

Family Leisure Satisfaction and Satisfaction with Family Life

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between family leisure satisfaction and satisfaction with family life. Zabriskie's Family Leisure Activity Profile was used to measure family leisure satisfaction. The Satisfaction with Family Life Scale was used to measure satisfaction with family life. The sample consisted of 898 families from throughout the United States. Results indicated a relationship between all family leisure satisfaction variables and satisfaction with family life. Data collected from parents and youth provided insight into the relationship between family leisure satisfaction and satisfaction with family life. At the parent, youth, and family levels, core family leisure satisfaction was most correlated with satisfaction with family life. These findings provide implications for researchers, parents, and family professionals.

KEYWORDS: Satisfaction with family life, family leisure satisfaction, family leisure, family recreation

The family is the fundamental unit of society, and is perhaps the “oldest and most resilient institution” in society (DeFrain & Asay, 2007a, p. 2). As important as families are in society, families today face many challenges both within the family and in the social environment (DeFrain & Asay, 2007b). Many view families as weak and

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troubled (Nock, 1998) and as “demoralized” institutions (VanDenBerghe, 2000, p. 16-17). With families facing challenges, many people and organizations are working to strengthen the family unit. One step has been the exploration of satisfaction with family life.

Satisfaction with family life is a construct that researchers have explored in an attempt to find avenues of supporting families (Bowen, 1988; Toth, Brown, & Xu, 2002). Some factors that have been correlated with family life satisfaction are common goals and values among family members (Bowen) and good mental health (Sears, 1977). Family leisure has also been related to family life satisfaction (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003).

Family leisure provides opportunities for families to bond with each other, problem solve, and strengthen their relationships. Recent research has identified family benefits related to family leisure. Such benefits include increased communication skills (Huff, Widmer, McCoy & Hill, 2003), problem solving efficacy (Wells, Widmer, & McCoy, 2004), development of life skills and social skills (Mactavish & Schleien, 1998), and satisfaction with family life (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). Family leisure involvement has also been positively correlated with family cohesion, family adaptability, and overall family functioning (Agate, Zabriskie, & Eggett, 2007; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001; Zabriskie & Freeman, 2004). Each of these studies, however, has explored family leisure participation but has failed to examine the satisfaction with that participation.

In studies examining individuals and couples, satisfaction with leisure has been found to be more strongly correlated with beneficial outcomes than participation alone (Johnson, Zabriskie, & Hill, 2006; Russell, 1987, 1990). In fact, Johnson et al. reported that joint couple leisure satisfaction was the single best predictor of marital satisfaction when considering age, gender, length of marriage, income, number of children, time spent together, and joint leisure involvement. Although researchers have examined the relationship between family leisure participation and satisfaction with family life (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003), family leisure satisfaction has not yet been explored as a construct related to satisfaction with family life. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between family leisure satisfaction and satisfaction with family life

Review of Literature

Satisfaction with Family Life

Stronger families are a key element in creating a stronger society (Johnson et al., 2006). (For a discussion of what constitutes a strong family, see DeFrain & Asay, 2007a.) As an entity of such importance, it is necessary that society provide avenues through which the family unit can be strengthened and supported. Bowen (1988) recognized the importance of practitioners who work with families in “promoting the development of policies, programs, and services that are supportive of family life” and stated they are “able to help families better understand the dynamics of family life satisfaction” (p. 461). Researchers can provide understanding to assist those who work with families in this task by identifying factors that correlate with satisfaction with family life.

While the body of research that identifies factors related to satisfaction with family life is relatively limited, some relevant factors have been examined. In a longitudinal study of gifted men, Sears (1977) identified good childhood social adjustment, good mental health, and positive attitudes toward parental family of origin as significant indicators of family life satisfaction. In another study, Bowen (1988) found that family life satisfaction was related to the ability to live according to one's family values.

In more recent studies, Toth et al. (2002) examined differences in urban and rural family life and identified that satisfaction with community life was related to satisfaction with family life. Caprara (2005) reported that for adolescents filial self-efficacy was related to family life satisfaction. His research indicated that adolescents with higher perceived self-efficacy to manage parental relationships reported higher satisfaction with family life, and that these results held both concurrently and longitudinally. A final factor that researchers have identified as a significant correlate to family life satisfaction is family leisure.

Family Leisure Involvement

Many families consider family leisure to be an important part of family life. Family leisure is often purposive in nature, and parents consciously and deliberately plan and facilitate family leisure activities to improve family relationships (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). Shaw and Dawson also indicated that family leisure is so integral to healthy family life for some parents that it is with a "sense of urgency" that they plan to spend time with children participating in family activities.

