

## Structured Leisure and Adolescent Adjustment

### STRUCTURED LEISURE AND ADOLESCENT ADJUSTMENT

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By

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**KEYWORDS:** Structured Leisure, Extracurricular Activities, Organized Activities,  
Adolescent Development

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between participation in structured leisure (SL) activities (e.g., sports, prosocial activities) and adolescent adjustment were investigated. SL activities have been associated with various developmental benefits but there has been a limited number of studies that have investigated the potential negative aspects of participation. Questionnaire data were collected from 210 boys and girls (between grades 10 and 12). Fourteen students participated in focus groups to obtain a phenomenological perspective on SL participation. Adjustment variables included a well-being composite (comprised of depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and life satisfaction), a school orientation composite (comprised of students' levels of school involvement and their values regarding school), academic achievement, and self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism. Three hypotheses were examined. First, it was predicted that there would be a curvilinear relationship between the extent of SL participation and the various adjustment variables. Second, aspects of play and leisure were expected to have moderating effects on the relationships between SL participation and outcomes. Third, aspects of perfectionism were hypothesized to play a moderating role on the relationship between SL and adolescent adjustment.

Although the present investigation yielded some insightful observations about participation in SL activities, the results provided no direct support for the hypotheses. Regression analyses indicated positive relationships between SL participation and self-oriented perfectionism, and SL participation and academic achievement. Negative relationships were found between the degree of playfulness in SL activities and socially

prescribed perfectionism, and between academic achievement and global intrinsic leisure motivation. Notable focus group themes included a distinction between the fun experienced in SL activities and the fun experienced in nonstructured contexts, significant positive and negative experiences related to SL participation, and differences and similarities between the SL context and other contexts such as school. It is argued that leisure theory can contribute to a better understanding of the developmental implications of SL participation and that the relationship between SL participation and perfectionism merits further investigation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SL.....	Structured Leisure
EAP.....	Extracurricular Activity Participation
NELS: 88 .....	National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988
GPA.....	Grade Point Average
ASAQ.....	After School Activities Questionnaire
CAPS.....	Child and Adolescent Perfectionism Scale
SOP.....	Self-Oriented Perfectionism
SPP.....	Socially Prescribed Perfectionism
MPS.....	Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale
CMAS.....	Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale – Revised
CDI.....	Children's Depression Inventory – Short Form
ILMS.....	Intrinsic Leisure Motivation Scale
ILM.....	Intrinsic Leisure Motivation
SLSS.....	Student Life Satisfaction Scale
SPPA.....	Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of how children and adolescents spend their time has received considerable attention from researchers, clinicians, and society in general (Larson, 2001; Mahoney, Harris, & Eccles, 2006). One particular area of recent interest is structured leisure (SL). Young people are often encouraged to participate in various activities such as sports, youth organizations, and fine arts. Although these activities have generally been found to be developmentally beneficial for participants, researchers have recently begun to take a more critical approach to investigating their developmental implications (e.g., Eccles & Barber, 1999; Luthar, Shoum, & Brown, 2006; Mahoney et al., 2006). The underlying question that drives this area of research is whether young people are spending their time in ways that are healthy and beneficial to their development into competent adults. Opinions on this subject range from the belief that the majority of youth are bored, unmotivated, and unchallenged (Larson, 2000), to contentions that some children and adolescents are overscheduled, pressured to achieve, and possibly suffering emotional damage due to this achievement orientation (Elkind, 2001; Kleiber, 1999). Both positions may be valid. However, each may also apply to different populations of youth and different contexts.

The concept of SL has been described in various ways by researchers. The area of SL falls under the broader research domain of *positive youth development* and/or *organized activities*. Admittedly, the term, *structured leisure* has not been used extensively in recent literature. Instead, terms such as *structured voluntary activities* or simply *organized activities* are used as descriptors. Nonetheless, even in recent research

(e.g., Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006), the word *leisure* is still used in reference to adolescent activity involvement. The specific term *structured leisure* has been used, at times, synonymously with youth activities (e.g., Larson, 2001) and is also sometimes used to describe activities that likely do not fall under the realm of leisure (e.g., service activities). One definition of these types of activities, put forth by Larson (2000), is that they are voluntary (i.e., not required for school) and involve some type of structure where participation occurs in the context of constraints, rules, and goals. While it is well operationalized, this definition does not address the leisure aspects of these activities and therefore does not capture the richness of the domain.

Definitions aside, in general, various studies have now demonstrated that SL is associated with a number of positive academic, psychological, and behavioural outcomes (Mahoney et. al., 2006; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a). SL has also been associated with participants feeling highly challenged and motivated (Larson, 2000). This combination stands in contrast to the states associated with school work, which are typically high in challenge and concentration, but low in intrinsic motivation.

Although a number of studies have focused on the benefits of SL, more recently there has been a call for assessing the possible negative implications of such activities (Larson, 2000; Larson & Verma, 1999; Mahoney et al., 2006). Examples of negative outcomes include an association between sports involvement and increased alcohol use (Eccles & Barber, 1999), competition anxiety (Smoll & Smith, 1996), and self-centred moral reasoning (Bredemeier & Shields, 1996). It is possible that non-sport SL

activities may be associated with detrimental outcomes, and more research is needed to assess the potential risks and liabilities.

In a recent study, Mahoney and colleagues (2006) summarized the literature on organized activities and adolescent development, and also utilized data from a nationally representative database of 3563 American families, to examine support for two competing perspectives (i.e., negative outcomes versus benefits) on the developmental implications of organized activity participation. The authors described the *over-scheduling hypothesis* as consisting of three interrelated propositions. First, motivation for involvement in organized activities is viewed as extrinsic and participation is due to the perceived pressure from adults to achieve long-term educational and career goals. Second, the time commitment required for participation is seen to undermine traditional family activities and parent-child interactions. Third, youth devoting large amounts of time to organized activities are seen to be at risk for developing adjustment problems and for having poor relationships with their parents.

The second perspective articulated by Mahoney and colleagues (2006) is that of *positive youth development*. This perspective purports that organized activity participation facilitates positive development and that more participation is associated with more positive development (e.g., improved academic achievement and psychological adjustment, lower rates of antisocial behaviour).

The authors concluded that, in general, there is more support for the positive youth perspective than for the over scheduling perspective (Mahoney et al., 2006). They point out that the research indicates that the vast majority of youth participate in

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organized activities for intrinsic reasons. Results from the analysis showed that youth who participated in organized activities for fewer than 20 hours per week were better adjusted than youth who did not participate at all. Curvilinear trends indicated that increased participation in organized activities was associated with positive outcomes up until a certain level of participation. Optimal levels of participation varied between 5 and 20 hours per week depending on the outcomes. For example, emotional well-being increased with increasing participation, reaching asymptote at 5-9.59 hours of participation per week. Alcohol use declined for youth who participated in organized activities up to 14.59 hours per week. Some negative changes in outcomes were evident with high levels of participation (i.e., reading achievement, self-esteem, alcohol use, child-parent discussions) and the authors acknowledged that there is limited research assessing the developmental implications for highly involved participants.

It is clear that the relationship between SL and well-being is complex, and other perspectives, aside from the over-scheduling hypothesis and positive youth development, may provide insight into this relationship. From a leisure perspective, one of the fundamental challenges is to determine a suitable balance among imposing structure and facilitating self-expression and intrinsic motivation (Kleiber, 1999). Indeed, the combination of *structure* and *leisure* can at times be problematic. The drive to provide children and youth with structure and supervision stems from the notion that “idle hands are the devil’s workshop” and children need guidance in order to develop important skills and values (Kleiber, 1999). The socialization function of leisure can be beneficial to children and adolescents in terms of productively occupying their time and

thus discouraging deviant or antisocial behavior. The potential problem with this approach, however, is that true leisure may be put at risk. By emphasizing learning and performance, it is easy for intrinsic motivation to be undermined and self-expression to be restricted. When these conditions occur, the benefits of SL may be drastically reduced. As noted by Fredricks and colleagues (2002), more research is needed to determine how youth can benefit from SL without incurring large costs.

One key factor that has been identified in relation to the balance between structure and self-expression is the influence of play (Kleiber, 1999). Play has been demonstrated to have a number of developmental benefits for children (e.g., anxiety reduction, cognitive development, providing a sense of mastery; Barnett, 1991). The question is, what aspects of play produce such benefits? One of the central aspects of play is the relative unimportance of its consequences (Kleiber, 1999). Despite the fact that immediate outcomes can be beneficial, children do not necessarily play to achieve some higher goal (e.g., improved problem-solving skills); they tend to play for the experience, for the enjoyment, and for the exercise of choice. Such freedom allows children greater latitude to test limits and to operate in an environment relatively free of constraints. Although the skills and benefits obtained from play are seen as highly valuable, formalizing and structuring play (via SL activities) may become problematic because an emphasis on structure can undermine some of the benefits of the inherent freedom that define play.

With the fundamental conflict between structure and leisure in mind, researchers in the area of SL must examine how SL activities can incorporate an optimal

combination of these constructs. The relationship between SL and adjustment might not be linear. On one hand, an extreme amount of freedom is likely detrimental to development as most children and youth will not challenge themselves and may simply end up sitting in front of the TV (Larson, 2001). On the other hand, too much structure may bring negative consequences. Having much of their lives scheduled into SL activities has the potential to stifle the self-expression and undermine the intrinsic motivation of many youth (Kleiber, 1999).

The current study has two primary goals. First, an attempt is made to explicitly explore the possible negative ramifications of SL involvement by determining if curvilinear relationships exist between SL participation and adolescent adjustment. While it is acknowledged that SL can have many developmental benefits, attention must be given to potential liabilities of participation. Second, data are analysed to determine potential moderating variables on the relationships between SL participation and adolescent adjustment. Specifically, do aspects of play, leisure, and perfectionism interact with SL participation?

This investigation focuses on the relationships between SL participation and two primary aspects of adolescent adjustment. First, the internalizing outcomes of depression, anxiety, self-esteem, perfectionism, and life satisfaction will be examined in relation to SL involvement. With the exception of self-esteem, these constructs have received limited attention in the SL literature. Second, the relationships between SL participation and academic achievement, students' levels of school involvement, and their values regarding school will also be assessed. Of interest in the current study is



whether an examination of these outcomes will help elucidate the subtle emotional aspects of SL participation. It may be that SL participation is associated with improvements in these areas. However, it is also possible that too much SL participation, or SL participation that is lacking in certain qualities (e.g., certain aspects of play and/or leisure), may lead to detrimental consequences. Another possibility that will be considered is that certain variables such as perfectionism may act as moderators on the relationships between SL participation and adjustment.

A great deal of research in this area has focused on the relationship between SL activities and outcomes (e.g., school dropout) for youth who could be considered *at-risk*. Although these efforts are commendable and vital, there has been limited research, until recently, focusing on the potential risks of participation for the general population of children and adolescents who regularly participate in SL and have a number of opportunities to do so. Accordingly, findings of this investigation may suggest important improvements in SL activities that will make these activities more beneficial to youth in general. It is important that we are aware of our reasons for encouraging youth to participate in these activities and that we ensure that their development as a whole is addressed. Many reasons for encouraging participation have been proposed including: the development of initiative (Larson, 2000), fostering educational achievement (Marsh, 1992), preventing antisocial behavior (Mahoney, 2000), and providing youth with a context where they can develop and, at times, relax (Kleiber, 2000). While all of these goals are worthwhile endeavors, research should be

implemented to assess if there are any drawbacks associated with activities that attempt to promote such outcomes.

In the sections that follow, I will address key issues for the current study. First, a discussion of leisure will emphasize how leisure has been construed in the past and how researchers currently view leisure. Although there is no one definitive definition of leisure, there are a number of characteristics that are commonly associated with this construct. The relationship between structure and leisure will also be discussed. Next, the construct of play will be examined in relation to leisure. Some authors (e.g., Kleiber, 1999) have identified play as providing the foundation for leisure and it is possible that play may serve an important function in determining how SL may both be an asset and a potential hindrance to development. The literature focusing on SL in relation to adolescent adjustment will also be reviewed. Finally, a description of the current investigation along with results and conclusions will be presented.

## 2. THE MEANING OF LEISURE

Although there has been a recent interest in the relationship between structured leisure (SL) activities and adjustment, there does not seem to be a great deal of focus on the construct of leisure itself. Moreover, despite the inherent need to clearly define constructs under investigation, the majority of studies contain only a few lines operationalizing SL activities. Regardless of the label, the notion of leisure forms the basis of many of these activities. A greater emphasis on the definition of leisure may provide a stronger theoretical component to the literature on SL and adolescent adjustment, thus facilitating a deeper understanding of the relevant processes. Similar to many abstract and complex constructs, a brief, definitive, and comprehensive definition of leisure is likely not a realistic expectation. Nonetheless, an examination and critique of various definitions of leisure is a critical starting point.

The construct of leisure has been conceptualized in many different ways, and aspects of leisure have changed throughout history. Much of the literature focusing on leisure credits the ancient Greeks with initiating some of the most thorough and thoughtful discussions on this topic (Goodale & Godbey, 1988). For the Greeks, leisure was seen as an ideal and a way of life. Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato viewed leisure as an ideal state of being devoted mainly to contemplation, discourse, and self-expression (Kleiber, 1999). Leisure was a human condition that emphasized freedom from obligation and a focus on the refinement of character. Although some modern academic perspectives have begun to revisit the Greek notions of leisure (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991) it is apparent that ideas regarding leisure in the late

20<sup>th</sup> century have drastically diverged from those discussed by the ancient Greeks. I will first focus on the traditional approaches that researchers have used to define leisure (e.g., as discretionary time, as activity, as experience). Following this discussion more modern definitions of leisure will be presented (e.g., leisure as self-actualization, leisure as a context).

One manner in which leisure has been defined is as discretionary or free time (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991). Thus, whenever individuals are not engaged in obligatory activities (e.g., work, sleep, survival activities) they are in the realm of leisure. The problem with this approach is that much of this *free* time is not free and does not allow for a clear definition of what is leisure and what is not. Many activities are not clearly designated as obligatory or discretionary. For example, family responsibilities and religious activities are both scenarios that would not be seen as traditional work but neither are they often seen as leisure. As will be discussed below, the characteristics commonly associated with leisure are not typically associated with these types of activities. Simply defining leisure as something that occurs when we are not performing obligatory tasks does not lead to a useful definition of this construct.

One of the most often utilized definitions of leisure involves leisure as activity (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991). Yet, if leisure is defined by type of activity, which activities are included in this category? Researchers commonly include those activities that the *culture* places in the category of leisure. Thus, those activities that are seen as recreational and rarely done for productive purposes (e.g., hobbies, sports) are defined as leisure. Again, problems arise with this straightforward definition. First, even if an

activity is commonly seen as leisure, are there conditions under which it no longer maintains its status? For example, is playing golf still leisure when the main purpose is to secure a business agreement (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991)? This question illustrates the blurred boundary between work and leisure activities.

Using *experience* as the primary factor in defining leisure has been common in more recent research (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991). According to an experience approach, whether an individual is immersed in an obligatory or discretionary moment or whether that person is in an activity that is culturally defined as leisure is not of vital importance. The main issue is whether or not that person is *experiencing* leisure. Some of the experiences that have been identified by previous researchers are freedom, intrinsic motivation, absence of social evaluation, relaxation, and enjoyment (e.g., Iso-Ahola, 1980; Neulinger, 1981; Samdahl, 1991; Shaw, 1985; Tinsley & Tinsley, 1986). To determine if there is congruence between popular conceptions of leisure and the experiential definitions devised by researchers, studies into the connotative meanings of leisure have been implemented. These studies have revealed that adults often associate leisure with some combination of the above experiences (e.g., Iso-Ahola, 1980; Samdahl, 1991; Shaw, 1985).

Despite the match between popular and academic models of leisure experiences, it has been argued that an emphasis on experience does not provide an adequate definition of leisure itself. Although these experiences help to elucidate the construct of leisure they still do not define it (Kleiber, 1999). A definition remains elusive because extremely different activities can contain these various experiences. Visiting with a

friend over coffee, and downhill skiing, can both be freely chosen and intrinsically rewarding but the obvious differences between these activities make it difficult to define leisure simply as experience. It has been noted that such disparate activities can be contained within the *context* of leisure (Kleiber, 1999), and these contextual aspects will be discussed below.

Regarding modern approaches to defining leisure, the relationship between leisure and self-actualization has been explored (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991). The notion of self-actualization stems from Greek ideas around leisure, which emphasized a condition of life that was free from necessity and allowed for the exploration of one's potentialities and the development of character. The main thrust of the argument put forth by Csikszentmihalyi and Kleiber seems to oscillate between the approach that leisure should be *defined as* self-actualization and the approach that leisure holds great potential to lead an individual *towards* self-actualization. The authors point out that there are definitely activities such as TV watching and informal socializing that can be defined as leisure but that these activities likely will not lead to self-actualization. On the other hand, there are other activities, such as rock climbing, writing poetry, or dancing, that often do lead to personal growth and discovery and thus to self-actualization.

The key aspect identified in relation to these potentially self-actualizing activities has been labeled *the flow experience* (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The flow experience is a term that was coined by Csikszentmihalyi to describe a state of consciousness that was reported by individuals when they participated in certain

activities. For this experience to occur, a number of characteristics are required to be present. First, there is a merging between action and awareness. In terms of rock climbing, the climber does not feel separate from the rock and his or her movements come without conscious awareness. This lack of self-consciousness is one of the primary benefits of the flow experience. When attention is so intense that there is nothing left to contemplate the self, the individual is no longer restricted by the self-image. Although the self becomes irrelevant during the actual flow experience, it is also argued that it emerges more fully developed afterwards because the activity has expanded its limits. This expansion of the self is one of the key aspects that make flow relevant to self-actualization.

Another criterion of the flow experience is that there needs to be a match between the given activity or challenge and the individual's skills or abilities (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991). If the challenge is above the individual's skill level, then frustration and anxiety are likely to occur. If the skills are overdeveloped relative to the challenge, then individuals are likely to become progressively bored. Finally, the flow experience also requires that the activity provides a clear goal for the person to pursue. Examples include reaching the top of a mountain, winning a game, or completing a poem. Although the goal of the activity is important, in flow theory the main purpose of the goal is to provide feedback regarding the performance of the activity. The goal is not an end in itself; it is sought mainly because it makes the activity possible (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991). In this regard, when an activity elicits a flow experience it becomes *autotelic*, or worth doing for its own sake.

One of the typical benefits of flow experienced during a leisure activity is that new experiences can be explored without being overly concerned about unpleasant consequences. Csikszentmihalyi and Kleiber (1991) argue that the majority of leisure activities are clearly demarcated and have appropriate rules which allow participants to anticipate risks and minimize the unexpected. This experience is different from that of work and other areas of responsibility where individuals are often exposed to the hazards of everyday life and the consequences that accompany the workplace. Thus, in leisure, there is a supportive environment that allows for the optimal growth of the self as there is typically a buffer between the activity and serious consequences. In this arena, learning about oneself is facilitated as an individual can feel free to make mistakes and, thus, explore different aspects that would not typically be investigated or attempted (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991).

A significant amount of research has been done on flow theory (see Csikszentmihalyi, 2000 for a review) and it has been found to be relevant to many areas including leisure. However, when one connects the flow experience back to the idea of self-actualization and the issue of defining leisure, it becomes evident that this approach is also problematic. Using self-actualization as part of the definition for leisure is not much different from using other experiences for a definition (e.g., freedom, intrinsic motivation). Flow can occur in contexts other than leisure (e.g., surgery), and by using flow as a necessary condition of leisure we are excluding other less active experiences, such as relaxation (Kleiber, 2000). Another consequence of focusing on leisure as self-actualizing is that leisure is restricted to prosocial and adaptive activities. The question



arises: Can leisure activities be freely chosen, intrinsically motivating, etc., and yet still have a negative effect on society and possibly the individual performing the activity? While leisure in relation to self-actualization does not allow for this negative aspect, another recent approach to leisure does.

Kleiber (1999) has developed a concise definition of leisure. He defines leisure as “the context of free time in combination with the expectation of preferred experience” (p. 10). With this definition, leisure is seen as more than simply free time and includes the absence of worry and a sense of opportunity. One of the key aspects of leisure from this approach is that it is often experienced as a *change in perspective* where an individual can experience relative freedom and disengage from everyday life. Preferred experiences are seen as experiences that are sought from activities that are intrinsically motivating, not those that follow from instrumental activities such as work that are often (although not always) seen as obligatory and relatively unappealing. As noted previously, the boundary between what is leisure and what is work can at times be blurred. Some individuals are intrinsically motivated in their work, and others may even experience a sense of freedom in this aspect of their lives. Such occurrences demonstrate that the relationship between work and leisure exists along a continuum and is often not clear cut.

Viewing leisure as a context into which many different activities and experiences can be placed allows for a more flexible definition of the construct (Kleiber, 1999). Although a broad range of experiences and activities can be associated with leisure, a number of typical characteristics are often present when leisure occurs. In

addition to a sense of relative freedom, one of the characteristics that is associated with preferred experiences is intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation has received a great deal of attention by researchers (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2000) and has been found to be relevant to well-being in various life domains. Intrinsic motivation occurring within a leisure context has the potential to facilitate self-expression (Kleiber, 1999). Personally expressive activities often create the impression that whatever the activity, it is what the individual was meant to do and it reaffirms that individual's identity. When personal expression is paired with a sense of freedom, the exploration of the self is facilitated as the serious consequences that often accompany everyday life are loosened. Leisure allows for the freedom to make mistakes, which permits risks that would not normally be taken.

Another characteristic of the leisure context is that it often facilitates a social connection (Kleiber, 1999). Whether activities are solitary or group-based, being involved often establishes links with others via the use of specialized language, attire, or other symbols that create the experience of being part of a defined social world. This social link is often associated with leisure activities that are more structured and involve a certain level of commitment from the participants. Aspects of structured leisure will be discussed further below.

Kleiber (1999) has noted that leisure can provide experiences ranging from intense involvement to relaxed detachment. Intense involvement tends to be associated with leisure activities that are more structured and involve more commitment, whereas the experience of relaxation can be the product of disengaging from action and simply

pausing to gain perspective (Kleiber, 1999). Both experiences can be considered under the realm of leisure. Another common experience of leisure is fun. Individuals involved in leisure often experience some type of pleasure or enjoyment. Excitement can also be experienced. Activities such as bungee jumping or whitewater rafting often lead to excitement. Although the above experiences could be considered as those most often experienced in leisure, it is important to note that there are numerous others to consider. Sadness and empathy, for example, can be the result of reading a novel or watching theatre (Kleiber, 1999).

In addition to providing a concise yet expansive definition of leisure, Kleiber (1999) has also identified ways in which leisure is relevant to development. First, leisure behavior can be seen as a *derivative* of developmental change. The contexts within which individuals experience leisure depend on, to some extent, their level/stage of development. For example, an adolescent may no longer want to go on a family outing, instead choosing to socialize with friends at the mall. This different expression of leisure can be seen as a result of that adolescent's developmental change. A second developmental aspect of leisure is that it can be seen as *adjustive*. Leisure can act as a buffer when serious life events intrude on everyday existence. The continuity and the curative potential that lie in many leisure activities can assist in coping with various negative life events (Kleiber, 1999). Leisure can also serve as a context for *generating* growth and personal transformation. Leisure is often associated with freedom from being evaluated by others (e.g., Shaw, 1985), and thus it is understandable that when

one is in a context of relaxed self-expression one is more likely to realize personal potential and explore varied aspects of oneself.

In addition to seeing leisure experience as being derivative, adjustive, and generative, Kleiber (1999) has argued that leisure experience can be *maladaptive*. One example of maladaptive leisure would be over-investing oneself in any one activity, thus, risking a narrowing of identity and the neglect of other developmental tasks. Leisure activities such as prolonged drug use could also be seen as an impediment to development. Additionally, the cultural pattern of staying *busy* could be seen as a potential pitfall of leisure. When leisure activities are taken on simply to fill time or maximize productivity then the reflective value of leisure is eliminated. When our leisure activities have the same frantic pace of as those of our everyday life, the developmental benefits may be greatly reduced (Kleiber, 1999).

The cultural pattern of staying busy introduces an aspect of leisure that is not often discussed in the literature. The societal/cultural components of leisure are obviously difficult to investigate empirically, but such factors inevitably influence both our definition and our expressions of leisure. Authors such as Hultsman and Harper (1993) have commented on the changing face of leisure in light of technological development. These authors take a new perspective on the idea of the “problem of leisure.” Traditionally, authors in the 1950’s and 1960’s felt that an abundance of leisure time would be the next crisis to hit Western society. This prediction was based on the development of numerous time-saving machines and other technological developments that were designed to increase productivity and create more economic

prosperity. Concerns were expressed that citizens would be unprepared to use this time productively and that leisure skills needed to be developed.

