Journal of Leisure Research
2005, Vol. 37, No. 1, pp. 1-28

Articles

Gender-Based Analyses of Coping with Stress among Professional Managers: Leisure Coping and Non-Leisure Coping

Yoshi Iwasaki, Ph.D., Kelly MacKay, Ph.D., and Jennifer Mactavish, Ph.D.
University of Manitoba

Despite the growth of leisure and stress-coping research, gender-based analyses of leisure stress-coping have been performed rarely. The purpose of the present study was to examine how female and male managers cope with stress, using data collected from a series of focus groups. The focus group questions were designed to elicit information about the range of methods these individuals used to cope with stress and the contribution of leisure (generally and leisure travel in particular) to this process. The results demonstrated that female and male managers rely on a broad range of coping methods—including leisure specific strategies—as life-survival techniques. Although sharing a number of common stress-coping themes (e.g., socialization through leisure, deflecting stress-inducing thoughts through leisure, feeling rejuvenated through leisure, leisure as personal space, humour/laughter, spiritual coping, altruistic leisure coping, leisure travel), there also were themes unique to female managers (e.g., preventative role of leisure/exercise) and male managers (e.g., playing hard in leisure). These unique gender-based variations in stress-coping appear to be linked to differences in life circumstances and stressors women and men face in work, domestic, and leisure domains, and the gendered nature of women's and men's life experiences.

KEYWORDS: *Gender, leisure, stress, coping, health, managers.*

Stress is evident in every domain of contemporary life—work, family, home, and even leisure (McBride-King & Bachmann, 1999; Shields, 2003). Juggling diverse demands in these areas on a daily basis leaves many people *stressed-out* (Aneshensel, 1986; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999; Hochschild, 1989), which has a substantial impact on health and life quality (Avison & Gotlib, 1994; Crandall & Perrewe, 1995; Hobfoll, 1998). To deal with stress,

Address correspondence to: Yoshi Iwasaki, 102 Frank Kennedy Centre, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation Studies, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R3T 2N2. Email: iwasakiy@ms.umanitoba.ca

Author note: Yoshi Iwasaki, Kelly MacKay, and Jennifer Mactavish are in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation Studies, Health, Leisure & Human Performance Research Institute at the University of Manitoba.

This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), Research Development Initiative (RDI) Grants.

people consciously and unconsciously use various methods of coping (Gottlieb, 1997) as essential life-survival techniques (Lazarus, 1999).

Since stress and coping are considered key determinants of health and life quality (Zeidner & Endler, 1996), stress-coping research has important theoretical and practical implications (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000a). Examining the ways in which people cope with stress in their lives can help facilitate understanding of the processes and mechanisms by which coping strategies counteract the negative impact of stress on health and well-being (Somerfield & McCrae, 2000). This knowledge could also be useful in the development of effective health-related policies and programs to prevent stress-induced illnesses, reduce health service costs, and promote population health (Folkman & Greer, 2000).

Despite the growth of stress and coping research (Somerfield & McCrae, 2000), gender-based analyses in this area are limited. Davidson and Fielden (1999) and Greenglass (1995) argued that stress research has focused primarily on men. The current conceptualization of stress is based almost entirely on the normative perspectives of men, and existing measures of stress have been criticized as male-oriented, which may undermine their usefulness for assessing stress in women's lives (e.g., Bell & Lee, 2002; Zalaquett & Wood, 1997, 1998). For example, the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS, Holmes & Rahe, 1967) and second generation scales, such as the Life Events Survey and the PERI Life Events Scale, which are popular in life-event approaches to stress research, have been criticized for their gender and cultural biases because "most were developed decades ago with all-male samples in particular occupational groups such as the US Navy and US college students" (Bell & Lee, 2002, p. 190). Furthermore, the *Handbook of Coping: Theory, Research, Applications* (Zeidner & Endler, 1996) and a special issue of *American Psychologist* on stress and coping research (Somerfield & McCrae, 2000), two landmark publications in this area, did not address the importance of gender and culture.

While attention to the role of gender in stress coping has been limited, what is known suggests that women's methods of coping may not be exactly the same as men's. For example, women and men may cope with stress in different ways partly because women and men tend to encounter different sources or causes of stress. Unlike most employed fathers who primarily take the breadwinner role (Davidson & Fielden, 1999; Schwartz, 1994), employed mothers, especially those with small children, often juggle multiple roles and responsibilities (home, work, care-giving, etc.), which may result in unique stress experiences and/or methods of coping (Powell, 1999; Statistics Canada, 2003). According to the 2001 Canadian Census (Statistics Canada, 2003), women continue to do most of the household work, with approximately 21% of Canadian women reporting 30 or more hours of housework in the week prior to the census. Only eight percent of their male counterparts reported the same level of involvement. This division of labour has remained virtually unchanged since 1996 (Statistics Canada, 2003).

Furthermore, it has been shown that psychosocial aspects of gender, such as gender roles, influence the ways women and men cope with stress

(e.g., Gianakos, 2000, 2002). There is also a need to recognize issues of inequality, discrimination, and sexism to understand the gendered nature of women's lives, as opposed to men's lives (Ghorayski, 2002). Thus, gender, as a socially constructed notion (Anderson, 1997; Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, & Freysinger, 1996), appears likely to play a key role in explaining ways in which people cope with stress in their daily lives. Examining gender-based variations in stress-coping, therefore, may offer important insights for developing health policies and programs that address the needs of women and men (Fielden & Davidson, 2001).

Paralleling Anderson's (1997) conceptualization, gender is defined, for the purpose of the present paper, as:

> The socially learned behaviors and expectations that are associated with the two sexes. Thus, whereas "maleness" and "femaleness" are biological facts, becoming a woman or a man is a cultural process. Like race and class, gender is a social category that establishes, in large measure, our life chances and directs our social relations with others. (p. 31)

In occupational settings, "Different working experiences between women and men are not inevitable, but reproduce social structural forces which tend to sort people into different working roles based on their sex" (Brooker & Eakin, 2001, p. 98). Thus, "Women often perform different roles [than men] even within the same occupational grouping. This underscores the social structural nature of gendered working lives" (Brooker & Eakin, 2001, p. 98). It is, however, important to give attention to both issues facing men and masculinity, as well as issues facing women and femininity in gender-based analyses (McKay, Messner, & Sabo, 2000). For example, there may be the costs of masculinity (e.g., lack of health care interests such as preventive health among men) in addition to the rewards of masculinity (Young & White, 2000).

In the present paper, the focus is on the stress-coping methods used by female and male managers. Included in this discussion is the contribution of leisure in general and leisure travel as a specific means of coping with stress, and other non-leisure coping methods (e.g., direct-action problem-focused coping). The effects of leisure travel on stress-coping are not well documented. As such, the rationale for its inclusion in this study was based on the popularity of vacations and their potential as a unique environment in which people seek to reduce stress.

Gender and Stress-Coping

Although gender has not been a primary focus of inquiry in stress and coping research, researchers have increasingly given greater attention to the role that gender may play in explaining the use of coping methods. For example, Ptacek, Smith, and Dodge (1994) proposed that gender differences in coping strategies could arise from early socialization that promotes stereotypes of women as emotional, supportive, and dependent, compared to men who are portrayed as independent, instrumental, and rational. Evidence, however, shows that females tend to use behavioral coping (e.g., tak-

ing direct and positive actions to deal with problems) more actively than males (Fielden & Davidson, 2001). Similarly, Gianakos (2000, 2002) found that women were more likely than men to use direct action coping to deal with stress by working longer and harder. Gianakos (2000) also noted that working women might utilize coping skills such as active planning and time management to juggle work and family responsibilities effectively. She suggested that this result might be explained by the idea that employed women must work harder to survive in careers, particularly when their professions are male-dominated.

Differences in women's and men's perceptions of control, influence, and power over life may be another aspect responsible for gender variations in stress-coping. According to Phillips-Miller, Campbell, and Morrison (2000):

> Women tend to have less control over resources for coping with job stress, less influence on their work environments and their male colleagues, and less power in marital relationships to bring about a more equitable distribution of child care and household responsibilities. (p. 17)

This perspective is supported by findings reported by Apostal and Helland (1993), Duxbury and Higgins (1991), and Steil and Weltman (1992). It also has been suggested that lower perceived control, influence, and power in home and work domains may limit the range of effective coping strategies available to women and increase role overload and depression (Greenberger & O'Neil, 1993). Supporting this contention, Davidson and Fielden (1999) noted that "in comparison to men, women tend to report significantly poorer mental health, characterized by low self-esteem, increased self-doubt, and self-blame" (p. 425).

