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# Articles

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## Leisure as Multiphase Experiences: Challenging Traditions

William P. Stewart

Department of Leisure Studies, University of Illinois

### Introduction

More than three decades ago, Clawson and Knetsch (1966; Clawson, 1963) characterized five sequential phases of outdoor recreation. They succinctly discussed their seminal idea of an evolving recreation experience by arguing that these phases occur in sequence and are each necessary for an outdoor recreation trip: anticipation and planning, travel to the site, on-site activity, return travel from the site, and recollection of the trip. Although their work is widely known, has not been controversial, and has relevance beyond outdoor recreation (cf. Fridgen, 1984), *it has not been influential nor integrated into the study of leisure, recreation, or tourism*. Other than a supportive follow-up study by Hammitt (1980), their work has not visibly affected nor been thoroughly discussed by the leisure research community.

"Leisure as multiphase experiences" is a problematic label for this special issue. It explicitly refers to the Clawsonian model, but may signal a narrow view of content and implications. Notions of leisure as emerging states of mind, as a sequence of transactions between individuals and their environments, as personal stories with temporal and spatial qualities, and as a lived experience would not be freely associated with the Clawsonian model, yet they are compatible extensions of it. The phasic nature of experience is a structure aligned with Clawson and Knetsch's desire to develop an economic model for recreation demand. Their basic concept of an evolving state of mind, with or without formalized phases, is embedded within each of the papers herein. As an example, Hultsman (this issue) suggests that the experience of the first day of one's trip powerfully influences the experiences of subsequent days; although not adhering explicitly to the Clawsonian model, her findings fall within the boundaries of this special issue.

Although characterizing leisure as a state of mind is a truism with which few of us would argue, its unorthodox depiction is at the heart of leisure as multiphase experiences. Few of us have trouble conceiving a state of mind as mental activity and experiential phenomenon. The troubling part is conceiving a state of mind as something that can be captured in a single moment

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in time, as if the experience can be represented by a still-life photograph. There is a growing uneasiness regarding dominant research perspectives that still rely on concepts and methods depicting leisure experiences as something that individuals can easily frame, that endures through time, and whose essential qualities are captured in a single image. This special issue of "leisure as multiphase experiences" challenges some traditional thoughts and addresses leisure experiences as dynamic, emergent, and embedded within personal stories.

Along with a state of mind that evolves, the content of the leisure state is also a concern. As characterized by Mannell (1980; see also Tinsley & Tinsley, 1986) leisure involves a collection of positive experiences that are "accompanied by satisfying and pleasurable moods, emotions, and feelings" (p. 77). Likewise in her essay "One size doesn't fit all," Henderson (1996) argued that leisure experiences are diverse and associated with multiple meanings. Whereas the truism claims that leisure is a *state* of mind, an important distinction is that there are *states* of mind that encompass leisure. Within this special issue, a variety of states of mind are considered the experiential content of leisure, including: optimal experiences depicted as absorption-in-the-moment; several types of emotions; meanings associated with the challenges of leisure environments; and cognitions related to way-finding during leisure travel.

"Leisure" or "leisure experiences" are widely used terms whose meanings cover a wide-breadth of mentalistic states. Identifying relevant states and assessing whether individuals and their communities are improved due to these states of mind, have been important directions for the leisure research community. In contrast to the still-life photograph depiction, it is the dynamic and emergent qualities of leisure that are explicitly depicted as being contributory to (and important parameters in the assessment of) the improvement of individuals and their communities.

Although some strides have been made, research that addresses multiphase experiences is still growing and not widely understood. As indicated by the review comments in the papers submitted for this special issue, this area of research confronts commonly held philosophical, theoretical, and methodological beliefs within the leisure research community. The remainder of this introduction to the special issue identifies four specific disconnections between multiphase leisure and traditions of the literature, and in doing so, characterizes the challenges associated with "leisure as multiphase experiences."