For more than 70 years, researchers have identified and reported positive relationships between family leisure and positive family outcomes (Hawkes, 1991; Holman & Epperson, 1989). Orthner and Mancini (1991) summarized benefits of family leisure involvement by organizing outcomes into variables related to family satisfaction, to family interaction, and to family stability. Among the more recent studies Huff, et al. (2003) reported that parents and adolescents who participated in challenging outdoor recreation together experienced increases in interaction, elevated levels of trust and support, improved communication, and increased affection and kindness. In a similar study among families with at-risk youth, Wells et al. (2004) reported that participation in such activities was correlated with increases in collective efficacy and conflict resolution efficacy. They found that as families became more confident in their abilities to perform tasks and work together as a group in recreation, they also experienced increases in their confidence to resolve conflicts and solve problems together in other settings.

Among families that have a child with a disability Mactavish and Schleien (1998) reported that families viewed joint family leisure as a means of promoting overall quality of family life (e.g. family unity, satisfaction, physical and mental health) and for helping family members develop other life skills and social skills. They also found that benefits of family leisure involvement appeared to be most effective with the family as a whole and concluded that "concentrating on adult-only perceptions may underestimate the positive value of shared recreation for the family as a whole" (p. 226). Another line of family leisure research, the Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning, has consistently correlated family leisure involvement with family functioning from multiple family perspectives and in many different types of family samples.

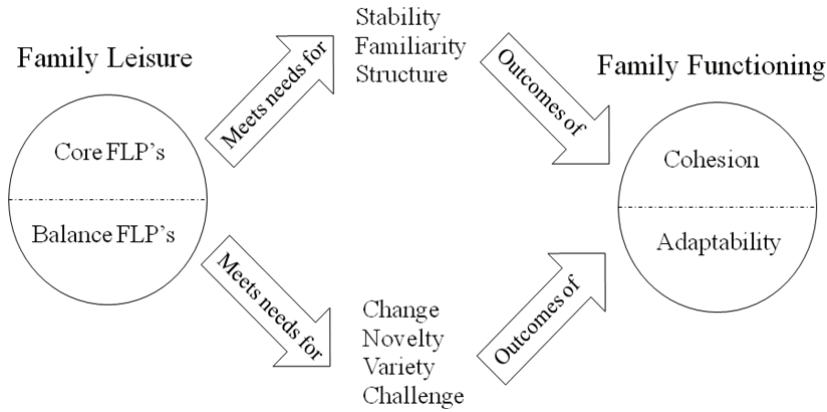


FIGURE 1. Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning

Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning. The Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning (see Figure 1) indicates that there are two basic categories or patterns of family leisure, core and balance, which families utilize to meet needs for both stability and change, and ultimately facilitate outcomes of family cohesion and adaptability which are primary components of family functioning. Core family leisure includes “common, everyday, low-cost, relatively accessible, often home-based activities that many families do frequently” (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003, p. 168). This may include family activities such as playing board games together, making and eating dinner together, or shooting baskets in the driveway together. Such activities provide a “consistent, safe and usually positive context in which family relationships can be enhanced and feelings of family closeness increased” (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003, p. 77). Balance family leisure, on the other hand consists of activities that are more out of the ordinary, and typically not home-based which provides an element of novelty (Zabriskie & McCormick, p. 168). This may include family activities such as family vacations, camping, special events, and trips to sporting events or theme parks. They tend to be more out of the ordinary and “include elements of unpredictability or novelty, which require family members to negotiate and adapt to new input and experiences that stand apart from everyday life” (Freeman & Zabriskie, p. 77).

Core family leisure involvement tends to facilitate feelings of closeness, personal relatedness, family identity and bonding. Balance family leisure involvement provides the input necessary for families to be challenged, to develop, to adapt, to progress as a working unit and helps foster the adaptive skills necessary to navigate the challenge of family life in today’s society. Research (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003) suggests that both categories are essential and that families who regularly participate in both core and balance types of family leisure activities report higher levels of family functioning than those who participate in high or low amounts of either category.

The relationship between core, balance and total family leisure involvement and family cohesion, family adaptability and overall family functioning has been consistently reported from parent, young adult, adolescent child, and family perspectives

(Agate et al., 2007; Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003). It has also been consistent among several different family types including two-parent families (Zabriskie, 2000; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001), transracial adoptive families (Zabriskie & Freeman, 2004), single-parent families (Hornberger, 2007; Smith, Taylor, Hill & Zabriskie, 2004), Mexican-American families (Christenson, Zabriskie, Eggett, & Freeman, 2006), divorced families from non-resident fathers' perspective (Swinton, 2006), and families with a child with a disability (Dodd, 2007).

Zabriskie and McCormick (2003) also examined the contribution of family leisure involvement to satisfaction with family life from a parent, early adolescent, and a family perspective. They reported that when considering numerous variables such as family size, family income, family structure, history of divorce, and age, the "parents' responses indicated that family leisure involvement was the single strongest predictor of their satisfaction with family life" (p. 181). Furthermore, from the youth's perspective, core family leisure involvement was related to family satisfaction, and from the family perspective total family leisure involvement "was the only variable that positively predicted satisfaction with family life" (p. 182). Whether considering outcomes of family functioning or family satisfaction, the Core and Balance framework has consistently been used to examine participation or involvement in family leisure but has not been used to examine the satisfaction with family leisure.

