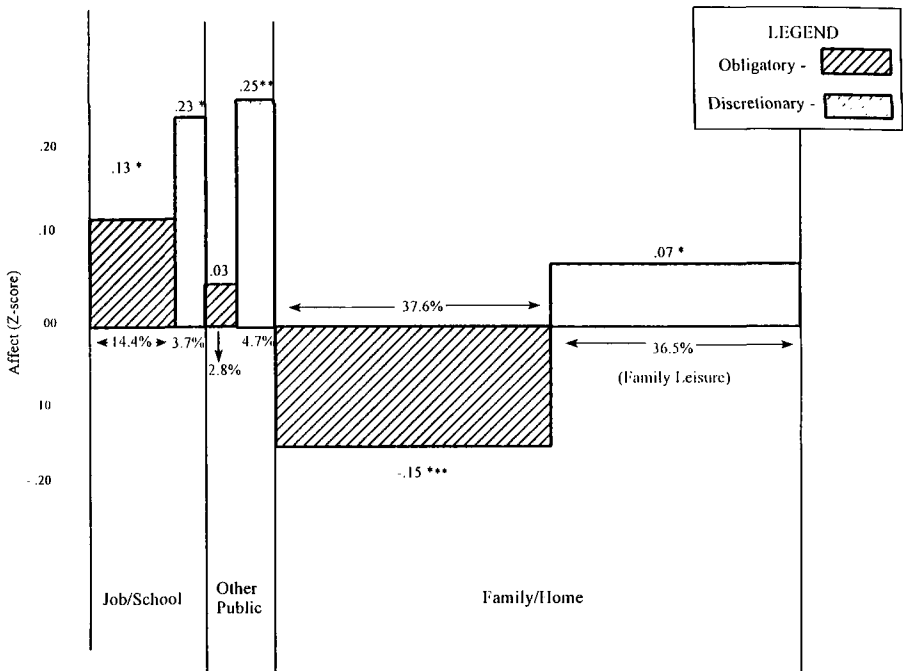


Figure 2. Mothers' affect across domains of their daily experience ($N = 2482$ weighted self-reports).

affect in discretionary activities at school and particularly in other public settings. Their affect during the 8.9% of their waking hours that they spent in discretionary activities in public was significantly and quite strongly positive. This confirms Hypothesis #4 that young adolescents experience more positive affect apart from the family sphere.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm the prediction that family and home leisure is often a different kind of subjective experience for fathers, mothers, and young adolescents. Mothers reported less positive affect than fathers, and young adolescents reported less positive affect and intrinsic motivation than their parents. The difference in affect between adolescents and their parents was significant even when we focused on shared leisure activities, despite limited statistical power for this test. Perhaps the most striking finding of the analyses was that, at a given moment during shared family leisure, there was no correlation between family members' subjective states. Though doing the same activity, fathers', mothers', and young adolescents' subjective experiences diverged.

Two examples elucidate how family members' experiences can differ. One of the ESM signals found a working class family eating lunch at a res-