### Challenges with Tradition

*Challenge #1. Leisure and recreation experiences are still predominately conceived as being dispositional, trait-like, consciously need-driven, determined by antecedent states, and/or enduring.* To be sure, there may be aspects of leisure that have trait-like qualities, however empirical research in the past few decades has generally assumed, rather than challenged, these prevailing conceptions.

The evidence that does exist, suggests that these can be problematic assumptions in need of qualification (e.g., Hammitt, 1980; Manfredi, 1984; Mannell & Kleiber, 1997; Samdahl, 1991). In varying degrees, each of the papers in this special issue characterize, and in some sense justify, the relevance of approaching leisure experiences as having dynamic and evolving qualities.

Even though the Clawsonian five-phase model is not a tight fit to any of the papers, it is viewed as a relevant point of departure for introducing other alternatives associated with multiphase leisure experiences. During the review process, a recurrent dialogue developed between reviewers and authors regarding a particular conception of evolving leisure experiences and its ability to adhere to a Clawsonian model. It became apparent that a five-phase model of recreation experiences was employed as a useful starting point rather than a final framework for application. In other words, the Clawsonian model is one of the few well-known points of reference in leisure literature that explicitly embraces temporal aspects of leisure as evolving states of mind, and when employed within the articles herein, functions as a springboard to other thoughts. There is clearly a dearth of research relating to the nature of an evolving leisure experience, and the discussions within this special issue underscore the need for development beyond the Clawsonian model.

The prevailing trait-like ideologies of leisure have functioned to suppress growth on research related to leisure process and context, and to promote research related to antecedent determinants and/or outcomes. In other words, a focus on the application of trait-like concepts has a longstanding acceptance, accommodation, and encouragement by the leisure literature. As an example, the general use of Driver's Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scales (Driver, Tinsley, & Manfredi, 1991) are unnecessarily tied to a framework that conceptualizes recreation experiences as being represented by motivations, and that individuals being driven to fulfill their motivations choose appropriate environments and social groups in which to recreate. As a cryptic depiction of this view, recreation endeavors are the fulfillment of one's antecedent motivations, which convert to outcomes and benefits in a post-trip phase. Thus, motivations lead to experiences which lead to psychological outcomes which lead to recreation benefits. Using aspects of reasoned-action or expectancy theory to frame research, the process of leisure experience is cast as irrelevant while the "product" or trait-like outcome of recreation becomes the desired target of study. To be sure, Driver's work provided a well-needed conceptual framework and set of methodological tools to complement the activity-based approaches (i.e., participation rates as being the important dependent variable) prevailing during the 1960s and 1970s. With some notable exceptions, the ensuing widespread use of the REP scales was more intent on inventorying experiential outcomes of recreation than understanding the processes by which these outcomes emerged. In doing so, the REP scales became a popular tool that reaffirmed the still-life photograph depiction of leisure experiences.

As an example of the insight that processual models can provide, Patterson, Watson, Williams, and Roggenbuck (this issue) contrast their "emergent experience" model with a motivational model. They focus on the meaning that recreationists create as being the enriching content of leisure experiences, and that these meanings become whole within the context of stories that people tell about themselves. They argue that a motivational model would have difficulties accounting for emergent leisure experiences, in that antecedent states are the start of a "linear sequence" that imposes a determining influence on outcomes.

The forced alignment of the REP scales with trait-like concepts illustrates a recurrent pattern associated with numerous other concepts borrowed from the social sciences and applied in leisure literature. Borrowed concepts, steeped in frameworks associated with both personal and social processes, are transformed in our literature by selecting aspects of these concepts that emphasize dispositional and trait-like qualities. Although the longstanding bias in leisure literature that guides research to trait-like and outcome-oriented concepts has produced an array of meaningful insights, it also has produced blinders to theoretical frameworks that deviate from its assumptions yet may enhance and liberate our understandings of leisure. In other words, multiphase leisure is inherently directed toward theories that account for personal and social processes, context dependencies, and situational responses and meanings. Although theoretical perspectives have been applied in the leisure literature, many have been adapted to screen-out processual issues and effectively reaffirm the still-life photograph depiction of leisure. In such cases, although the theoretical perspectives may have the same set of labels, their meanings would need reconsideration for application to leisure as multiphase experiences.