Leisure Satisfaction

Satisfaction with leisure is one of the many life domains included in one's judgment of overall life satisfaction. Several scholars have reported significant correlations between leisure satisfaction and satisfaction with life (i.e. Russell, 1987, 1990; Ragheb & Griffith, 1982). In fact, Riddick (1986) argued that leisure satisfaction is more important than satisfaction with all other life domains when determining an individual's life satisfaction or mental well-being.

Russell (1987) examined the influence of several factors on life satisfaction. She hypothesized that leisure participation and leisure satisfaction would be greater predictors of life satisfaction than all other variables. Findings indicated that religiosity had a slightly stronger contribution to life satisfaction than leisure participation. Nevertheless, satisfaction with leisure had a much stronger contribution than either religiosity or leisure participation. She concluded that it was the satisfaction with the involvement in leisure activities that influenced life satisfaction rather than the frequency of the involvement. In a similar study, Russell (1990) examined the interrelationship between many life circumstance variables including leisure, and their contribution to an individual's quality of life. Her findings indicated that religiosity, marital status, education, gender, and age were significantly related to health, income, leisure participation, and leisure satisfaction. None of the other factors, however, were found to contribute directly to quality of life. The only significant and direct predictor to quality of life was leisure satisfaction.

When considering couple leisure involvement among married couples, a long history of studies have consistently reported strong relationships between joint leisure and marital satisfaction (Holman, 1981; Holman & Jacquart, 1988; Orthner, 1975; Smith, Snyder, & Monsma, 1988) and done so in different cultures as well (Ahn, 1982; Palisi, 1984). The most recent study (Johnson et al. 2006), however, attempted to clar-

ify previous findings by examining couple leisure involvement, leisure time, and leisure satisfaction as they related to marital satisfaction. Their findings indicated that it was not the level or amount of couple leisure involvement or satisfaction with the amount of time couples spent together, but satisfaction with couple leisure that contributed to marital satisfaction. They concluded the following:

Couples that were satisfied with their leisure involvement with their spouse, regardless of the amount or type of that involvement, were clearly more satisfied with their marriage than couples who may have participated in more or different kinds of leisure activities but were not satisfied with that participation (p. 84).

When considering families, recent studies (Mactavish & Schleien, 1998; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003) have also reported relationships between family leisure involvement and satisfaction with family life, but no research to date has examined the contribution of family leisure satisfaction. Considering the consistent findings among individuals and couples, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between family leisure satisfaction and satisfaction with family life. It was hypothesized that, when controlling for sociodemographic and family leisure involvement variables, satisfaction with family leisure involvement would be positively correlated with satisfaction with family life.

Methodology

Sample

Data were collected through an online survey sampling company which collects data from a national sample. Subjects were drawn from a multi-source internet panel of people interested in participating in online research. The research instrument was completed by a national sample of families ($n = 898$) residing in U.S. households containing at least one child (11-15 years old). For the purposes of this study, families were defined as

two or more persons who share resources, share responsibility for decisions, share values and goals, and have a commitment to one another over time. The family is that climate that one comes home to and is the network of sharing and commitments that most accurately describes the family unit, regardless of blood, legal ties, adoption, or marriage (DeFrain & Asay, 2007b, p. 284).

Each responding family was required to submit two completed responses: one from a parent and one from a child between the ages of 11 and 15 years. The majority of respondents (58.6%) lived in urban/suburban areas (population > 50,000). The majority of parent respondents were female (75.5%) and ranged from 22 to 60 years of age with a mean age of 41.96 ($SD = 7.13$). Youth respondents were more evenly split in terms of gender (male = 51.1%) with a mean age of 13.06 ($SD = 1.51$) and ranged from nine to 18 years. As per recommendations made by Zabriskie and McCormick (2003) it was initially intended to require participating youth to be between the ages of 11 and 15; however, some youth outside that age range responded. Upon comparing the research variables of the youth outside the intended age range with the rest of the sample, no significant differences were found between the means; therefore, they were included in the sample.

Approximately 80% of the parents were married, 4% were single/never married, 10.7% were separated/divorced/widowed, and 5.5% lived with a domestic partner. A history of divorce was reported by 36.9% of respondents. Ethnic majority of the parents was white (86.7%) with minority represented by Hispanic (.7%), Pacific Islander (.1%), Native American (1.4%), Asian (1.6%), Black (4.5%) and other (6.6%). Youth ethnic majority was also white (84.3%) with minority represented by Hispanic (5%), Pacific Islander (.7%), Native American (1.3%), Asian (1.9%), and Black (6.8%). The average family size was 4.47 people with a reported range from 2 to 15 family members. The households were located in the following census regions: Northeast (20.4%), Midwest (27.5%), South (36%), and West (16%). Annual income ranged from less than \$20,000 to over \$150,000 with a median income of \$50,000-\$59,999.