Other possible gender-based variations in stress coping may be related to the unique stressors women encounter in the workplace and at home. Discrimination and prejudice (e.g., career blocks, sexual harassment) and being viewed as "tokens" in non-traditional jobs (e.g., male-dominated organizational structures and climates, gender stereotyping) are examples of stressors that are unique, typically, to employed women (Davidson & Fielden, 1999). At home, women tend to have the primary responsibility for attending to the needs of others and care-taking (e.g., children, aging parents, partners), which often takes precedence over their own needs. Men, conversely, appear to have the expected privilege or option of not taking on such responsibilities (Gilligan, 1982; Henderson, et al., 1996; Wearing, 1998).

These differing expectations placed on women and men illustrate the socially constructed nature of gender and a male dominated hierarchy of status (Anderson, 1997; Ghorayski, 2002). The privileged position of men appears evident in a number of social arenas including employment settings, wealth and income, (Connell, 1995), and even leisure settings (Henderson et al., 1996). The rewards of masculinity, however, also have costs (e.g., lack of interest in preventive health among men) (Young & White, 2000). As Kimmel (1995) noted, "Most of the leading causes of death among men are

the results of men's behaviors. . . Masculinity is one of the more significant risk factors associated with men's illness" (p. vii).

Leisure and Stress-Coping

The notion that leisure may act as a means of coping with stress is not a recent idea in the leisure research literature (Caldwell & Smith, 1988; Weissinger & Iso-Ahola, 1984). Extending Coleman and Iso-Ahola's (1993) leisure and health model, Iwasaki and Mannell (2000) developed *hierarchical dimensions of leisure stress-coping* in which various dimensions and sub-dimensions of leisure coping were identified at different levels. At the most general level, they distinguished between *leisure coping beliefs* and *leisure coping strategies.* Leisure coping beliefs refer to enduring dispositional coping styles generated from engagement in leisure, whereas leisure coping strategies represent situation-specific coping behaviors and cognitions available through leisure pursuits. At more specific levels, for example, leisure empowerment is a sub-dimension of leisure coping beliefs, whereas leisure palliative coping is a sub-dimension of leisure coping strategies. In the first of these sub-dimensions, leisure is presented as an opportunity for promoting feelings of empowerment and developing resources for coping effectively with stress. Individuals with high leisure empowerment tend to have positive attitudes toward life, irrespective of negative happenings and undesirable circumstances in their lives (Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000).

Leisure palliative coping is a form of a time-out from stressful everyday lives. It allows individuals under stress to feel refreshed and gain renewed energy and perspective, and to help them regroup to handle stressors. Similarly, Kleiber (1999) has suggested that leisure provides an opportunity to restore the disruption of people's normal life patterns when they experience negative life events. This idea of palliative coping through leisure is consistent with Folkman and Moskowitz's (2000a) proposition that meaningful positive events such as leisure can act as *breathers* from stress, *sustainers* of coping effort, and *restorers.*

Another important theoretical development includes recent propositions by Kleiber, Hutchinson, and Williams (2002) that "leisure is a resource for the self-protective effects of emotion-focused and problem-focused coping, and that such experience may be the foundation for adjustment and personal growth following a negative life event" (p. 225). Specifically, Kleiber et al. proposed four major functions of leisure in transcending negative life events—two of them deal with leisure as a self-protective coping device, while the other two functions consider leisure a means of adjusting to negative life events. The first two self-protective functions deal with the role of leisure in buffering the impact of negative life events, by being distracting or generating hope, while adjustment functions focus on leisure in restoring or reconstructing one's valued self that is continuous with the past, as well as in transforming oneself to grow through finding new opportunities and perspectives and through realizing a new self. For example, in the wake of neg-

ative life events (even traumatic events), leisure (especially, new types of leisure activity for individuals) may help people find new meanings and directions in life.

Leisure Sciences published a special issue on leisure, stress, and coping, which included a diverse collection of papers on this topic. For example, Kimball and Freysinger (2003) reported on collegiate sport as both a means of stress coping (by providing contexts for self-determination and social support) and a source of stress (due to lack of self-determination and social support). They also revealed that race, gender, and social class played an important role in shaping collegiate athletes' experiences of stress. In particular, social inequality and gender stereotypes/hegemonic masculinity were identified as key themes. Klitzing (2003) demonstrated that women who were homeless and lived in a transitional shelter faced numerous, ongoing difficulties. She also showed that these women, either consciously or unconsciously, used various stress-coping strategies such as being with others (found as a primary strategy), engaging in diversionary leisure to relax, problem-solving, being alone, religiosity and positive thinking, and physical activities.

Leisure travel and stress-coping. The notion of vacations "to get away from it all" and "to relax and/or rest" is a common and popular idea, supported by a wealth of seminal research in motivation for leisure travel (Crompton, 1979; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Iso-Ahola, 1983; Dann, 1977; Dann, 1981). Research on the precise relationship of leisure travel to stress coping, however, is not well developed. Studies on vacations as a means of physical and psychological stress recovery (Schmidhauser, 1989) have primarily focused on the socio-psychological concepts of intrinsic motivation (Crompton, 1979; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Iso-Ahola, 1983) or *push* factors (Dann, 1977; Dann, 1981). Push factors involve restoration and regeneration that only can be fulfilled by travel and getting away from it all. Travel has been linked with efforts to fulfill what is lacking, yet desired (Mansfeld, 1992).

Iso-Ahola (1989) proposed a concise theoretical model to explain leisure and tourism motivation. In this model, the psychological benefits from leisure travel stem from the dialectical relationship between escaping routine and stressful situations (personal and interpersonal environments), and seeking (personal and interpersonal) intrinsic rewards. The motivational mechanism for tourism is likely to be triggered more by the escape motivation, which is suggested in recent trends toward more frequent and shorter vacations (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1998). Iso-Ahola's (1982; 1983; 1989) research indicates that tourist motives are stimulated primarily by escape needs (e.g. from stress, escape from familiar surroundings) for most people under most conditions. Consequently, people may learn to desire vacations for escape purposes and come to think of these vacations as essential to their psychological well-being. Additionally, people engage in leisure travel to escape both over-stimulating and under-stimulating life situations as a means of achieving and maintaining optimal levels of arousal (Iso-Ahola, 1983). Therefore, the present study included an examination of the role of leisure

travel in coping with or reducing stress, in addition to the contribution of leisure in general to stress-coping.

Methods

Grounded in a qualitative framework, focus groups were employed to explore female and male managers' views and meanings about the methods of stress-coping they used. Focus groups are an effective method for obtaining in-depth information about a concept or issue and leaning about people's experiences (Madriz, 2000; Krueger, 1994; Krueger & Casey, 2000). Instead of being directed by predetermined hypotheses or controlled by existing measures, focus groups enable participants to express themselves, in their own words, in an open and flexible process. In addition, this method has been advocated as particularly useful in offering a social context for meaning-making, which may more readily allow for gender-based analysis (Madriz, 2000). These attributes and their consistency with the objectives of the research led to the selection of focus groups as the method of choice in the present research.

As an analytical framework, phenomenology was adopted in this study. A phenomenological perspective focuses on "what people experience and how they interpret the world" (Patton, 1990, p. 70). Also, Schutz (1970) suggested that phenomenology focuses on the ways in which members of society experience everyday lives and "how the social world is made meaningful" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000, p. 489). In the present exploratory study, the focus was on describing and interpreting the meanings of stress-coping strategies used by female and male managers, and variations in these meanings that might be attributed to gender. While we understand that people's experiences of stress-coping cannot be reduced to gender alone, in this particular study we focus on this axis of people's identities.

Participants

Purposive criterion sampling was used to identify participants who were professionals with managerial positions in business, government, or non-government organizations in a western Canadian city. The criteria for selection included: (a) individuals were responsible for making decisions that affect the direction of their business or organization on a regular basis and (b) individuals had to score 3, 4, or 5 on at least three of four questions that addressed the level of stress in their work, family, personal, and overall life situations using a five-point scale (1 = *not stressful at all* to 5 = *extremely stressful*). The first criterion verified that each individual held a managerial position, whereas the second criterion ensured that they generally felt stressed in their lives. A research assistant called potential participants to: (a) describe the purpose of the study, (b) ensure the individual met the participant criteria, (c) explain the participant's role in the research, and (d) inquire about interest in being involved in the study. Attention also was

paid to ensuring that both women and men were recruited to participate. Thirty-six individuals who met the above criteria and agreed to participate were recruited for three focus groups: (a) women only group (12 women), (b) men only group (12 men), and (c) mixed gender group (6 women and 6 men).[1] These individuals received a confirmation letter and a reminder call to confirm the date, time, and location of each focus group.