Patterson et al.'s (this issue) discussion of "freedom" provides an example of a traditional concept that has been revised to fit an emergent experience model. The review comments on an earlier version of the paper indicated some confusion or misunderstanding with their use of this term and called for further clarification. The final discussion of their paper was rewritten to account for such comments, and to further specify the usefulness of "situated freedom" to link aspects of the environment to human experiences. Their concept of "freedom" is different than its previous depictions within the leisure literature and addresses creative aspects of leisure in a new light.

*Challenge #2. Research methods that recognize leisure as a dynamic and evolving experience are necessarily innovative.* Although the 1990s are associated with a surge in the exploration and development of methods in the social sciences and humanities, the dominant method in leisure research has been one-time assessments, typically in the form of a mailback questionnaire (Riddick, DeShriver, & Weissinger, 1984, 1991). Most of the papers within this special issue have devoted an unusual amount of text to describe and explain their alternate methods. The need for explicit and clarifying technical detail generally accompanies the emergence of new techniques, such as the emergence

of qualitative leisure research in the past two decades (e.g., Howe, 1988; McCormick, 1996). Several of the review dialogues contained issues related to methodology, and in some of the cases, these methodological dialogues occupied substantial portions of the reviews. Two examples from the review process serve to illustrate the need for innovations in methods and potential misunderstandings that emerge due to departures from past techniques.

Survey response rates have been an issue close to the methodological heart of leisure literature (e.g., Gitelson, Kerstetter, & Guadagnolo, 1993; Kelly, Knapp, Simon, & Temperley, 1996). In their paper associated with travelers to Branson, Missouri, Vogt and Stewart (this issue) tracked potential visitors who requested information, and ultimately obtained pre-trip profiles, on-site diaries, and post-trip profiles, from a subset set of the population requesting information. The term "response rate" as generally used in our literature does not easily fit their research design, nor is it a parameter that succinctly depicts the effectiveness of their techniques. They found that many people who requested information did not make the trip to Branson, and thus were not eligible for their study. Yet non-travelers or people that canceled their trip are not non-respondents. Nor should non-travelers be considered "drop outs" contributing to a mortality rate, since such implies that the individuals abandoned their role as study participants rather than never being eligible to participate. With user "lists" being the common sampling frame in leisure research, problems emerge regarding the characterization of methods in which the majority of one's sampling frame does not qualify to be in the sample (i.e., they did not follow through with their travel and/or do not become "users"). As a result, traditional meanings of methodological terms may not adequately capture the intended meaning of the research parameter, and may be misunderstood by a readership unfamiliar with the problem.

Vogt and Stewart (this issue) also were in need of an analysis method that could address intra-subject differences, and effectively track the personal sequence of events and experiences, or stories, within their quantitative data set. With most leisure research employing one-time assessments, cross-sectional or correlational frameworks of analysis are the techniques known well by the research community. To account for these intra-subject differences (sometimes referred to as individual differences), analytical procedures were required to link the many repeated-measures associated with any given participant, along with the usual partitioning of between (or inter-) subject variation. Cross-sectional regression analyses would not be the best match for their dataset and research questions. Although multivariate statistical techniques accounting for "paired variance" are not unusual in the leisure literature, partitioning such variance in their analysis required a degree of innovation and adaptation of techniques.

From philosophical tenets to research design to statistical techniques, each of the papers of this special issue has extended the methodology of leisure research. The study of leisure as multiphase experiences both accommodates and invites a wide diversity of methodological perspectives. To em-

brace leisure as a multiphase experience is to introduce, adapt, and develop unorthodox methodology for leisure research.