Hultsman and Harper (1993) reexamine this issue by reviewing some of the writings of the early critics of industrialization. They argue that what is considered leisure in modern day times has a very different function and value from what was meant by preindustrial leisure. Preindustrial leisure was considered pluralistic and integrated into everyday life. Industrial and postindustrial leisure, on the other hand, has been characterized as lacking a reflective aspect, being segmented, and focusing more on production and skill. The impoverished idea of this type of leisure is well expressed in a quote by Donald Davidson, a critic of industrialism who lived in the Old South:

The kind of leisure provided by industrialism is a dubious benefit. It helps nobody but the merchants and manufacturers who have taught us to use it in industriously consuming the products they make in great excess over the demand. Moreover, it is spoiled, as leisure, by the kind of work that industrialism compels. The furious pace of our working hours is carried over into our leisure hours, which are feverish and energetic. We live by the clock. Our days are a muddle of “activities,” strenuously pursued. We do not have the free mind and easy temper that should characterize true leisure. (as cited in Hultsman & Harper, 1993, p. 52).

The implications of Davidson’s words are well illustrated by another quote from a qualitative study conducted by Fredricks and colleagues (2002). This statement was

taken from an interview with a tenth grade girl who was involved in multiple structured leisure (SL) activities:

It's time consuming. I don't have a lot of time to myself. I feel that my weekends aren't even relaxing, especially right now... The school team starts up for training. And at the same time, I have drama club, so it's like I go straight from soccer to rehearsal. Then on the weekends, it's not even free time to me, it's just when I have to get this work done, or have to do this around the house. And it's stressful. (p. 85)

Hultsman and Harper (1993) argue that viewing leisure as a technical skill to be developed distorts the true nature and significance of leisure. Indeed, these authors are advocating for a type of leisure that emphasizes growth and meaning, and that allows for reflection. The real problem of leisure, according to Hultsmann and Harper, is that society seems intent on reducing leisure to something that is diversionary, escapist, and technical.

It is important to note that Hultsman and Harper (1993) emphasize that not all leisure is characterized by the above aspects. Indeed, technology has increased the number of leisure pursuits available to individuals, and there is potential for leisure activities that facilitate personal growth and the examination of life in general. What these authors advocate, however, is that the current construct of leisure be examined within a cultural and historical context. Geertz's (1973) concept of ethos is relevant here in that it is important to understand how a society directs the growth and development of its members. Ethos refers to the affective, aesthetic, and moral component of human

existence. Current technological society places strong emphases on efficiency, productivity, and other aspects of the Protestant work ethic. These aspects undoubtedly have some influence on the context of leisure and how it is relevant to human development. When leisure is placed within this broader context it becomes prudent to attend to situations where certain types of leisure may have detrimental consequences to development.

Given that leisure can be defined as a context of free time with the expectation of preferred experience (Kleiber, 1999), how is this definition altered when leisure is experienced within a structured environment? Structured leisure (SL) plays an important role in the lives of many adolescents. SL activities often are supervised by adults and one of the main perceived benefits is the socialization effect that occurs from participation (Kleiber, 1999). Although there are definite benefits associated with SL activities, it is vital to recognize that structure and leisure are two constructs that have great potential for conflict. As noted by Kleiber (1999), such activities may lose their leisure characteristics (i.e., sense of freedom, intrinsic motivation, fun) due to the emphasis on learning and performance. The elements of control and achievement that accompany structure make it difficult to develop a successful relationship with leisure. This is not to say that the two constructs cannot be joined in effective ways. Structure has the potential to enrich leisure experiences, thus, allowing for adolescents to become more involved in the experience and to develop in a number of important ways. When adolescents can focus their attention and put forth a concentrated effort in the context of enjoyment, they are able to link the fun and pleasurable aspects of childhood with the

structured and committed aspects of adult life (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984). In this respect, SL activities can be seen as providing a transition between childhood and adulthood.

For the current investigation, Kleiber's (1999) contextual definition of leisure is used to examine structured leisure. From Kleiber's perspective, the leisure context is characterized by freedom of choice, freedom from evaluation, and intrinsic motivation. Various experiences can occur in this context and some of the more common experiences for adolescents in SL activities could include fun, intense involvement, and relaxation. Finally, a fundamental condition for leisure, as described by Kleiber, is that a change in perspective occurs. Leisure allows for participants to disengage from their everyday lives and adopt a different perspective. One limitation to this contextual definition of leisure is that it will likely not map perfectly onto SL activities as these activities do provide structure which then limits some of the above aspects (e.g., freedom from evaluation). It is still argued, however, that these characteristics are more likely to occur in SL activities relative to nonleisure activities (e.g., school).

For the current investigation, attempts are made to assess if some of these defining features of leisure (e.g., intrinsic motivation, freedom of choice, fun) are actually present for participants in SL activities and how they are related to measures of adolescent adjustment. In addition to having these important features, SL activities will also be defined by the presence of some sort of formal coaching or adult guidance as well as regular participation. Thus, for the purposes of the present investigation, SL is defined as the context of free time in combination with the expectation of preferred



experience that involves the presence of some sort of formal coaching or adult guidance and regular participation.

The fundamental conflict between leisure and structure provides the foundation of the present investigation. Although SL activities may provide many developmental benefits to youth, it is important to determine whether there are conditions under which the benefits of such activities are substantially reduced. One of the key components leading to the answer may involve the contextual definition of leisure as developed above. If SL activities retain the vital aspects of leisure, within the structured context, then children are likely to benefit developmentally in a number of ways. However, if aspects of leisure are absent or significantly reduced, it is possible that the benefits of these activities may also be greatly reduced and/or participation may become potentially damaging (e.g., inducing significant anxiety).

### 3. STRUCTURED LEISURE AND PLAY

Of particular relevance to structured leisure (SL) activities is the construct of play. Although it has been identified as the foundation of leisure by some researchers (e.g., Freysinger, 1998; Kleiber, 1999), play has received limited attention regarding its role in SL activities.

Many similarities exist between play and leisure. As with leisure, play is not easily defined. Rubin, Fein, and Vandenberg (1983) noted that various factors can serve to characterize play. These factors include intrinsic motivation, pleasure, free choice, nonliteral aspects, and active engagement. In addition to the above characteristics, play can also be characterized by personal expression and a lack of necessity (Kelly, 1996). Finally, the consequences of play are not of vital importance to the participant; the activity is done for its own sake (Kleiber, 1999). Researchers have identified various developmental benefits of play for children in the areas of cognition, creativity, social skills, and emotional development (Barnett, 1991). It is important to note that much of the play literature focuses on infants and young children. Research emphasizing play in adolescence is limited and not all of the above characteristics (e.g., nonliteral aspects) are likely relevant to adolescent play.

Kleiber (1999; Kleiber & Roberts, 1987) has noted that the use of SL activities can be seen as attempts by society to formalize and structure play for youth. Similarly, other authors have viewed SL activities as efforts to supervise, control, and rationalize the free time of adolescents (Larson & Verma, 1999; Freysinger, 1998). Given the known benefits of play in childhood, having these benefits continue in adolescence is

profitable for everyone involved. However, the constructs of leisure and play are not identical. One important difference between childhood play, and leisure in adolescence and adulthood, is that participants are often expected to have a more self-conscious and aware presence in the activity as they age (Kleiber, 1999; Freysinger, 1998). The free license that existed in childhood is no longer present and restraints are put in place to effectively socialize the participant. In terms of adolescent SL, various degrees of adult control and structure are implemented in order to ensure that the time is not used inappropriately. Such control illustrates the dialectical relationship between structure and leisure.

Another difference between play and leisure is that leisure can be viewed as being a more inclusive construct. For the current discussion, *fun* is seen as a core component of the play context. If children are not experiencing some sort of pleasure, *play* is likely not occurring. In contrast, leisure can involve fun but it can also involve a number of other experiences such as sadness or grief from reading a novel or watching a film. As noted previously, there are many similarities between the two constructs but there are also subtle developmental differences that may help to elucidate the transitional experience from childhood to adulthood.

Although the benefits of SL activities have been said to be most apparent in the dynamics of play (e.g., fun, freedom, intrinsic motivation), some SL activities may not have such dynamics (Kleiber, 1999). When the structured aspect of SL activities is heavily emphasized, aspects of play that provide developmental benefits are likely minimized and participants may no longer be involved in a leisure context. These SL

activities may have benefits in that various skills are gained, but the learning context likely no longer has the emotional satisfaction that so often accompanies leisure (i.e., these activities may resemble work more than leisure). While the aim of many SL activities is to provide a context where adolescents can enjoy themselves, and at the same time gain valuable skills (e.g., perseverance and discipline), the main emphasis may become the attainment of skills. With this emphasis comes the question: Will these activities lead to overall developmental benefits (e.g., improvement in both emotional and performance domains) or simply improve certain skills?

This instrumental focus of SL activities has been identified as being more in line with the values of work rather than leisure (Kleiber & Roberts, 1987). Kleiber and Roberts addressed this issue by discussing aspects of high school play. For example, they identified the instrumentality of high school sport as being antithetical to the values of play. Characteristics such as adult direction, a focus on extrinsic rewards, and formal structure go against what is often thought of as play. Kleiber and Roberts argued that there is a transformation of play as children age and that play often loses its bipolar nature during SL activities. These bipolar aspects involve convergent thinking, repetition, accommodation, and practice on one hand, and divergent thinking, experimentation, and innovation on the other. SL activities may be emphasizing the former aspects to the detriment of experimentation and innovation. This imbalance arguably leads to the *bifurcation* of play into either deviant/antisocial forms (i.e., illicit play) or forms that emphasize a strong identification with the dominant social values (e.g., hard work, discipline, etc.). Both outcomes have potentially serious consequences.

Forms of illicit play may allow for self-expression, but this expression often comes with social costs. With those SL activities that mainly serve to socialize youth and help them become productive adults, there is a risk that their overall development is inhibited as the aspects of true play are not encouraged (Kleiber & Roberts, 1987).

Partial evidence for the bifurcation of play can be found in the results of a qualitative study by Dworkin, Larson, and Hansen (2003), which sought to investigate the growth experiences that accompanied adolescent SL participation. Two of the subthemes that emerged were *learning effort and perseverance* and *learning to manage time*. Frequent descriptions for these themes included “learning to push oneself, trying harder, being disciplined, staying focused...” (Dworkin et al., 2003, p. 21) and “learning to get their homework done, say[ing] ‘no’ to social opportunities, and set[ing] priorities” (Dworkin et al., 2003, p. 21). These descriptions provide examples of how SL activities can potentially serve to socialize youth to adopt the dominant social values of current society. As noted previously, such socialization is not detrimental in itself, but there is the possibility of these aspects being overemphasized and, thus, limiting the developmental benefits that could potentially occur in other areas (e.g., divergent thinking, creativity).

What is apparent in addressing the bifurcation of play and the relationship between illicit and sanctioned forms of play, is the relative absence of real play. Perhaps when a SL activity has a context that allows for intrinsic motivation, freedom, and fun (while at the same time providing meaningful structure), then the developmental benefits will be optimized for such activities.

## Structured Leisure and Adolescent Adjustment

The role of play in SL activities has not been thoroughly addressed in the literature. Aside from the work of Kleiber and his colleagues, few researchers have investigated the relationship between play and SL; one purpose of the current study is to further develop this area. In order to better understand how aspects of play may be relevant to SL activities, it is necessary to review the literature on the relationship between SL participation and adolescent adjustment.

#### 4. STRUCTURED LEISURE AND ADOLESCENT ADJUSTMENT

For the purposes of this review, structured leisure (SL) activities will include those that would meet the criteria as developed in chapter 2. Although not all participants will necessarily experience such activities as SL, it is assumed that, in general, such activities are *intended* to have a context of intrinsic motivation, free choice, and *relative* freedom from evaluation. It is also assumed that, to some extent, these activities are expected to be fun and pleasurable for the participants, while at the same time allowing them to put forth a concentrated effort and to develop certain skills (e.g., communication, creativity). This last component pertains to the structured aspect of these activities and also implies that some type of adult involvement is present.

For the present review, structured leisure encompasses activities labeled in the literature with various terms such as extracurricular activities, organized activities, and structured voluntary activities. To remain consistent with the content of the reviewed studies, the label used in the study (e.g., extracurricular activities) will also be used in the current review when describing the investigation. I will begin by focusing on some of the earlier theoretical developments in this area as well as some identified limitations regarding SL research. Relevant studies that focus on the relationships between SL activities and adjustment (e.g., academics, school dropout, crime, risky behavior, etc.) will then be presented. Existing theoretical approaches will be used wherever possible to organize the present review. These variations are grouped as follows: school-involvement approaches, identity-oriented approaches, and societal approaches. The following section focuses on the links between adjustment and SL, summarizes the

existing findings, and reviews studies that do not focus on a specific theoretical approach. Finally, process-oriented research on SL activities is summarized.

Various hypotheses have been proposed to explain the relationship between SL and development. One of the earliest attempts was made by Coleman with his zero-sum model of extracurricular activity participation (EAP; Coleman, 1961). This approach implies that any activities, aside from traditional educational methods, detract from the achievement of educational goals. By participating in extracurricular activities, adolescents will arguably have less time to focus on their academic lives. Coleman contended that adolescents are primarily focused on peer acceptance and have a lackadaisical approach to academic achievement. From this perspective, EAP is seen as detracting from the amount of time spent on studies and, thus, is harmful to academic achievement.

In contrast to Coleman's (1961) zero-sum model, Holland and Andre (1987) proposed a developmental approach, which considered EAP as having the potential to facilitate the overall development of youth. These authors identified that the values and goals that society assigns to schools tend to oscillate between a simple focus on academic excellence and the transmission of knowledge, and a focus on producing a self-governing adult with well-rounded skills and interests. They stressed that schools need to provide more than academic training and that EAP is one possible mechanism for facilitating overall development.

A more recent theoretical approach has been developed by Marsh (1992) in relation to EAP. Marsh's commitment-to-school hypothesis emphasizes that EAP can



have positive effects on nonacademic outcomes as well as facilitate academic growth by providing stronger ties to the school. A number of empirical studies have utilized variations of this approach.

Holland and Andre (1987) outlined some general limitations of the EAP literature that were aimed at the literature prior to 1987 and many of these limitations are still relevant today. One of the most serious methodological problems identified by Holland and Andre (1987) was the self-selection of students into participant and nonparticipant categories. Although they acknowledged that self-selection could not be avoided in this type of research, the authors argued that researchers need to use methods such as statistical controls to minimize its effects. A second area of difficulty was the lack of attention to variables that were related to both EAP and outcome measures (e.g., SES, student ability, type and extent of EAP, etc.). Without accounting for these variables, researchers are likely unable to fully describe the relationship between EAP and development. Finally the authors also criticized the existing research for its lack of theory development. Theoretical development would allow for a more detailed understanding of *how* EAP occurs and *how* it affects adolescent development.

The current study attempts to address these issues as fully as possible by including measures (e.g., academic achievement, SES, SL ability) that will minimize the influence of self-selection and other methodological limitations. Efforts were also made to adopt a more theoretical approach in order to deepen the understanding of the developmental implications of SL activities.

### *4.1 School Involvement Approaches*

Various researchers have adopted some version of a school-involvement approach in their investigations of structured leisure activities and adolescent well-being. Given the primary focus on the academic domain, understandably, these researchers focus explicitly on extracurricular activities. The main commonality across the various studies that will be reviewed is that EAP is seen as increasing students' involvement in the school environment, and thus providing benefits in both academic and nonacademic domains.

In an effort to investigate the size and direction of EAP effects, Marsh (1992) completed an extensive study with data collected from high school students who were part of a nationally representative data collection effort. The rationale behind the study was to compare the zero-sum model (Coleman, 1961) with his commitment-to-school hypothesis. The main goals of the study included: (a) examining the effects of EAP on students' development during the last 2 years of high school; (b) assessing whether there were non-linear effects of EAP; (c) determining if different aspects of self-concept mediate EAP effects; and (d) determining if EAP effects interact with individual characteristics (e.g., gender, SES, academic ability level).

The sample consisted of 4000 high school students who were in the last two years of high school between 1980 and 1982 (Marsh, 1992). Data were collected in the sophomore year (i.e., grade 10) and then again in the senior year (i.e., grade 12). Important moderator or background variables included SES, gender, race, school size, and prior educational experiences. Outcome variables included standardized

achievement tests, GPA, coursework selection, self-concept, locus of control, absenteeism, getting into trouble, educational and occupational aspirations. Post-secondary educational and occupational aspirations were also collected. EAP was operationalized as a single total score encompassing all of the extracurricular activities endorsed by participants on a questionnaire. Participation in each activity was scored dichotomously for sophomores (0 = nonparticipant, 1 = participant) and trichotomously for seniors (0 = nonparticipant, 1 = participant, 2 = leader/officer). Scores were then summed to provide total EAP.

In the study's design, EAP and the various background variables were used to predict outcomes (Marsh, 1992). Contrary to previous studies implemented on this topic, and in an attempt to obtain an unbiased estimate of EAP effects, Marsh not only included background variables as controls (e.g., SES, gender, etc.), but also used longitudinal data and controlled for EAP and outcome measures in the sophomore year. Overall, 22 senior and postsecondary outcomes were predicted from the combined set of 12 background variables, the 15 sophomore outcomes, and the total EAP.

Results indicated that EAP was significantly related to 17 of 22 outcomes. The effects of EAP were beneficial for each of the outcomes (Marsh, 1992). Greater participation in extracurricular activities was predictive of feeling socially and academically competent, having an internal locus of control, taking advanced courses, spending more time on homework, having higher grades and academic abilities, lower rates of absenteeism, and having higher educational aspirations for senior year and college. EAP also predicted an increased likelihood of being in an academic track,

college attendance, parental involvement in students' education, greater parental aspirations for students, and greater occupational aspirations for students (for both senior and college years).

Results indicated that 15 of the 22 outcomes had nonlinear relationships with EAP (Marsh, 1992). Specifically, these outcomes (e.g., social and academic self-concepts, locus of control, doing homework) formed inverted U functions when paired with EAP. It is important to note that for most of the score range; however, greater EAP was associated with monotonically increasing benefits for all outcomes. For example, the maximum benefits of EAP to academic self-concept were found to be approximately 3 standard deviations above the mean. Once this point was reached, there were no further gains. Neither were there losses. This finding implies that once a certain point is reached, the benefits of EAP are maximized.

Marsh (1992) also found evidence for mediating effects of both academic and social self-concepts on the relationships between EAP and outcomes. When general self-concept, academic self-concept, and social self-concept were included as predictors as opposed to criterion variables, the variance explained by EAP was reduced by an average of 40% (although the majority of EAP effects remained statistically significant). When specific aspects of self-concept were analyzed further, it was found that controlling general self-concept had almost no effect but that both academic and social self-concepts reduced the effect sizes for EAP. With these findings, Marsh concluded that the commitment-to-school hypothesis was supported as this model predicted that academic self-concept has a mediating role in terms of the positive effects

of EAP. That is, students who participated in extracurricular activities were more likely to have higher academic self-concepts, which in turn likely explains part of the developmental benefits of EAP. Marsh concluded that his data did not support a zero-sum model given that EAP facilitated academic outcomes rather than detracted from them.

Marsh (1992) found little evidence for EAP interacting with various individual characteristics. EAP effects were reasonably consistent across sex, ethnicity, school size, and level of college participation. Some variations, however, found for SES and academic ability level. Students from lower SES families benefited more from EAP than students from higher SES families, and more academically able students benefited more than less able students.

To extend the findings of Marsh (1992), Marsh and Kleitman (2002) used data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS: 88). Again, EAP was used to predict a variety of grade 12 and postsecondary outcomes (e.g., school grades, coursework selection, homework, educational and occupational aspirations, self-esteem, locus of control). Outcome data collected in grades 8 and 10 were used as statistical controls for relevant outcomes in grade 12 and post-secondary years. EAP was operationalized in a variety of ways, including number of school-based activities, hours per week spent in school-based activities, a composite of these two measures, and the amount of weekly participation in structured activities outside of school. In addition to testing the commitment-to-school and zero-sum models, the authors also outlined theoretical rationales for nonlinear effects (i.e., threshold model) and increased benefits

of EAP for socioeconomically disadvantaged students (i.e., social inequality gap reduction model).

Marsh and Kleitman (2002) reported that EAP had beneficial effects on the majority of grade 12 and post-secondary outcomes (e.g., school grades, educational and occupational aspirations, self-esteem, freedom from substance-abuse, university enrollment). In further support of the commitment-to-school model, activities that took place in the school context had systematically more positive effects on specific academic outcomes (e.g., school grades) in comparison to activities that took place outside of the school context. Other variables that were not specifically academic in nature (e.g., self-esteem) did not vary with the context of the extracurricular activity.

In support of the threshold model, the authors reported a number of nonlinear EAP effects (e.g., educational and occupational aspirations, not abusing substances, university enrollment, university applications; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). They stated that for all significant outcomes, the form of the function was an inverted U. For most of the typical range of EAP, greater EAP was associated with monotonically increasing benefits. However, extremely high levels of EAP were found to have diminishing returns. Finally, EAP was found to have consistent effects across a variety of student characteristics (e.g., race, school size, sex). In support of the social inequality gap reduction model, socioeconomically disadvantaged students appeared to benefit as much or more from EAP in comparison to more advantaged students.

The conclusions reached by Marsh (1992) and Marsh and Kleitman (2002) are meaningful to the literature on extracurricular activities and SL for a number of reasons.

First, Marsh and colleagues utilized procedures to minimize the effects of preexisting differences in order to obtain a relatively unbiased estimate of the effects of EAP.

Second, as the zero-sum model has been perceived as one of the most influential theories in this area of research (Marsh, 1992), the definitive lack of support for this theory invites further theoretical development. Finally, the rigorous investigation of nonlinear EAP effects is laudable as few researchers have examined the possibility that the benefits of EAP/SL participation may plateau or even potentially have diminishing returns.

A noteworthy limitation of Marsh's (1992) work is the operationalization of EAP into a trichotomy. This approach may have simplified the relationship between EAP and the various outcome variables. A great deal of variability likely existed across students in terms of their extent of participation, and using discrete categories for this variable precludes the detection of such variability. This issue was addressed by Marsh and Kleitman (2002) by using various measures of activity participation and for the current study a continuous measure of participation in SL/extracurricular activities is utilized.

The implications of EAP on school dropout rate (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; McNeal, 1995) and antisocial behavior (Mahoney, 2000) have also been examined from a school involvement approach. In general, EAP has been associated with reduced rates of both of these outcomes. Mahoney and Cairns (1997) implemented a longitudinal study to examine the relationship between EAP and early school dropout across students exhibiting different levels of risk for dropping out. They predicted that EAP

would not have the same effects across participants. Specifically, they argued that EAP would be most beneficial to the least competent students in terms of reducing the risk of dropout. One of their primary reasons for this argument was that marginal or at-risk children differ from highly competent students in terms of the range and breadth of the influences that keep them in school. Competent students are involved in the school environment in a number of ways (e.g., socially, academically, etc.) and therefore EAP may not significantly increase their level of school commitment. At-risk children, however, have limited involvement with the school environment and therefore may benefit a great deal from EAP in reduced dropout risk.

Participants consisted of 392 seventh graders recruited during the 1982-1983 and 1983-1984 school years who were interviewed annually for 6 years (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). EAP was obtained through the use of yearbooks and participation was coded dichotomously (1 = *participation in a given activity* and 0 = *no participation*). Sixty-four different activities were divided into nine categories (athletics, academics, fine arts, student government, school service activities, school assistants, vocational activities, royalty activities) and activity participation scores were determined for each participant (e.g., total number of activities in a given year, number of activities within each domain for a given year, total number of activities participated in across all years for each domain) by summing the values. Measures were also completed by teachers to assess social behavior (i.e., aggression and popularity) and academic competence. The authors performed a cluster analysis using SES, age, academic competence, aggressive



behavior, and popularity with peers as clustering variables. A growth curve analysis was also utilized to model activity growth over time for the various clusters.

The authors identified three categories of competence (High Competence, Marginal Competence, and At-Risk; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). Overall, 16% (27 girls, 34 boys) of the participants were early school dropouts with dropout rates increasing over time. Dropouts participated in significantly fewer extracurricular activities (prior to dropping out) than did those students who remained in school.

To examine the interaction between EAP and cluster membership, EAP was divided into three categories (i.e., no involvement, one activity, and more than one activity) and comparisons were made between the levels of EAP for the respective clusters (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). For data collected during middle school, it was found that students in the At-Risk cluster showed a significantly higher dropout rate than students in the more competent clusters for no EAP and moderate levels of EAP. There were no significant differences found when comparisons were made between students who had high levels of EAP. For data collected during early high school, significant differences were observed only in the case of no EAP for which the dropout rate was higher for the At-Risk group. Additionally, there was a large reduction in dropout rates for students in the At-Risk cluster as EAP increased. For all of the above analyses no gender interactions were present.

The authors concluded from this study that EAP is associated with decreasing rates of early school dropout for both boys and girls (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). They also noted that this effect was strongest among students who were at the highest risk for

dropout. These results provide support for the notion that when students with weak ties to the school environment participate in extracurricular activities such participation creates an opportunity to provide a positive and voluntary connection to the school.