Participants ranged in age from 25 to 78 (average = 45.4). Half of the participants completed a university degree. All but one of the participants were employed full-time (35 hours/week or more). With the exception of one person (African Canadian), all of the participants were Caucasians. Most of the participants had at least one child at home. Occupations of the participants included general managers, president/CEOs, business owners, sales managers, accounting and financial representatives, and self-employed workers. Ranges of yearly household income were: $20,001-$40,000 (N=5), $40,001-$60,000 (N=7), $60,001-$80,000 (N=5), $80,001-$100,000 (N=7), $100,001 + (N=6). All male managers were married, while marital statues of female managers were varied (i.e., 6 married, 4 divorced or separated, 3 single, and 1 common-law).

Focus Group Procedures

Each focus group session took place at the focus group facility of a local research firm. An experienced professional moderator facilitated all of the focus groups. The research team leader contacted the moderator to plan for the focus groups and to make sure that the moderator clearly understood the purpose and nature of the study. The moderator followed a focus group questioning route (Krueger & Casey, 2000) developed by the research team and guided by the research objectives. The questioning route outlined opening comments about the topic of stress, introductory questions to engage the participants in the topic, transition questions related to evaluations of stress, key questions on the causes of stress and coping strategies, and ending questions to summarize the discussions and confirm main points (see Table 1). At each stage of questioning, the moderator allowed sufficient time for all the participants to share their views. In this paper the focus is exclusively

[1]All twelve of the prospective participants in the women only and men only groups came to the scheduled focus group session. Ten individuals were then randomly chosen from each group to participate in the focus group session. This approach was taken as it is generally recommended that ten participants is the optimal for effective focus group sessions (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Of the twelve individuals recruited for the mixed gender group, only ten were able to attend; thus, all of them participated in the focus group session. Three different focus groups (i.e., female only, male only, & mixed) were conducted since (a) gender was a key consideration in our analyses, and (b) the power of group dynamics was likely to operate depending on whether people were in the same sex group or in the mixed group. It was expected that these group dynamics would help generate both a breadth and depth of information about coping with stress.

TABLE 1
Outline of Focus Group Questioning Route and Protocol

Opening Comments

- Welcome and statements regarding the purpose of the study, focus group procedures, and ethical issues.

Opening Question

- Please tell us a little bit about yourself.

Introductory Question

- Stress is prevalent in our everyday lives because many people feel stressed. In thinking about your daily life, what does stress mean to you?

Transition Questions

- Is stress a negative factor in your life? If so explain how it is negative.
- Is stress a positive factor in your life? If so in what ways it is positive.

  Sub-probe: What is it about stress that makes it good or bad?

Key Questions

- What are the things that contribute to stress in your life?

  Sub-probe: (a) How does this work, does one thing contribute to stress more than others or does the combination of many things contribute to stress? (b) Do you have any particular health concerns that contribute to your feelings of stress? Can you tell us more about this? (c) Besides possible health concerns, is there anything else that adds to your feelings of stress? (d) Does being a manager contribute to your feelings of stress? If so describe how.

- What are the ways or strategies that you use to help you deal with stress in your daily life?

  Sub-probe: (a) How would you describe your typical way of coping with stress in your life? (b) What role, if any, does leisure play in helping you deal with stress? (c) Would your thoughts change if you were thinking about vacations and/or holidays (alone and/or with other people)?

Ending Questions

- All things considered, what would you say is the major cause of stress in your life?
- Of all the ways of dealing with stress that we've talked about tonight, which have you found to be most useful or effective in your life?
- Is there anything about stress and coping that we haven't talked about that you would like to raise before we leave tonight?

on the methods of stress-coping—as such, a broader conceptualization of stress and its contributing factors is beyond the present scope.[2]

[2]Stress aspects of the study findings have been reported elsewhere (Iwasaki, MacKay, & Ristock, 2004). Specifically, its focus was on (a) the meanings women and men attach to their experiences of stress in their lives, (b) the ways women and men perceive their experiences of stress as negative and/or positive, and (c) the major sources or causes of stress in their lives. Overall, the findings suggested that gender played an important role in influencing how female and male managers experienced stress in their lives.

At the conclusion of each focus group, the participants completed an exit questionnaire to provide socio-demographic background information. They were thanked for their time and contribution to the focus group and each given a $100 honorarium. Each focus group lasted approximately 90 minutes as planned. The research assistant transcribed verbatim the conversations of the focus groups, which were audio-recorded. For the mixed gender group, the voices of female managers were noted as (f), and the voices of male managers were identified as (m) in the transcriptions.

Data Analysis Procedure

Phenomenological data analysis, which consisted of a series of steps, was conducted. The first step requires researchers to set aside their preconceived ideas about the phenomenon under investigation (i.e., stress-coping) to concentrate on gaining understanding that is based on the study participants' voices—this process is called *epoche* or *bracketing* (Husserl, 1970; Moustakas, 1994). "Epoche requires that looking precede judgment and that judgment of what is 'real' or 'most real' be suspended until all the evidence (or at least sufficient evidence) is in" (Ihde, 1977, p. 36). "As such, epoche is an ongoing analytical process rather than a single fixed event" (Patton, 1990, p. 408). Specifically, epoche or bracketing was accomplished throughout the analysis process by carefully and non-judgmentally deriving information from the data on hand rather than being directed by pre-existing assumptions.

During the second step of the analysis, the principal researcher (i.e., the first author of this paper) and another researcher (i.e., the second author of the paper) individually identified statements, separately for women and men, about coping with stress, and listed every significant statement relevant to the phenomenon (i.e., "horizonalization" of the data). Each statement was treated as having equal value (Moustakas, 1994). In the third step, these statements were clustered into themes or meaning units, separately for women and men, by removing repetitive and overlapping statements (Creswell, 1998). These meaning units were formulated by reflectively reading and re-reading the full transcripts to ensure that the significant statements were consistent with the original context. The researchers individually engaged in this process to assess whether anything was not accounted for in the clusters of common themes, and to ensure that the proposed clusters did not include interpretations that exceeded the original context of the data (Riemen, 1986). This process resulted in a refinement of the theme clusters, which were then referred back to the original descriptions for further validation.

The principal researcher (one of the two researchers involved in the process described above) carefully reviewed the common theme clusters and summary statements that were individually developed in the previous steps. Consistencies between the two researchers' analyses were retained as overall themes. The principal researcher dealt with divergent analytical aspects by either incorporating some of them into similar themes, or identifying the others as new themes. As a result of this process, the principal researcher

constructed an overall and integrated description of the essences (or "essentials") of the phenomenon, separately for women and men. This synthesis contained the "bones" of the phenomenon (Patton, 1990).

As a final check on the analyses, a third researcher (i.e., the third author of this paper), who is an expert in qualitative research methods, critically reviewed the analysis process and results. All three researchers then communicated to confirm that the analysis was appropriately carried out and that the results were consistent with and accurately reflected the focus group data. Finally, the participants were sent a summary of the analyses for their assessment. Those participants who returned their evaluation forms (eighteen, 60 %, of the 30 participants) unanimously verified that the descriptions were consistent with the views they expressed during the focus groups and their perspectives on stress-coping.

Results and Discussion

The focus group data yielded a number of stress-coping strategies that were common to both women and men, while others were unique to one informant group or the other. In this section, common themes are presented first, with a discussion of the gender-specific themes to follow.

Stress-Coping Methods Common for Female and Male Managers

Nine common themes emerged from interpretation of the focus group data: (a) socialization through leisure and leisure-generated social support, (b) deflecting stress-inducing thoughts through leisure, (c) feeling rejuvenated through leisure, (d) leisure as personal space, (e) humour and laughter, (f) spiritual coping, (g) altruistic leisure coping, (h) leisure travel: a *special* or *novel* form of leisure, and (i) problem-focused coping.

Socialization through leisure and leisure-generated social support. One of the common stress-coping themes involved socializing through leisure and developing a network of social support through interactions in this context. For example, spending time with their families and friends was an important way of coping with stress for male managers. This included talking to their spouse, being with friends (e.g., "dining out with friends"), and spending time with their children or grandchildren. One male manager noted: "I have a wife who's prepared to listen to me and have the courage. I spend time with hobbies with friends who are not in my line of work. That's critical." Another man indicated, "Skiing, roller blading, hanging around the house, we read, bounce the basketball—I really like spending time with my children."

Having a network of friends and family with whom to talk, socialize, and have fun also had stress-coping benefits for female managers. As one woman noted, "You use different strategies and part of that is a good network of friends and colleagues." Another emphasized, "The leisure activities that actually reduce stress the most are the ones I do with other people." Likewise,

yet another woman pointed out, "Just talk about it with friends or co-workers. I think that's a big stress release." In addition, instrumental aspects of social support were raised by women—"talking to friends, and trying to find someone else perhaps who's been through the situations, that can give you some advice."

These findings are consistent with discussions of "leisure companionship" and "leisure friendship" in the leisure research literature (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993; Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000). Social aspects of leisure and leisure-related social support were found to be key stress-coping methods in most of the papers included in a recent special issue of *Leisure Sciences* on leisure, stress, and coping (Hutchinson, Loy, Kleiber, & Dattilo, 2003; Kimball & Freysinger, 2003; Klitzing, 2003; Loy, Dattilo, & Kleiber, 2003; Schuster, Hammitt, & Moore, 2003).