Instrumentation

The research questionnaire included four sections a) the Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP), used to measure family leisure involvement (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001), b) the Family Leisure Satisfaction Scale (FLSS) which is embedded in the FLAP, c) the Satisfaction with Family Life Scale (SWFL), (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003), and d) relevant sociodemographic questions.

FLAP. The Family Leisure Activity Profile measures core and balance family leisure involvement based on the Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning (Zabriskie, 2000). Eight questions refer to core leisure activities and eight refer to balance activities. Each question asks if the respondent participates in the activity category with family members. If yes, respondents complete ordinal scales of frequency and duration for each activity category.

Core and Balance family leisure involvement scores were calculated by multiplying duration and frequency for each item then summing the ordinal index scores of questions 1-8 for core and summing the index scores of questions 9-16 for balance. The total family leisure involvement score was calculated by summing the core and balance index scores (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). Acceptable psychometric properties have been reported for the FLAP with evidence of construct validity, content validity, inter-rater reliability, and test-retest reliability for core ($r = .74$), balance ($r = .78$), and total family leisure involvement ($r = .78$) (Zabriskie, 2001).

FLSS. The Family Leisure Satisfaction Scale measures satisfaction with family leisure involvement based on the Core and Balance Model and is embedded in the FLAP. Following each of the 16 family leisure involvement items is a satisfaction with family leisure involvement item. Responses were rated on a Likert-type scale with scores ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Family leisure satisfaction scores were calculated by summing items 1 through 8 for a satisfaction with core family leisure involvement score and summing items 9 through 16 for a satisfaction with balance family leisure involvement score. Total family leisure satisfaction was calculated by summing core and balance satisfaction scores. While the FLAP has demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties no evidence of validity and reliability has been reported for the FLSS. In the current study internal consistency for both the parent and youth samples were acceptable ($\alpha = .90$).

SWFL. The Satisfaction with Family Life Scale asks respondents to answer five questions using a seven point Likert-type scale (with scores ranging from 1 = strongly

disagree to 7 = strongly agree) to indicate the level which they agree or disagree with the statement. Scores are calculated by summing all items which produces a satisfaction with family life score with a range of 5 to 35. The scale has demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties including evidence of construct validity, internal consistency ($\alpha = .93$), and test-retest reliability ($r = .89$) (Zabriskie, 2000; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003).

Sociodemographic questions were used to identify underlying characteristics of the sample. They included state of residence, urban or rural residence, marital status of the parent, history of divorce, age, ethnicity, and gender of parents and youth, education, income, and family size.

Analysis

The statistical program SPSS was used to analyze the data. Data were first reviewed for missing responses and examined for outliers. Descriptive statistics were calculated to examine various characteristics of the research variables. The following three data sets were compiled: (a) parent responses, (b) youth responses, and (c) family level measurement (the mean of the parent and youth responses for each family). Pearson Product Moment zero-order correlations were calculated between variables in each data set to check for multicollinearity and to identify possible controlling factors to be included in regression equations.

In an effort to examine the unique perspectives from parents and their children as suggested in previous research (Agate et al. 2007; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003) blocked multiple regression analyses were conducted for the parent, youth, and family mean data sets. The first block included only sociodemographic variables, the second block added the variables of core and balance family leisure involvement, and the third block added the core and balance family leisure satisfaction variables. The dependant variable of satisfaction with family life was regressed on the independent variables for each data set. Independent variables were included in the regression models if they had significant zero-order correlations to the dependent variables or if they were theoretically justified to be included based on past literature. For each model, the multiple correlation coefficients were examined at the .05 alpha level, and the standardized regression coefficients (Beta) were examined to determine the contribution of each variable in the significant models.

Results

In the parent data set core family leisure satisfaction scores ranged from 8 to 40 ($M = 29.97, SD = 5.201$); balance family leisure satisfaction scores ranged from 9 to 40 ($M = 29.11, SD = 5.132$); and total family leisure satisfaction scores ranged from 20 to 80 ($M = 59.09, SD = 9.513$). In the youth data set core family leisure satisfaction scores ranged from 8 to 40 ($M = 30.24, SD = 4.656$); balance scores ranged from 8 to 40 ($M = 28.98, SD = 4.969$); and total family leisure satisfaction scores ranged from 18 to 80 ($M = 59.21, SD = 8.888$). In the family mean data set core family leisure satisfaction scores ranged from 8 to 40 ($M = 30.10, SD = 4.401$) balance scores ranged from 11 to 40 ($M = 29.04, SD = 4.555$) and total family leisure satisfaction scores ranged from 19 to 80 ($M = 59.15, SD = 8.38$).