Using the same longitudinal project, Mahoney (2000) examined the relationship between EAP and patterns of antisocial behavior (arrest or school dropout) from childhood to young adulthood. The main goal of the study was to assess whether EAP is associated with a long-term reduction in antisocial behavior. Consistent with the developmental approach outlined by Holland and Andre (1987), Mahoney supports viewing EAP within the context of overall development and as an opportunity for developing more involvement with the school environment. He argues that EAP may act as a moderating variable in relation to antisocial behavior through fostering a positive connection between the individual and the school and encouraging the development of prosocial interests. Mahoney also argues that the benefits of EAP may depend on the extent to which high-risk youth are involved in a social network that supports a value system consistent with the school and society. Thus, in order for a reduction in antisocial patterns to occur, it may be necessary for both participants and members of their social networks to participate in extracurricular activities.

Mahoney (2000) used the same pool of participants used to form the sample in the previous study (i.e., Mahoney & Cairns, 1997), however, the sample size was considerably larger (N = 695). While some differences were present, the sample characteristics were quite similar. Data collection and analytical methods were nearly identical. Important differences were that EAP was simply coded dichotomously (i.e.,

the extent of participation was limited to that of participant vs. nonparticipant), that data were collected on the social networks of participants, and that interview data were collected when the participants were 20 and 24 years of age.

Evidence for four clusters emerged and the basic features of each cluster were consistent across gender and cohort (Mahoney, 2000). The first cluster (Competent) was characterized by participants who were highly competent in all domains assessed and unlikely to experience arrest or school dropout. Cluster two (Resilient) was similar to the Competent cluster except that they were more mature and of lower SES. Individuals in cluster three (At-Risk) were characterized by moderately low academic competence, popularity, and SES and moderately high levels of aggression. Finally, cluster four (High Risk) individuals tended to have high ratings on aggression and below average ratings on academic competence, popularity, and SES. Incidences of dropout and arrest were more concentrated in the At-Risk and High Risk clusters

Although the various clusters were discriminating in terms of subsequent antisocial behaviour, there were a number of individuals who had an early profile of behavior problems and poor academic performance who were not school dropouts and were not arrested as adults (approximately 40% in the High Risk cluster; Mahoney 2000). It was hypothesized that EAP would differentiate high-risk youth who did experience later problems from those who did not. Overall, individuals who were involved in extracurricular activities had lower rates of dropout and arrest and the majority graduated from high school and were not arrested as young adults. In contrast, those individuals who did not participate had higher rates of dropout and arrest. For

High Risk group members, approximately 85% of those who did not participate dropped out of school, were arrested, or both.

The examination of participants' social networks provided an interesting twist to the findings on EAP as there was an interaction effect between EAP and social network participation. For example, High Risk youth showed few associated benefits of EAP unless both they and their peers participated in extracurricular activities. This interaction suggests that peer processes may play an important role in determining how beneficial EAP is towards influencing antisocial behavior.

The results of Mahoney's study (2000) indicated that individuals who became involved in extracurricular activities were less likely to drop out of school as adolescents or to become arrested as young adults than those not involved. This effect was most evident for those individuals who were at the highest risk and was moderated by whether or not peers also participated in extracurricular activities. Another noteworthy conclusion of this investigation was that EAP was found to have positive effects that extended beyond the years of secondary education.

In sum, the studies utilizing variants of the school-involvement approach have found that EAP is associated with various benefits and there is some evidence to support the theoretical notion that these benefits occur as a result of students being more integrated within the school environment. There is also evidence for stronger EAP connections with students who could be considered *high risk*. As noted previously, the current study examines the potential negative associations of SL participation on individuals who are often not traditionally considered to be part of the *at-risk* population

(e.g., middle and upper class youth who are involved in SL activities and the school domain in a variety of ways). The notion of limited benefits may be relevant for domains other than those mentioned above (e.g., depression, anxiety) as there could be unforeseen negative consequences for low-risk youth who participate in SL activities.

### *4.2 Identity-Oriented Approaches*

Whereas some researchers have adopted a school-involvement perspective towards understanding the impact of SL activities, others have investigated how the process of identity development may partially explain the link between SL and well-being. One often-cited study on this topic was conducted by Eccles and Barber (1999) where the main goal was to investigate the longitudinal correlates of EAP during the high school years. It is relevant to note that Eccles and Barber use the terms “extracurricular activities” and “constructive leisure” interchangeably and do not discuss how the various activities they selected fit into either of these categories. For the purposes of this review, EAP will be used to describe the results since extracurricular activities is the term most often used in the article.

Eccles and Barber (1999) noted that it is frequently assumed that EAP results in more beneficial outcomes than other more relaxed types of leisure (e.g., watching TV) because EAP provides opportunities to: (a) acquire and practice specific social, physical, and intellectual skills that may apply to various aspects of life; (b) contribute to the well-being of one’s community and to develop a sense of agency; (c) belong to a socially recognized and valued group; (d) establish supportive networks of both peers and adults; and (e) experience and deal with challenges. Although these opportunities

all likely occur, the authors note that the aforementioned developmental benefits have not been thoroughly tested. Their study attempted to examine both the potential benefits and risks associated with various forms of EAP. They also examined possible reasons for the associations through two potential mediating factors, namely peer associations and activity-based identity formation.

The sample for the study initially consisted of approximately 1800 sixth grade children who were followed through eight waves of data collection beginning in 1983-1984 and ending in 1996-1997 when most participants were 25 to 26 years old (Eccles & Barber, 1999). The results being reviewed here involve 1259 participants who provided two waves of data between 1990 and 1993. The majority of participants were in grade 10 for the first wave and grade 12 for the second wave. Participants completed various questionnaires which assessed EAP, risky behavior, academic outcomes, family characteristics, peer activity involvement, and identity formation. EAP was assessed by having adolescents check off all activities in which they participated. Activities were categorized into prosocial activities (e.g., attending church, volunteering or community service), performance activities (e.g., school band, drama, dance), team sports (e.g., football), school involvement (e.g., student government, cheerleading), and academic clubs (e.g., debate, chess club). Risky behavior was operationalized through likert responses regarding drinking, getting drunk, skipping school, and using drugs. Academic outcomes were assessed by obtaining cumulative grade point averages (GPA's), aptitude test results from students' files, information regarding college

attendance at age 21, and asking students how much they liked school. Finally, parental education was used as a marker of SES.

Multiple regression analyses were performed for each of the different types of activities with the various risky behaviors and academic outcomes as criterion variables and activity types as predictors (Eccles & Barber, 1999). Gender, mother's educational level, and aptitude test results were used as controls as well as the grade 10 levels of the respective criterion variables. Results for prosocial activities indicated that students involved in these activities showed less of an increase in risky behaviors over the high school years in comparison to their noninvolved peers. Prosocial involvement was also positively related to higher GPA in grade 12. Team sports activities showed varied effects across outcomes. Being involved in these activities served as a protective factor in that participants were more likely to like school, have higher GPA's in grade 12, and be attending college full-time at age 21. Team sports were also, however, positively related to drinking alcohol and getting drunk. Those who were involved in performing arts activities were more likely to have higher grade 12 GPA's and were less likely than their peers to drink alcohol in grade 12 (males only). School involvement activities were found to have protective effects in that those involved had better than expected twelfth grade GPA's and a higher likelihood of attending college. Finally, for academic club participation, those who participated were more likely to have higher GPA's and to be enrolled in college than their noninvolved peers.

As with other investigations, the authors found that EAP during high school provided a protective context in terms of both academic involvement and risky

behaviors (Eccles & Barber, 1999). All five categories of activity predicted better than expected high school GPA, and prosocial activities were the only category that did not predict a greater likelihood of attending college. Prosocial activities were also the only category that served as a protective factor against risky behavior for both males and females. In contrast to these positive effects, team sports were found to be associated with an increased use of alcohol. In order to explain these varied effects, Eccles and Barber investigated the links between EAP, peer groups, and identity formation. They argued that EAP provides youth with an opportunity to form identities that allow them to be actors in their social world and to feel competent and successful in their everyday activities. Additionally, EAP may influence the peer group that one associates with and, thus, it would be expected that a synergistic relationship exists among these three factors.

To investigate this hypothesis, Eccles and Barber (1999) collected data regarding the EAP of the participants' friends as well as prototypical judgments regarding participants' identities. Five characters from a popular movie (*The Breakfast Club*; Hughes, 1985, as cited in Eccles & Barber, 1999) were used as a basis for an identity measure. Participants were asked to indicate which of the main characters (i.e., the princess, the jock, the brain, the basket case, and the criminal) was most like them. They were also asked to ignore the sex of the character and simply focus on the type of person each character was. Approximately 9% selected the criminal, 11% selected the basket case, 12% selected the brain, 28% selected the jock, and 40% selected the princess.



## Structured Leisure and Adolescent Adjustment

In terms of the peer group characteristics, it was found that the peer groups of those individuals who were involved in extracurricular activities were more likely to be doing well in school (with the exception of sports participants) and planning on going to college as compared to the peer groups of nonparticipating individuals (Eccles & Barber, 1999). Consistent with the protective aspect of prosocial activities, adolescents involved in these activities had fewer friends who used alcohol and drugs and who skipped school in comparison to nonparticipants. Also, adolescents who participated in team sports were more likely to have friends who drank as compared to those not involved. Eccles and Barber suggest that these results provide initial evidence that peer group association may be one of the mediators of the association between EAP and well-being.

Identity data provided support for various activity-based identities (Eccles & Barber, 1999). For example, participants who were involved in team sports were most likely to identify themselves as jocks. Princesses were found to be overrepresented in both the performing arts and school involvement activities and the brains were found to be overrepresented in the prosocial activities group. Finally, both the criminals and the basket cases were found to be characterized by low participation in all activities (with the exception of team sports for criminals and performing arts for basket cases).

As expected, the criminals obtained the highest scores on measures of risky behavior and the brains obtained the lowest scores (Eccles & Barber, 1999). Conversely, the brains had the highest rates of college attendance (followed by the princesses and jocks) and the criminals had the lowest. As with team sports activities,

the jocks reported relatively high levels of alcohol use (significantly higher than alcohol use for brains and basket cases). The strongest support for a link between identity and patterns of EAP occurred when the jock and the criminal identities were compared. These two groups were doing equally well in terms of academic performance and had similar levels of alcohol consumption in grade 12. What distinguished the two groups was that the jocks had higher rates of college attendance when compared to the criminals. The authors note that one of the meaningful differences between these two groups was that the jocks had a school-based identity whereas the criminals did not. These results suggest that there is a link between identity, patterns of EAP, and adjustment.

In summary, the results of this study indicated that type of EAP, peer group association, and identity had synergistic relationships (Eccles & Barber, 1999). Given these results, it is likely that the type of extracurricular activity both grows out of and reinforces a certain type of identity formation as well as channels friendship networks due to exposure and shared interests. These factors have been shown to influence development even into young adulthood (Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001). While the causal directions are not yet established for these three domains of adolescent development, a recent study (Fredericks & Eccles, 2005) found support for the mediating role of prosocial peer associations on the relationships between EAP and both school engagement and lack of depression.

The main strengths of the investigation by Eccles and Barber (1999) include its longitudinal design and the unique approach of investigating identity via a popular

youth film. Although this study, like many others in this area, used a dichotomous approach to assessing activity participation, this is one of the few limitations of this pivotal study.

Adopting a similar identity-oriented approach, Shaw, Kleiber, and Caldwell (1995) focused on SL and identity formation in a sample of Canadian adolescents. Shaw and colleagues contended that leisure activities play a role in identity development in that activities provide an opportunity for adolescents to experiment with identities (e.g., hockey player) that are based on a sense of competence and/or identification with a social group. Given that SL activities typically involve challenge, effort, and concentration, involvement in SL may provide a transitional vehicle whereby adolescents attempt to bridge the gap between childhood play and adult work. Shaw and colleagues further hypothesized that certain types of SL activities may affect males and females differently. For example, sports have traditionally been within the male domain and, thus, may reinforce traditional notions of masculinity (Messner, 1989). Girls who participate in sports activities may similarly develop beliefs about the self as independent and autonomous, despite the fact that these attributes challenge traditional female roles. Thus, when it comes to involvement in this type of activity, sports may provide girls with an alternative view of the self as compared with males who are faced with congruency.

In order to examine the relationship between SL activities and identity formation, Shaw and colleagues (1995) collected data on various categories of leisure activities. Specifically, sports and physical activities, social activities (e.g., spending

time with friends), television watching, and other free time activities (e.g., hobbies, youth organizations). The authors hypothesized that all of the various activities, with the exception of watching television (which was predicted to have a negative relationship with identity), would be positively correlated with identity development and that sports activities would be especially beneficial for females, whereas social activities would be especially beneficial for males.

The sample for the study consisted of 73 grade 10 students (38 males, 35 females) who completed questionnaires on their time use patterns, self-esteem, and identity development (i.e., the degree to which an individual has a clear and coherent sense of self as well as characteristics such as independence and autonomy; Shaw et al., 1995). In addition to questionnaires, interviews were carried out with a subsample of 20 students. Questions were asked regarding a number of domains such as students' primary leisure activities and how they viewed their own identities.

Results indicated partial support for two of the initial hypotheses (Shaw et al., 1995). First, a significant positive relationship was found between sports/physical activities and female identity development, but, no significant relationship was found for males. Second, a significant negative relationship was found between male identity development and television watching. No other significant correlations were found. Interview results suggested that males were more likely to identify themselves in terms of the sports they participated in, whereas females, even those who had high levels of sports/physical activity participation, were not likely to mention sports as being of primary importance to their identity. When questioned further, females acknowledged

that their sports/physical activities were important to them; however, the relationship between this type of participation and female identity development did not appear to be due to a conscious self-identification as an athlete or participant. Interview data did not provide any insight as to why television watching was negatively associated with male identity development.

The results of the study provide partial support for the notion that participation in sports/physical activities may facilitate female exploration of alternative options in terms of identity formation (Shaw et al., 1995). In terms of the lack of a relationship for males and sports/physical activities, the authors state that the negative developmental outcomes of these activities may outweigh the positives. Although sports/physical activities likely provide challenging and stimulating environments, they may also reinforce traditional male gender roles, thus narrowing the adolescent male's possibilities for alternative identities.

The study by Shaw and colleagues (1995) has some significant limitations. First, as noted by the authors, the study examined broad categories of activity participation, thus precluding opportunities to examine the effects of specific types of activities. Indeed, the use of categories such as television watching and socializing makes it difficult to ascertain the relevance of the findings to SL in particular. The category of sports/physical activities is also problematic in that this category contained both traditionally structured activities such as team sports and relatively unstructured/informal activities such as weightlifting and biking. This is not to say that these activities cannot be structured, but the commitment level required can vary

substantially as opposed to the commitment that is required to be on a formal team. Second, data were analysed using relatively straightforward techniques. Self-esteem was the only control variable utilized and correlational analyses do not allow for detailed statistical controls. For the current study, efforts were made to include relevant controls (e.g., academic achievement, SES). Limitations aside, this study is the only Canadian study on the topic of leisure and identity development in youth.

One of the more recent studies on SL activities with an identity orientation was conducted by Fredricks and colleagues (2002). The goal of this qualitative study was to enhance understanding of those factors that influence adolescents' commitments to extracurricular activities. The authors note that there is a paucity of research regarding our understanding of how context interacts with individual factors to influence persistence and withdrawal behavior.

Participants in the study consisted of 41 adolescents (15 males, 26 females) in grades 9, 10, and 12 (Fredericks et al., 2002). All adolescents came from a European American background and middle class metropolitan areas. A purposive sample was utilized in that most participants had a history of being highly involved and competent in their respective extracurricular activities (either in middle childhood or into adolescence). Specifically, all participants were involved in or had recently quit participating in one or more extracurricular activities (i.e., sports, instrumental music, singing, dance, art, or drama). Studying youth at the extreme end of the participation spectrum was argued to be beneficial in that this group likely has considerable experience with issues of choice and decision making.

Semistructured interviews were focused on the following areas: (a) general changes in the adolescent's life over the past 3-4 years; (b) general hopes and plans for the future; (c) the adolescent's history of involvement and accomplishment in the activity; (d) hopes and concerns about the activity; (e) the impact of the activity on other aspects of life; (f) the role of significant others on his/her involvement; and (g) hopes and plans for involvement in the future (Fredricks et al., 2002). When adolescents were involved in multiple activities, the same set of questions was asked regarding each activity.

Interview data were analyzed using the constant comparative method and researchers took various steps to determine common themes within the interviews (Fredricks et al., 2002). The authors identified three main areas that influenced participants' decisions regarding activity participation. The first domain focused on psychological factors, and the most common reason youth reported participating in an activity was to obtain enjoyment. Activities were described as being fun or pleasurable, and the two most frequently cited reasons for these experiences were that participants were good at the activity and they had an opportunity to see their friends. Being good at the activity motivated participants to maintain their involvement as they reported feeling increased self-confidence, and it seemed that their involvement possibly helped to compensate for areas of weakness (e.g., social or academic domains). Extrinsic rewards and recognition for their skill were also relevant to participants. Finally, intrinsic factors, such as simply wanting to improve their abilities, were noted. For those who did not feel that they had the necessary skills, interest in their activities tended to wane over

time. These participants found that they could not remain competitive as time progressed. In terms of peer interaction, adolescents reported that they participated in their activity because it helped them find a peer group with common values and interests. Other significant psychological reasons (although less commonly reported) for participation included wanting to please parents and coaches, keeping busy, benefits for the future, and relieving stress.

The second area of influence involved contextual factors (Fredricks et al., 2002). In terms of the community context, the authors noted that the adolescents involved in the study came from a middle class suburban community where they were encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities and there were a number of alternatives in terms of participation. Participants were also encouraged to attend college and develop personal interests and talents in relation to their careers. Contextual factors specific to the activities involved participants' perceptions of being challenged, opportunities for learning skills and life lessons, and the stressors associated with participation. For challenge, there needed to be an optimal level in order to facilitate the activity. If too little challenge was present, participants were not motivated to put forth effort. If the activity was too difficult, adolescents felt inadequate and became frustrated. Participants also noted that they learned such things as discipline and teamwork from participating in their activities. A notable negative aspect of many activities was the accompanying stress. Adolescents mentioned feeling pressured by the competition and feeling dejected when performances did not match expectations. Attempts to balance activities with other interests and obligations were also seen as stressful by participants. Finally, other



stressors that arose were the physical consequences of participation such as being injured and often feeling tired.

The third area identified by the authors involved the interplay between psychological/individual factors and the individual's perceptions of the context of the activity (Fredricks et al., 2002). When there was a mismatch between these two areas, individuals had to reevaluate their levels of commitment. How the activity related to the participant's emerging identity was seen as a critical factor. On one hand, when individuals were able to see themselves as an athlete, musician, or artist, their activities served to complement their identities. On the other hand, when the activity-based identity did not fit with the person, it was unlikely that the activity would be continued.

Fredricks and colleagues (2002) argued that psychological factors, context, and identity formation have reciprocal effects on EAP. Participation is seen as beginning with early opportunities and encouragement in childhood. Decisions regarding whether to continue participation or quit in adolescence are based on a complex interplay of the above factors. If these factors become out of balance, it is likely that participation will be reduced or eliminated.

The study by Fredricks and colleagues (2002) is one of the few investigations that have produced an in-depth analysis of the processes that are relevant to adolescents' experiences of SL. Results indicated that, as expected, EAP provides many perceived benefits to youth. In addition to these benefits, however, youth may experience considerable stress associated with these activities. For some, the stress may be worthwhile, and overall they may obtain significant developmental benefits. For others,

who do not identify with the activity, the stress may be detrimental to their development. Although the findings may not be generalizable to the larger population of adolescents in these activities, the conclusions and the reciprocal effects of identity, psychological factors, and contextual factors warrant further investigation. As noted by the authors of the study, the qualitative analysis provides insight into the process aspect of participation and also generates hypotheses. They have also identified that there is a need for further research on: (1) how the developmental implications of EAP vary depending on individual and contextual characteristics, (2) whether there are harmful outcomes that come with too much participation, and (3) the influence of significant others (e.g., parents, coaches, peers) on EAP.

In addition to the many strengths of the investigation by Fredricks and colleagues (2002), there are limitations. First, as noted by the authors, only the perspectives of adolescents were obtained. Given this single perspective, it is possible that external reasons for participation or nonparticipation were not found (e.g., some participants may not have disclosed being cut from an activity). Second, due to the small sample size, differences based on gender, age, type of activity, and length of involvement were not considered. Finally, although the authors did focus on community contextual factors, they did not elaborate on the large scale cultural factors that may affect SL/EAP. Various authors have identified the societal pattern of staying busy and maintaining a frantic pace of life (e.g., Hultsman & Harper, 1993; Kleiber, 1999), and this pattern has potentially had an effect on SL activities.

Taken together, research indicates that SL activities likely play significant roles in terms of adolescent identity formation. However, Kleiber (1999) has noted that research on identity formation has not adequately addressed the role of leisure in influencing identity. In addition to not fully addressing the positive influences of leisure, the potential detrimental effects of SL activities on identity development have also not been adequately addressed. Kleiber has noted that an overinvestment in an activity could potentially result in *identity foreclosure*. When adolescents are too involved and committed to an activity, they may no longer be able to explore aspects of themselves that are outside the realms of that activity. When and if such an overcommitment occurs has not yet been established, and it is also relevant to note that many factors (e.g., the support of peers) could potentially mitigate the consequences of such an overcommitment (Kleiber, 1999). Nonetheless, given that adolescence is a period of development that should be characterized by exploring alternative ways of being, it is important to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between exploration of, and commitment to, various SL activities.

While identity formation is not a specific construct of interest for the current study, it is plausible that the presence of internalizing symptoms may be indicative of identity foreclosure. When adolescents are too involved in an activity they may feel restricted and may suffer from such symptoms as anxiety or depression. A link between depression and constricted self-identity has already been identified by various authors (e.g., Linville, 1985; Thoits, 1983) and similar results may be evident for other internalizing constructs. As demonstrated by Fredricks and colleagues (2002), important

insights regarding both the positive and negative implications of SL participation can also be gained by directly asking adolescents about their SL involvement. The current study incorporates this approach in the form of focus group methodology.

### *4.3 Societal Approaches*

The only empirical study that has attempted to address the role of societal influences on SL participation was performed by Shaw, Caldwell, and Kleiber (1996). This Canadian study utilized the same sample as the previously reviewed study by these authors (Shaw, Kleiber, & Caldwell, 1995) but focused on whether free-time activities were related to boredom, time stress, and lack of control. These variables were chosen in order to examine potential ways in which adolescents may react to having their lives structured by adult society. Specifically, the goals of the study were to determine the extent to which adolescents experience boredom, time stress, and lack of control (lack of choice) during their free time and in school.

In addition to information about time spent at school, homework, chores, and paid work (as described earlier), participants also reported on their attitudes towards time stress (e.g., “I often feel I don’t have enough time to do all the things I have to do”), boredom (e.g., “Time often weighs heavy on my hands”), and their degree of choice in everyday activities (e.g., “I have to do what other people want a lot of the time”; Shaw et al., 1996). For each of these areas students were asked to respond in regards to situations at school and situations outside of school. A subset of 20 students participated in interviews and were asked about their free time activities and their experiences with time stress, boredom, and lack of choice in their daily activities.

Although there was a global focus on general time use in this study, the present review will focus on the results relevant to SL activities (Shaw et al., 1996). In terms of time stress, the results indicated that approximately half of the sample reported not having enough time outside of school and approximately 25% reported feeling rushed much of the time out of school. Chi square analyses indicated that females were more likely to experience time stress than males, and this finding was supported by interview data as well. Both males and females reported that activities such as school and homework were factors related to their experiences of time stress, as well as participation in organized activities and paid work. In response to being asked about how often she felt rushed or stressed during the week, one participant stated: “Probably during the whole week because I have to work during the whole week and I go to army cadets and I have gymnastics and to babysit and do my homework ... Sometimes I feel like I am going to have a nervous breakdown but I don’t” (Shaw et al., 1996, p. 282). Interestingly enough, there was also a positive relationship between boredom and time stress for males, suggesting that these two experiences are not mutually exclusive. Although there was a focus on the sense of control that participants felt they had in regards to their activity participation, the broad categories utilized (within and out of school) did not allow for a specific focus on SL activities.

The study by Shaw and colleagues (1996) is relevant to the current topic because the authors focus on how youth may be experiencing time stress and a sense of little to no control in their daily activities. Few studies have examined this aspect of adolescent experience in relation to SL activities and more research is needed to determine the

developmental consequences of these experiences. The present study attempts to address these issues by examining how greater participation in SL activities is related to measures of internalizing behaviors. It is possible that when adolescents are spending too much time on SL activities, they may feel out of control and anxious regarding their numerous commitments in both SL and regular daily activities (e.g., homework, chores).