Deflecting stress-inducing thoughts through leisure engagement. Female and male managers shared the view that engaging in leisure provided a positive, alternative focus to help deflect thinking about stress in their lives. In describing this notion, a female manager noted, "I like things to keep my mind occupied. In the summer I like to garden—anything that keeps my mind off of work. Same with reading, you're consumed." The idea of leisure as a useful means for diverting thoughts about stress, was linked by some participants to the social benefits of leisure. One woman suggested, "Getting together with friends, going out, going to movies, a lounge after work. It takes your mind off things, you're talking, you're having fun with people." Similarly, one man noted, "Roller blade, bike ride, snowboarding . . . skateboarding, games on the computer, like puzzle games. Definitely sets your mind somewhere else, you don't even think about it [stress]." Another man suggested, "With the dog running, you get excited, it is in fact a stress relief, because I don't think about anything else when I'm doing it. My mind just goes blank."

This theme is in line with *leisure palliative coping* (a form of a time-out from stressful everyday lives) (Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000) and the self-protective function of leisure (the role of leisure in buffering against the negative impact of stress by being distracting or generating hope) (Kleiber et al., 2002). This finding is also consistent with studies by Hutchinson et al. (2003) and Iwasaki, Mannell, Smale, and Butcher (2002).

Feeling rejuvenated through leisure. Female and male managers valued the importance of leisure as a means of getting re-charged or feeling rejuvenated. In speaking of leisure travel, one woman noted, "I get recharged when we go away three times a year to one of the resorts," while another woman suggested that playing golf "always rejuvenates" her. Likewise, one man considered getting "re-charged" as a major motivation for his "get-away trips." These findings are consistent with another aspect of leisure palliative coping (Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000) in which leisure provides opportunities for getting renewed perspective and energy and feeling refreshed.

It is, however, important to point out that female participants placed a stronger emphasis on leisure for self-rejuvenation, perhaps as a means of

compensating for the cumulative effects of juggling a wider rage of stressors/demands than their male counterparts. One female manager described,

> I try to take at least one holiday a year because I really have to get away from work and other responsibilities. Just get away for a couple of weeks. . . I come back and I feel like a new person because I caught up on six months of sleep deprivation.

Stress caused by juggling family/home demands and work responsibilities appears greater for employed females than for their male counterparts (Jamieson, 1998; Statistics Canada, 2003). Also, employed women tend to experience female-specific work stressors such as: discrimination and prejudice, male-dominated organizational structures and climates, and gender stereotyping (Davidson & Fielden, 1999). Because of these female-specific stress-inducing factors in both family/home and work, feeling re-charged or rejuvenated through leisure might have more significant meaning for female managers to compensate for these cumulative effects than for their male counterparts. Self-rejuvenation through leisure for male managers, on the other hand, appears to have different motivation (perhaps, focusing primarily on the act of leisure itself) than compensating for cumulative stress.

Another related aspect of leisure described only among female managers was that "playing hooky" in their leisure time helped them cope with stress. One female admitted,

> I went out and I just blew the whole day. I went shopping, got a manicure, and you know what? I was so much more productive the next few days, because I just couldn't deal with it. Sometimes you have to allow yourself to play hooky.

Similarly, another female talked about the same idea in her golf games—"I'm usually playing hooky when I do it and there's something about playing hooky that just feels so good." The use of the term "playing hooky" to enable rejuvenation through leisure suggests that these women may not feel entitled to the time off for leisure, for themselves. This terminology was not used by men.

Leisure as personal space. Another theme common to female and male managers was the importance of having time and space for themselves in leisure, regardless of the type of activity. One man mentioned doing "something for myself—For me it was just spending some time with my friends, or could be doing nothing or reading a book—It's just relaxing." Another man described:

> The role of leisure is very important for me, but I would treat leisure as something I do individually or on my own. In the fall, it's going hunting for birds. I'll go by myself and I'll walk for miles in the bush and that to me is leisure time. Golfing with my son or with a group of guys, it's still fun, but it isn't the leisure. Personally, if I really want to have leisure time, I prefer to be alone.

Female managers also emphasized the importance of creating leisure time and space for themselves. One woman noted, "Taking more time for myself. Just more 'me' time," while another woman described, "I do a combination

of things, I meditate, I take breaks. I do all kinds of things. But most of all I try to take care of me first." Other comments by women on this topic included:

> Keeping myself on the list. If I take myself off the list, I get really stressed. As long as I can fit in time for myself, I can usually cope pretty well.
>
> You're doing something you really enjoy, whether it's walking, going to movies, going to a comedy club or whatever, the fact that you're going out to do something really pleasurable for yourself.
>
> It [leisure] is for me and just doing what I want and ignoring my family gives me a sense of escape from everything.

This evidence supports the notion of leisure as personal space (Henderson et al., 1996; Rojek, 1995). For example, from poststructuralist perspectives, Wearing (1998) has suggested that leisure means "personal spaces, physical and metaphorical, where women can explore their own desires and pleasures and perform acts" that go beyond cultural stereotypes. Leisure as personal space can be used for women to challenge and resist dominant male definitions and control, as well as to "rewrite a sense of self-worth and subjectivity which honours, rather than devalues, their femininity" (Wearing, 1998, p. 151). She also noted the relevance of this idea to men—there is a need for men to have "time out for themselves" (p. 156) from their everyday demands.

It is, however, important to emphasize that there were gender-based variations in the way women and men attached meaning to their experiences in the context of leisure as personal space (and deflecting or diverting thoughts about stress through leisure, in some way). First, female managers explicated a direct connection between their leisure involvement and positive affect, while male managers did not. Specifically, playing a piano and doing exercise (e.g., walking, working out at a gym) helped some women feel good. One female manager described, "I play the piano. That's my moment. It feels pretty good," while another woman suggested, "When I exercise regularly, I feel so much less stress. . . It's amazing it's the thing that makes you feel the best."

It appeared that, in talking about leisure as personal space or as a way of diverting attention from their stressors or worries, male participants tended to focus on the *process* or actual act of leisure as a mechanism for escaping or dealing with feelings of stress (e.g., "my mind goes blank," "I don't even think about it"). Women, on the other hand, seemed more *outcome*-focused, specifically, feeling better as a consequence of their leisure engagements.

Another gender-based variation in this context was linked to differences in motivation for creating leisure as personal space. Many women agreed that leisure activities were a way to do something for themselves since they, as women, are "always giving" and busy taking care of other people. One woman summarized this point:

> I think we, as women especially, are always giving. If it's not to your spouses or your partners or your children or your family, you really forget about yourself. Yes, it can be sitting in a room full of candles reading a great book, listening to some great music, having a glass of wine, to going out and doing things of activity of others or yourself. But it has to be, in my opinion, self-serving.

Male managers also implied the importance of "keeping themselves on the list." However, they typically talked about leisure time and space as a reward. Illustrating this point, one man stated,

> I try to make sure that I reward myself everyday. Whether it's a personal pat on the back, or drive out and grabbing a cappuccino, or doing something for myself. I say, "Hey, you're valuable, you're worthwhile and keep your head up!"

These findings illustrate the gendered nature of people's lives where women and men may have different motivation for stress-coping through leisure since women and men tend to encounter unique life circumstances and stressors, and to have unique psychosocial and behavioral orientations (Young & White, 2000; Wearing, 1998).

Humour/laughter. Humour or laughter was another stress-coping method shared by the female and male managers. As one woman explained, Tthe way I handle it [stress] is with humour. I love to laugh at myself and the other people around me," while another woman described, "Laughter. It's incredible. When you can laugh instead of cry, it makes all the difference." Other participants indicated:

> Humour. I use it on all my friends and clients, whatever, they quite love it and they do the same for me. You put it [stress] in a role or a context and their reaction is priceless. (female)
>
> Do everything with humour. I try to turn things and make them humourous. It just works for me. (male)

This theme relates well to the notion of palliative coping (described earlier) and mood enhancement through leisure (leisure provides an opportunity to enhance positive mood/emotion and/or reduce negative mood/emotion) (Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000) and could be linked with social aspects of leisure (e.g., leisure companionship). Also, the intentional use of humour and laughter could be viewed as a problem-focused approach to stress-coping. Specifically, deliberately finding positives in the midst of stressful encounters is a problem-focused approach to dealing with stress. This positive reinterpretation or reframing has been identified as an important coping strategy that possesses both problem-focused and emotion-focused aspects (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). Turning negatives into positives, being optimistic, and having hope about life, are all effective coping approaches that incorporate humour and laughter. Supporting this contention, Kleiber et al. (2002) suggested that leisure could buffer the impact of negative life events by generating optimism about the future, while Hutchinson et al. (2003) found that "personally meaningful, enjoyable leisure activities served as a

source of motivation to sustain ongoing efforts to cope [by] offering hope and optimism" (p. 151).