In the parent data set core family leisure involvement scores ranged from 2 to 126 ($M = 44.21, SD = 15.90$); balance scores ranged from 0 to 179 ($M = 51.30, SD = 25.68$); and total scores ranged from 2 to 252 ($M = 95.51, SD = 35.54$). In the youth data set core family leisure involvement scores ranged from 0 to 134 ($M = 42.37, SD = 17.66$); balance scores ranged from 0 to 167 ($M = 52.50, SD = 25.91$); and total scores ranged from 0 to 261 ($M = 94.87, SD = 37.43$). In the family mean data set core family leisure involvement scores ranged from 1 to 126.5 ($M = 43.29, SD = 15.35$); balance scores ranged from 0 to 173 ($M = 51.90, SD = 24.31$); and total scores ranged from 1 to 241.5 ($M = 95.19, SD = 34.34$). Scores were consistent with previous research (Agate et al., 2007; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003) that used the FLAP.

In the parent data set satisfaction with family life scores ranged from 5 to 35 ($M = 24.47, SD = 7.218$). Youth scores ranged from 5 to 35 ($M = 24.95, SD = 7.144$). Family mean scores also ranged from 5 to 35 ($M = 24.714, SD = 6.553$). Scores were consistent with previous research that used the SWLS to measure family satisfaction (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003).

Zero-order correlations were produced to analyze the relationships between all research variables at the univariate level as well as to check for multicollinearity and possible controlling factors to include in regression equations. Results from the parent data set indicated significant relationships ($p < .01$) between all research variables (family leisure involvement, family leisure satisfaction, and satisfaction with family life). Multicollinearity, as indicated by $r > .90$ (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996) was not found between any of the independent variables among any of the data sets (parent, youth, or family). Zero-order correlations were reported between satisfaction with family life and the independent variables of history of divorce ($r = -.16, p < .01$), income ($r = .13, p < .01$), current marital status ($r = .17, p < .01$), and parent age ($r = -.11, p < .01$). Therefore, these variables were included in the regression equations.

Results from the youth data set also indicated significant relationships between all research variables. Zero-order correlations were reported between satisfaction with family life and the independent variables of history of divorce ($r = -.11, p < .01$), income ($r = .13, p < .01$), current marital status ($r = .10, p < .01$), and youth age ($r = -.11, p < .01$). Therefore, these variables were included in the regression equations.

Results from the family level data set likewise identified significant relationships between all research variables. Zero-order correlations were reported between satisfaction with family life and the independent variables of history of divorce ($r = -.15, p < .01$), income ($r = .14, p < .01$), current marital status ($r = .15, p < .01$), parent age ($r = -.09, p < .01$) and youth age ($r = -.07, p < .05$). Therefore, these variables were included in the regression equations.

Following univariate analysis, multivariate analysis was conducted. In the parent sample (see Table 1), the first block containing sociodemographic variables explained a small, but statistically significant amount of the variance in satisfaction with family life ($R^2 = .058, p < .001$). After adding core and balance family leisure involvement into the second block there was a statistically significant change ($\Delta R^2 = .063, p < .001$) in the variance explained by the model. Parent core family leisure involvement was a significant predictor of satisfaction with family life ($\beta = .130, p < .001$) and parent balance family leisure involvement was also significant ($\beta = .170, p < .001$). Upon adding parent core and balance family leisure satisfaction into a third block there was again a

TABLE 1
*Summary of Blocked Regression Equations Predicting Satisfaction
 with Family Life: Parent Data*

Predictor	B	SE B	β	<i>p</i>
Block 1 $R^2 = .058$ ($p < .001$)**				
Parent age	-.105	.033	-.103	.002**
Currently married	1.823	.638	.101	.004**
History of divorce	-1.572	.514	-.105	.002**
Income	.336	.114	.101	.003**
Block 2 $\Delta R^2 = .063$ ($p < .001$)**				
Parent age	-.081	.032	-.080	.013*
Currently married	1.881	.618	.105	.002**
History of divorce	-1.720	.498	-.115	.001**
Income	.230	.114	.069	.044*
Parent core leisure involvement	.059	.016	.130	.000**
Parent balance leisure involvement	.048	.010	.170	.000**
Block 3 $\Delta R^2 = .280$ ($p < .001$)**				
Parent age	-.090	.027	-.089	.001**
Currently married	1.478	.511	.082	.004**
History of divorce	-.813	.414	-.054	.050*
Income	.220	.094	.066	.020*
Parent core leisure involvement	.005	.014	.012	.708
Parent balance leisure involvement	.014	.009	.049	.131
Parent core leisure satisfaction	.518	.055	.373	.000**
Parent balance leisure satisfaction	.344	.056	.245	.000**

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; $n = 898$. Total amount of variance explained by model, $R^2 = .401$

statistically significant change ($\Delta R^2 = .280, p < .001$) in the variance explained. Parent core family leisure satisfaction ($\beta = .373, p < .001$) and parent balance family leisure satisfaction ($\beta = .245, p < .001$) were significant predictors of satisfaction with family life, but parent core and balance family leisure involvement were no longer significant indicators of satisfaction with family life.