### *4.4 Links between SL and Adjustment*

Although there has been a recent interest in the previously reviewed theoretical approaches to the literature on SL activities, not all investigations can be categorized according to these theoretical approaches. Attempts have been made to improve theory in relation to SL, but many studies still focus primarily on describing the connections between SL and various indices of adjustment. Although many outcomes have been investigated in the SL literature, the predominant outcomes of interest tend to fall within the externalizing (e.g., criminal behavior, alcohol and substance use) and/or academic domains (e.g., achievement, dropout). Until recently, few studies had investigated the relationship between SL participation and adjustment indices that could be considered part of the internalizing domain. Constructs such as depression, anxiety, and life satisfaction are of primary interest in the present research. Of additional interest is the construct of perfectionism, a potentially relevant variable that may help explain how SL activities influence adolescent development.

*4.4.1 Externalizing outcomes.* Various studies have examined the relationships between SL and externalizing constructs. SL participation has been linked with reduced

antisocial behaviour (Bartko & Eccles, 2003; Holland & Andre, 1987; Mahoney, 2000; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000) and externalizing behavior (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a; Bartko & Eccles, 2003). Findings regarding the association between SL participation and alcohol and drug use have produced inconsistent results. Some research links increased rates of alcohol and drug use with SL participation (sports involvement only; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b), whereas others suggest lower rates are associated with SL participation (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b).

A recent study by Fredricks and Eccles (2006a) examined the relationships between different high school extracurricular contexts (i.e., sports, school clubs, prosocial activities) and various developmental outcomes. The sample consisted of a diverse sample of African American and European American youths who were followed for five waves of data collection from 1991 to 1999. The size of the sample varied from 1480 to 912 participants.

The longitudinal nature of the study allowed researchers to control for prior levels of the dependent variables (i.e., academic adjustment, depression, internalizing and externalizing behavior, alcohol and drug use, and civic engagement) along with gender, race, SES, and achievement related motivation (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a). This design thus provides a conservative estimate of the effects of extracurricular participation as it controls for many of the self-selection biases that are often noted as a concern in research on extracurricular activities. EAP was measured dichotomously

(i.e., yes – no) and was used to predict current adjustment levels as well as adjustment one year after high school.

Analysis of covariance and regression results indicated that high school EAP predicted several indicators of academic, psychological, and behavioral adjustment (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a). Some of the major findings from the study included: (a) Participation in high school clubs and sports activities predicted higher grades and educational expectations; (b) sports involvement was predictive of lower levels of depression, internalizing behavior, and higher levels of self-esteem; and (c) being involved in different types of extracurricular activities was associated with positive adolescent and young adult adjustment. Consistent with other research on extracurricular activity participation (e.g., Eccles & Barber, 1999; Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002), the majority of effects were generalizable across race and gender.

As with other longitudinal studies, the study by Fredricks and Eccles (2006a) has numerous strengths (e.g., controlling for selection effects, ethnic and economic diversity). Overall positive effects were found for EAP. One area of improvement highlighted by the authors emphasized expanding conceptualizations of EAP beyond dichotomous measures of involvement, and the current investigation has attempted to do so by gathering information on the extent of and the experiences involved in SL participation.

Mahoney and Stattin (2000) conducted a study which examined the effects of different types of leisure on antisocial behavior (e.g., lying, stealing, drinking; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). This Swedish study compared levels of antisocial behavior for youth



who participated in leisure activities that emphasized structure (i.e., sports, music, drama, etc.) versus those that were in a leisure context that was relatively unstructured (i.e., a government sponsored youth centre). The study also assessed the peer group characteristics and parent-child relationships of the participants in each group. The authors note that SL activities typically involve regular participation, rule-guided engagement, direction by an adult figure, an emphasis on skill development that is continually increasing in complexity and challenge, sustained attention, and clear feedback performance. Given these characteristics, it was expected that youth in SL activities would have lower rates of antisocial behavior, better parent-child relationships, and more involvement with non-deviant peers.

Using parent education as a covariate, comparisons were made between individuals who participated in SL activities and those who did not participate. A similar dichotomous comparison was made for the unstructured context (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). The results indicated that, for both boys and girls, participation in SL activities was linked to lower antisocial behavior, whereas involvement in unstructured activities showed the opposite pattern. In terms of the parent-child relationship, parents tended to monitor and trust their children less when they were involved in unstructured activities. When children were involved in structured activities, parents tended to trust them more and support their involvement in SL activities. In terms of peer relationships, it was found that adolescents involved in structured activities reported fewer deviant peers, whereas those involved in the unstructured context reported older friends who

also tended to stay out late, perform poorly in school, and who had been caught by the police.

This study by Mahoney and Stattin (2000) empirically investigated the relationship between the structured aspect of leisure and various outcomes.

Unfortunately, the study does not establish the relevant processes that contribute to the various positive outcomes of SL. It also does not address the question of whether there are negative aspects of too much structure. In the process of advocating for increased involvement in SL activities, these authors point out that it is important that participants freely choose to participate in SL activities, as forced participation could undermine intrinsic motivation (i.e., wanting to participate for inherent satisfaction) and the enjoyment adolescents get from the activity. This aspect of SL warrants more attention. It is very possible that intrinsic motivation and enjoyment are, as identified by Mahoney and Stattin (2000), key components to the success of SL activities. It is also possible that when these aspects are absent, negative consequences could occur. Measures of intrinsic motivation and activity enjoyment are included in the present study to investigate these possibilities.

*4.4.2 Academic outcomes.* As with externalizing outcomes, there has been a considerable amount of attention paid to the relationship between SL participation and academic outcomes. Specifically, SL has been connected to higher academic achievement (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b; Holland & Andre, 1987; Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002), greater feelings of academic competence (Marsh, 1992), more involvement in homework and

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school-based clubs (Bartko & Eccles, 2003), greater educational status (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a; Mahoney, Cairns, & Farmer, 2003), higher levels of school belonging (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b), and higher educational aspirations (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a; Holland & Andre, 1987; Marsh, 1992). Perhaps not surprisingly, SL has also been linked to lower absenteeism (Marsh, 1992), decreased rates of early school dropout (Mahoney 2000; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997), and a greater likelihood of attending college (Mahoney et al., 2003; Zaff, Moor, Papillo, & Williams, 2003).

Cooper, Valentine, Nye, and Lindsay (1999) examined the influence of SL activities (divided into extracurricular activities and other structured activities) and other after-school activities (e.g., homework, employment, television watching) on academic achievement for youth in grades 6 to 12 (N = 424). Control variables were included for student grade, gender, ethnicity, SES, and whether or not an adult was present in the home. EAP and SL participation were assessed by asking both parents and students how many hours (e.g., 1-2 hours, 3-5 hours, etc.) students spent on extracurricular activities and other structured group activities (e.g., scouts, nonschool sports). Consistent with existing research, results indicated positive relationships between academic outcomes and both EAP and participation in other structured activities. Of particular interest is that a curvilinear relationship between EAP and achievement was found, such that greater EAP was associated with increasing achievement, except for the highest level of participation, where achievement test scores dropped dramatically.

Cooper and colleagues (1999) note that their study did not address why EAP has a nonlinear relationship with academic achievement and it did not provide adequate support for establishing causal relationships. Additionally, there was a limited number of participants involved at the highest level of EAP ( $n = 9$ ). Nonetheless, Cooper and colleagues provide further support for the positive relationship between EAP/SL participation and academic outcomes (at least within a certain range of participation) and offer evidence for the possibility of diminished returns at high levels of SL participation.

Mahoney and colleagues (2003) examined whether consistent participation in extracurricular activities predicted increased educational status at adulthood. The authors used participants from the ongoing Carolina Longitudinal Study (see previously reviewed study by Mahoney & Cairns, 1997 for more detail) and assessed consistency of participation over two years. After accounting for SES, gender, interpersonal competence, and educational aspirations, path analysis results indicated that consistent EAP across adolescence was positively linked to educational status at young adulthood. Other findings included a reciprocal relationship between consistent EAP and the development of interpersonal competence, and positive relationships between interpersonal competence, educational aspirations, and educational status. Finally, these findings were most apparent for participants who had low levels of interpersonal competence, thus providing more evidence of the differential benefits of EAP in terms of high and low risk participants.

In a similar study, Zaff and colleagues (2003) examined the relationships between the consistency of EAP and the likelihood of attending college, civic engagement, and community involvement. After controlling for multiple variables (e.g., SES, ethnicity, gender, academic ability, etc.), the authors reported that the consistency of EAP across grades 8, 10, and 12 had positive relationships with college attendance, voting in national and regional elections, and volunteering for community and religious organizations.

Typically, research in the area of SL and EAP has included concrete academic indicators (i.e., academic achievement, absenteeism, early school leaving). In line with this approach, participants' overall grade averages were obtained for the current investigation. Additionally, in order to further extend understanding of the links between SL and academic adjustment, measures assessing the constructs of class/school involvement and overall school value were also included. Consistent with existing research, it seems likely that students who are involved in SL will also report high levels of involvement in class and will place a high value on their education.

*4.4.3 Internalizing outcomes.* In contrast to academic and externalizing outcomes, less attention has been paid to the relationships between SL participation and adjustment markers that could be considered to be within the internalizing domain (e.g., depression, anxiety). Researchers have reported positive associations between SL participation and self-esteem (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a; Holland & Andre, 1987) and social and academic self-concept (Marsh, 1992). Links have been established between SL participation and lower levels of depression and internalizing behaviors (Bartko &

Eccles, 2003; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a; Mahoney, Schweder, & Stattin, 2002). A recent study also identified a positive relationship between SL participation and psychological resilience and a negative relationship between SL participation and psychological distress (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b).

Bartko and Eccles (2003) used a person-oriented/individual differences approach to examine the relationship between various profiles of activity involvement (e.g., school and community clubs, sports, paid work, pleasure reading, etc.) and psychosocial adjustment. The study sample consisted of 1004 adolescents, most of whom were between 16 and 17 years of age (Bartko & Eccles, 2003). To assess activity involvement, participants were asked to report on their participation over the past year in 11 areas (sports, reading for pleasure, homework, chores, time with friends, watching television, school clubs, volunteering, religion, and paid work). Using cluster analysis, the authors identified six clusters characterized by the following defining features: involved in sports (Sports), school-based clubs (School), work activities (Work), volunteer activities (Volunteer), high involvement in all of the activities (High Involved), and low involvement in all activities (Uninvolved). The authors reported that although all six of the groups were below the clinical cutoff for depression, the Uninvolved adolescents reported significantly more depressive symptomatology than the Sports, School, Volunteer, and High Involved participants.

Among their self-reported adjustment indices of interest, Bartko and Eccles (2003) also examined the construct of resilience (e.g., learning from one's mistakes). They observed that their Highly Involved group along with the School and Sports

groups, reported higher scores on resiliency as compared to the Uninvolved, Work, and Volunteer clusters. Examination of data obtained from parents revealed that the highest level of internalizing problems occurred for the Uninvolved adolescents and the lowest levels for the Sports and High Involved youth.

Although the study by Bartko and Eccles (2003) did not focus exclusively on SL activities, the relevance of these findings to the current investigation is that there seems to be initial evidence indicating that high levels of activity involvement are not associated with significant negative consequences. Bartko and Eccles' investigation is laudable in that a more fine-grained analysis (i.e., a focus on individual differences) has been used to investigate various activities, and that internalizing measures were included in the analysis. Although these findings are encouraging for SL researchers, it should be acknowledged that the authors of the study were not explicitly interested in examining the potential negative effects of participation. It is possible that other unmeasured variables of interest (e.g., perfectionism, anxiety) may have demonstrated some of the less desirable consequences of high involvement.

Another study that assessed the connection between SL participation and depression was performed by Mahoney, Schweder, and Stattin (2002). This investigation examined whether SL participation acted as a moderator of depressed mood for adolescents who had detached relationships with their parents. Key indicators of detachment included a lack of parental knowledge/interest in the adolescent's daily activities, low verbal communication between parent(s) and adolescent, and a paucity of shared time and activities. Mahoney and colleagues were specifically interested in

whether perceived support from an after-school activity leader was associated with a reduction in depressed mood.

The investigation by Mahoney and colleagues (2002) took place in Sweden and involved 537 adolescents (281 girls, 256 boys) and their parents. Adolescents provided questionnaire data on their after-school activity participation, depressive symptoms, aspects of the parent-adolescent relationship, and perceived support from community activity leaders. Parents also provided reports of their child's activities, peer relations, and the parent-child relationship. After-school activity participation was defined as an activity that involved being in a group with others of a similar age, having an adult leader, and meeting at least once a week at a regular time. Activity types were coded dichotomously (0 = *no participation*, 1 = *participation*) as Sports, Music, Theater and Fine Arts, Hobbies, Church, Scouting, Politics, or Other Activities.

Both parent-adolescent detachment and after-school activity participation were classified into three groups (Mahoney et al., 2002). Parent-adolescent detachment was categorized as low detachment (108 adolescents), intermediate detachment (324 adolescents), and high detachment (107 adolescents). After-school activities were categorized as no activity participation, activity participation *without* high support from an activity leader, and activity participation *with* high support from an activity leader.

Results indicated that adolescents in the high detachment group reported higher levels of depression when compared to adolescents in the intermediate and low detachment groups (Mahoney et al., 2002). Additionally, adolescents involved in after-school activities reported lower levels of depression compared to nonparticipants. It was



also found that among after-school activity participants, those who perceived a highly supportive relationship with their leader had lower levels of depression as compared to those who did not have such a relationship. The above comparisons were also made across the detachment subgroups. For adolescents who were highly detached from their parents, depression was highest for those not participating in after-school activities, followed by activity participants lacking a supportive relationship with the activity leader. In contrast, depression was not observed to differ across activity participation for low and intermediate detached subgroups. Thus, the perception of support from an activity leader was particularly important for youth who had high levels of detachment from their parent(s).

The results of the study by Mahoney and colleagues (2002) suggest that structured after-school activities may lead to improved emotional well-being for some adolescents. These authors point out that at-risk children are the most likely group to benefit from structured after-school activities, and yet they are the least likely to participate. It is important to emphasize that Mahoney and colleagues have identified one group of adolescents that may benefit from more participation. They have noted that more research is needed to determine the protective aspects of structured after-school activities in order to inform policy decisions on how to best organize these activities. While this is a vital area of research, what remains largely unacknowledged by these authors is that investigations should also be implemented in order to determine whether there are any risk factors associated with participation in such activities. One possibility is that some individuals may develop depressive symptoms in relation to

their participation in SL activities. As noted previously in this document, participants who may develop internalizing symptoms as a result of their participation in SL activities may be quite different from the at-risk adolescents identified by Mahoney and colleagues. Such participants may possibly be pressured to participate, not enjoy the activity, or experience significant anxiety during their involvement. They may also come from middle to upper class backgrounds and experience significant pressure to productively occupy their time.

A recent study completed by Luthar, Shoum, and Brown (2006) examined whether high levels of participation in extracurricular activities accounted for the higher than expected rates of internalizing symptoms found amongst a sample of affluent adolescents (see Luthar & Becker, 2002). The researchers hypothesized that any observed negative EAP effects would be better explained by relevant family process variables (e.g., parental criticism, parental expectations).

The sample consisted of 314 primarily White, eighth-grade students living in an affluent suburb within New England (Luthar et. al, 2006). Data were collected on extracurricular activities (i.e., sports, arts/theatre, academics, civic involvement), various family dimensions (i.e., parental criticism, parental expectations, parents' emphases on personal character versus achievements, after school supervision), internalizing symptoms, delinquency, substance use, school grades, and classroom behaviors. Regression results indicated that for the majority of outcomes and types of extracurricular activities, there was little evidence that higher EAP predicts maladjustment. Of the four types of extracurricular activities, only academic activities

(e.g., math club, tutoring) were associated with maladjustment. Participation in sports and arts activities were associated with higher levels of academic functioning, but, these associations were no longer significant once family variables were included in the analysis. Curvilinear effects for EAP were also tested and no significant results were reported. Not surprisingly, the authors found that the effects for family dimension variables were more strongly related to outcomes than were those for extracurricular activities. Two of the family variables that were most consistently related to maladjustment were parental criticism and lack of after school supervision. Cluster analysis results provided further support regarding the relevance of family variables in comparison to EAP variables. The authors concluded from the study that high EAP in itself is not necessarily harmful. More importantly, harm is much more likely to occur when participants feel that poor performance makes them unworthy in their parents' eyes or when they feel that their parents are uninvolved or uninterested in activities and pursuits.

The study by Luthar and colleagues (2006) is the only study to date to examine EAP exclusively in relation to affluent youth. Consistent with studies that have utilized samples from other socioeconomic strata, Luthar and colleagues found limited evidence for harmful effects of EAP. There was no conclusive explanation for the relationship between maladjustment and participation in academic activities. The authors point out that youth who are experiencing maladjustment may be encouraged to participate more actively in academic activities (e.g. tutoring). Given that this type of connection has not been reported in previous research, it is possible that the finding is attributable to a

unique feature of the study by Luthar and colleagues. One possibility is that the results were skewed by including students who *received* tutoring within the category of academic activities. This type of participation is arguably different in many aspects in comparison to other academic activities such as participating in a yearbook or chess club. It is also difficult to determine the distribution of EAP for the study by Luthar and colleagues and it is not clear how *high* EAP was determined.

In an effort to broaden the operationalization of EAP, Fredricks and Eccles (2006b) examined the associations between adolescent adjustment indicators and the duration of EAP, the total number of extracurricular activities participants were involved in, and the breadth of EAP. The study did not focus exclusively on internalizing outcomes, and all significant findings will be presented in the current section. The authors used various waves of longitudinal data collected from participants who were in grades 8 – 12 ( $n = 447 - 508$ ). EAP duration was categorized into (a) no EAP at any wave, (b) EAP involvement at one wave, (c) EAP in two out of three waves, and (d) continuous EAP at all three waves. Breadth of EAP was assessed by summing the number of different extracurricular activity contexts (e.g., academic clubs, prosocial activities, sports activities) in which youths reported participating. Regression analyses were utilized to predict student grades, a sense of school belonging, self-worth, psychological resilience, psychological distress, associations with academic and risky peers, risky behaviors, and alcohol use. The researchers also tested for a curvilinear relationship between number of extracurricular activities and adjustment.

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Results were analyzed for both the two youngest cohorts (Grades 8 and 9) and the oldest cohort (Grade 11) but are not distinguished for the current review (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b). The authors reported that the duration of participation in school clubs was associated with more favorable academic and psychological adjustment. Longer term involvement in school clubs also predicted lower rates of association with risky peers and alcohol use. Interestingly, duration of participation in organized sports was associated with higher levels of drinking alcohol. The total number of extracurricular activities was positively associated with a sense of school belonging, psychological resilience, and associating with academic peers. Negative relationships were reported with psychological distress and associating with risky peers. The authors reported that a curvilinear relationship was present between number of activities and risky behavior one year later. Participants who had relatively low and high numbers of activities reported higher levels of risky behaviors in comparison to those with more moderate numbers of activities. The authors point out that the overall level of risk behaviors in the sample was still very low. Increased breadth of participation was a positive predictor of school belonging, associating with academic peers, and psychological resilience. It was a negative predictor of psychological distress and associating with risky peers.

The study by Fredricks and Eccles (2006b) is one of the first to examine the relationships between EAP and adjustment by multiple methods of assessing the extent of SL participation/EAP. These methods provide further insight into how SL participation/EAP may benefit youth adjustment and also, at times, potentially hinder it.

The authors note that the duration of participation is likely relevant to adjustment as it can take time for participants to develop supportive and respectful relationships with adults and to build their intellectual, psychological, and social skills. A greater breadth of participation may encourage positive adjustment because of the distinct experiences available within each context (Larson & Verma, 1999), and/or a diversification of participation may allow participants to cope more effectively with stressful events that occur in one domain but not the other(s) (Linville, 1985). The current study has also attempted to broaden the notion of SL participation beyond *yes/no* by examining the number of weekly hours of SL involvement.

One internalizing outcome that has received limited attention in the SL literature is anxiety. Sports researchers have attended to the issue of competition anxiety and burnout among participants (e.g., Smoll & Smith, 1996; Scanlan, Babkes, & Scanlan, 2005), but, the relationship between anxiety and SL participation has not been extensively investigated for the broader range of SL activities. As with sports, it is likely that the majority of SL participants do not find participation exceedingly stressful. However, as noted by authors in the sports literature (Gould, 1993; Passer, 1988), even if a small percentage of youth experience excessive stress from participation, then there are potentially millions of such youth across North America. Within the sports literature, there has been a predominant focus on competition anxiety and this is potentially not the only type of relevant anxiety in regards to SL activities in general. Indeed, participants could be experiencing more generalized anxiety as a result of their participation and this form of anxiety is the focus of the present research.

Life satisfaction is another construct that could potentially be classified within the internalizing domain, and which is seldom investigated in relation to SL activities. To date, the only study that focused primarily on the relationship between SL participation and adolescent life satisfaction was conducted by Gilman (2001). Gilman specifically predicted that students involved in more extracurricular activities would report higher school life satisfaction than students who participated in fewer activities. The study also focused on social interest (i.e., being concerned about the welfare of others and society in general), and Gilman predicted that individuals who were higher in terms of social interest would also participate in the greatest number of extracurricular activities. As the current investigation emphasizes SL activities, only the results relevant to this topic will be reported.

To test his hypotheses, Gilman (2001) collected questionnaire data from 321 adolescents (208 females, 113 males) in grades 9 to 12. Data were collected on the various dimensions of life satisfaction (i.e., family, friends, school, living environment, and self), social interest, and extracurricular activity participation. EAP was assessed by asking students to list the number of extracurricular activities they had participated in since their enrollment in high school. On the basis of social interest data, individuals were categorized into low, average, and high groups. EAP data were used to create low (3 or less activities), medium (4-6 activities), and high (more than 6 activities) groups.

Gilman (2001) reported that students in the high EAP group reported higher levels of school satisfaction than students in the low EAP group. Interestingly, there was no significant correlation between social interest scores and the total number of

extracurricular activities. In terms of the author's prediction regarding high social interest and high EAP, the results indicated that there was little congruence between an individual's placement in a social interest group and their placement in an EAP group. For example, the majority of students in the high social interest group (81%) were actually in the low EAP group. This finding contradicted Gilman's hypothesis and he noted that the quality of the activities may be more important than the actual number. The finding that individuals in the high social interest group did not necessarily have the highest levels of EAP is interesting because it suggests that more EAP is not always better. In terms of the present investigation, it was hypothesized that there may be an optimal level of participation and that anything above this level may have detrimental consequences (e.g., a decrease in overall life satisfaction).

The relationship between SL participation and perfectionism is another area of research that is under-developed. Perfectionism has been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct that encompasses both intra-individual and interpersonal trait components (Hewitt, Caelian, Flett, Sherry, Collins, & Flynn, 2002). Hewitt and Flett (1991) have identified three primary aspects of perfectionism which include self-oriented perfectionism (SOP), socially prescribed perfectionism (SPP), and other-oriented perfectionism (OOP). SOP has been defined as requiring oneself to be perfect, whereas SPP has been defined as the perception that others (e.g., parents, coaches) require the self to be perfect. Finally, OOP involves the expectation that others be perfect in their actions. These dimensions of perfectionism have been found to be related to various types of adult maladjustment (see Flett & Hewitt, 2002), and recent



research has also demonstrated a link between SOP and SPP and maladjustment in children and adolescents.

Hewitt, Newton, Flett, and Callander (1997) found that SOP and SPP were both associated with hopelessness in a sample of adolescent inpatients and that SPP was associated with increased suicidal ideation. Hewitt and Flett (1993) found that SOP consistently interacted with achievement stress to predict increased depression in clinical and nonclinical samples. This interaction was also found in a more recent study by Hewitt and colleagues (2002). The study utilized a sample of 114 children and adolescents and it was found that only participants who had average or high levels of achievement stress experienced increased depression as SOP levels increased. Thus, achievement stress may be particularly problematic for children who have higher levels of SOP. Finally, the same study also found that SOP and SPP were both directly and positively related to measures of depression and anxiety.

Given that self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism have been found to be related to internalizing symptoms in children and adolescents, it is possible that they are also relevant to SL activities. Although there are various models attempting to address the development of perfectionism (see Flett, Hewitt, Oliver, & Macdonald, 2002 for a review), there has been little research done on the role of specific environmental contexts (Flett et al., 2002). Arguably, the contexts of some SL activities could have characteristics that promote the development of perfectionism. SL activities can involve considerable pressure to achieve, and when adolescents are placed in situations where their self-worth is contingent on their performance, negative

consequences, such as perfectionistic tendencies, may develop. While parents are undoubtedly important influences on the development of perfectionism, Flett and colleagues (2002) have argued that consideration should also be given to the role of society, peers, and teachers. Given this extension, it is also plausible that individuals involved in SL activities, such as coaches and other activity leaders, may have some influence. Perfectionism may be an important adjustment correlate in relation to SL participation; however, it is also possible that this construct may serve to moderate the relationship between SL participation and other internalizing outcomes. There may be a link between excessive amounts of SL participation and negative outcomes (e.g., increased anxiety and depression) for highly perfectionistic adolescents. In contrast, if perfectionistic tendencies are moderate or low, extreme amounts of SL participation may not be detrimental to development.