Spiritual coping. Prayer and spirituality as a means of mitigating stress appeared to be of particular meaning and value to some of the female and male managers. In describing this perspective, one man noted, "Prayer is important. I consciously learned or I'm learning how to set it aside, covered with the umbrella of the fact that I've just placed myself in God's hands and everything's fine." Likewise, one woman suggested, "The only thing that helped me was my religious background. You can always say a prayer and it will make a difference." In the midst of feeling stressed in their lives, some female and male managers made it a priority to set aside time and space for being spiritual.

This finding is consistent with Heintzman and Mannell's (2003) notion of spiritual functions of leisure that may "serve as coping strategies to ameliorate the negative influence of time pressure" (p. 207) and possibly stress in general. They identified possible spiritual functions of leisure such as sacrilization and sense of place. *Sacrilization* refers to "the use of leisure for nurturing the spiritual dimension of life, and use of leisure to provide the time and space to develop spirituality," while the *sense of place* refers to "the tendency to use leisure as an opportunity to encounter places or settings that enhance spiritual well-being" (p. 213).

Altruistic leisure coping. Some women and men were consciously involved in various volunteering activities, which affirmed their altruistic values and, through this process, reduced their feeling of stress. One male manager described,

> As far as hobbies, I spend a lot of time as a volunteer in minor hockey system. My son plays, I played for years, and I think I've given back what I got out of the system. I enjoy that quite a bit because I see a lot of young kids developing what I consider a great game.

A female manager indicated that she did "some volunteer activities," although she admitted that engaging in these activities could be stressful. Helping others was highly valued by some of the participants, and leisure seemed to provide opportunities for satisfying this altruistic need/value as a way of coping with stress. This finding is consistent with Kleiber et al.'s (2002) and Hutchinson et al.'s (2003) notion of meaning-centered leisure coping. As well as other meanings (e.g., social, spiritual), an altruistic meaning may be gained through leisure pursuits as a way of dealing with stress.

It is worth noting that in describing hobbies and volunteer activities, some female managers suggested that these engagements often introduced a new form of stress, although this resulting stress was perceived as "a different kind of stress." This *new* form of stress may be perceived as positive because it stems from a freely chosen commitment. The adoption of *positive* stress may be an effective strategy for reducing effects of *negative* stress. Consistent with the present findings, this notion may be more relevant to women than to men.

Leisure travel: A special or novel form of leisure. Both female and male managers viewed leisure travel as a stress-coping strategy. Some male managers saw general forms of leisure as an immediate stress reliever, whereas leisure travel was more for long-term stress reduction and included an element of anticipation. One man summarized this point:

> Reading a book and things like that, that's more for the moment relaxation for stress—more taking care of immediate stress. I find that when you do leisure travel, you're looking forward to it for a couple of weeks. . . Leisure travel takes care more of long term stress.

Several other males also looked forward to their trips and destinations, meeting new people, and the activities they would do once there. For instance, one man described, "We take a lot of day trips, 2-day trips, 3-day trips. Looking forward to being at this destination or seeing this place for the first time or this thing that we've read about or heard about or has been in the news, that kind of thing, you look forward to doing that." One man felt that travel contained adventure and unfamiliarity which could be stressful but in a pleasurable, positive way:

> When I travel in the States or I'm traveling in Europe, you're on a bit of an adventure. It's not like going to work each day, where you're familiar with all the surroundings, it's what's around the next bend, what's to see, what's the weather gonna be like. It's new stuff and it's an adventure. It's pleasurable.

Female managers also identified leisure travel as a key strategy in coping with stress. Their reasons for leisure travel included "going away from work and everything," resting, "relaxing," getting "sunshine" ("soaking it up and laying there"), getting "re-charged," "being in a different place," "walking," and enjoying "each other's company." Female participants described leisure travel as a family activity, "secluded," and/or a stress reliever. For example, one woman noted, "We take the whole family for two weeks every year on Lake Winnipeg on the boat up north. It's really secluded."

Thus, female and male managers indicated that leisure travel provided a variety of benefits including stress-relief. As well as the benefit of being away from daily routines or stressors, these managers noted that leisure travel was important to feel rested and relaxed, get re-charged, enjoy company, go to different places, and experience adventure and unfamiliarity. These benefits concur not only with the notion of leisure palliative coping described earlier, but also with the literature on leisure travel motivation (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981; Iso-Ahola, 1983; Schmidhauser, 1989) that suggests people both seek novelty and learning as well as escape and diversion. Several male managers distinguished between leisure in general and leisure travel in specific, implying that leisure travel had a more long-term stress-coping benefit than leisure in general. This is consistent with the historic and modern spa/health tourism movements (Standeven & DeKnop, 1999).

Leisure travel may be a *special* or *novel* form of leisure, which includes anticipation and recollection stages and involves an escape or detachment from normal daily life. Because of these special characteristics, the benefits

of leisure gained (including stress-coping) may be magnified through leisure travel. The multi-phasic nature of both leisure in general and leisure travel, in particular, has been an important aspect of their common conceptual bases (van Raaij & Francken, 1984). Consistent with the present findings, Iwasaki (2002) found evidence that greater frequency and/or enjoyment of leisure travel buffered against or moderated the negative impact of stress to help police and emergency response personnel effectively cope with stress.

However, it is important to emphasize that male managers were more positive about the role of leisure travel as a stress-coping strategy than female managers. Specifically, in the context of cottage life, some women did not think it as a stress reliever and regarded it as "just more work," whereas men considered it as "a huge stress reliever" without any references to work aspects of cottage life.

> We have a cottage but I don't go out there that much any more because we used to be a weekly deal, rush out to the cottage, rush home—the cottages are a lot of work. (female)
>
> I don't really find it [leisure travel] that much of a stress relief. We have a cottage so we're out there every weekend and that's not a lot different than being in the city. Just more work—there's two things to maintain instead of one. (female)
>
> I guess leisure for us involves going to the lake. The places that I enjoy going to the most are the quietest ones. It's roughing a little—a campfire in the winter in the bush or in the fall is the furthest thing away from stress. (male)
>
> In the summer we have a cottage and I love it. It's certainly a huge stress reliever for me. (male)
>
> We have a family cottage and a boat too, so that's a great release in the summer. (male)

Many women may feel responsible for the planning and organizing of the cottage trip plus the same household and family work at the cottage, thus extending their "ethic of care" for others that often takes precedence over their own needs (Gilligan, 1982; Henderson, et al., 1996). Cottage life seems to represent one social arena where gendered aspects of people's lives become visible (Anderson, 1997; Ghorayshi, 2002; Wearing, 1998). In addition, this reconfirms both conceptually and operationally the recent move to not consider cottage travel as part of domestic tourism statistics (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2002). Travel to the cottage is, instead, considered as part of one's regular environment, and the results here emphasize the differences in perception of going to the cottage and going on a "real vacation," especially for women.

Problem-focused coping. A final common theme was the use of various problem-focused coping strategies that did not appear to be directly associated with leisure. Specifically, mentioned were: (a) setting boundaries/compartmentalizing, (b) organizing/setting priorities/planning, and (c) leaving work at work (not taking work home). These were used specifically to deal directly with stressors or problems. For example, as one woman described, "It's the whole strategy of, Is this mine or not? Can I draw a boundary here?

Can I do something about it?" Similarly, one man spoke of "separating home life from work life," while another woman suggested, "I've learned to compartmentalize things and just leave them. I just make a note, I'm going to deal with it tomorrow and shove it in my briefcase, then I forget about it." With respect to organization, one man described, "My desk is organized and I'm not taking work home any more. You're setting priorities. I don't live to work; I work to live." Also, another man talked about "making sure that people that work with you know your priorities as well." In addition, one woman suggested, "Sometimes at work stress, it takes just 10 minutes to sit down, take a break, think about what you're doing, get a little plan, organize things a little better and that relieves [stress] a lot."

These strategies were considered life-survival techniques used to manage stressors. Although these techniques are not directly associated with leisure, some of the leisure-specific coping methods discussed previously seem to have some elements of problem-focused coping. Also, by using effective leisure-specific coping techniques, managers gain renewed energy and perspective to better implement direct problem-focused methods. For example, deflecting stress-inducing thoughts through leisure, feeling rejuvenated through leisure, doing something for oneself in leisure (i.e., leisure as personal space), and humor and laughter, seem to contain problem-focused elements, and/or to positively influence the use of more direct coping approaches.