In the youth sample (see Table 2), the first block containing the sociodemographic variables again explained a small, but statistically significant amount of the variance in satisfaction with family life ($R^2 = .041, p < .001$). After adding core and balance family leisure involvement into the second block there was a statistically significant change ($\Delta R^2 = .096, p < .001$) in the variance explained by the model. Youth core family leisure involvement was a significant predictor of satisfaction with family life ($\beta = .234, p < .001$) and youth balance family leisure involvement was also significant ($\beta = .128, p < .001$). Upon adding youth core and balance family leisure satisfaction into a third block there was again a statistically significant change ($\Delta R^2 = .193, p < .001$) in the variance explained. Youth core family leisure satisfaction ($\beta = .343, p < .001$) and youth balance family leisure satisfaction ($\beta = .161, p < .001$) were significant predictors of satisfaction with family life.

In the family level sample (see Table 3), the first block, containing only the sociodemographic variables, again explained a small but statistically significant amount of the variance in satisfaction with family life ($R^2 = .054, p < .001$). After adding core and balance family leisure involvement into the second block there was a statistically significant change ($\Delta R^2 = .094, p < .001$) in the variance explained by the model. Core family leisure involvement was a significant predictor of satisfaction with family life ($\beta = .211, p < .001$) and balance family leisure involvement was also significant ($\beta = .148, p < .001$). Upon adding core and balance family leisure satisfaction into the third block there was again a statistically significant change ($\Delta R^2 = .276, p < .001$) in the variance explained. Core family leisure satisfaction ($\beta = .412, p < .001$) and balance family leisure satisfaction ($\beta = .193, p < .001$) were significant predictors of satisfaction with family life.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between family leisure satisfaction and satisfaction with family life. Results from the parent, youth, and family perspectives indicated that there were indeed significant relationships between both core and balance family leisure satisfaction and satisfaction with family life. Paired data collected from parents and youth within families provides interesting insights into the nature of that relationship. Moreover, this is one of the first family leisure studies to gather information from a national sample of this size. Although study limitations must be considered, findings have meaningful implications for parents, practitioners who work with families and scholars who study families.

Relationship between Family Leisure Satisfaction and Satisfaction with Family Life

Current findings are consistent with Russell's (1987) conclusions among individuals, that it was satisfaction with leisure that impacted life satisfaction rather than variables dealing with leisure involvement. Additionally, they were in line with subsequent findings (Russell, 1990) that when examining variables of religiosity, gender,

TABLE 2
*Summary of Blocked Regression Equations Predicting Satisfaction with
 Family Life: Youth Data*

Predictor	B	SE B	β	<i>p</i>
Block 1 $R^2 = .041$ ($p < .001$)**				
Youth age	-.553	.156	-.117	.000**
Currently married (parent)	.884	.637	.050	.165
History of divorce (parent)	-1.192	.510	-.081	.020*
Income (family)	.368	.113	.111	.001**
Block 2 $\Delta R^2 = .096$ ($p < .001$)**				
Youth age	-.338	.149	-.071	.024*
Currently married (parent)	.935	.605	.053	.123
History of divorce (parent)	-1.149	.484	-.078	.018*
Income (family)	.303	.109	.092	.006**
Youth core leisure involvement	.095	.014	.234	.000**
Youth balance leisure involvement	.035	.010	.128	.000**
Block 3 $\Delta R^2 = .193$ ($p < .001$)**				
Youth age	-.327	.132	-.069	.013*
Currently married (parent)	.995	.534	.056	.063
History of divorce (parent)	-.810	.428	-.055	.059
Income (family)	.241	.096	.073	.013*
Youth core leisure involvement	.042	.014	.103	.002**
Youth balance leisure involvement	.019	.009	.068	.040*
Youth core leisure satisfaction	.526	.064	.343	.000**
Youth balance leisure satisfaction	.232	.059	.161	.000**

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; $n = 898$. Total amount of variance explained by model, $R^2 = .330$

TABLE 3
*Summary of Blocked Regression Equations Predicting Satisfaction with
 Family Life: Family Mean Data*