By examining internalizing outcomes, the subtle psychological aspects of SL participation may become more evident. The above studies indicate that participation is linked to increased self-esteem, psychological resilience, and school satisfaction, and decreased psychological distress and depression. Although studies focusing exclusively on sports participation have identified potential risks for increased anxiety, few studies have examined this construct in relation to nonsport activities. The relationship between SL participation and internalizing constructs warrants further investigation as it is possible that certain SL contexts could lead to the exacerbation of various internalizing outcomes. Aside from Luthar and colleagues (2006), no researchers have attempted to

explicitly focus on the potential negative consequences that could occur from SL participation and this is a goal of the current research.

### *4.5 Process Research*

One final area of research on SL involves the relevant developmental processes that occur during participation. Although research examining this topic is limited, one group of researchers (e.g., Dworkin et al., 2003; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003; Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006) has attempted to address this deficit in the literature.

A qualitative study by Dworkin and colleagues (2003) focused on the growth experiences reported by youth participants in structured voluntary activities, and many themes emerged. Participants reported that the various activities helped them explore aspects of their identity, develop initiative (e.g., setting goals, managing time), interact with their peers, learn about their emotions, gain experience in working in a group, and develop social capital. An interesting aspect of the study is that some of the themes that emerged (e.g., learning to manage time, perseverance) could be seen as being more in line with work values as opposed to those associated with leisure.

In a follow-up study, Hansen and colleagues (2003) used a quantitative methodology to assess adolescents' self-reported developmental experiences in organized youth activities. The authors had participants complete a survey regarding their participation in three primary contexts: organized youth activities, academic classroom activities, and socializing with friends. It was hypothesized that participants in organized youth activities would report higher rates of learning experiences than those participants who reported on the other two contexts. In general, it was found that

youth activities provided participants with more self-reported personal development experiences (e.g., identity exploration, development of initiative) and more experiences related to interpersonal development (e.g., teamwork and social skills) than the other two contexts. The study also examined self-reported negative experiences (e.g., negative peer and adult interactions, stress) in the three contexts, and found that students reported greater experiences of stress in academic classes in comparison to youth activities and time spent with friends. More negative peer interactions were reported for spending time with friends in comparison to youth and classroom activities.

A second objective of the study was to compare self-reported experiences (both positive developmental and negative experiences) across five categories of youth activities: sports, faith-based and service activities, academic and leadership activities, performance and fine arts, and community organizations and vocational clubs (Hansen et al., 2003). The findings identified distinct profiles of developmental experiences for different categories of youth activities. Participants involved in faith-based and service activities and community and vocational activities were found to have similar patterns of developmental experiences. These activities were associated with high rates of experiences relating to the development of prosocial norms, identity, and ties to the community. Sports involvement was associated with frequent learning experiences related to self-knowledge, emotional regulation, and physical skills. Sports involvement was also associated with higher rates of negative peer interactions and inappropriate adult behavior. Involvement in arts activities and academic and

leadership activities was generally not associated with higher levels of learning experiences than the other youth activities.

A more recent study by Larson and colleagues (2006) used a similar design as was used in the study by Hansen and colleagues (2003). As with the previous study, developmental and negative experiences occurring in relation to organized activities were compared with experiences occurring in three other major activities in youth's lives: school classes, leisure with friends, and part-time employment. Relevant experiences were also compared among categories of organized activities. The Larson and colleagues study extended the previous research by using a much larger sample of youth ( $n = 2280$ ) and by collecting data via computer administration, allowing the researchers to systematically select and inventory two activities per participant. This data collection method not only allowed researchers to oversample/undersample activity contexts that are often unevenly distributed (e.g., sports activities versus community activities), but also enabled them to conduct within person comparisons, which greatly reduced confounds related to self-selection.

When developmental experiences associated with organized activities were compared to those of the other activity contexts, the most consistent finding was that each of the different organized activities was associated with higher levels of personal development (e.g., identity exploration, development of initiative) and interpersonal development (e.g., teamwork and social skills) in comparison to classroom activities (Larson et al., 2006). When different types of organized activities were compared with time spent with friends and part-time employment, results varied. For example, in

comparison to spending time with friends, the various types of organized activities did not differ consistently in terms of positive developmental experiences. These findings are in contrast to those of the previous study, and the authors note that the earlier findings may have been attributable to self-selection.

Interestingly, higher rates of negative influences (e.g., peer pressure) and peer dynamics (e.g., inappropriate comments or gestures) were identified by participants in their interactions with friends in comparison to their experiences in organized activities (Larson et al., 2006). Stress was another negative experience that was measured, and three of the six organized activities (i.e., academics, service, and faith-based activities) involved significantly lower levels of stress in comparison to classroom activities. The other three organized activities (i.e., sports, arts, and community activities) did not differ significantly from classroom activities in terms of the self-reported stress levels.

When the different types of organized activities were compared to the mean values of developmental experiences for all organized activities, faith-based activities had the most distinct profile (Larson et al., 2006). Students in these activities reported higher rates of experiences in terms of both personal and interpersonal developmental domains. They also reported lower levels of stress. Students involved in sports reported higher rates of personal development experiences (e.g., initiative, emotional regulation) but lower rates of interpersonal development experiences (e.g., identity work, developing an adult network). Higher rates of stress were also reported by sports participants.

These studies provide a welcome focus on the processes that occur during SL activities. The respective authors note that further work is needed in this area, and the present study makes such a contribution by focusing on how aspects of play and leisure may be related to the developmental implications of participation. It will also attempt to highlight potential negative aspects of SL participation through the inclusion of internalizing variables such as anxiety and depression.

### *4.6 Conclusions from the Literature*

Taken together, the literature on SL and adolescent adjustment has presented a number of conclusive findings. First, there is a *positive* association between various desired outcomes (e.g., academic achievement, educational and occupational aspirations, reduced rates of dropout and criminal behavior, reductions in depression and general internalizing behaviors, increased self-esteem, increased psychological resilience, decreased psychological distress) and participation in SL activities. These relationships have remained significant even when individual characteristics found to influence participation (e.g., SES, academic ability, etc.) have been taken into account. In addition to these positive effects, studies have also found that SL participation can be accompanied by *negative* developmental outcomes. Eccles and Barber (1999) found that sports participation was related to increased alcohol consumption, and Fredricks and colleagues (2002) revealed that many adolescents in their study reported significant stress in relation to their SL activities.

In terms of theoretical development in this area, some progress has been made since Holland and Andre's (1987) call for a more theoretical approach, particularly in

relation to the school-involvement and identity-related perspectives. However, there is still a need for more theory to describe *how* development is influenced during SL activities (Dworkin, Larson, & Hansen 2003). One aspect that may be hindering the development of theory in this area is the common tendency to focus on youth “activities.” This tendency is tantamount to utilizing an activity-based definition of leisure (as discussed previously). Contemporary researchers utilize the term *organized activities* to collectively refer to a broad category of youth activities (Mahoney et al., 2005). This label serves to distinguish organized activities from those activities that are considered as forms of “passive leisure” (Mahoney et al., 2005, p. 4), but the common definition of these activities often involves no mention of leisure. Also, the use of the term organized activities inevitably requires a more fine-grained analysis of specific activity contexts (e.g., sports, faith-based, fine arts) because, potentially, the only shared aspect across these activities can be that they are *organized*. For the current study, *structured leisure* is used as it is argued that this label is associated with the theoretical development that has accompanied the leisure construct, and that many organized activities are intended to have a leisure component for participants. Thus, the use of leisure theory may facilitate the discovery of the relevant developmental processes that are inherent in SL activities.

With these theoretical issues in mind, findings in the literature have suggested that further exploration of both the costs and the benefits of SL participation is warranted. In an effort to extend research on the possible negative implications of participation and to further theory in this area, the current study focused on the



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relationships between SL participation and the internalizing measures of depression, anxiety, and self-esteem, as well as measures of perfectionism and life satisfaction. In addition to academic achievement, measures assessing students' school involvement and school value were also included, as these academic variables have not been examined in relation to SL participation. The theoretical framework in which these relations were examined emphasizes the dialectical roles of both the inherent structure of the activity and the different aspects of play and leisure (e.g., fun, freedom, intrinsic motivation) that are experienced by the participant. The role of perfectionism as a moderator for the relationship between SL participation and adjustment was also examined.

## 5. STUDY RATIONALE

Although SL activities have been demonstrated to be associated with various developmental benefits, only a limited number of studies has investigated the potential negative aspects of participation. Consistent with the threshold theory (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002), an aim of the current study was to examine whether there were any indications of significant diminished returns or costs of participation. The few studies that have focused on these issues have tended to emphasize behaviors that would traditionally be considered within the externalizing domain (e.g., arrests, drinking, dropout). In contrast, one goal of the present investigation was to focus on internalizing constructs (e.g., anxiety, depression, life satisfaction) to better understand the subtle psychological aspects associated with SL participation.

Of particular interest to the present study was the relevance of play and leisure aspects to the developmental implications of SL participation. If important play and leisure characteristics are absent or reduced during SL activities, participants may still develop important skills such as discipline and perseverance but, at the same time, may experience anxiety, limited enjoyment, or other undesirable consequences that may negatively influence adolescent development. Of specific interest was the extent to which participants perceived aspects of intrinsic motivation, fun, and freedom of choice as being present in their SL activities, and how these aspects were associated with the following outcomes: anxiety, depression, perfectionism, life satisfaction, self-esteem, academic achievement, and class/school involvement and school value.

Finally, in addition to investigating the idea of diminished returns and the role of play and leisure in relation to SL participation, the present investigation attempted to determine whether perfectionism acts as a moderator on the relation between SL participation and adjustment.

The current study consisted of two main components. First, questionnaire data were collected for a quantitative analysis of the primary hypotheses (described below). Second, focus groups were held to obtain a phenomenological perspective of youths' participation in SL activities. The focus group methodology has been argued to help youth articulate complex processes as they are able to share ideas in the group (Dworkin et al., 2003). As the potential negative consequences of SL participation may be subtle and difficult for youth to express, focus groups may provide information not evident in the quantitative analysis. The focus group approach allows for a more contextual analysis of youth participation in SL activities and ideally provides a deeper understanding of this topic. Although the focus group component of the study occurred concurrently with the quantitative data collection, the two components can be considered independent. According to the descriptions provided by Cresswell (2003) on mixed methods designs, the current study would be considered quantitative dominant with both methods occurring concurrently.

### *5.1 Hypotheses*

Three primary hypotheses were investigated in the current research. First, it was predicted that there would be a curvilinear relationship between the extent of SL participation and the various adjustment outcomes. Specifically, SL participation was

expected to have beneficial effects (e.g., increased self-esteem, reduced anxiety) up to a point, after which these benefits would begin to level off or possibly decline. This hypothesis was tested quantitatively by examining the relationships between the quadratic term for SL participation and adjustment outcomes. Second, aspects of play and leisure (i.e., fun, freedom of choice, and intrinsic leisure motivation) were expected to have moderating effects on the relationships between SL participation and outcomes, such that the benefits of SL participation (e.g., increased self-esteem and life satisfaction) would be attenuated when these characteristics were low. Moderating effects were investigated quantitatively by testing for interactions between SL participation and play and leisure variables. Finally, in addition to being a relevant outcome, perfectionism was hypothesized to play a moderating role in the relationship between SL and adolescent adjustment. Perfectionism has been shown to interact with achievement stress for the prediction of depression (Hewitt et al., 2002) and there may be a link between excessive amounts of SL participation and negative outcomes for the cases of highly perfectionistic adolescents. In contrast, if perfectionistic tendencies are moderate or low, extreme amounts of SL participation may not be detrimental to development.

## 6. METHOD

### *6.1 Participants*

The overall sample consisted of 210 high school students (136 boys, 72 girls, 2 students did not disclose their sex) in grades 10 (55%), 11 (14%), and 12 (31%). Participants were recruited from two public schools and one Catholic school in Saskatoon, and data were collected in April and May of the school year. In total, 419 parental consent forms (see Appendix J) were distributed and 259 (62%) were returned. Of these returned consent forms, 233 students (90%) received permission to participate. Despite having received parental consent for 233 students, not all of these students were present for data collection, thus resulting in a sample size of 210. Students ranged in age from 15 to 19 years ( $M = 16$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ) and were predominantly Caucasian (79%), but other reported ethnicities included Aboriginal (8.1%), Asian (6.7%), Latin (2.4%), Black (1.4%), East Indian (1.0%) and Arabic (0.5%). Two students did not report their ethnicity. In terms of parental education, 93% of participants' mothers had obtained at least a high school diploma. Other demographic characteristics are described in Table 6.1.

In addition to completing the questionnaire component, 14 students (10 males, four females) participated in the focus group component of the study. Focus group participants were recruited during the questionnaire component and focus groups were held after questionnaire data had been collected. Unfortunately, only 17 students expressed interest and of those students 14 agreed to take part in a group. Four focus groups were conducted with 2-4 adolescents in each group. Two groups were conducted

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Table 6.1

*Demographic Characteristics of Main Sample (N = 210)*

	Percentage (n)			
	Boys	Girls	Missing	Total
Grade				
10	35.7% (75)	19.0% (40)	.5% (1)	55.2% (116)
11	9.0% (19)	5.2% (11)	-	14.2% (30)
12	20.0% (42)	10.0% (21)	.5% (1)	30.5% (64)
Total	64.8% (136)	34.3% (72)	1.0% (2)	100% (210)

with grade 10 students and two groups were conducted with grade 12 students. All but one of the focus group participants were involved in at least one of the following SL activities: fastball, badminton, school musical, soccer, horseback riding, volleyball, wrestling, school clubs, track, church organization, sea cadets, football, or kung-fu. In the focus group sample, three participants were involved in a single activity, and 10 participants pursued more than one activity. All but one of the participants were involved in some type of sports activity. Three participants were involved in school involvement activities (e.g., school newspaper) and one participant was involved in a church organization. Two participants were involved in nonreligious community organizations (e.g., sea cadets). One participant was not involved in any SL activities, but was involved in informal basketball. Weekly SL participation for focus group participants ranged from 0-20 hours with an average of 8.64 hours ( $SD = 6.88$ ,  $Mdn = 6.00$ ).

### 6.2 Measures

*6.2.1 After-School Activities Questionnaire (ASAQ)*. This self-report instrument (see Appendix D) was developed by the author for the current research. The ASAQ was designed to collect information on the types and extent of student SL participation. Respondents were asked to list the various organized after-school activities (i.e., those involving some sort of formal adult guidance) in which they were involved and then to provide time estimates of their participation in hours per week (hereafter referred to as *SL participation*). Previous research with adolescents indicates that adolescents' estimates regarding their time usage are often unreliable (e.g., Brown & Wang, 2003)

for various reasons. Although this is a potential concern for the present study, it is argued that the number of hours spent weekly in SL activities is of a more specific nature than the type of time estimates that are required for large-scale time-use studies that focus on a variety of activities (e.g., reading, television watching, playing video games, etc.). Participants were asked to report on the number of hours they spent in *structured* activities each week. It was expected that they would be able to provide more reliable estimates on this lone type of participation.

Nonetheless, in order to examine the reliability of participants' reports, two other methods of collecting time estimates were utilized. First, as has been done in other investigations of SL and time use (e.g., Bartko & Eccles, 2003; Passmore & French, 2001), participants were asked to provide the frequency of their participation in a Likert format (e.g., *daily, 3 times a week, twice a week, once a week, once every two weeks, once a month or less*). Second, parents were also asked to report on their child's SL participation in a format similar to the ASAQ. This brief measure was sent home to 73 parents who indicated on the consent form that they would be willing to complete such a questionnaire (envelopes with pre-paid postage were provided). Thirty-two questionnaires were returned. No demographic information was specifically collected from parent respondents, but based on student questionnaire data the majority of parent questionnaires (65%) came from parents of Grade 10 students. Fifty-six percent of parent respondents were parents to boys and 44% were parents to girls. Ninety-one percent of parents had children who reported that their grade averages were at least 70% or better. Most parents were White (78%) and had obtained at least a college diploma or



some type of certificate (69%). Parent reports of child SL involvement ranged from 0-23 hours with an average of 5.76 hours.

The observed correlation between parent and child ratings for the overall number of hours participants were involved in SL activities was  $r(29) = .75, p < .01$ . The correlation between parent and child Likert ratings for the most time-consuming activity was  $r(30) = .90, p < .01$ .

In addition to the type and extent of participation, the ASAQ asked participants about the play characteristics of their SL activities. Specifically, for each activity, respondents were asked to provide Likert ratings for the following variables:

1. The amount of fun typically experienced in the activity on a scale of 1 “not at all fun” to 10 “a lot of fun” (*Fun*). Specifically, participants were asked: “How much fun do you *usually* have during this activity?” Higher scores on this variable indicated greater levels of fun. If students reported involvement in more than one SL activity, fun ratings were combined to create an average score.
2. Freedom of choice in participation on a scale of 1 “not at all true” to 5 “very true” (*Free Choice*). Specifically, participants responded to the following statement: “I do this activity because other people (e.g., parents, friends) want me to do it.” Higher scores on this variable indicated lesser degrees of choice in terms of SL participation. If students reported involvement in more than one SL activity, free choice ratings were combined to create an average score.

*6.2.2 Background variables.* Information was collected on the following background variables (see Appendix D):

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1. Socioeconomic status (SES) was measured by mother's level of education with higher levels indicating higher levels of SES.
2. Age of participants, in years.
3. Sex of participants.
4. Part-time employment, measured in a yes/no format.
5. Academic average, measured on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (<20-50%) to 6 (91-100%), with higher levels indicating better academic achievement.
6. SL ability, which measured participants' perceived skill levels at their SL activities on a scale of 1 "not very good" to 5 "very good." Higher scores on this variable indicated greater ability in comparison to peers. If students reported involvement in more than one SL activity ability ratings were combined to create an average score.

### *6.2.3 Intrinsic Leisure Motivation Scale (ILMS; Weissinger & Bandalos, 1995).*

The ILMS (see Appendix E) is a 24-item self-report measure that was designed to assess individual differences in the orientation toward intrinsic motivation in leisure behavior. Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from *False, not at all true of me* to *Very true of me*) with higher scores reflecting greater levels of intrinsic leisure motivation. The development of this measure was based on the motivational theories of Deci and Ryan (1985) and Maddi and Kobasa (1981) which emphasize that intrinsic motivation stems from both situational/task variables and individual variables.

The underlying construct of the ILMS is considered to be *intrinsic leisure motivation disposition*. This construct is defined as a tendency to seek intrinsic rewards

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in leisure behavior and is argued to have four subcomponents. *Self-determination* is seen as an awareness of internal needs and a strong desire to make free choices based on these needs. Individuals high on this aspect tend to want to feel in control of their leisure behavior. *Competence* is characterized by attention to feedback that provides information about effectiveness, ability, and skill. Individuals high in this component tend to seek out leisure behaviors that convey feedback regarding their competence. *Commitment* involves a tendency towards deep involvement in leisure behaviors. Those high in this aspect tend to value leisure behaviors, and feel dedicated to leisure in their lives. Finally, *challenge* refers to a tendency to seek leisure experiences that stretch one's limits and provide novel stimuli. Individuals high in this component tend to select leisure behaviors that slightly exceed their skills, and perceive this state as challenging rather than aversive or threatening.

The ILMS provides an overall score for intrinsic leisure motivation disposition as well as scores for the four subcomponents. The psychometric properties of the ILMS have been found to be adequate (see Weissinger & Bandalos, 1995). The internal reliability coefficients for the overall scale have ranged from .87 to .91 and the reliability coefficients for the subscales have ranged from .64 to .83. Test-retest reliabilities have been sufficient with the coefficient being .63 for an 8-week interval. These coefficients were obtained in various studies using participants ranging in age from 17-64 years. The factor structure of the ILMS has largely been confirmed via confirmatory factor analysis and the measure also demonstrates good convergent and discriminant validity (Weissinger & Bandalos, 1995). For the current study, the alpha

coefficient for the global ILMS scale was  $\alpha = .85$ . Alpha coefficients for the subscales were  $\alpha = .59$  (Self-Determination),  $\alpha = .69$  (Competence),  $\alpha = .69$  (Commitment), and  $\alpha = .69$  (Challenge).

*6.2.4 Child-Adolescent Perfectionism Scale (CAPS; Flett et al., 2001).* The CAPS (see Appendix A) is a 22-item, self-report measure that assesses self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism in children. Self-oriented perfectionism (SOP) has been defined as requiring oneself to be perfect (e.g., “I try to be perfect in everything I do”), whereas socially prescribed perfectionism (SPP) has been defined as the perception that others require the self to be perfect (e.g., “There are people in my life who expect me to be perfect”; Hewitt et al., 2002). This instrument has a Grade 3 reading level and items are rated on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from *False, not at all true of me* to *Very true of me*) with higher scores reflecting greater perfectionism. The foundation for the CAPS was provided by the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS; Hewitt & Flett, 1991). The MPS has demonstrated satisfactory internal and test-retest reliabilities, and several studies have found support for the validity of the instrument (see Enns & Cox, 2002 for a review). The factor structure of the CAPS has been confirmed via factor analysis and reliability has also been deemed adequate (Flett, Hewitt, & Davidson, 1990, as cited in Hewitt et al., 2002). For the current study, the coefficient alpha for the CAPS was  $\alpha = .90$ . Coefficients for the SOP and SPP scales were  $\alpha = .86$  and  $\alpha = .88$ , respectively.

*6.2.5 Children’s Manifest Anxiety Scale-Revised (CMAS; Reynolds & Richmond, 1985).* The CMAS (see Appendix B) is a 37-item self-report instrument

designed to assess the level and degree of anxiety in children and adolescents between the ages 6 and 19 years. This scale has a third grade reading level and responses are dichotomous (*Yes* or *No*). Higher scores represent higher levels of anxiety. Reliability estimates for the CMAS have been reported to be as high as  $\alpha = .98$  (three week interval; Reynolds & Richmond, 1985). Various studies have supported the construct validity of the CMAS via tests of convergent and divergent validity (Reynolds & Richmond, 1985). For the current study, the CMAS alpha coefficient was  $\alpha = .83$ .

*6.2.6 Children's Depression Inventory-Short Form (CDI; Kovacs, 1992).* The CDI (see Appendix C) is a 10-item self-report scale designed to assess depressive symptomatology (e.g., feelings of hopelessness) in children and adolescents between the ages of 8-17 years. Items are rated according to severity from 0 to 2. Higher total scores indicate higher levels of depression. The CDI has an alpha reliability coefficient of .80. It is also highly correlated ( $r = .89$ ) with the nonabbreviated version of the Children's Depression Inventory which has demonstrated adequate convergent and divergent validity (Kovacs, 1992). For the current study, the CDI's alpha coefficient was  $\alpha = .80$ .

*6.2.7 Student's Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS; Huebner, 1991).* The SLSS (see Appendix F) is a seven-item measure of global life satisfaction (e.g., "My life is going well"; "I wish I had a different life"). For the current study items were rated on a 5-point scale (ranging from *False, not at all true of me* to *Very true of me*). The SLSS has demonstrated adequate internal ( $\alpha = .82$ ) and test-retest reliability ( $r = .74$ ; two week interval). Adequate support for the validity of the SLSS has been found via factor analysis and expected correlations with related constructs (see Gilman & Huebner, 2000

for a review). The theoretical basis for the measure is that children's global life satisfaction can be accurately assessed by a child's evaluations of his or her overall life satisfaction, separate from the specific domains of family, friends, or school. For the current study, the alpha coefficient for the SLSS scale was  $\alpha = .87$ .

*6.2.8 Self Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPPA; Harter, 1988).* The SPPA (see Appendix G) is a self-report measure that assesses self-esteem in both global and specific domains. For the present investigation only the global aspect was utilized and this subscale is comprised of five items. The SPPA employs a structured alternative format where each item contains two statements, one on the left side of the page and one on the right. These statements are separated by the word "BUT." An example from the global subscale is "Some teenagers are often disappointed with themselves BUT other teenagers are pretty pleased with themselves." Adolescents are asked to choose the statement that is most like them and then to mark whether the statement is *really true* or *sort of true* for them. The score for each item can range from 1 (*least favourable self-perception*) to 4 (*most favourable*). Higher total scores indicate higher self-esteem. The SPPA has been used extensively with adolescents, and the global self-esteem subscale has been found to be related to other commonly used measures of self-esteem (Hagborg, 1993). Previous investigations have reported alpha coefficients ranging from .80 - .89 for the global subscale (Eiser, Eiser, & Havermans, 1995; Harter, 1988; Harter, Waters, Whitesell, 1998). For the current study, the alpha coefficient was  $\alpha = .80$ .

*6.2.9 School values and involvement.* School attitudes and involvement were assessed by two questionnaires that examine value for school and school involvement.