Stress-Coping Unique to Female Managers

Arts and cultural activities. Arts and cultural activities as a means of dealing with stress were discussed only among women. For example, when asked to identify the type of leisure that helps to manage stress, one woman suggested that she liked "the arts" and liked to "go to theatre and the opera." Several other women agreed that arts and cultural activities are important for this purpose. However, male managers did not indicate the potential of arts and cultural activities for stress-coping.

Caltabiano (1994) found cultural-hobbies leisure as one of the three major groups of leisure activity that was perceived to have the potential to reduce stress. Arts and cultural leisure might provide individuals with an opportunity to escape from their routine, everyday world and transport them to a "fantasy world" (Caltabiano, 1995, p. 43). For example, being creative in artistic activities or attending a symphony concert, ballet, or theatre may allow individuals to enjoy extraordinary and exhilarating experiences. Artistically and culturally stimulating experiences could facilitate psychological enrichment and spiritual renewal. These benefits of arts and cultural leisure appear more important for stress-coping by female managers than by their male counterparts.

Preventative role of leisure/exercise. In addition to the use of leisure as *reactive* stress-coping strategies *in response to* or *as a result of* the experiences of stress, some female managers emphasized the importance of leisure and physical activity/exercise for *proactively* keeping "healthy" and preventing

stress from occurring before stress becomes manifest. One female participant remarked,

> Exercise and eating right. I find that when I'm doing both of those things, I just feel excellent and nothing really bothers me as much. Instead of using it as a way to release stress, it's a preventative measure. It's a way to keep stress away from you.

Due to more demanding lifestyles of female managers such as cumulative effects of juggling a wider rage of demands (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999), they might emphasize the importance of being healthy and a preventative value of leisure/exercise. The media also appears to play a role in this raised conscientiousness about exercise and stress prevention targeted to women (Duncan & Messner, 1998). Another rationale for this finding is that, as suggested by Young and White (2000), men tend to view "matters of preventive health" as "the jurisdiction of women and 'ambiguous' men" (p. 113). Thus, a preventive role of leisure may not be highly valued by men.

Stress-Coping Unique to Male Managers

Several stress-coping methods were raised only by male managers. These included themes related to sense of control in leisure, playing hard in leisure, and sport spectatorship.

Sense of control in leisure. Male managers stated that leisure played an important role in dealing with their stress because leisure provided them with opportunities to feel in control. One male manager summarized this point:

> For me it [leisure] has a big role. By being restricted and not having any leisure time, really inside it just felt like I was bursting. But as soon as you enter leisure activity, like going out to the cabin, removing yourself from the stress, the free time with yourself, you're in total control.

In contrast, women did not raise anything about leisure as a means of feeling in control. Perhaps, most men are inclined to take control and enjoy being in charge, which likely reflects their values and gender role orientations (i.e., masculinity) (McKay et al., 2000; Wearing, 1998). Although the rewards of masculinity mean that men, in general, tend to be more privileged than women (Young & White, 2000), men's desire and willingness to take control may be highly pervasive and influential in all life domains including a leisure sphere.

Playing hard in leisure. Another unique characteristic that was cited only by men was that playing hard in free time helped some male managers cope with stress. One male manager noted,

> Another thing I do is I give 100% effort. If that isn't good enough, don't worry about it. And we play real hard. It is not uncommon to just get on a plane and go. We just have great times laughing and playing hard. And I do the same thing with golf.

Similarly, within the context of leisure travel another man suggested, "I just play hard, so whether I'm going to St. Kitts or on a cruise, or out to Stough-

ton to stay in a bed & breakfast and talk with the farm couple and wander around a farm for 2 days."

The high value attributed by male managers to a strong work ethic (Powell, 1999) might transfer to their leisure domain. Working hard at their jobs and playing hard in leisure could be important for them and reflect their attitudes toward life, values, and identities.

Sport spectatorship. Although female and male managers cited several of the same leisure activities as a means of coping with stress (e.g., "exercise," "golfing," "reading," "listening to music," "watching movies," "playing piano," "hobbies," "walking," "going on vacation," "sailing"), only male managers indicated being a sports spectator. One male football fan suggested that to "go down to the Bomber games and get excited" was one way of relieving his stress, while several men mentioned "watching a hockey game."

Enjoying and being excited about watching professional sports live or on TV may be more prevalent as a stress-coping strategy for men than for women. One rationale may be that sports, through the media, tend to reinforce values that are consistent with cultural hegemony (Dworkin & Wachs, 2000). It has been shown that sports broadcasted through the media implicitly define and construe men and masculinity as superior (Duncan & Messner, 1998; Kane, 1995; Messner, Duncan, & Wachs, 1996). Sport spectatorship as a form of stress-coping for men can be contrasted with arts and cultural activities for women described previously. Although both women and men watch sports and attend arts and cultural activities as forms of *leisure spectatorship,* the meanings attached to these activities may be different between women and men. As a stress-coping strategy, the former activity may be more prevalent for men and the latter activity for women, while other meanings such as socializing, kinship, and obligation could be attached to different forms of leisure spectatorship.

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that leisure acts as an important means of coping with stress among female and male managers. Although some types of non-leisure coping methods were identified (i.e., direct-action problem-focused coping such as organizing, setting priorities, or planning), these managers' descriptions of stress-coping are filled with numerous cases and examples in which leisure contributes to helping them deal with stress. In addition, the findings suggest that gender plays a key role in explaining how female and male managers cope with stress in their lives. Although a number of common stress-coping themes were shared by female and male managers, key themes unique to either female managers or male managers were also evident. Nine themes of stress-coping common for both female and male managers included: (a) socialization through leisure and leisure-generated social support, (b) deflecting stress-inducing thoughts through leisure, (c) feeling rejuvenated through leisure, (d) leisure as personal space, (e) humour and laughter, (f) spiritual coping, (g) altruistic leisure coping, (h) leisure travel: a *special* or *novel* form of leisure, and (i) problem-focused cop-

ing. These themes appear central to the notion of coping with stress relevant to both females and males, perhaps beyond professional managers.

It is, however, important to emphasize that meaning attached to some of these stress-coping methods seems different between female and male managers. First, female managers valued leisure for self-rejuvenation, more as a means of compensating for the cumulative effects of juggling a wider rage of stressors/demands than their male counterparts. In contrast, male managers' motivation for self-rejuvenation of leisure appeared to be primarily the act or process of leisure itself rather than compensating for cumulative stress. Second, as for the notions of leisure as personal space and deflecting thoughts about stress through leisure, female managers directly and explicitly linked their leisure involvement to positive affect, while male managers did not. Male participants tended to be concerned with the *process* or actual act of leisure as a mechanism for coping with feelings of stress, whereas female participants seemed more *outcome*-focused—gaining positive feelings as a result of their leisure engagements.

Another gender difference in this context was concerned with differences in motivation for leisure as personal space. Women's motivation was based primarily on the fact that women tend to be "always giving" and busy taking care of other people, whereas men's motivation was mostly to have leisure time and space as a personal reward. The gendered nature of people's lives was illustrated in participants' descriptions of cottage life, as well. Some female managers raised work and responsibility aspects of "cottaging" primarily due to their ethic of care for others, while male managers did not.

Finally, with respect to altruistic leisure coping, some female managers suggested that volunteer activities often introduced another level of stress, although this new form of stress was perceived as "a different kind of stress." This finding implies that strategies used for stress-coping also may introduce a new or different source of stress, which may be perceived as *positive* because it originates from a *freely chosen* commitment. The finding supports the importance of giving attention to the distinction between negative and positive stress [see Selye's (1974) notion of eustress vs. distress]. Experiencing *positive* stress may be effective for reducing detrimental effects of *negative* stress—these effects may be more relevant to women than to men.

Some ways of coping with stress tended to be gender-specific. Female-specific themes identified included arts and cultural activities and the preventative role of leisure. Male-specific themes are: (a) sense of control in leisure, (b) playing hard in leisure, and (c) sport spectatorship. Overall, gender-based variations in the use and meaning of stress-coping, as shown in the study, are likely to be explained, not only by the specific life circumstances and stressors women and men face in work, domestic, and leisure domains, but also by the gendered nature of people's lives. For example, the issues of power and inequality are relevant in this context. Although "some men enjoy more access to power and influence than others, . . . what most men in patriarchal societies share in common, however, is the ability to benefit from their privileged position as a gender class in the form of certain

rewards or 'patriarchal dividends'" (Young & White, 2000)—"the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women" (Connell, 1995, p. 79). Patriarchal dividends are visible in a variety of social arenas such as men's dominations in the workplace, men's privileges of wealth and income, men's control over the practices of violence, and a gender ideology that normalizes and reproduces the marginalization of women in general (Connell, 1995). As found in the present study, patriarchal dividends are evident even in leisure settings. For example, the advantage or privilege of male managers over female managers was seen in their cottage life.