*Challenge #3. Leisure research has a strong tradition of being detached from the context of leisure.* Although several lines of research are exceptions to this challenge, particularly since the introduction of the Experience Sampling Method to the leisure literature (e.g., Kleiber, Larson, & Csikszentmihalyi, 1986; see also Mannell, in press, for his review of "the anatomy of the leisure experience"), it is not unusual for research to overlook the lived leisure experience. If the depiction of leisure is an enduring still-life photograph, the assessment does not need to occur while the photographic image is in the making, but could wait until some future time. Hence, a large portion of empirically-based leisure research has collected data outside of relevant leisure contexts, and within environments and time frames that are neither the leisure environment nor leisure time frame being studied. In other words, a curious disconnection exists with a literature aimed at understanding leisure, yet brimming with studies that purposefully have avoided studying people at leisure.

In contrast, if the depiction of leisure is a lived experience with temporal and spatial qualities, then assessments need to be sensitive to evolving situational contexts and embedded experiences and meanings. To recognize that an individual's leisure experiences emerge from interactions with situational contexts, is to recognize a personal story. The stories are lived and re-told; both the living and the telling are relevant targets for research, yet neither has a strong tradition of appreciation within the leisure literature. In different ways, each of the papers within this special issue moves in the direction of being sensitive to situational contexts of leisure, and in doing so, provides grist to understand leisure as a lived experience.

Embedding research within a leisure context forces researchers to both "trace" temporal and spatial qualities of leisure experiences, and in some sense, to develop an explanation or capture a story to address such variability. Through various qualitative and quantitative methodological perspectives, the papers of this special issue explain and interpret temporal/spatial variability in leisure experiences. These explanatory and/or interpretive frameworks are close to the conceptual heart of leisure literature, as was exhibited in the review discussions of the Walker, Hull, & Roggenbuck (this issue) paper. In their search for relationships between on-site optimal experiences and off-site benefits, an earlier version of their manuscript suggested that optimal experiences were passive endeavors in that participants "obtained" or "received" such experiences. In questioning distinctions between recreation benefits and optimal experiences, reviewers felt that although benefits could be "received," optimal experiences are "produced" or "achieved," which indicates that individuals engage in the self-creation of leisure experiences. In other words, conceptualizing the process by which leisure states of mind emerge became a critical point within the review dialogue of the Walker, Hull, & Roggenbuck (this issue) paper.

As another example of issues associated with a research frame embedded in the context of leisure, McIntyre and Roggenbuck (this issue) are

explicit in addressing both the lived and re-told experience. In an earlier version of the paper, reviewers were concerned about the authors' "inserting their own (presumed) meanings onto the experiences" of participants. Within the final version, a "personal accounts" section was developed that reflects the importance of representing participants' leisure meanings in both the living and the re-telling of the experience. As a consequence, other aspects of their final paper focused on the creation of meanings within the contexts of leisure experiences, and its positive influence on the conscious reflection of personal values.

*Challenge #4. Leisure research has emphasized managerial applications, relegating other conceptualizations of leisure to secondary status.* There are at least two points of concern regarding the potential of multiphase leisure research to be associated with managerial relevance: (1) Multiphase leisure research designs are not driven by an explicit managerial framework. They are directed at understanding a comparatively whole experience, and provide insight within a user-based, rather than managerial-based, context. (2) Multiphase leisure research designs are associated with a comparatively small number of participants, due to a need to gather more information on each study participant. In some sense, the entirety of recreation experiences represented by one participant could be considered a distinct population from which to sample (e.g., if 50 participants were in the study, then there would be 50 populations of lived experiences to sample; see Samdahl, 1989). With a felt need to represent user populations, the comparatively small sample size of multiphase leisure studies may be considered a threat to generalizing to user populations. These two concerns are discussed in turn.

In the name of managerial relevance, research designs purposefully decontextualize leisure experiences, allegedly standardizing them for aggregation and comparison, and providing a seemingly seamless link between study participants and managerial frameworks. Research that emphasizes managerial or "controllable" factors is easy to justify due to professional needs for applicability and relevance to practice. But this emphasis may be a double-edged sword, and in some cases, may be problematic in the quest for managerial relevance. We know well our managerial frameworks and their points of contact with users' leisure experiences. These points of contact represent discrete elements of leisure, which by themselves, are small windows to frame leisure. However, the size of the window is often obscured due to the flurry of attention within the frame of the managerial window.