Both questionnaires were adapted and utilized by Berndt and Miller (1990; see Appendix H). Responses are obtained using a 5-point Likert format (ranging from *False, not at all true of me* to *Very true of me*). The 19-item Value for School Questionnaire (items 1 to 19 in Appendix H) is designed to assess students' perceptions regarding the values they place on school, with higher scores indicating higher school value. For example, students are asked about the utility of school learning (e.g., "I think school is useful for the job I want"), the importance of school (e.g., "I care a lot about doing my best at school"), and their interest in their schoolwork (e.g., "I am interested in the work my teachers give me"). This questionnaire was adapted by Berndt and Miller (1990) from a questionnaire used by Eccles, Adler, and Meece (1984). Berndt and Miller reported that this questionnaire had an alpha coefficient of  $\alpha = .84$ . The second questionnaire is designed to assess school involvement (items 20 to 29 in Appendix H), with higher scores indicating higher levels of self-perceived school involvement. Students are asked about their attitudes and behaviors in and out of the classroom (e.g., "I put a lot of energy into what I do in school," "I do extra work on my own"). This questionnaire was adapted by Berndt and Miller from a questionnaire that was used by Moos and Trickett (1974). The alpha coefficient for this measure has been reported to be  $\alpha = .83$  (Berndt & Miller, 1990). Although neither questionnaire has been formally evaluated in regards to validity, they both have face validity. For the current study, the alpha coefficients for the Value for School and School Involvement questionnaires were  $\alpha = .92$  and  $\alpha = .79$ , respectively.

*6.2.10 Focus group schedule.* Four independent focus groups were conducted in order to obtain participants' own phenomenological descriptions of their participation in SL activities in relation to the above hypotheses. Questions were asked regarding the play aspects of the various SL activities and the perceived costs and benefits that are associated with participation. Participants were also asked about the influences that various adult figures (e.g., parents, activity leaders) had on their experiences in SL participation. A structured interview format was used and is outlined in Appendix I.

### *6.3 Procedure*

*6.3.1 Questionnaire component.* Once students received parental consent, questionnaire data were collected at participants' schools in a group format. Questionnaires took approximately 30 minutes to complete. Detailed instructions were provided both in written and oral formats, and the primary researcher along with at least one assistant (depending on the size of the group) were always present to verify that the questionnaire had been properly completed.

*6.3.2 Focus group component.* When participants completed assent forms for the questionnaire component, they were asked to provide contact information if they were interested in taking part in small discussion groups at their schools. They were also informed that it was not necessary to be involved in SL activities in order to participate in the focus groups. In total, four groups were held at the various schools and were moderated by the author of this study. The focus group sessions typically lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. All groups were audio taped and detailed notes were taken by an assistant moderator. Audio tapes were subsequently transcribed verbatim.



## 7. RESULTS

### 7.1 Questionnaire Analyses

#### 7.1.1 Preliminary Analyses

##### 7.1.1.1 Composite Variables

A number of the outcome measures were found to be highly correlated with one another (range in  $r$  from  $-.47$  to  $.78$ ; see Table 7.1), and the correlation between two of the predictor variables – fun and free choice – was also moderately high ( $r = -.41$ ; see Table 7.2). Accordingly, three composite variables were created (described below) to be used for investigating the three hypotheses. Table 7.1 provides correlations between the original outcome variables for the examination of Hypothesis 1 (i.e., linear and curvilinear SL relationships) for all participants, including those who did not participate in any SL activities. Hypotheses two and three (i.e., testing for the moderating effects of play, intrinsic leisure motivation (ILM), and perfectionism) involved using data from a subset of the larger sample (i.e., individuals who participated in at least one SL activity,  $n = 149$  excluding those who did not report any SL participation) and the pattern of correlations (Table 7.2) were similar to those presented in Table 7.1.

*Well-being composite.* Based on the observed correlations, a well-being composite was created by summing the standardized scores of the following variables: (a) anxiety (reflected), (b) depression (reflected), (c) life satisfaction, and (d) self-esteem. Anxiety and depression scores were reflected prior to creating the composite to

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Table 7.1  
Correlations among Original Outcome Measures for Full Sample ( $df = 208$ )

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Anxiety	1.00	.65**	-.47**	-.51**	-.17*	-.15*	-.21**	.26**	.08	.20**
2. Depression		1.00	-.66**	-.67**	-.18**	-.20**	-.11	.25**	.01	.15*
3. Life Satisfaction			1.00	.78**	.22**	.27**	.22**	-.19**	-.01	-.11
4. Self-Esteem				1.00	.14*	.24**	.19**	-.16*	-.03	-.11
5. Academic Average					1.00	.49**	.34**	-.06	.37**	.18**
6. School Values						1.00	.75**	-.01	.43**	.26**
7. School Involvement							1.00	.02	.34**	.22**
8. SPP								1.00	.43**	.84**
9. SOP									1.00	.85**
10. Global Perfectionism										1.00

Note. SOP = Self-Oriented Perfectionism, SPP = Socially Prescribed Perfectionism. \*  $p < .05$  (2 tailed). \*\*  $p < .01$  (2 tailed).

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Table 7.2  
*Correlations among Original Outcome Measures for a Reduced Sample (Dropping Students with no SL Activity) (df = 147)*

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
1. Anxiety	1.00	.62**	-.45**	-.47**	-.13	-.10	-.13	.23*	.11	.20*	-.11	.04	-.25*	.02	.05	-.01	-.06	
2. Depression		1.00	-.68**	-.68**	-.22**	-.21**	-.09	.26**	.00	.15	-.06	.07	-.24**	-.09	.02	-.10	-.13	
3. Life Satisfaction			1.00	.76**	.21*	.26**	.18*	-.24**	-.01	-.15	.15	-.09	.34**	.18*	.01	.09	.18*	
4. Self-Esteem				1.00	.14	.22**	.16	-.17*	-.01	-.11	.18*	-.09	.28**	.09	-.04	.13	.14	
5. Academic Average					1.00	.46**	.32**	-.09	.36**	.15	-.02	-.06	-.03	-.09	-.08	-.22**	-.14	
6. School Values						1.00	.75**	-.03	.41**	.23**	-.15	.01	-.05	-.05	-.15	-.06	-.10	
7. School Involvement							1.00	.03	.31**	.20*	-.05	.02	-.10	-.07	-.15	-.01	-.11	
8. SPP								1.00	.47**	.86**	-.21**	.13	.01	-.02	-.00	.08	.02	
9. SOP									1.00	.86**	-.12	-.04	-.01	.06	.08	-.01	.04	
10. Global Perfectionism										1.00	-.20*	.05	-.01	.02	.05	.04	.03	
11. Fun											1.00	-.41**	.26**	.22**	.21*	.06	.24**	
12. Free Choice <sup>a</sup>												1.00	-.30**	-.29**	-.26**	-.22**	-.34**	
13. Self-Determination													1.00	.59**	.38**	.33**	.72**	
14. Competence														1.00	.57**	.54**	.87**	
15. Commitment															1.00	.33**	.77**	
16. Challenge																1.00	.72**	
17. ILM: Global																		1.00

Note. SOP = Self-Oriented Perfectionism, SPP = Socially Prescribed Perfectionism, Self-Determination = Intrinsic Leisure Motivation (ILM): Self-Determination, Competence = ILM: Competence, Challenge = ILM Challenge, ILM: Global = total score for ILM Scale. <sup>a</sup>Higher scores on Free Choice indicate lower levels of free choice.

\*  $p < .05$  (2 tailed). \*\*  $p < .01$  (2 tailed).

ensure that higher scores indicated greater levels of well-being. The alpha coefficient for this composite was  $\alpha = .92$ .

*School orientation composite.* A school orientation composite variable was created by summing standardized scores of the school involvement and school values questionnaires. Higher scores indicate more positive orientation toward school. The alpha coefficient for the school orientation composite was  $\alpha = .94$ .

*Play composite.* A play composite variable was created by standardizing the fun and free choice variables (free choice was first reflected) and then summing them. Higher scores indicate higher levels of play aspects for SL activities. The alpha coefficient for the play composite was  $\alpha = .56$ .

#### *7.1.1.2 Descriptive Statistics*

Table 7.3 provides descriptive information regarding the mean and median number of hours participants were involved in SL activities (shown separately for girls and boys). Information on the number and types of SL activities, the amount of fun had during the activities, and the degree of free choice regarding the activities are also provided. Fun and free choice, rather than the play composite, are reported for ease of interpretation. Appendix K provides information regarding how the various SL activities were grouped into the following categories: sports, performing arts, prosocial activities, and school involvement activities.

#### *7.1.1.3 Missing Data, Evaluations of Assumptions, and Data Transformations*

Missing data did not occur frequently in the questionnaires. However, when they did, scale and subscale totals were computed when at least 70% of the items for the

Table 7.3

*Structured Leisure Participation for Boys and Girls*

	Boys (n = 136)	Girls (n = 72)
Mean number of SL participation in hours ( <i>SD</i> )	6.39 (6.61)	6.68 (7.27)
Median number of SL participation (hours)	5.00	5.00
Range of SL participation in hours	0-31	0-31
Mean number of SL activities ( <i>SD</i> )	1.23 (1.10)	1.50 (1.45)
Median number of SL activities	1.00	1.00
Range for number of SL activities	0-5	0-6
Participants reporting participation in at least one SL activity	98	50
Percentage reporting SL participation, by activity type:		
Sports Activities	69% (n = 94)	60% (n = 43)
Prosocial Activities	9% (n = 12)	15% (n = 11)
School Involvement Activities	1% (n = 1)	8% (n = 6)
Performing Arts	7% (n = 9)	25% (n = 18)
Mean level of free choice for all SL activities ( <i>SD</i> ) <sup>a</sup>	1.72 (1.03)	1.84 (0.83)
Mean level of fun for all SL activities ( <i>SD</i> ) <sup>b</sup>	8.57 (1.47)	8.3 (1.05)

*Note.* SL = Structured Leisure. <sup>a</sup> Possible scores ranged from 1-5, with lower scores indicating higher levels of free choice. <sup>b</sup> Possible scores ranged from 1-10, with higher scores indicating higher levels of fun.

relevant scale had been completed. The total was then calculated by obtaining the average of the completed items and multiplying that average by the number of items in the complete scale. When less than 70% of the items for the relevant scale had been completed, missing scale and subscale totals were replaced with the mean value of the variable (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2001). Nine mean replacements were completed for the SPPA, eight replacements were completed for SES, five replacements were completed for academic average, and one replacement was completed for the RCMAS and age variables.

Prior to analysis, data were examined for violations of normality. Skewness and kurtosis levels of the relevant variables, along with visual inspections of their distributions, were examined separately for the entire sample ( $n = 210$ ) used to test Hypothesis 1, and for the subset of the sample (excluding those with no SL participation  $n = 149$ ) used to test Hypotheses 2 and 3. Table 7.4 presents z-scores for skewness and kurtosis levels of the variables that were transformed, both prior to and after transformation. Decisions regarding variable transformations were made based on recommendations by Tabachnik and Fidell (2001).

For Hypothesis 1, a square root transformation was applied to SL participation to address significant skewness. To address significant kurtosis, a logarithmic transformation was applied to SES. Although the transformation did not bring the kurtosis score below  $z = 3.29$  (i.e.,  $\alpha = .001$ ), visual inspection of the variable's distribution indicated sufficient normality. Tabachnik and Fidell (2001) note that an alpha level of .001 is conservative and that for larger samples (i.e., 200 or more

Table 7.4

*Skewness and Kurtosis Values (Z-scores) for Transformed Variables*

Variable	Skewness before transformation	Skewness after transformation	Kurtosis before transformation	Kurtosis after transformation
SES <sup>a</sup>	-.00595	-2.46	-4.99	-3.356
SES <sup>b</sup>	-.778	-2.432	-4.31	-2.959
SL participation <sup>a</sup>	7.398	0.3035	0.826	3.04
SL participation <sup>b</sup>	6.065	2.563	2.990	-.790
Play <sup>b</sup>	-7.492	-3.13	9.382	1.04

*Note.* SL Participation = Structured leisure participation in hours. <sup>a</sup>*n* = 210. <sup>b</sup>*n* = 149

participants), a visual inspection of the distribution can be more appropriate than formal inference testing. For Hypotheses 2 and 3, a square root transformation was applied to SL participation (to address significant skewness) and play (to address significant skewness and kurtosis). A logarithmic transformation was applied to SES to address significant kurtosis. All subsequent analyses were conducted with transformed scores. Assumptions of multivariate normality and homoscedasticity were assessed by the examination of residual scatterplots and were deemed to be met.

#### *7.1.1.4 Effects by Grade and Sex*

For the purpose of developmental description, preliminary analyses were conducted to explore whether variables of interest in the present study differed as a function of sex or grade of the respondent. Accordingly, a series of 2 (Sex: boy, girl) x 3 (Grade: 10, 11, 12) between-subjects analyses of variance were conducted using the following variables or composites as dependent measures: Well-being, school orientation, academic average, global perfectionism, self-oriented perfectionism, socially prescribed perfectionism, SL hours, play, global intrinsic leisure motivation (ILM: Global), ILM: Self-determination, ILM: Competence, ILM: Challenge, and ILM: Commitment. Significant findings are reported separately for main effects of sex and grade as well as the interaction of Sex x Grade.

*Main effects of sex.* A significant main effect for sex was found for well-being,  $F(1, 202) = 8.12, p = .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .04$ . Table 7.5 shows the means and standard deviations for girls and boys and indicates that girls reported lower levels of well-being in comparison to boys. No additional main effects of sex were observed



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Table 7.5

*Means and Standard Deviations of Outcome, Structured Leisure, and Play Variables by Sex and Grade Level*

Variable	Sex				Grade Level <sup>a</sup>					
	Boys (n = 136)		Girls (n = 72)		10 (n = 115)		11 (n = 30)		12 (n = 63)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Outcome variables:										
Well-Being <sup>b</sup>	0.59	3.20	-1.12	3.51	-0.45	3.44	0.29	2.46	0.64	3.64
School Orientation <sup>b</sup>	-0.07	1.94	0.13	1.77	0.09 <sub>ab</sub>	2.09	0.78 <sub>a</sub>	1.24	-0.55 <sub>b</sub>	1.55
Academic Average	3.90	1.22	4.34	1.05	4.10	1.24	4.44	1.04	3.78	1.07
CAPS: Global	64.16	13.74	64.46	12.90	66.02	13.90	63.86	13.48	61.12	12.17
CAPS: SOP	36.38	8.15	36.22	7.71	37.15	8.62	36.83	7.85	34.61	6.72
CAPS: SPP	27.81	8.10	28.22	7.39	28.8	7.90	27.01	7.07	26.53	7.92

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Table 7.5 (continued)

Variable	Sex				Grade Level <sup>a</sup>					
	Boys		Girls		10		11		12	
	(n = 98)		(n = 50)		(n = 77)		(n = 27)		(n = 44)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
SL variables <sup>c</sup>										
SL Hours	2.81	0.99	2.91	1.09	2.79	0.96	2.81	0.97	2.96	1.14
Play <sup>b</sup>	2.69	0.49	2.58	0.40	2.66	0.50	2.49	0.47	2.74	0.37
ILM: Global	93.47	9.97	91.10	10.54	93.00 <sub>a</sub>	9.50	87.75 <sub>b</sub>	9.82	95.28 <sub>a</sub>	10.69
ILM: Self-Determination	24.44	2.66	23.26	3.24	24.24	2.78	22.93	2.79	24.41	3.09
ILM: Competence	23.87	3.10	23.42	3.09	23.95 <sub>a</sub>	2.99	22.44 <sub>b</sub>	2.75	24.17 <sub>a</sub>	3.32
ILM: Challenge	24.40	3.45	24.01	3.44	24.35 <sub>a</sub>	3.16	22.56 <sub>a</sub>	3.58	25.20 <sub>a</sub>	3.50
ILM: Commitment	20.77	3.56	20.45	4.32	20.49	3.70	19.84	4.06	21.5	3.80

*Note.* CAPS = Child and Adolescent Perfectionism Scale. SOP = Self-Oriented Perfectionism. SPP = Socially Prescribed Perfectionism. ILM = Intrinsic Leisure Motivation. <sup>a</sup> Means not sharing subscripts differ at  $p < .05$ . <sup>b</sup> Variables were calculated by summing Z-scores <sup>c</sup> Based on those participants reporting participation in at least one SL activity.

for the variables of interest (See Appendix L for non-significant  $F$ -values).

*Main effects of grade.* Significant main effects for grade were found for school orientation,  $F(2, 202) = 5.77, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .05$ , ILM: Global,  $F(2, 142) = 4.60, p = .012$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .06$ , ILM: Competence,  $F(2, 142) = 3.50, p = .033$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .05$ , and ILM: Challenge,  $F(2, 142) = 4.84, p = .009$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .06$ . Means and standard deviations are displayed in Table 7.5. Significant main effects involving grade were followed up using Tukey's B post-hoc tests. Students in grade 11 reported higher levels of school orientation in comparison to grade 12 students. In terms of ILM: Global, ILM: Competence, and ILM: Challenge, students in grades 10 and 12 reported higher levels of these types of intrinsic leisure motivation in comparison to students in grade 11. No additional main effects of grade were observed (see Appendix L for non-significant  $F$ -values).

*Interactions between sex and grade.* No significant interactions between grade and sex were evident for any of the dependent variables (see Appendix L for non-significant  $F$ -values).

#### 7.1.1.5 The Presence versus Absence of SL Involvement

T-tests (two-tailed) comparisons for well-being, school orientation, academic average, global perfectionism, self-oriented perfectionism, and socially prescribed perfectionism were made between participants who had no SL involvement and those who were involved with SL activities. Significant differences were found for global perfectionism, self-oriented perfectionism, and academic average. Nonparticipants had lower levels of global perfectionism ( $M = 60.60, SD = 12.91$ ) than SL participants ( $M =$

65.70,  $SD = 13.43$ ),  $t(208) = -2.53$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $d = 5.10$ . They also had lower levels of self-oriented perfectionism ( $M = 33.10$ ,  $SD = 7.87$ ) than SL participants ( $M = 37.65$ ,  $SD = 7.28$ ),  $t(208) = -3.85$ ,  $p < .00$ ,  $d = 4.55$ . Finally, nonparticipants reported having lower grades ( $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ) than SL participants ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ),  $t(208) = 2.70$ ,  $p = .008$ ,  $d = .47$ . No additional differences between SL participants and nonparticipants were observed (Appendix M shows results of non-significant comparisons).

#### *7.1.1.6 Intercorrelations among Variables*

Tables 7.6 and 7.7 provide correlations between SL participation, background variables, adjustment/criterion variables, and leisure and play variables (Table 7.7 only). Table 7.6 provides correlations based on the entire sample ( $n = 210$ ), and Table 7.7 provides correlations based on those participants who reported being involved in at least one SL activity ( $n = 149$ ). These correlations were computed as a preliminary look at relationships that would be examined in the three hypotheses.

Table 7.6 indicates positive correlations between SL participation and SES, academic average, self-oriented perfectionism, and global perfectionism. Specifically, for the full sample, students who spent more time participating in structured leisure activities came from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, demonstrated better academic achievement and reported higher levels of self-oriented and global perfectionism. No significant correlations were found between SL participation and school orientation, well-being, or socially prescribed perfectionism. No significant correlations were found between the quadratic term for SL participation and any of the variables of interest.

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Table 7.6

*Correlations among Structured Leisure Participation, Background Variables, and Final Outcome Measures (df range from 206-208<sup>a</sup>)*

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. SL Hours	1.00	.05	.03	-.00	.17*	-.06	.12	.18**	.07	.07	.25**	.19**
2. (SL Hours) <sup>2</sup>		1.00	.10	.06	-.10	-.00	-.01	.08	-.06	.05	-.07	-.02
3. Age			1.00	-.01	.09	.47**	-.09	-.13	.09	-.13	-.16*	-.17*
4. Sex <sup>b</sup>				1.00	.01	.06	.05	.18*	-.24**	.03	-.01	.01
5. SES					1.00	-.15*	.11	.11	.07	.03	.14*	.10
6. Part-Time Employment <sup>c</sup>						1.00	.05	.04	-.07	.06	.05	.07
7. School Orientation							1.00	.44**	.25**	.01	.42**	.26**
8. Academic Average								1.00	.20**	-.06	.37**	.18**
9. Well-Being									1.00	-.25**	-.05	-.18*
10. SPP										1.00	.43**	.84**
11. SOP											1.00	.85**
12. Global Perfectionism												1.00

*Note.* SL Hours = Structured leisure. SOP = Self-Oriented Perfectionism, SPP = Socially Prescribed Perfectionism. <sup>a</sup> Degrees of freedom fluctuate due to two missing values for the sex variable. <sup>b</sup> 0 = male, 1 = female. <sup>c</sup> 0 = no part-time employment, 1 = part-time employment. \*  $p < .05$  (2 tailed). \*\*  $p < .01$  (2 tailed).

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**Table 7.7**  
*Correlations among Structured Leisure and Play Variables, Background Variables, and Final Outcome Measures (df range from 146-147<sup>a</sup>)*

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. SL Hours	1.00	.12	.05	.03	-.06	.02	-.02	-.01	.17*	.29**	.20*	.23**	.06	.06	-.05	.10	.08	.10
2. Age		1.00	-.04	.10	.41**	.09	.05	-.03	.00	.07	.06	.04	-.08	-.09	.07	-.18*	-.19*	-.22**
3. Sex <sup>b</sup>			1.00	.02	.02	-.22**	-.11	-.19*	-.07	-.04	-.05	-.11	.06	.18*	-.21**	-.05	-.07	-.07
4. SES				1.00	.16	-.20*	.11	.03	.16	.02	.10	.09	.07	.10	.07	.07	.14	.12
5. Part-Time Employment <sup>c</sup>					1.00	-.01	.01	.04	-.00	-.10	-.02	-.03	.04	.01	.02	.08	.08	.09
6. SL Ability						1.00	.27**	.28**	.34**	.14	.22**	.31**	-.03	.03	.11	.02	.04	.03
7. Play							1.00	.35**	.33**	.30**	.16*	.37**	-.08	.01	.15	-.20*	-.03	-.14
8. Self-Determination								1.00	.59**	.38**	.33**	.72**	-.08	-.03	.33**	.01	-.01	-.01
9. Competence									1.00	.57**	.54**	.87**	-.06	-.09	.10	-.02	.06	.02
10. Commitment										1.00	.33**	.77**	-.16	-.08	-.03	-.00	.08	.05
11. Challenge											1.00	.72**	-.04	-.22**	.10	.08	-.01	.04
12. ILM: Global												1.00	-.11	-.14	.15	.02	.04	.03
13. School Orientation													1.00	.42**	.21**	.00	.39**	.23**
14. Academic Average														1.00	.21*	-.09	.36**	.15
15. Well-Being															1.00	-.27**	-.04	-.18*
16. SPP																1.00	.47**	.86**
17. SOP																	1.00	.86**
18. Global Perfectionism																		1.00

*Note.* SL = Structured Leisure. SOP = Self-Oriented Perfectionism, SPP = Socially Prescribed Perfectionism, Self-Determination = Intrinsic Leisure Motivation (ILM); Self-Determination, Competence = ILM: Competence, Challenge = ILM Challenge, <sup>a</sup> Degrees of freedom fluctuate due to one missing value for the sex variable. <sup>b</sup>0 = male, 1 = female. <sup>c</sup>0 = no part-time employment, 1 = part-time employment. \*  $p < .05$  (2 tailed). \*\*  $p < .01$  (2 tailed).

When the sample was reduced to only those students who participated in SL activities (i.e., removing participants with 0 hours of structured leisure; see Table 7.7) SL participation (in hours) was observed to be related to three of the four ILM subscales (Competence, Commitment, and Challenge) as well as to the global ILM measure. SL participation was not significantly correlated with any of the potential control variables or well-being/criterion variables. Structured leisure ability, however, was positively connected to beliefs about play and several aspects of intrinsic leisure motivation (i.e., self-determination, competence, and challenge). Higher perceptions of play (the combination of fun and free choice) in SL activities were related to higher scores on all four subscales of ILM (Self-Determination, Competence, Commitment, and Challenge) and were also tied to lower reports of socially prescribed perfectionism.

A stronger orientation towards school was linked to better academic achievement, more positive psycho-social well-being, and higher self-oriented perfectionism. Higher academic achievement was tied to better psycho-social well-being, higher self-oriented perfectionism, and lower reports of being intrinsically motivated by the challenge. Finally, students who reported better psycho-social well-being also reported lower levels of global and socially prescribed perfectionism and greater intrinsic leisure motivation based on self-determination.

### *7.1.2 Regression Analyses*

Sequential regression techniques were utilized to test the primary hypotheses (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Aiken & West, 1991). Please note that academic average is used both as a criterion variable and as a control variable when applicable. For a brief

overview of the variables used in the regression analyses for each hypothesis, please refer to Appendix N.

#### *7.1.2.1 Data Screening*

Data were screened for the presence of outliers, multicollinearity amongst variables, normality, and independence of errors. With the use of a  $p < .001$  criterion for Mahalanobis distance, multivariate outliers were identified and excluded when necessary. No multivariate outliers were detected for Hypothesis 1, one outlier was detected for Hypothesis 2, and two were detected for Hypothesis 3. All variables were standardized prior to being entered into the regression analyses (Aiken & West, 1991).