On the other hand, as Kimmel (1995) emphasized, men tend to pay a price for their *privileged* positions. One of "the costs of masculinity" is that "sensitization to bodily well-being and matters of preventive health in general become viewed as the jurisdiction of women and 'ambiguous' men;" consequently, "health care interests tend to be conspicuously absent in the task orientation of men in general" (Young & White, 2000, p. 113). In fact, at almost every age, men die more frequently from preventable causes than do women (Stillion, 1995). Consistent with this notion, a preventative role of leisure was identified as a female-specific theme of coping with stress in the present study. Thus, the findings of our gender-based analyses of stress-coping among professional managers support the current gender literature that discusses, for example, the rewards and costs of masculinity (Young & White, 2000).

To enhance understanding of the role of leisure stress-coping, existing theoretical frameworks (e.g., Iwasaki & Mannell, 2000; Kleiber et al., 2002) need to be extended through more critical and well-designed empirical research on leisure and stress-coping processes. The present study suggested the importance of such notions as: leisure as personal space, a preventive role of leisure, and leisure travel as stress-coping techniques, which have not been given much attention in past research on leisure, stress, and coping. For example, it is important to examine *how* individuals consciously or unconsciously create their personal spaces to engage in leisure to explore their own desires, to challenge/resist cultural stereotypes, and/or to "rewrite a sense of self-worth and subjectivity" (Wearing, 1998, p. 151), as ways of coping with stress. Furthermore, this aspect of leisure as personal space may co-function with other types of leisure coping such as meaning-centered and growth-oriented leisure coping. Leisure may provide an opportunity for creating personal space to experience and gain important meaning for individuals that not only affirms their values and identities, but also positively transforms them.

Also, the role of leisure may operate as more than just a means of *reactively* coping with stress—leisure might be an important source of more *proactively* preventing people from experiencing high stress. In addition to obvious health-benefits that leisure can provide, it is important to examine the relationship between leisure pursuits and problem-focused coping as a preventative strategy. Another area of inquiry that warrants attention is the role of leisure travel in dealing with stress. As a special or novel form of leisure, in

comparison to routine leisure activities (e.g., exercising or playing a musical instrument on a regular basis), stress-coping benefits of leisure travel may be magnified or long-term in nature, compared to routine leisure activities. Finally, it will be important to explore the potential that experiencing positive stress could be effective in reducing or counteracting the detrimental effects of negative stress. This idea suggests that negative and positive stress may coexist in certain circumstances, and particular forms of leisure, such as volunteering activity, as stress-coping strategies may introduce a new, different, or positive source of stress.

All of the potential roles that leisure plays in helping people cope with stress and prevent them from experiencing stress may have important meanings in relation not only to gender, but also to race/ethnicity, social class, age/life span, disabilities, and sexual orientations. Particularly, it appears important to give attention to potential differences in the meanings and sources of stress (Iwasaki, Bartlett, & O'Neil, 2004), as well as in the ways people cope with stress (Iwasaki, Bartlett, & O'Neil, 2005) because the key axes of power in society (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, class, sexual orientations) intersect and overlap with one another in a complex way (Crenshaw, 1995; Iglesias & Cormier, 2002). For example, Bowleg, Huang, Brooks, Black, and Burkholder (2003) found that Black lesbians in their study are resilient by using a variety of proactive coping strategies, despite their "triple jeopardy experiences"—i.e., racism, sexism, and homophobia/heterosexism. Clearly, it is the responsibility of researchers to take into account the diversity of society when pursuing studies on leisure, stress, and coping.

References

Anderson, M. L. (1997). *Thinking about women: Sociological perspectives on sex and gender* (*4th ed.*). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Aneshensel, C. S. (1986). Marital and employment role-strain, social support, and depression among adult women. In S. Hobfoll (Ed.), *Stress, social support and women* (pp. 99-114). Washington, DC: Hemisphere.

Apostal, R. A., & Helland, C. (1993). Commitment to and role changes in dual career families. *Journal of Career Development, 20,* 121-129.

Avison, W. R., & Gotlib, I. H. (1994). *Stress and mental health: Contemporary issues and prospects for the future.* New York: Plenum Press.

Bell, S., & Lee, C. (2002). Development of the perceived stress questionnaire for young women. *Psychology, Health and Medicine, 7*(2), 189-201.

Bowleg, L., Huang, J., Brooks, K., Black, A., & Burkholder, G. (2003). Triple jeopardy and beyond: Multiple minority stress and resilience among Black lesbians. *Journal of Lesbian Studies, 7*(4), 87-108.

Brooker, A., & Eakin, J. M. (2001). Gender, class, work-related stress and health: Toward a power-centred approach. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 11,* 97-109.

Caldwell, L. L., & Smith, E. A. (1988). Leisure: An overlooked component of health promotion. *Canadian Journal of Public Health, 79*(April/May), S44-S48.

Caltabiano, M. L. (1994). Measuring the similarity among leisure activities based on a perceived stress-reduction benefit. *Leisure Studies, 13,* 17-31.

Caltabiano, M. L. (1995). Main and stress-moderating health benefits of leisure. *Society and Leisure/Loisir et Societe, 18,* 33-52.

Canadian Tourism Commission (2002). *Design elements for a new domestic travel survey.* Cat. No. C86-145/2002E. Ottawa: Author.

Carver, C. S., Scheier, M. F., & Weintraub, J. K. (1989). Assessing coping strategies: A theoretically based approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 56,* 267-283.

Coleman, D., & Iso-Ahola, S. E. (1993). Leisure and health: The role of social support and self-determination. *Journal of Leisure Research, 25,* 111-128.

Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Crandall, R., & Perrewe, P. L. (Eds.). (1995). *Occupational stress: A handbook.* Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.

Crenshaw, K. (1995). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. In K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G., Peller & K. Thomas (Eds.), *Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement* (pp. 357-383). New York: The New Press.

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crompton, J. (1979). Motivations for pleasure travel. *Annals of Tourism Research, 6,* 409-424.

Dann, G. (1977). Anomie, ego-enhancement and tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 4,* 184-194.

Dann, G. (1981). Tourist motivation: An appraisal. *Annals of Tourism Research, 8,* 187-219.

Davidson, M. J., & Fielden, S. (1999). Stress and the working woman. In G. N. Powell (Ed.), *Handbook of gender and work* (pp. 413-426). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Duncan, M., & Messner, M. (1998). The media image of sport and gender. In L. Wenner (ed.), *MediaSport* (pp. 170-185). New York: Routledge.

Duxbury, L. E., & Higgins, C. A. (1991). Gender differences in work-family conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 76,* 60-74.

Dworkin, S. L., & Wachs, F. L. (2000). The morality/manhood paradox: Masculinity, sport, and the media. In J. McKay, M. A. Messner & D. Sabo (Eds.), *Masculinities, gender relations, and sport* (pp. 47-66). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Fielden, S. L., & Davidson, M. J. (2001). Stress and the woman manager. In J. Dunham (Ed.), *Stress in the workplace: Past, present and future* (pp. 109-129). London, England: Whurr Publishers, Ltd.

Folkman, S., & Greer, S. (2000). Promoting psychological well-being in the face of serious illness: When theory, research and practice inform each other. *Psycho-oncology, 9,* 11-19.

Folkman, S., & Moskowitz, J. T. (2000a). Positive affect and the other side of coping. *American Psychologist, 55*(6), 647-654.

Folkman, S., & Moskowitz, J. T. (2000b). Stress, positive emotion and coping. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 9,* 115-118.

Ghorayshi, P. (2002). "Working Canadian women: Continuity despite change". In V. Dhruvarajan & J. Vickers (Eds.), *Gender, race and nation: A global perspective* (pp. 123-147). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Gianakos, I. (2000). Gender roles and coping with work stress. *Sex Roles, 42,* 211-223.

Gianakos, I. (2002). Predictors of coping with work stress: The influences of sex, gender roles, social desirability, and locus of control. *Sex Roles, 46,* 149-158.

Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gottlieb, B. H. (Ed.). (1997). *Coping with chronic stress.* New York: Plenum Press.

Greenberger, E., & O'Neil, R. (1993). Spouse, parent, worker: Role commitments and role-related experiences in the construction of adults' well-being. *Developmental Psychology, 29,* 181-197.

Greenglass, E. R. (1995). Gender, work stress and coping: Theoretical implications. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality, 10*(6), 121-134.

Greenhaus, J. H., & Parasuraman, S. (1999). Research on work, family, and gender: Current status and future directions. In G. N. Powell (Ed.), *Handbook of gender and work* (pp. 391-412). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gubrium, J. F., & Holstein, J. A. (2000). Analyzing interpretive practice. In N. Y. Denzin Y. & Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research (2nd ed.)* (pp. 487-508). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Henderson, K. A., Bialeschki, M. D., Shaw, S. M., & Freysinger, V. J. (1996). *Both gains and gaps: Feminist perspectives on women's leisure.* State College, PA: Venture Publishing.