Predictor	B	SE B	β	<i>p</i>
Block 1 R ² = .054 (<i>p</i> < .001)**				
Parent age	-.071	.031	-.078	.022*
Youth age	-.255	.144	-.059	.078
Currently married (parent)	1.344	.580	.082	.021*
History of divorce (parent)	-1.345	.468	-.099	.004**
Income (family)	.360	.104	.119	.001**
Block 2 Δ R ² = .094 (<i>p</i> < .001)**				
Parent age	-.057	.030	-.062	.052
Youth age	-.096	.138	-.022	.488
Currently married (parent)	1.374	.552	.084	.013*
History of divorce (parent)	-1.393	.446	-.103	.002**
Income (family)	.283	.102	.093	.005**
Family core leisure involvement	.090	.015	.211	.000**
Family balance leisure involvement	.040	.010	.148	.000**
Block 3 Δ R ² = .276 (<i>p</i> < .001)**				
Parent age	-.064	.024	-.070	.008**
Youth age	-.047	.114	-.011	.682
Currently married (parent)	1.221	.455	.075	.007**
History of divorce (parent)	-.742	.368	-.055	.044*
Income (family)	.230	.084	.076	.006**
Family core leisure involvement	.019	.014	.044	.178
Family balance leisure involvement	.019	.009	.072	.027*
Family core leisure satisfaction	.613	.065	.412	.000**
Family balance leisure satisfaction	.278	.061	.193	.000**

Note: **p* < .05; ***p* < .01; *n* = 898. Total amount of variance explained by model, R² = .424

education, marital status, age, and leisure satisfaction, leisure satisfaction was the only significant and direct predictor of quality of life. Furthermore, they were consistent with recent research (Johnson et al., 2006) among couples that concluded that satisfaction with joint couple leisure involvement was the only significant predictor of marital satisfaction when considering sociodemographic variables, joint couple leisure involvement, and satisfaction with joint couple time. The findings from this study are the first to report that among families as well, the satisfaction with their leisure involvement together is clearly the best predictor of overall satisfaction with family life, even when accounting for family income, marital status, age, history of divorce, and family leisure involvement. In other words, it appears that the satisfaction with family leisure involvement is more important than the amount of time spent together when considering satisfaction with family life, whether examined from a parent, youth, or family perspective.

Whereas previous family leisure research has focused primarily on participation, insights from current findings suggest that regarding family leisure involvement, more is not necessarily better. In other words, satisfaction with leisure experiences together with family members is also an essential factor that must be recognized. These findings suggest that instead of only focusing on increased time spent in family leisure activities, parents and practitioners would do well to identify individual family members' specific expectations for family recreation and then focus on addressing those expectations. Such efforts would help provide more meaningful family leisure experiences that are individually satisfying and enjoyable.

It must be acknowledged, however, that without some family leisure involvement there cannot be leisure satisfaction. It can also be argued that families who participate in family leisure activities more often and more consistently than others are also more likely to have developed the skills and abilities necessary to create family leisure experiences that they are satisfied with. Current findings add support for this argument. The second block in each model clearly indicated a significant relationship between family leisure involvement and satisfaction with family life for families in this sample as has been reported in previous work (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). The fact that the addition of the leisure satisfaction variables allowed the model to explain much more variance in satisfaction with family life and rendered leisure involvement non significant from some perspectives does not completely discount the importance of the involvement itself. In fact it must be pointed out that, from the youth perspective, both core and balance leisure involvement remained significant predictors even after the family leisure satisfaction variables added much more explained variance to the model. In other words, among early adolescents both the amount and the satisfaction with their family leisure experiences are essential to their perceptions of satisfaction with their family life.

Another significant contribution of this study was the overall amount of variance in family life satisfaction that was explained by family leisure satisfaction. Results indicated that sociodemographic variables explained a significant but small amount of variance in family life satisfaction (R^2 ranged from .041 to .058 depending on data set). The second block which included the family leisure involvement variables also explained a significant but small amount of the variance (ΔR^2 ranged from .063 to .096). In the third block, which added core and balance family leisure satisfaction, the

change in the amount of variance explained in the model (ΔR^2 ranged from .193 to .302) was up to seven times higher than the previous blocks. Furthermore, the overall variance explained in the models ranged from 33 to 42 percent, which is unusually high when examining sociological variables. The importance of the amount of variance in satisfaction with family life that is explained by family leisure satisfaction cannot be understated. This implies, similar to claims among individuals (Russell, 1990), that family leisure satisfaction may be the single most important explanatory factor when considering perceptions of satisfaction with family life.

Relationship between Core Family Leisure Satisfaction and Satisfaction with Family Life

The use of the Core and Balance Model allowed researchers to understand satisfaction with different types of family leisure as they were related to satisfaction with family life. In parent, youth, and family analyses, results indicated that core family leisure satisfaction explained a much greater amount of the variance in satisfaction with family life than balance family leisure satisfaction. These results support previous findings (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003) that among youth, core family leisure involvement appears to explain more variance in satisfaction with family life than balance family leisure. Current findings, however, go beyond previous research and are among the first to identify a similar relationship from a parent or family perspective. Zabriskie and McCormick reported that core and balance family leisure involvement contributed equally to satisfaction with family life for parents. For this sample, core family leisure satisfaction was the single greatest predictor of satisfaction with family life and explained up to twice as much variance as balance family leisure satisfaction from a parent, youth, and family perspective.