#### *7.1.2.2 Hypothesis 1: Does Linear and/or Curvilinear SL Participation Predict Adjustment?*

Hypothesis 1 involved determining if there were significant linear and/or curvilinear relationships between SL participation and adjustment. To test this hypothesis, zero-order correlations were first examined between SL participation (both linear and quadratic terms) and each of the adjustment variables (school orientation, academic average, well-being, SOP, and SPP) to determine which regression analyses would be performed. For those adjustment variables for which a significant zero-order correlation was present, a regression analysis was performed using all of the background variables in the first step of the analysis, except SL ability (because it was not applicable to those participants who did not participate in SL activities) and part-time employment (because none of the zero-order correlations between this variable and SL participation and the adjustment variables was significant). Step two of the analysis



consisted of the linear term for SL participation. Because there were no significant zero-order quadratic relationships between SL participation and adjustment outcomes, the quadratic term for SL participation was not included in the regression analyses.

Table 7.8 displays the hierarchical regression analyses used to test Hypothesis 1. Two regression equations were implemented to predict academic average and self-oriented perfectionism. For the prediction of academic average, age, sex, and socioeconomic status were entered on Step 1 and SL participation on Step 2. For the prediction of self-oriented perfectionism, age, sex, socioeconomic status, and academic average were included on Step 1 and SL participation on Step 2.

*Academic average.* As illustrated in Table 7.8, Step 1 of the regression analysis (age, sex, and SES) accounted for approximately 6% of the total variance in the prediction of student grades,  $F(3, 204) = 4.46, p = .01$ . With the addition of SL participation, Step 2 of the analysis accounted for an additional 3% which was statistically significant,  $F\text{-change}(1, 203) = 6.39, p = .01$ . Uniquely significant predictors included age, sex, and SL participation. Better academic achievement was associated with being younger, being female, and greater levels of SL participation.

*Self-oriented perfectionism.* For the prediction of self-oriented perfectionism (see table 7.8), Step 1 of the analysis (age, sex, SES, and academic average) accounted for approximately 17% of the total variance,  $F(4, 203) = 10.48, p < .001$ . With the addition of SL participation, Step 2 of the analysis accounted for an additional 3% which was statistically significant,  $F\text{-change}(1, 202) = 6.66, p = .01$ . Uniquely significant predictors included academic average and SL participation, with higher

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Table 7.8

*Regression Analyses for Structured Leisure Participation (Linear) Predicting Academic Average and Self-oriented Perfectionism*

Variable	Academic Average			Self-oriented Perfectionism		
	<i>B</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	<i>B</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1		.06**	.06**		.17**	.17**
Age	-.14*			-.11		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	.18*			-.08		
SES	.12			.12		
Academic Average	-			.36**		
Step 2		.09*	.03*		.20**	.03*
Age	-.14*			-.12		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	.18**			-.07		
SES	.09			.10		
Academic Average	-			.33**		
SL Hours	.17*			.17*		

Note. SL = Structured leisure. <sup>a</sup>0 = male, 1 = female. \*  $p < .05$  (2 tailed). \*\*  $p < .01$  (2 tailed).

student grades and greater participation in SL activities associated with greater self-oriented perfectionism.

*7.1.2.3 Hypothesis 2: Do Play and Leisure Variables Interact with SL Participation to Predict Adjustment?*

Hypothesis 2 examined the linear effects of play and leisure variables on adjustment/criterion variables as well as their potential moderating effects on the relationships between SL participation and adjustment/criterion variables. Two sets of hierarchical regression analyses were run including only participants who had reported SL participation. For each set, five regression analyses were completed with school orientation, well-being, self-oriented perfectionism, socially-prescribed perfectionism, and academic average being utilized as outcome/criterion variables. Age, sex, ability in SL activities, and academic average (not included in the analysis when academic average was an outcome/criterion variable) were entered as control variables on Step 1. For the first set of analyses, SL participation and the play composite measure were entered on Step 2. The interaction term of SL participation with play was included on Step 3. For the second set of analyses, Step 2 included the amount of time spent in SL activities and ILM: Global. The interaction term of SL participation with ILM: Global was included on Step 3.

*Play and SL participation predicting adjustment.* For the prediction of school orientation (see Table 7.9a), Step 1 of the analysis accounted for approximately 18% of the total variance,  $F(4, 143) = 7.92, p < .01$ . Academic average was the only uniquely

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Table 7.9a  
*Regression Analyses for Structured Leisure Participation and Play Predicting School Orientation and Well-Being*

Variable	School Orientation			Well-Being		
	<i>B</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	<i>B</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1		.18**	.18**		.12**	.12**
Age	-.03			.09		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	-.03			-.25**		
SL Ability	-.05			.04		
Academic Average	.43**			.26**		
Step 2		.19**	.01		.13**	.02
Age	-.03			.09		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	-.04			-.24**		
SL Ability	-.03			.01		
Academic Average	.43**			.26**		
SL Hours	.04			-.06		
Play <sup>b</sup>	-.08			.12		
Step 3		.20**	.01		.14**	.00
Age	-.05			.10		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	-.02			-.24		
SL Ability	-.03			.02		
Academic Average	.42**			.27**		
SL Hours	.06			-.07		
Play <sup>b</sup>	-.05			.11		
SL Hours x Play	.12			-.06		

*Note.* SL = Structured leisure. <sup>a</sup> 0 = male, 1 = female. <sup>b</sup> Higher scores indicate greater levels of playfulness in activity. \*  $p < .05$  (2 tailed). \*\*  $p < .01$  (2 tailed)

significant predictor with higher grades associated with higher levels of school orientation. Steps 2 and 3 did not account for any significant increments in variance.

For the prediction of well-being (see Table 7.9a), Step 1 of the analysis accounted for approximately 12% of the total variance,  $F(4, 143) = 4.76, p < .01$ . Significant predictors included sex and academic average with being male and having higher grades associated with higher levels of well-being. Steps 2 and 3 did not contribute any significant additional variance

For the prediction of self-oriented perfectionism (see Table 7.9b), Step 1 of the analysis accounted for approximately 18% of the total variance,  $F(4, 143) = 7.73, p < .01$ . Academic average was the only significant predictor with higher grades associated with higher levels of self-oriented perfectionism. No additional variance was contributed by steps two or three.

For the prediction of socially-prescribed perfectionism (see table 7.9b), Step 1 of the analysis did not account for a significant portion of variance. However, when SL participation and the degree of playfulness in SL activities were added to the equation, approximately 11% of the total variance in socially-prescribed perfectionism was accounted for,  $F(6, 141) = 2.79, p = .01$ . Age and playfulness in SL activities were the only significant predictors with higher levels of socially-prescribed perfectionism associated with being younger and lower levels of playfulness in SL activities. Step 3 of the analysis did not account for any significant additional variance.

For the prediction of academic average, no significant variance was predicted on any of the three steps.

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Table 7.9b  
*Regression Analyses for Structured Leisure Participation and Play Predicting Self-Oriented and Socially Prescribed Perfectionism*

Variable	Self-Oriented Perfectionism			Socially Prescribed Perfectionism		
	<i>B</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	<i>B</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1		.18**	.18**		.05	.05
Age	-.15			-.20*		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	-.14			-.03		
SL Ability	.01			.03		
Academic Average	.38**			-.11		
Step 2		.19**	.01		.11*	.06*
Age	-.16*			-.21*		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	-.14			-.05		
SL Ability	.02			.09		
Academic Average	.38**			-.11		
SL Hours	.08			.13		
Play <sup>b</sup>	-.05			-.21*		
Step 3		.19**	.00		.11*	.00
Age	-.15			-.21*		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	-.15			-.05		
SL Ability	.02			.09		
Academic Average	.38**			-.11		
SL Hours	.07			.12		
Play <sup>b</sup>	-.07			-.21*		
SL Hours x Play	-.05			-.01		

*Note.* SL = Structured leisure. <sup>a</sup> 0 = male, 1 = female. <sup>b</sup> Higher scores indicate greater levels of playfulness in activity. \*  $p < .05$  (2 tailed). \*\*  $p < .01$  (2 tailed).

*ILM: Global and SL participation predicting adjustment.* Because both sets of analyses for Hypothesis 2 used identical adjustment/criterion variables and Step 1 predictor variables, only significant results for Steps 2 and 3 are reported below.

For the prediction of academic average (see Table 7.10), Step 1 of the analysis did not account for any significant variance. However, when SL participation and ILM: Global were included in the equation on Step 2, approximately 8% of the total variance was accounted for,  $F(5, 141) = 2.43, p = .04$ . ILM: Global was the only significant predictor with higher levels of ILM associated with lower grades. Step 3 of the analysis did not account for any significant additional variance.

No significant results, beyond Step 1, were found for the remaining outcome/criterion variables (i.e., school orientation, well-being, self-oriented perfectionism, socially prescribed perfectionism).

#### *7.1.2.4 Hypothesis 3: Do Perfectionism and SL Participation Interact to Predict Adjustment?*

To test Hypothesis 3, three hierarchical regression analyses were run using only participants who reported SL participation. Age, sex, and academic average (not included in the analysis when academic average was an outcome/criterion variable) were entered on Step 1, amount of time spent in SL activities, self-oriented perfectionism (SOP) and socially-prescribed perfectionism (SPP) on Step 2, and the interaction terms of SL participation with SOP and SL participation with SPP on Step 3. Criterion/adjustment variables included school orientation, well-being, and academic average.

Structured Leisure and Adolescent Adjustment

Table 7.10

*Regression Analyses for Structured Leisure Participation and ILM: Global Predicting Academic Average*

Variable	Academic Average		
	<i>B</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1		.04	.04
Age	-.11		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	.18*		
SL Ability	.08		
Step 2		.08*	.04
Age	-.12		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	.16		
SL Ability	.14		
SL Hours	.07		
ILM: Global	-.20*		
Step 3		.09*	.01
Age	-.13		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	.16*		
SL Ability	.14		
SL Hours	.06		
ILM: Global	-.17		
SL Hours x ILM: Global	.12		

*Note.* SL = Structured leisure. ILM = Intrinsic Leisure Motivation. <sup>a</sup> 0 = male, 1 = female. \*  $p < .05$  (2 tailed). \*\*  $p < .01$  (2 tailed).



## Structured Leisure and Adolescent Adjustment

For the prediction of school orientation (see Table 7.11a), Step 1 of the analysis accounted for approximately 18% of the total variance,  $F(3, 144) = 10.49, p < .01$ .

With the addition of SL participation, self-oriented perfectionism, and socially prescribed perfectionism, Step 2 of the analysis accounted for an additional 8%, which was statistically significant,  $F\text{-change}(3, 141) = 4.70, p < .01$ . Significant predictors included academic average and self-oriented perfectionism. Higher levels of school orientation were associated with higher grades and higher levels of SOP. Step 3 of the analysis did not account for a significant increment in the variance.

For the prediction of well-being (see Table 7.11a), Step 1 of the analysis accounted for approximately 12% of the total variance,  $F(3, 142) = 6.27, p < .01$ . With the addition of SL participation, self-oriented perfectionism, and socially prescribed perfectionism, Step 2 accounted for an additional 6%, which was statistically significant,  $F\text{-change}(3, 139) = 3.27, p = .02$ . Significant predictors included sex, academic average, and socially prescribed perfectionism. Higher levels of well-being were associated with being male, higher grades, and lower levels of socially prescribed perfectionism. Step 3 of the analysis did not account for any significant additional variance.

For the prediction of academic average (see Table 7.11b), Step 1 of the analysis did not account for any significant variance. However, with the addition of SL participation, self-oriented perfectionism, and socially prescribed perfectionism, Step 2 of the analysis accounted for approximately 25% of the total variance,  $F(5, 139) = 9.23, p < .01$ . Significant predictors included sex, self-oriented perfectionism, and socially

## Structured Leisure and Adolescent Adjustment

Table 7.11a

*Regression Analyses for Structured Leisure Participation, Self-Oriented and Socially Prescribed Perfectionism Predicting School Orientation and Well-Being*

Variable	School Orientation			Well-Being		
	<i>B</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	<i>B</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1		.18**	.18**		.12**	.12**
Age	-.04			.08		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	-.02			-.26**		
Academic Average	.42**			.26**		
Step 2		.25**	.08**		.18**	.06*
Age	-.02			.03		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	.02			-.28**		
Academic Average	.27**			.26**		
SL Hours	.03			-.03		
SOP	.35**			-.05		
SPP	-.15			-.22*		
Step 3		.26**	.01		.21**	.03
Age	-.02			.05		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	.03			-.29		
Academic Average	.27**			.26**		
SL Hours	.03			-.03		
SOP	.34**			-.01		
SPP	-.14			-.25*		
SL Hours x SOP	-.09			.24*		
SL Hours x SPP	.06			-.04		

*Note.* SL = Structured leisure. SOP = Self-Oriented Perfectionism. SPP = Socially Prescribed Perfectionism <sup>a</sup> 0 = male, 1 = female.

\*  $p < .05$  (2 tailed). \*\*  $p < .01$  (2 tailed).

Structured Leisure and Adolescent Adjustment

Table 7.11b

*Regression Analyses for Structured Leisure Participation, Self-Oriented and Socially Prescribed Perfectionism Predicting Academic Average*

Variable	Academic Average		
	<i>B</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1		.04	.04
Age	-.12		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	.15		
Step 2		.25**	.21**
Age	-.06		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	.19*		
SL Hours	.03		
SOP	.54**		
SPP	-.36**		
Step 3		.25**	.00
Age	-.07		
Sex <sup>a</sup>	.19*		
SL Hours	.03		
SOP	.53**		
SPP	-.36**		
SL Hours x SOP	-.06		
SL Hours x SPP	.04		

*Note.* SL = Structured leisure. SOP = Self-Oriented Perfectionism. SPP = Socially Prescribed Perfectionism <sup>a</sup> 0 = male, 1 = female.

\*  $p < .05$  (2 tailed). \*\*  $p < .01$  (2 tailed).

prescribed perfectionism. Higher grades were associated with being female, higher levels of self-oriented perfectionism, and lower levels of socially prescribed perfectionism.

### 7.2 Focus Group Results

#### *7.2.1 Focus Group Analysis*

In order to reduce the influence of personal biases, prior to transcript coding I recorded my personal biases and experiences regarding the current topic (see Appendix O). Significant points included believing that SL activities can have many benefits for participants but also be potentially detrimental due to a societal over-emphasis on achievement and an under-emphasis on leisure. Given that the current study had a more explicit focus on potential drawbacks of SL participation, a concentrated effort was made to recognize the benefits of participation. Finally, in an effort to reduce bias, focus group results were analyzed prior to completing quantitative analyses.

The transcripts of the focus group discussions were coded to identify themes that emerged for each of the analyzed questions in the focus group schedule. The questions that were analyzed focused on the aspects of SL activities that participants enjoyed and did not enjoy, the role of parents or other adults in these activities, how these activities related to fun/play, why participants chose to participate in these activities, situations where focus group participants thought it was unhealthy to participate in SL activities, and participants' opinions regarding the hypothesis that SL activities can sometimes be more like work (i.e., school) as opposed to leisure. To complete the thematic analysis, I reviewed each of the transcripts on multiple occasions for possible themes. Once the

initial coding was completed, group themes were compared to one another and all themes were put in one document using the "cut and paste" method (Krueger & Casey, 2000). This method involves taking the actual portion of the transcript that was used to identify the theme and placing that portion in a master document. This approach allows for other individuals, aside from the primary investigator, to examine how the themes were derived.

Following this second step, I created summary descriptions of the various themes and ultimately organized them according to the positive and negative aspects of SL participation, and factors that influence the SL experience. These three primary categories were determined through discussion with supervisors (who also reviewed the focus group transcripts) and members of my advisory committee. A final phase of the focus group analysis involved a trained research assistant examining the original transcripts and comparing them with the summary descriptions to determine if any themes were not supported or if any new themes needed to be added. No changes were required.

### *7.2.2 Focus Group Themes*

An overview of the themes and sub-themes identified in the focus groups is provided in Table 7.12.

#### *7.2.2.1 Positive Aspects of SL Participation*

When asked what they enjoyed about their particular SL activities, participants in multiple groups reported that their activities satisfied their competitive drive. Some

Table 7.12  
Focus Group Themes

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Positive aspects of SL participation                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Satisfaction of competitive drive</li> <li>b. Health benefits</li> <li>c. Stress Relief</li> <li>d. Support of parents and other significant adults</li> <li>e. Having fun</li> <li>f. Learning new things</li> </ul> </li> <li>II. Negative aspects of SL participation                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Political aspects</li> <li>b. Time pressure</li> <li>c. Dissatisfaction with other participants</li> <li>d. Not feeling in control of one's participation</li> <li>e. Maintaining motivation participate</li> <li>f. Pressure from parents to participate</li> <li>g. Coaches whose approaches were not appropriate for the level of competition</li> <li>h. Injuries and other unhealthy consequences</li> <li>i. Mismatches between participants and the level of competition/involvement</li> </ul> </li> <li>III. Factors that influence the SL experience                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Reasons for participating in SL activities                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Challenge/accomplishment</li> <li>ii. Fun</li> <li>iii. Opportunities</li> <li>iv. Fights boredom</li> <li>v. Scholarships</li> <li>vi. Sense of control/freedom</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Fun and SL participation                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Sense of relaxation/being in the moment/feeling happy</li> <li>ii. Not worried about everyday concerns</li> <li>iii. Fun distinction</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Do SL activities and the school environment provide different contexts?                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Depends on various factors (e.g., level of competition, number of activities, which SL activity)</li> </ul> </li> <li>d. Parental reactions to quitting an SL activity                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Generally supportive if for the right reasons</li> </ul> </li> <li>e. Issues that arise when friends are involved in SL activities                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Experiences and emotions (both positive and negative) can be intensified</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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participants elaborated by saying that they enjoyed the challenge and the adrenaline rush that comes with competition.

Another theme that occurred in multiple groups focused on the health benefits associated with SL participation. Participants reported that they felt that they were involved in more exercise and had a healthier diet due to their involvement. They also reported that their SL activities helped to relieve stress. Other benefits reported by participants in multiple groups was having fun with friends and learning new things.

Participants across groups had a number of positive things to say about the roles of parents and other adults in their SL activities. Parents were appreciated for their moral support along with their practical contributions such as assisting in fund-raising, travel assistance, and financial support. Coaches and teachers were also greatly appreciated. Coaches in particular were appreciated for their knowledge, instruction, and acting as meaningful role models.

### *7.2.2.2 Negative Aspects of SL Participation*

In terms of the negative aspects of SL activities, participants across groups indicated their dislike for the politics involved in the activities (e.g., how participants were chosen for various levels of their activity and how they participated in the activity). This topic created some interesting discussion for groups in that some participants felt that they had been treated unfairly in the past, whereas other participants felt that politics/bias was an inherent aspect in these activities and could not be escaped. Others also went out of their way to state that they felt that the level of politics/bias varied a great deal depending on the adult/coach.

Members across groups also reported that time pressure was one undesirable aspect of SL participation. Participants reported feeling drained over having something to do all the time and feeling as if there was not enough time in the day. Another multiple group theme focused on dissatisfaction with the involvement of some of the other participants in SL activities. Some group members indicated that they felt that others did not demonstrate enough dedication to the activity and other members reported that some team members or coaches had poor attitudes.

Themes that occurred in single groups involved disliking not always being in control of how one participated in the activity (e.g., feeling unprepared to participate at a higher level of the activity) and difficulty remaining motivated to do the activity. One participant reported that she was prematurely put in a competition that eventually led to a serious injury. Some participants indicated that they felt they had reached a level where the effort to remain involved in the activity was not commensurate with the benefits.

In terms of the roles of parents, participants in two groups indicated being involved in a particular activity in part to maintain a relationship with one or the other parent. Two participants, in two different groups, reported being involved in two activities, each of which was favored by each parent. This aspect of the activity appeared to introduce some degree of pressure to remain involved. Participants indicated that if they discontinued their participation it could possibly risk their relationship with a parent, or their parents would potentially no longer have access to the network of friends they had developed within the SL activity. Some participants



reported either real or hypothetical difficulties with their parents in terms of quitting SL activities. One participant indicated that he had not been allowed to stop his music lessons because his parents had been quite passionate about him being a musician. Another participant indicated that her parents would be quite upset if she were to quit activities as it would show a lack of dedication and commitment. She described SL activities as being on the same level of responsibility as her school work. She stated that due to this pressure, she did not quit activities even when she wanted to. Other themes that emerged in relation to parents involved the idea that some parents adopt an overly critical stance and that sometimes parents pressure their children to participate in order to contend for scholarships at the postsecondary level.

A negative aspect of adults in a coaching role focused on inappropriate matches between the abilities or characteristics of a coach and the context of the activity. Two female participants in one group discussed having a male coach for a female team who could not identify well with the players. The same participants also provided an example of a coach who was too egalitarian for the competitive level at which he was coaching. They felt that this egalitarian approach influenced the competitiveness of the team and increased the stress levels of participants.

When asked to describe situations where SL participation may be harmful, participants in multiple groups indicated that they had either observed, or been directly involved in situations in which injuries or other health issues led to unhealthy behavior in relation to SL activities. One participant described playing with an injury for the whole season which resulted in the injury becoming chronic. Other group members

provided examples involving wrestling and athletes "cutting weight" by vomiting or excessive exercise. This example was even more salient in that some of the participants could identify their own behavior as being unhealthy but still felt it was necessary in order for them to participate.

Participants in one focus group also indicated that a mismatch between the activity and the individual's personality could potentially lead to harm for the individual. This fit was seen as being necessary both between the individual and the activity as well as between the individual and the competitive level of the activity (e.g., Division I vs. Division III).

### *7.2.2.3 Factors that Influence the SL Experience*

*Reasons for participating in SL activities.* When asked why they participated in SL activities, participants across groups spoke of the challenge, sense of competition, adrenaline rush, accomplishment and fun that often came with these activities. They also identified the opportunities (e.g., travel, develop friendships) that accompanied these activities. Two groups discussed appreciating the acknowledgment and pride that they felt by being successful in their SL activities. Another theme that emerged across groups involved participants wanting something to occupy their time and fight boredom. A less common theme that emerged involved some participants identifying the pursuit of scholarships as a goal for their SL participation. Other students discussed feeling a sense of freedom and control over their activities while participating in SL activities.

*Fun in relation to SL participation.* The discussion around fun focused on four components. First, participants were asked what they did for fun. Next, they were asked how they felt when they were having fun, and if they experience this feeling when they participated in SL activities. Finally, they were asked what the consequence would be if they did not have fun in their SL activities.

In terms of what participants did for fun, common responses included spending time with friends, listening to music, playing video games, and driving. Some participants also reported participating in more relaxed sport activities (e.g., throwing the ball around, skateboarding) for fun. Commonalities that were present across groups for the experience of fun included a sense of relaxation, being in the moment, and feeling happy. Participants indicated that when they were having fun they did not worry about their regular everyday concerns. Students in one group specifically identified working hard in their sports as being fun, in that they pushed themselves and that they had a sense of accomplishment. Although this experience was identified as being fun, overall, there seemed to be a distinction between the fun that is experienced during relaxed activities (e.g., being with friends, video games) and that experienced during formal SL activities.

Participants across groups formally identified this “fun” distinction and elaborated by saying that the fun experienced in SL activities involved competition, excitement, and focus, and was of a more serious nature. They also identified that there were aspects of their respective SL activities that were not fun (e.g., practicing, pressure, responsibility). When asked about what would happen if they did not have

fun in their SL activities, participants had varying answers. Some reported that not always having fun during SL activities was simply part of the process. Others reported they did not participate to have fun but that the winning component of sports was fun for them. Despite these comments, a number of participants stated that they would quit their activity if they no longer had fun. These individuals reported that they felt that they would lose their motivation to participate and that the activity would become more like a job or a chore.

*Do SL activities and the school environment provide different contexts?* When asked if they found that SL activities were either similar or different from things like school work (e.g., stressful, obligatory), participants provided complex answers. Some felt that the context of SL activities depended on a number of factors. In some situations, participants may see their SL activities as a job because they are performing at a highly competitive level. In these circumstances, participants stated that involvement was quite serious and that fun was not a primary goal. Serious effort is required and the consequences of failure may be not being able to participate in the future. When participation is of a more casual nature, participants may experience more fun and feel they are doing the activity solely for enjoyment. Participants within one group also reported that the amount of stress experienced during SL activities is often a function of the number of activities an individual is involved in.

Members in two groups indicated that their SL activities were as stressful, or more stressful, than their school activities. These participants stated that the stress they

experienced in their SL activities was not always negative and that, like school, the hard work could be rewarding.

Participants also reported that the context of their SL activities varied depending on the activity in which they were involved in. One participant reported having a great deal of fun and freedom while horseback riding, whereas playing competitive soccer was more of a responsibility. Contexts were reported to change within activities as well. Group members reported more positive experiences when they were traveling for their activities (e.g., more fun, new experience) as opposed to when their activities occurred in the usual context.