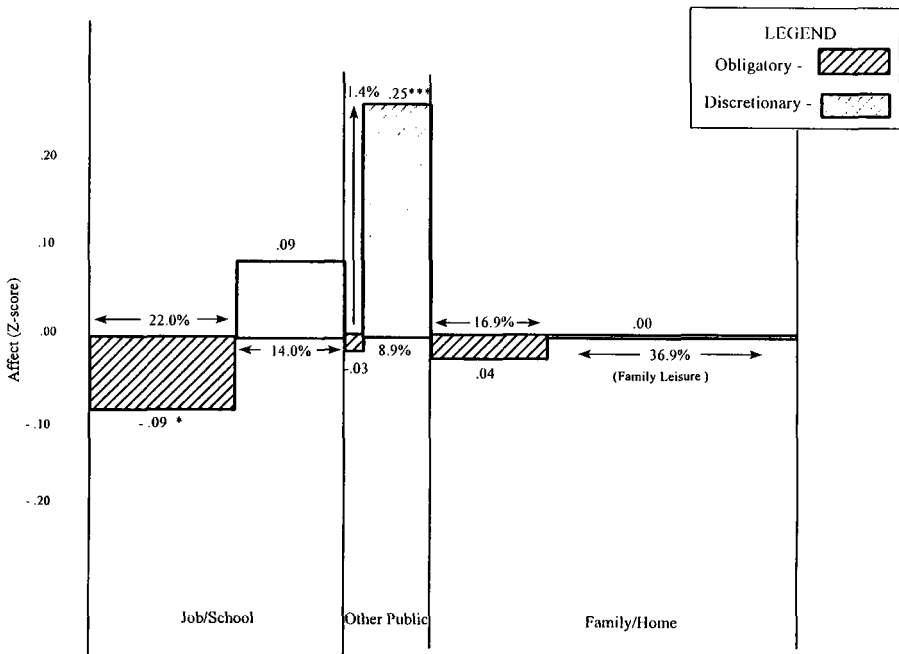


Figure 3. Young Adolescents' affect across domains of their daily experience ($N = 2346$ weighted self-reports).

restaurant. Their responses to open-ended items on the self-report form provided a fuller picture of the situation. The parents had pulled their 6th-grade daughter out of school for the day and were taking a break from what the mother described as a "shopping spree." At that moment, the father was talking about the upcoming smelt fishing season. Both the daughter and he identified him as "the leader"; and he reported extremely positive affect ($z = 1.20$). In short, he was waxing on a favorite pastime, was in command of his family, and, for him, this was a peak experience. We found this pattern—paternal self-expression and assumption of authority—to be quite frequent across many families (see also Larson & Richards, 1994), and it may partly explain why family leisure consistently yielded positive affect for the fathers in the study.

As she listened to her husband, this mother's affect at that moment was not as positive ($z = .34$). She was feeling the onset of an illness that would hit with force the next day, and she indicated feeling worried about her husband (they had a fight later in the day). More telling, perhaps is that fact that she was thinking about shopping—she may not have been able to fully relax and enjoy herself because she was concerned about the family's afternoon activities. Other research suggests that the responsibility mothers carry for family care and planning more often intrude and compromise their experience of family leisure (Hunter & Whitson, 1991; Shaw, 1992). Shaw

(1992) also found that mothers are often the person who organizes a family leisure activity and they often organize it around the needs of the children and husband rather than their own needs. These factors may explain our finding that the mothers in the study reported less positive average affect during family leisure than their husbands.

The 6th grade daughter in this family was pleased that her parents had pulled her out of school, nonetheless her affect was below average ($z = -.43$). She indicated that she felt tense towards her father and wrote that she was bored because "my dad was talking." While this was an opportunity for self-expression for her father, it was not for her. At an age where autonomy is beginning to become important, it was probably not a rewarding experience for her to listen to her dad carry on, nor would this be likely to fill her needs for excitement and affiliation. She had a much more positive leisure experience the next night when she slept over at a friend's house and the signals found her playing with Barbie dolls and talking about boys. Not all of this girl's family leisure was boring. On Sunday the family went for a walk in the nature preserve to see deer and all members, including her, reported a very positive experience. However, given the differing needs of young adolescents, it is not surprising that, on average, they reported lower intrinsic motivation and affect than their parents during family leisure.

A second example illustrates how conflict between young adolescents and parents may sometimes further compromise family leisure, particularly for adolescents and mothers. In this instance, another working class family was signalled in the middle of an evening card game, Skippo, which they were playing with several extended family members. The mother reported extremely negative affect because she was "disgusted" with the way her 8th grade son "always tries to be the center of attention and have his own way." The son reported being angry, partly because his parents want them to move to Oregon and partly because he had a fight with a close friend earlier in the day. Because mother's role of caregiver often puts her on the front line, research indicates greater conflict of young adolescents with mothers than with fathers (Collins & Russell, 1991), thus it is not surprising that the tension is between child and mother. At this same moment, the father indicated no awareness of his wife's and son's feelings and reported enjoyment and absorption in the game of Skippo.

The divergence in experiences between fathers, mothers, and young adolescents can be interpreted in terms of the roles each holds inside the family, as well as the relationship of family leisure to the rest of their lives. For fathers leisure at home and with family may yield peak affect because they experience less responsibility than mothers for immediate caretaking. Given their role of primary breadwinner, they feel a right to use this time for relaxation and self-expression (Ferree, 1988). Fathers experienced more negative affect at their jobs than did the employed mothers at theirs. We have also seen that fathers do not have a strongly rewarding leisure life apart from the family. For fathers, then, family leisure is the primary context that counterbalances their strenuous work life. In addition, fathers may find this

time pleasurable as their primary opportunity to experience affiliation and attachment to their families (Freysinger, 1995).

