

The Relationship between Degree of Influence of Agents of Leisure Socialization and Generalized Leisure Self-Efficacy Among University Students

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INTRODUCTION

Many factors are assumed to affect individuals' general sense of self-efficacy in leisure. This general sense of self-efficacy is defined by individuals' beliefs about their competence, control, and mastery with respect to their repertoire of leisure pursuits. Among the numerous factors that are assumed to have an impact on individual's generalized leisure self-efficacy are their personal histories of successes and failures in leisure activities (Ellis and Witt, 1986; Iso-Ahola, 1980, 1984; Savell, 1986; Weissinger, 1988); their personality dispositions (Mannell, 1984); their leisure attitudes, values, and motivations (Beard and Ragheb, 1980, 1983; Crandall, 1980; Mundy and Odum, 1979); and influences of various development factors that have directed people's socialization into their culture during childhood and adolescence (Bandura, 1986; Damon, 1983; Kelly, 1977).

Although a few studies have been conducted that provide insight into factors that influence generalized leisure self-efficacy, no previous studies have taken a life cycle orientation to examine influences of such important agents of socialization as parents, peers, teachers, and television during childhood and adolescence. Existing theoretical and empirical evidence, however, would suggest that these agents of socialization may play a major role in determining generalized leisure self-efficacy primarily during childhood and adolescent stages of the life cycle (Iso-Ahola, 1980; McPherson, 1976). The purpose of this study, therefore, was to examine the relationship between degree of influence of parents, peers, teachers, and television and generalized leisure self-efficacy among university students. Based on research conducted by McPherson (1976), this relationship was tested separately for the total sample, males, and females.

Usable data were collected from 409 university students (200 male and 209 female) enrolled in general education courses at a California state university. Generalized leisure self-efficacy was measured using three instruments identified by Ellis and Yessick (1989) as representing a common theme approximating leisure self-efficacy. These instruments included the Intrinsic Leisure Motivation Personality Disposition Scale (ILM) (Weissinger, 1988), the Self-as-Entertainment Scale (SAE) (Mannell, 1985), and the Perceived Freedom in Leisure Scale (PFL) (Ellis and Witt, 1986). Degree of influence of leisure socialization agents was measured by the Leisure Socialization Agent Influence Inventory scales (LSAII) developed by the author and based upon the sources of self-efficacy information identified by Bandura (1986) as enactive attainment, verbal persuasion, vicarious experience, and physiological state. The LSAII consists of four subscales: parent influence, peer influence, teacher influence, and television influence. Each of these subscales is made up of 12 items with 3 items representing enactive attainment contribution, 3 items representing verbal persuasion contribution, 3 items representing vicarious experience contribution, and 3 items representing physiological state contribution. Three rounds of pilot testing were conducted to refine the scales and gain confidence in their reliability and validity. Reliability coefficients for the subscales of the LSAII were consistently high: parent subscale (0.923), peer subscale (0.894), teacher subscale (0.922), and television subscale (0.956). Dependent measure subscale reliability coefficients were also high and consistent with reliability indices reported previously: ILM (0.876), SAE (0.812), and PFL (0.934). LISREL was utilized to examine the relationship between sources of leisure self-efficacy influence and measures of generalized leisure self-efficacy.

RESULTS

Three separate analyses were conducted for the total sample, males, and females. For the total sample, significant ($p < 0.05$) effects were revealed for peers ($\gamma = 0.382$), television ($\gamma = 0.186$), and parents ($\gamma = 0.131$). For males, peer influence was identified as

the only significant contributor to generalized leisure self-efficacy ($\gamma = 0.460$). For females, both peer influence ($\gamma = 0.310$) and parent influence ($\gamma = 0.150$) were identified as salient contributors to feelings of generalized leisure self-efficacy. Among the indicators of generalized leisure self-efficacy, the PFL scale was most strongly associated with the latent variable ($\gamma=0.955$). Goodness of fit indices for the three casual models were high: 0.982 (total sample), 0.986 (males), and 0.964 (females).

DISCUSSION

The results of this study generally support McPherson's (1976) findings. The results from both McPherson's study and this study indicate that peers exert significant influence over the leisure attitudes of youth. In a departure from McPherson's findings, the results of this study indicate that for females, peers were identified as exerting a stronger degree of influence in feelings of leisure self-efficacy than parents.

The results of this study also support work by Mannell (1984), Weissinger (1988), and Witt and Ellis (1986) in that the three dependent measures used in this study based on their work combined effectively to represent a leisure based construct approximating efficacy which includes personal competence, intrinsic motivation, and perceived freedom. As noted by Damon (1983), Kelly (1977), and Iso-Ahola (1980), peers were identified as salient sources of leisure socialization. Kelly's (1977) research into how childhood exposure to leisure activities in family settings relates to leisure engagements as an adults can be integrated with the results reported here. While parents may be the most important source of initial information about activities in general, peers become more important in influencing how we perceive ourselves in our leisure.

This study utilized Bandura's (1986) social cognitive approach to determine if it could contribute to the explanation of how individuals are socialized into leisure. The testing of the casual models for male and female subjects, as well as the total sample, verified that Bandura's approach, as operationalized in this study, provides a promising basis for explanation.

The results of this study have application to both practice and research settings. Service providers could adapt Bandura's self-efficacy component to leisure settings utilizing counselling as noted by Iso-Ahola (1984) as a basis for enhancing participant/client perceptions of efficacy. The findings of this study regarding the relative differences between degree of influence of agents of leisure socialization could assist leisure service providers in understanding the important role peers play in influencing feelings of efficacy related to leisure among both males and females. The contribution of enactive attainment, verbal persuasion, vicarious experience, and physiological state to perceptions of leisure self-efficacy need to be investigated further as they seem to provide both an intuitive and empirical basis for understanding leisure attitudes leading to selected leisure engagements.

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