Hobfoll, S. E. (1998). *Stress, culture, & community: The psychology and philosophy of stress.* New York: Plenum Press.

Hochschild, A. (1989). *The second shift.* New York: Avon.

Holmes, T. H., & Rahe, R. H. (1967). The social readjustment rating scale. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 11,* 213-218.

Heintzman, P., & Mannell, R. C. (2003). Spiritual functions of leisure and spiritual well-being: Coping with time pressure. Special issue of *Leisure Sciences* on leisure, stress, and coping, 25, 207-230.

Husserl, E. (1970). *Logical investigation.* Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press.

Hutchinson, S. L., Loy, D. P., Kleiber, D. A., Dattilo, J. (2003). Leisure as a coping resource: Variation in coping with traumatic injury and illness. Special issue of *Leisure Sciences* on leisure, stress, and coping, *25,* 143-162.

Iglesias, E., & Cormier, S. (2002). The transformation of girls to women: Finding voice and developing strategies for liberation. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 30*(October), 259-271.

Ihde, D. (1977). *Experimental phenomenology.* New York: G. P. Putnam.

Iso-Ahola, S. E. (1982). Toward a social psychological theory of tourism motivation: A rejoinder. *Annals of Tourism Research, 12,* 256-262.

Iso-Ahola, S. E. (1983). Towards a social psychology of recreational travel. *Leisure Studies, 2,* 45-56.

Iso-Ahola, S. E. (1989). Motivation for leisure. In Jackson, E. and Burton, T. (Eds.) *Understanding Leisure and Recreation* (pp. 247-280). State College: Venture Press.

Iwasaki, Y. (2002). Testing independent and buffer models of the influence of leisure participation on stress-coping and adaptatinal outcomes. Special Issue of *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration* on the relationship between leisure and health, *20*(4), 90-129.

Iwasaki, Y., Bartlett, J., & O'Neil, J. (2004). An examination of stress among Aboriginal women and men with diabetes in Manitoba, Canada. *Ethnicity and Health, 9*(2), 189-213.

Iwasaki, Y., Bartlett, J., & O'Neil, J. (2005). Coping with stress among Aboriginal women and men with diabetes in Winnipeg, Manitoba. *Social Science and Medicine, 60*(5), 977-988.

Iwasaki, Y., MacKay, K., & Ristock, J. (2004). Gender-based analyses of stress among professional managers: An exploratory qualitative study. *International Journal of Stress Management, 11*(1), 56-79.

Iwasaki, Y., & Mannell, R. C. (2000). Hierarchical dimensions of leisure stress coping. *Leisure Sciences, 22,* 163-181.

Iwasaki, Y., Mannell. R. C., Smale, B. J. A., & Butcher, J. (2002). A Short-term longitudinal analysis of leisure coping used by employees of police and emergency response service workers. *Journal of Leisure Research, 34,* 311-339.

Iwasaki, Y., & Schneider, I. E. (Eds.) (2003). Leisure, stress, and coping: An evolving area of inquiry. Special issue of *Leisure Sciences* on leisure, stress, and coping, *25,* 107-114.

Jamieson, L. (1998). *Intimacy: Personal relationships in modern societies.* Malden, MA: Polity.

Kane, M. J. (1995). Resistance/transformation of the oppositional binary: Exposing sport as a continuum. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 19,* 191-218.

Kimball, A., & Freysinger, V. J. (2003). Leisure, stress, and coping: The sport participation of collegiate student athletes. Special issue of *Leisure Sciences* on leisure, stress, and coping, *25,* 115-142.

Kimmel, M. (1995). Series editor's introduction. In D. Sabo & D. Gordon (Eds.), *Men's health and illness: Gender, power, and the body* (pp. vii-viii). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kleiber, D. A. (1999). *Leisure experience and human development.* New York: Basic Books.

Kleiber, D. A., Hutchinson, S. L., & Williams, R. (2002). Leisure as a resource in transcending negative life events: Self-protection, self-restoration, and personal transformation. *Leisure Sciences, 24,* 219-235.

Klitzing, S. W. (2003). Coping with chronic stress: Leisure and women who are homeless. Special issue of *Leisure Sciences* on leisure, stress, and coping, *25,* 163-182.

Krueger, R. A. (1994). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research (2nd ed.).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research (3rd ed.).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lazarus, R. S. (1999). *Stress and emotion: A new synthesis.* New York: Springer.

Loy, D. P., Dattilo, J., & Kleiber, D. A. (2003). Exploring the influence of leisure on adjustment: Development of the leisure and spinal cord injury adjustment model. Special issue of *Leisure Sciences* on leisure, stress, and coping, *25,* 231-256.

MacKay, K. & Fesenmaier, D. (1998). A process approach to segmenting the getaway travel market. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 7*(3), 1-18.

Madriz, E. (2000). Focus groups in feminist research. In N. Y. Denzin Y. & Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research (2nd ed.)* (pp. 835-850). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mansfeld, Y. (1992). From motivation to actual travel. *Annals of Tourism Research, 19,* 399-419.

McBride-King, & Bachmann K. (1999). *Is work-life balance still an issue for Canadians and their employers? You bet it is!* Ottawa: Conference Board of Canada.

McKay, J., Messner, M. A., & Sabo, D. (Eds.) (2000) *Masculinities, gender relations, and sport.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Messner, M. A., Duncan, M. C., & Wachs, F. L. (1996). The gender of audience-building: Televised coverage of women's and men's NCAA basketball. *Sociological Inquiry, 66,* 422-439.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods. (2nd ed.).* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Phillips-Miller, D. L., Campbell, N. J., & Morrison, C. R. (2000). Work and family: Satisfaction, stress, and spousal support. *Journal of Employment Counseling, 37,* 16-30.

Powell, G. N. (Ed.). (1999). *Handbook of gender and work.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ptacek, J. T., Smith, R. E., & Dodge, K. L. (1994). Gender differences in coping with stress: When stressor and appraisals do not differ. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 20,* 421-430.

Riemen, D. J. (1986). The essential structure of a caring interaction: Doing phenomenology. In P. M. Munhall & C. J. Oiler (Eds.), *Nursing research: A qualitative perspective* (pp. 85-105). Norwalk, CT: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Rojek, C. (1995). *Decentering leisure: Rethinking leisure theory.* London: Sage.

Schmidhauser, H. (1989). Tourist needs and motivations. In S. Witt, and L. Moutinho (Eds.), *The Tourism Marketing and Management Handbook* (pp. 569-572). London: Prentice Hall.

Schuster, R., Hammitt, W. E., & Moore, D. (2003). A theoretical model to measure the appraisal and coping response to hassles in outdoor recreation settings. Special issue of *Leisure Sciences* on leisure, stress, and coping, *25,* 277-300.

Schutz, A. (1970). *On phenomenology and social relations.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Schwartz, P. (1994). *Peer marriage.* New York: The Free Press.

Selye, H. (1974). *Stress without distress.* Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott.

Shields, M. (2003). Stress, health and the benefit of social support. *Health reports,* Catalogue Number 82-003-XPE, Vol. 15(1). Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

Somerfield, M. P., & McCrae, R. R. (Eds.) (2000). Stress and coping research: Methodological challenges, theoretical advances, and clinical applications. In Psychology in the Public Forum. *American Psychologist, 55*(6), 620-673.

Standeven, J., & DeKnop, P. (1999). *Sport Tourism.* Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Statistics Canada (2003). *2001 Census.* Ottawa: Author.

Steil, J. M., & Weltman K. (1992). Influence strategies at home and at work: A study of sixty dual-career couples. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 9,* 65-88.

Stillion, J. M. (1995). Premature death among males. In D. Sabo & D. Gordon (Eds.), *Men's health and illness: Gender, power, and the body* (pp. 46-68). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

van Raaij, W., & Francken, D. (1984). Vacation decisions, activities, and satisfactions. *Annals of Tourism Research, 11,* 101-112.

Wearing, B. (1998). *Leisure and feminist theory.* London: Sage.

Weissinger, E., & Iso-Ahola, S. E. (1984). Intrinsic leisure motivation, personality and physical health. *Society and Leisure/ Loisir & Societe, 7*(1), 217-228.

Young, K., & White, P. (2000). Researching sports injury: Reconstructing dangerous masculinities. In J. McKay, M. A. Messner & D. Sabo (Eds.), *Masculinities, gender relations, and sport* (pp. 108-126). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Zalaquett, C. P., & Wood, R. J. (Eds.) (1997). *Evaluating stress: A book of resources.* Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press.

Zalaquett, C. P., & Wood, R. J. (Eds.) (1998). *Evaluating stress: A book of resources, Volume 2.* Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press.

Zeidner, M., & Endler, N. S. (1996). *Handbook of coping: Theory, research, applications.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.