Mothers, in contrast, may find family leisure less pleasurable because they are less able to distance themselves from the role of caretaker and family manager. When they are in presence or the vicinity of other family members, they are likely to experience obligations to provide care (Freysinger & Flannery, 1992). Mothers' periods of leisure are shorter than fathers, because caretaking activities intrude (Larson & Richards, 1994). In order to have uninterrupted and uncompromised experiences of leisure, women often need to get away from their families (Freysinger, 1995; Samuel, 1992), and indeed we found that women had more consistently positive leisure experience during their non-family discretionary activities, even at their jobs. Our analyses indicate that this pattern is similar across mothers who are employed and not employed: for both groups, their most positive affect is reported when they are away from the family (Larson et al., 1994).

Likewise, young adolescents have a more pleasurable set of leisure experiences apart from the family—in "other public" settings with friends. When at home, and even when sharing leisure activities with their parents, young adolescents report significantly lower intrinsic motivation and less favorable affect than parents. This may be partly due to conflict in parent-child relationships, which has been found to peak during this age period; but it may also be due to the fact that for young adolescents life is elsewhere. Kleiber and Rickards (1985) argue that being with significant peers is often a "primary condition for satisfaction" among adolescents (p. 298). Peers provide a more suitable context than family for fulfilling age-appropriate needs for excitement, affiliation, and self-expression. One implication of these findings is that research that examines the prevalence of boredom and other subjective states during adolescent leisure (e.g., Caldwell, Smith, & Weissinger, 1992; Iso-Ahola & Crowley, 1991; Kleiber et al., 1986) needs to differentiate between family/home leisure and leisure with peers. These appear to be different species of leisure experience.

It is important to recognize that the young adolescents in this study were in the midst of a set of developmental changes that alter their patterns of daily family interaction and leisure experiences. The amount of time youth spend with their families and in family leisure falls off steadily from preadolescence through late adolescence (Hendry, 1983; Larson et al., 1996). This is attributable, at least in part, to the lessening with age of constraints that keep young adolescents at home (Hultsman, 1993; Larson et al., 1996). At the same time, however, as teens move into middle adolescence the affect experienced with family becomes more positive (Larson et al., 1996), suggesting that their more limited time in family leisure may improve after early adolescence. Current theory recognizes that adolescents do not simply disengage from family interactions. For most there is a process of renegotiation in middle adolescence that leads towards greater understanding and mutual enjoyment (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986). This may make for more positive

family and home leisure experience in middle and late adolescence than were evident in these early adolescent data.

It should also be recognized that findings from our sample of white, middle and working class two-parent families may not generalize to other, increasingly sizable, numbers of North American families. Adolescents' experience of leisure has been found to vary by gender, class, and ethnicity, as well as by intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural variables (Hendry, 1985; McMeeking & Purkayastha, 1995; Raymore, Godbey, & Crawford, 1994). Among Asian-American and Latino adolescents, for example, autonomy from family is less valued than for European-American adolescents (Cooper, Baker, Polichar & Welsh, 1993), which may create less divergence than we found between these adolescents and their parents. Several studies also suggest that patterns may be different in one parent families. While the amount of time spent in family leisure is not markedly different in one parent, mother-headed families (Altergott & McCreedy, 1993; Asmussen & Larson, 1991), the quality of family leisure experience may differ. Weiss (1979) found that single parent family systems often have less of the echelon structure of power typical in two-parent families. This may mean that leisure activities are more peer-like, leading to greater opportunities for enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984). We are engaging in new research to examine patterns for these other groups of families.

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that practitioners need to recognize differences between family members in what they bring to family and home leisure and their typical subjective experience of it. While it is common to promote family leisure as good for families and assume that more is better (Shaw, 1992), if some family members are experiencing lower affect and intrinsic motivation, this may not be the case. Recreational specialists may have a more beneficial effect on families promoting quality rather than quantity. We need to explore ways to make family leisure experiences as rewarding for mothers and adolescents as they are for fathers. This might involve finding ways to encourage obligations of care to be shared between mothers and fathers and for incorporating peer interaction with family leisure for adolescents.

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