Although the importance of core family leisure has been identified while examining various other family outcomes (Agate et al., 2007; Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003; Smith et al., 2004), the consistency and strength of the correlations in the current findings not only confirm, but add greater emphasis and insight into the significance of core family leisure. Whereas popular or intuitive beliefs might suggest that family members, particularly younger adolescents, may place greater value on novel, exciting, or challenging balance types of family activities, the frequent, simple, home-based, and low-cost nature of core family leisure clearly stands out in current findings. Again it is important to recognize that satisfaction with balance family leisure is still a significant factor that cannot be discounted. It is likely that involvement and satisfaction with both the core and balance category complement one another and is the most beneficial to family members as the model suggests. Findings from this sample are quite clear, however, particularly from the youth perspective, that family involvement and satisfaction with frequent, simple, home-based activities such as reading together, eating dinners together, playing board games, playing catch in the yard, and attending family member's games or performances, is absolutely essential to satisfaction with family life.

Practical Implications

Findings from this study have several valuable implications for families and those who work with families. They provide further empirical evidence indicating that family leisure involvement is related to satisfaction with family life. The role of family leisure involvement may be discounted by busy parents and is often overlooked by profes-

sionals who work with families. These findings, however, clearly indicate that family leisure involvement is an integral component of satisfaction with family life and must be considered. Of further significance is the finding that satisfaction with family leisure involvement appears to play a much greater role in family life satisfaction than does the amount of participation alone. As families today face many challenges (DeFrain & Asay, 2007b), it is necessary that all potential possibilities to strengthen them be considered. Current findings provide a meaningful avenue through which parents and professionals can work to provide enriching experiences for families. They not only provide empirical evidence that family leisure satisfaction is correlated with satisfaction with family life, but they do so from parent, youth, and family perspectives. Furthermore, they give relatively clear direction as to the kinds of family leisure activities that appear to contribute most to satisfaction with family life.

The new evidence that the current research provides to reinforce the essential nature of core family leisure satisfaction cannot be understated and should be taken into account by recreation practitioners when considering family programming and service provision. Swinton (2006) identified a significant relationship between core family leisure participation and core family leisure satisfaction. Therefore, as recreation practitioners provide creative opportunities for families to participate in core types of family activities (as well as teach families the importance of these types of activities and the skills to participate in them), they are also likely to increase core family leisure satisfaction among families in their constituency. For example, Zabriskie (2001a) described how one municipal parks and recreation department modified simple aspects of their youth sports programs to involve families. Games were scheduled regularly and consistently, and ample space and activities were provided to encourage regular participation for the entire family. Coaches were encouraged to give players homework assignments to practice daily with family members at home, thus fostering more core family involvement. Simple modifications like these are just one way that findings from this study can guide programming in a conscious effort to influence satisfaction with family life among families in their communities.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Overall, findings from this study indicate that satisfaction with family leisure involvement, particularly when based in and around the home, is the single best predictor of satisfaction with family life among families in this national sample. Limitations of the study, however, must be recognized. Although data were collected from a parent and child from each family, the sample was perhaps one of the largest examined in this line of study but not representative of the entire population. The online response method may have resulted in some limitations. Many U.S. households do not have internet access. While a full range of annual incomes was represented, the majority of parent respondents were white females, thus limiting the perspectives of families from diverse ethnic backgrounds and those from fathers in the home. Further research targeting more ethnically diverse families as well as father's perspectives are recommended. Another future study recommended would be to examine a large national sample including various types and structures of families. The definition and inclusion criteria of "families" for this study were very broad and the research instruments did not ask about specific family types. The demographics of families are changing (i.e.

single-parent families, lesbian/gay families, grandparents or other family members as care givers), and it would be interesting to examine how these changes may or may not influence family leisure satisfaction and satisfaction with family life.

Additionally, correlational techniques were also utilized in this study. Therefore, interpretations regarding the directionality of relationships cannot clearly be made without further study. A better understanding of the relationship between family leisure satisfaction and satisfaction with family life may come through longitudinal studies in which data are collected on multiple occasions over time. Future research may also benefit by collecting data from all family members so as to gain a complete view of family members' experience. More sophisticated analysis techniques such as hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) that would allow for nested models at the family level may be useful with such data sets. A richer and deeper understanding of the meaning and contribution of core family leisure that qualitative methodologies can provide is also recommended. Possible societal changes that may have contributed to parents finding greater satisfaction in core family leisure involvement than they have done in the past should also be explored. Such research may shed further light on family life satisfaction and family leisure satisfaction and may contribute to the growing body of knowledge regarding leisure and today's families.

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