As result of viewing leisure through artificially small windows, concerns emerge regarding the extent to which points of contact between users' experience and managerial frames provide truths. The standards of quality in research often are related to judgments on the usefulness of the data to practitioners rather than parameters related to its validity in representing leisure experience. By embracing such standards, the research problem becomes a technical one of building a better research design (that improves upon the reflection of a practitioner framework) rather than a problem of understanding the whole of leisure (and subsequently shaping practitioner frameworks to fit elements of the whole). In short, leisure and its impact on

individuals and communities are often staged as targets of study; however these targets may become compromised due to strong undercurrents that question the ability to provide practitioner-relevant information when the research itself is not premised upon, and anchored in, a practitioner context.

As an example of practitioner-relevant information, longstanding managerial questions in leisure research have been associated with linkages between leisure settings and user experiences. Each of the papers within this issue provides detail regarding linkages between user experiences and environmental factors, several of which are associated with managerial relevance. In differing ways, each of these studies have traced comparatively whole leisure experiences, and in doing so, have provided insight to situational effects.

Regarding the second concern, meaningful managerial implications are still possible with small sample sizes that lack random selection. As argued by Havitz and Sell (1991), generalizing to descriptive parameters of one's population is different than generalizing to theoretical constructs. The descriptive generalizability question has taken primacy for decades in the form of scrutiny and pressure for high response rates, random sampling, large sample sizes, inclusion of users across all seasons, weekend/weekday users, and exhaustive coverage of locations or programs. To be sure, external validity issues are important and worthy of attention. However the descriptive generalizability questions are completely distinct from questions associated with the development of general or transferable principles, insight to conceptual relationships, and ability to infer theoretical constructs (Cook & Campbell, 1979, Ch. 2; Havitz & Sell, 1991). Although managers may need to know the proportion of users who are male/female, would pay a higher price for admission, or were satisfied with an exhibit, managers also need insight regarding *conceptual relationships*, say, between gender, willingness-to-pay, and/or satisfaction and aspects of the experience or environment. The ability to explain conceptual relationships is less a concern for descriptive generalizability and more of a concern for construct validity. In such cases, methods are scrutinized less for user inclusiveness and more for theoretical relevance. Each of the papers within this special issue contain practitioner-relevant insight that has not been garnered through previous studies, yet none of the five papers stress descriptive representativeness nor are they premised on managerial frameworks.

Reviewers challenged McIntyre and Roggenbuck (this issue) regarding their statements that general patterns of experience could be transferable elsewhere. A reviewer was concerned about whether they could generalize any specific pattern of experience to other locations. However the authors argued the theoretical relevance of their sample and methods, and speculated on the transferability that recreationists' emotions gradually acclimate to recreation environments, and that meanings of lived and re-told outdoor adventure experiences "reflect commonly held cultural values about wild natural environments."



### Concluding Comments

Taken separately, the above four challenges are not necessarily unique to the path of multiphase leisure. Other directions for leisure research, particularly those that embrace constructionist or critical theory orientations, share some of these disconnections. However as a package, this set of challenges is unique to multiphase leisure. These challenges indicate a need to reconsider concepts and methods premised upon leisure as an enduring still-life photograph. Such a reconsideration would entail both a re-framing of some generic research objectives associated with leisure, and attention to the coherence between research objectives, concepts, and methods.

Opening-up some of the review discussions within this essay by identifying specific dialogues between authors and reviewers was meant to underscore the challenges of multiphase leisure. Making some pieces of the review process public was done in the spirit of explaining these challenges. Each paper of this special issue addresses these challenges differently, and in doing so, are part of on-going dialogues regarding some core issues confronting the leisure research community.

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