*Parental reactions to quitting an activity.* When asked about how their parents would react if they were to quit an SL activity, the majority of focus group participants reported that their parents would generally be supportive. They indicated that their parents would likely want to know why they were quitting and potentially would require them to fulfill their current commitment to participate if equipment had been purchased and registration fees paid. The general consensus appeared to be that parents would be supportive if participants were quitting the activity for the "right reasons."

*Issues that arise when friends are involved in SL activities.* When participants were asked what it was like for them when their friends were involved in the same SL activity as themselves, interesting themes emerged around competition and fun. Participants across groups reported that when friends participated, the level of competition increased. This competition could be seen to enrich the SL experience when things were going well, but it also increased the tension level when one person in

the friendship was performing poorly. Participants reported feeling uncomfortable, especially in team situations, dealing with the dual roles that sometimes occurred when a friend was also a teammate. Participants in multiple groups also indicated having more fun in SL activities when friends were involved. They reported feeling more comfortable and enjoying themselves more because of that comfort.

## 8. DISCUSSION

The current study was designed to explore the relationships between SL participation and youth adjustment. Hypotheses focused on determining whether there were linear and/or curvilinear relationships between SL participation and adjustment and whether play, leisure, and perfectionism moderated these relationships. A distinguishing feature of the current investigation involved an emphasis on the characteristics of the leisure context (e.g., free choice, fun, intrinsic motivation, change in perspective) and how these characteristics may be relevant to the developmental implications of SL activities. In addition to viewing SL/organized activities as being voluntary, involving some sort of adult structure or guidance, and regular participation, I argued that these activities have a leisure component that needs to be addressed when considering the outcomes associated with participation.

In addition to quantitative analyses, a focus group methodology was used to obtain a phenomenological perspective from participants. Although the present investigation yielded some insightful observations about participation in SL activities, results provided only partial support for Hypothesis 1 (i.e. linear and/or curvilinear relations between SL participation and adjustment) and no direct support for Hypotheses 2 and 3.

### *8.1 Structured Leisure Participation in Adolescence*

For the current sample, boys and girls reported participating in approximately 6-7 hours of SL activities per week and almost three quarters of the students (71%) reported being involved in at least one SL activity. This degree of participation falls

within a spectrum of participation rates reported from other investigations where overall rates ranged from 60-88% of study participants (Fredricks & Eccles 2006a; Larson et al., 2006; Mahoney et al. 2006). Although sports activities was the most common category of participation (66%), students also reported involvement in performance activities (13%), prosocial activities (11%) and, to a lesser extent, school-related activities (3%). In general, both boys and girls reported high degrees of playfulness in their SL activities, indicating that the majority of SL activities were viewed as being freely chosen and involving high levels of fun. This finding provides further support for the notion that the majority of SL participants view their participation as voluntary and enjoyable (Luthar et al., 2006; Mahoney et al., 2006).

### *8.2 What is the Nature of the Relationship between SL and Adolescent Adjustment?*

In Hypothesis 1 of the present study, a curvilinear relationship was predicted between SL and adjustment outcomes in adolescence. In particular, SL participation was expected to have beneficial effects (e.g., increased well-being, academic achievement) up to a point, after which these benefits would begin to level off or possibly decline. Contrary to what was expected, quantitative analyses found no conclusive support for the notion of diminishing or maximized returns in relation to SL participation.

There are various potential explanations for the absence of curvilinear relations between SL participation and adjustment. First, for the current sample the distribution of SL participation was positively skewed. The proportion of participants who could be considered to be highly involved was smaller in comparison to the numbers of



nonparticipants and participants with more moderate amounts of participation.

Approximately 4% of the sample spent 20 hours or more per week in SL activities.

Although this proportion is generally consistent with other studies on this topic (e.g., Mahoney et al., 2006), this increased skewness reduces the power to detect curvilinear relationships (McClelland & Judd, 1993). From a theoretical perspective, diminished or maximized returns may be more likely to occur at high levels of participation and having fewer participants in this category could reduce the likelihood of finding significant curvilinear relationships.

The influence of measurement error on the reliabilities of cross-product regression coefficients, which in turn affect the power to detect significant effects, must also be considered as a potential reason for the lack of curvilinear relations. As noted by Aiken and West (1991), individual predictor variables must be highly reliable to provide even adequate reliabilities for cross-product terms. Although all of the reliability coefficients for the variables used in Hypothesis 1 were  $\alpha = .80$  or above, even values such as these can result in cross-product reliabilities of .70 (Aiken & West, 1991). Of specific relevance to the testing of Hypothesis 1, it was not possible to calculate a reliability coefficient for the measurement of SL participation and thus, similarly not possible to determine the extent to which the reliability of this measure potentially influenced the results. Nonetheless, it has been demonstrated that even relatively minor increases in measurement error can significantly detract from the power to detect interactions and other higher-order relationships and this issue is likely pertinent to the current research.

Another issue related to power is that the magnitude of the curvilinear effect may have been too small to be detected using the current sample. Fredricks and Eccles (2006b) have noted that studies that have found curvilinear relationships (e.g., Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002) have used large representative samples (ranging from 4000 - 12000 participants, and that detecting nonlinear effects is likely difficult to achieve with smaller samples.

It is also plausible that curvilinear relationships between SL participation and adjustment variables do not exist. However, given the distributional characteristics of the current sample, the challenges in detecting curvilinear relationships, and previous research using large representative samples, curvilinear relationships between SL participation and adolescent adjustment should not be ruled out based on the current research. Few activities come with limitless benefits, and SL participation, while associated with various positive outcomes in the literature, also likely reaches a point where benefits to participants are maximized or even begin to diminish.

Despite the lack of support for curvilinear relationships, the findings suggested notable linear connections between SL participation and relevant variables. First, zero-order correlations demonstrated positive relationships between SL participation and SES, academic average, self-oriented perfectionism, and global perfectionism. The connection between SES and SL participation has been found in other investigations (e.g., Fredricks & Eccles 2006b; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002), and Mahoney and colleagues (2006) have noted that the availability and affordability of SL activities are primary factors affecting participation.

When the variance for relevant demographic factors (age, sex, and, SES) was controlled, regression analyses indicated that higher levels of SL participation were associated with better academic achievement and stronger self-oriented perfectionism. The connection between academic achievement and SL participation is consistent with prior research (e.g., Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002) and only serves to reinforce the notion that SL participation is linked to academic benefits for participants. One possible explanation for this link is that SL activities lead to higher grades for participants, but, given the correlational nature of the data, it is also possible that having higher grades leads to higher levels of SL participation. Another explanation could involve a “third variable” such as a drive toward competence regulating both achievement and SL participation.

A key question in the present research was whether participation in SL activities may in fact be connected to adjustment difficulties. The link between self-oriented perfectionism and SL participation in the present study offers at least preliminary evidence of a more challenging side to SL participation. Although self-oriented perfectionism was not related to maladjustment for the current study, it has been found in previous research to be associated with negative outcomes such as anxiety and depression (Hewitt et al., 2002) and is considered by some researchers as a potential risk factor for maladjustment (Hewitt & Flett, 2005). Admittedly, there is an ongoing debate within the perfectionism literature regarding potentially adaptive aspects of certain components of perfectionism (e.g., striving for perfection; Stoeber & Otto, 2006). Despite the fact that this debate is still unresolved, the current finding regarding

SL participation and perfectionism provides a more subtle perspective on potential drawbacks of SL participation and merits further investigation.

From a leisure perspective, striving for perfection may not always be adaptive. As noted previously, the leisure context is seen as providing a change in perspective and/or a loosening of constraints. It is possible that high levels of self-induced pressure to achieve certain standards may reduce or interfere with the desired developmental benefits of SL activities. When the *leisure* component of SL activities is considered, a relevant question to ask is whether there are in fact times or activities where it is beneficial to not strive for perfection? Kleiber (2000) has noted that constructs such as concentrated effort, competence, and commitment have been emphasized in leisure studies and the notion of relaxation has been primarily valued for its role in recharging individuals in order to allow them to optimize their achievements and productivity levels. It is possible that experiencing a sense of relaxation or a loosening of constraints during SL activities may have a more primary role in terms of facilitating positive adjustment (e.g., providing experiences of contentment, calmness) than to simply provide individuals with a break from intense involvement/action-oriented participation. The current link between SL participation and self-oriented perfectionism suggests that relaxation may be a difficult state to achieve for some SL participants.

For the quantitative portion of the present study, no other adjustment variables evidenced linear associations with SL participation. Explanations for the absence of a linear relationship between SL participation and non-academic well-being are unclear. Previous findings regarding the relationships between SL participation and internalizing

composites comprised of anxiety and depression have been mixed (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Luthar et al., 2006). Previous research implicating depression as a correlate of SL participation (e.g., Bartko & Eccles, 2003; Mahoney, Schweder, & Stattin, 2002) has involved person-centered analytic techniques (e.g., cluster analysis) as opposed to the variable-centered (e.g., multiple regression) approach used in the present research. It is possible that straightforward connections between SL participation and well-being as measured in the present study are either not present or are difficult to detect. SL participation, relatively speaking, may not play a major role in influencing variables such as anxiety, depression, self-esteem or life satisfaction in comparison to other variables such as family characteristics (e.g., parental criticism; Luthar, 2006).

The specific variables used to create the well-being composite may have influenced the nonsignificant findings. First, the use of an abbreviated measure of depression may have limited the variability for the well-being composite. Second, trait anxiety may not be as relevant to SL participation as generalized stress. Indeed, stress-related themes (e.g., time pressure, pressure from parents) emerged from the focus group component of the current study. Some researchers (e.g., Larson et al., 2006; Shaw et al., 1996) have incorporated measures of stress into their investigations and future studies utilizing stress measures may lead to a more detailed analysis of the developmental implications of SL participation. SL involvement may not be related to anxiety levels but could have implications for stress levels and their management. Involvement in SL activities could potentially assist participants in coping with stress, but, stress could also be exacerbated by high levels of SL participation. In addition to

dealing with the potential pressures specific to SL activities (e.g., time stress, achievement pressure), the cumulative effects of stress may be relevant when highly involved participants need to deal with competing priorities in the forms of academics, peers, family, and employment. Third, although more global indicators of well-being (e.g., self-esteem, life satisfaction) may not be linked to SL participation, it is possible that investigations of well-being within specific domains (e.g., peer relationships, academics) may provide different findings. For example, previous investigations (e.g., Marsh, 1992) have reported positive relationships between SL participation and academic and social self-concepts.

The lack of a relationship between school orientation and SL participation was unexpected considering the significant association found between SL participation and academic achievement and previous research findings linking SL participation and school belonging (e.g., Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b). One possibility for not finding a relationship between SL participation and school orientation is that the school orientation composite focused more on behaviors and values regarding school (e.g., taking part in class discussions, caring about doing one's best at school), as opposed to actual academic ability or a sense of fit within one's school (i.e., school belonging). Thus, despite the positive connection between school orientation and academic achievement, the extent to which students value their schooling and are involved in schoolwork activities does not appear to be related to their degree of involvement in SL activities.

One of the benefits of the present study was that in addition to quantitatively measuring the nature of the relationship between SL participation and adjustment, students were also asked directly about what their SL experiences were like. Their answers to these questions point to a number of interesting themes that are relevant to adjustment. First, focus group participants reported notable positive aspects of SL participation including the experiences of fun, enjoyment, challenge, and accomplishment, as well as various health benefits. These reports are consistent with those summarized by Mahoney and colleagues (2006) on common reasons for youth participation in SL activities. Participants also appreciated the support of parents and other adults involved in their activities and their comments highlight the need to further examine the role of significant adults who facilitate SL participation for youth. In particular, it would be helpful to investigate exactly *what* young people find helpful about their parents' involvement. Additionally, relatively little is known about the costs and benefits of child SL participation for parents, as well as parents' motivations for supporting a child in SL activities. It would be interesting to gather parent perspectives regarding their perceptions of potential drawbacks of participation as well as whether they felt pressured to encourage their children to participate in SL activities.

Consistent with expectations that there can be a down-side to SL activities, students spontaneously articulated a number of negative aspects of participation including experiencing time pressure, injuries and unhealthy behaviours, and pressure and criticism from parents. Frustrations with some of the political processes related to SL activities were identified as well. Other potential negative aspects involved

inappropriate matches between participants' personalities and the context of the activity, and participants no longer feeling they were getting sufficient returns/benefits from their involvement. The themes of the stresses of SL activities (e.g., time) and weighing the costs and benefits of participation have been highlighted by Fredricks and colleagues (2002) and require further investigation. Having a more comprehensive understanding of how participants experience stress in relation to SL activities and their processes for determining if they remain involved in the activity could lead to recommendations regarding how to reduce stress and potentially increase participation levels as well as the benefits of participation.

In addition to identifying positive SL experiences, the focus group component of the current study provided various examples of negative experiences related to SL participation. Although firm conclusions cannot be drawn from these findings, due to the various limitations associated with this aspect of the study (further discussed below), the above themes provide partial support for Hypothesis 1. According to focus group participants, SL participation can involve significant costs. There was no evidence indicating the severity, or ultimate consequences, of these drawbacks, but, it was clear that participants felt that these aspects of participation (e.g., time stress, parental criticism, etc.) significantly influenced the experiences occurring within SL activities.

Overall, no definitive support was found for the hypothesis that SL participation either had diminishing returns or maximized benefits. The positive relationship between SL participation and self-oriented perfectionism, as well as focus group data on



drawbacks of participation, provide possible evidence for some negative implications of SL participation. Consistent with other investigations, the current study found evidence for positive implications of SL participation. Students who were involved in SL activities tended to have higher grades and also reported having various positive experiences during activities. As noted by Mahoney and colleagues (2006), there is a substantial amount of evidence that supports encouraging youth to become involved in SL activities and to expand the opportunities for involvement.

### *8.3 How are Play and Leisure Relevant to SL Activities?*

Quantitative results did not provide any support for the second hypothesis in which play and intrinsic leisure motivation were expected to moderate the relationships between SL participation and adjustment. Although no significant interaction effects were found, various linear relationships emerged as significant. First, correlational results from the smaller subsample of SL participants (including only those students who participated in at least one SL activity) indicated that individuals who participated in SL activities tended to seek out activities that provided them with a sense of competence, challenge, and commitment. Second, individuals who indicated higher levels of ability in relation to their SL participation reported being involved in activities that were playful and that led to experiences of self-determination, challenge, and competence. Finally, youth who reported experiencing more play in their SL activities also sought out activities that provided them with a sense of competence, challenge, commitment, and self-determination. These links between SL participation, play, SL ability levels, and different aspects of intrinsic leisure motivation highlight the

importance of considering the different qualities of the SL context. Although causal directions cannot be established, the experience of play in SL activities is connected to various positive aspects of SL participation. The associations between play and intrinsic leisure motivation also provide some concurrent validity for the operationalization of the play composite for the current study in that the combined aspects of fun and free choice in relation to SL activities was appropriately related to different components of intrinsic leisure motivation.

Hierarchical regression analyses indicated that, after controlling for relevant background variables, participants who reported experiencing higher levels of play in their SL activities were likely to experience lower levels of pressure to be perfect from significant others in their lives. This finding is important for two reasons. First, although there was no significant relation between SL participation and socially prescribed perfectionism (for neither the larger sample nor the subset of SL participants), a relationship was found between a characteristic of SL participation (i.e., play) and this outcome. This finding emphasizes the value of incorporating leisure-related constructs into the investigation of the relationships between SL participation and adolescent adjustment. It is possible that simply examining the ties between the extent of SL participation and adjustment may not be adequate to detect and describe the potentially subtle and complex aspects of these activities. As noted by Fredricks and Eccles (2006a; 2006b), information on the contextual factors or other qualities of SL participation will contribute to a better understanding of the associations between SL participation and adolescent adjustment. It is not surprising that experiencing lower

levels of pressure to be perfect from significant others could potentially facilitate experiencing higher levels of fun during SL activities, as well as a greater degree of choice in relation to participation. Such an interpretation makes sense from a leisure perspective in that a loosening of constraints may be present when an individual perceives that he or she feels that there is freedom to experiment, or even make mistakes during an SL activity without incurring harsh consequences. It is also possible that experiencing a greater degree of play in SL activities assists participants in coping more effectively with expectations of perfection from others in their lives. A second implication of this finding is that even after controlling for background in the present study, feeling more pressure to be perfect from significant others in one's life was connected to poorer well-being and lower academic achievement, thus, indirectly linking play in SL activities with these outcomes.

The finding that individuals who sought out intrinsic rewards in their SL activities tended to have lower grades was unexpected and reasons for this relationship are unclear. It is possible that such individuals may be over-invested in their SL activities and thus their academic performance possibly suffers. It may also be the case that poor academic performance spurs individuals on to expect more from their SL activities. The correlational nature of the current design precludes any definitive conclusions on the direction of this connection.

Although the intrinsic leisure motivation subscales were not analyzed through regression analyses (to minimize experiment-wise error rates), two zero-order correlations emerged between intrinsic leisure motivation subscales and outcomes.

First, participants who reported that they felt higher levels of control in terms of their SL participation also had higher levels of well-being. This finding again emphasizes the importance of investigating the qualities of the SL experience and their links with differential patterns of youth development. The second correlation of note here revealed that, similar to the relation between overall intrinsic leisure motivation and academic achievement, individuals who sought out SL experiences that pushed their limits tended to have lower grades.

Play and leisure variables were expected to have moderating effects on the associations between SL participation and outcomes, such that the hypothesized benefits of SL participation would be reduced when these characteristics were low. The lack of significant moderating effects may be due to various reasons. First, it is possible that levels of play and intrinsic leisure motivation simply do not matter when it comes to understanding the mechanisms that connect SL participation and adjustment. In line with this explanation, previous investigations (e.g., Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002) have found that the developmental implications of SL activities are relatively consistent across a number of variables (e.g., gender, school size, ethnicity).

Other potential explanations, as discussed in Section 8.2, involve the distributional characteristics of some of the primary variables of interest, the influence of measurement error when examining interactions, and potentially small effect sizes that may have been difficult to detect with the size of the current sample. As was found for the larger sample, SL participation for the smaller subset, consisting only of SL participants, was significantly skewed with high levels of participation under-

represented in comparison to low and moderate levels of participation. Play was both negatively skewed and highly kurtotic indicating that the majority of participants rated their SL activities as highly playful. It is possible that the current sample of convenience does not adequately represent the full extent of SL participation and its relevant characteristics. These distributional aspects likely reduced the degree of power to detect significant interaction effects. McClelland and Judd (1993), for example, have demonstrated that even in ideal field research situations, the likelihood of detecting interaction effects is much less than that encountered in experimental research, in large part due to the joint distributions of the variables hypothesized to interact. Given these issues, the existence of moderating relationships between SL participation and play and between SL participation and intrinsic leisure motivation should not be ruled out based on the present research.

Changes regarding sampling techniques and the measurement of relevant variables may be helpful for future research on this topic. First, to obtain more adequate representation in terms of highly involved participants, it may be beneficial to directly access participants from more focused community contexts (e.g., dance organizations, youth groups, higher level sports organizations). Second, for the current investigation, play was comprised of two single item measures (i.e., fun and free choice) and it is possible that these measures did not adequately represent/sample their relevant constructs. A measure of play that provides a more comprehensive and varied representation of the construct may be beneficial in detecting significant relationships. Future investigations on this topic may benefit from inquiring about levels of fun or

choice during different aspects of the SL activity (e.g., practicing versus games or performances, interacting with peers during participation).

Focus group data provided interesting insights into the roles of play and leisure in relation to SL activities. First, participants identified that fun was a necessary component of SL participation. They also identified a *fun distinction* in that the type of fun they had depended on a number of circumstances. The fun experienced when associating with peers in relaxed and less structured settings was different from and less serious than the fun experienced during SL activities. This distinction may be relevant to the quantitative relationship between play and socially prescribed perfectionism. Although viewed as a (somewhat restricted) form of fun, SL activities may involve, for some participants, significant external pressure to succeed.

Participants also reported fluctuating experiences of fun within and across activities. Examples of circumstances that seemed to influence the amount and type of fun experienced involved the level of competition, whether the activity occurred in the place where one lived or in a traveling context, or even the reasons for participating (e.g., maintaining a relationship with a parent). These fluctuations highlight the complexity of SL activities in regards to how the contextual aspects can vary during participation. Some aspects may indeed, involve a leisure context, but, this context may not remain constant and participation can easily change to emphasize more structured characteristics (e.g., achievement, perseverance).

The focus group data do not provide conclusive evidence regarding whether or not fun is necessary for SL to provide developmental benefits, or if SL activities offer a

true leisure context involving a change in perspective or loosening of constraints. Based on discussions with participants, it appeared that, at times, SL activities did provide them with fun and a change in perspective. However, there were also circumstances where SL activities were associated with pressure to achieve and conflicted relationships, sometimes within the same activity.

As with other studies that have attempted to directly engage SL participants in conversations regarding their experiences of SL (e.g., Fredricks et al, 2002; Dworkin et al., 2003), the focus group component of the current study provided interesting insights into the relevant processes of these activities. One significant contribution of the current study is that the focus group results facilitated a more thorough examination of the role of fun/enjoyment. Although previous studies (e.g., Fredricks et al., 2002) have discussed fun/enjoyment as a reason for participation, the current study examined participants' perceptions of fun in their SL activities and articulated that participants can identify different *types* of fun which are context dependent. This distinction merits further attention and illustrates the value of focusing on the *leisure* aspects of SL activities. As noted previously, many investigations emphasize the importance of the *structured* components (e.g., perseverance, teamwork, problem-solving) of these activities and do not adequately address leisure. Given that the leisure context can arguably be relevant to development (e.g., generating growth, helping individuals adjust to new circumstances; see Chapter 2) it is possible that constructs such as fun, free choice, intrinsic motivation, and a change in perspective have more than just a supportive role in facilitating positive adjustment via SL participation. Future research

should continue to focus on the potentially important influences these components have on positive youth development.

*8.4 Does Perfectionism Moderate the Link between SL Participation and Adjustment in Adolescence?*

The third hypothesis in the present investigation outlined the prediction that aspects of perfectionism would moderate the relationship between SL participation and youth adjustment. Although no support was found for this hypothesis, similar issues with the distribution of SL participation and the difficulties of detecting moderating relationships likely apply to these analyses. As noted in Chapter 4, perfectionism has been found to interact with other variables in the prediction of youth adjustment.

The current study did find significant linear relationships between aspects of perfectionism and youth adjustment. Regression analyses indicated that students who endorsed self-oriented perfectionism (e.g., try to be perfect at everything), did better academically and showed a stronger orientation to school. In contrast, students scoring higher on socially prescribed perfectionism (e.g., people expect me to be perfect) had lower academic averages and reported poorer well-being. Results from the previous two hypotheses indicated that self-oriented perfectionism was positively associated with SL participation, and socially prescribed perfectionism was negatively associated with the degree of playfulness in SL activities. When these connections are examined together, aspects of perfectionism indirectly link SL participation with adjustment variables. Although still somewhat unclear based on the results of the current study, future researchers should explore the relevance of perfectionism to the developmental



implications of SL activities. The current findings do not conclusively rule out the possibility that the developmental implications of SL participation may vary according to differing levels of self-oriented and/or socially prescribed perfectionism. When individuals experience significant amounts of pressure to succeed, stemming either from themselves or from others, it is possible that both the developmental benefits and the leisure aspects of SL participation are significantly reduced.

### *8.5 Implications of Using the Label Structured Leisure*

The current investigation differs from other recent research on this topic by purposefully using the label *structured leisure* to identify the relevant activities. In Chapter 1 I argued that viewing these activities as only involving voluntary and regular participation, adult guidance, and participation that occurs in the context of constraints, rules, and goals does not adequately address the leisure aspects of participation (e.g., fun, free choice, intrinsic motivation). The use of the term SL has strengthened the present study in two ways. First, I would argue that SL better captures the underlying characteristics of these activities in contrast to more global labels such as organized activities or structured voluntary activities. The inclusion of constructs such as leisure, play, and structure facilitate a more in-depth and theoretical discussion of the established and potential outcomes associated with participation, and the mechanisms by which these outcomes occur. Positive outcomes can be viewed as potentially stemming from an effective combination of structured and leisure aspects. Balanced hypotheses about potential drawbacks of participation can also be explored without having to adopt an *all good* or *all bad* perspective on SL participation. As discussed in

Chapter 2, it can be difficult to successfully incorporate aspects of both structure and leisure into these activities and some drawbacks likely exist.

A second benefit of the use of SL for the current study is that it facilitated examining relationships between process oriented-variables of participation (e.g., fun, free choice, intrinsic leisure motivation) and adjustment outcomes. In addition to measuring the amount of time spent in SL activities, experiential aspects of participation were assessed. The constructs used in the current study were by no means exhaustive in terms of relevant SL experiences, but their use did provide further confirmation that participants find these activities generally playful and intrinsically motivating, and that these aspects can be related to adjustment outcomes even in the absence of significant relationships between time spent in SL activities and outcomes.

To my knowledge there has been very little discussion in the literature on this topic regarding the label used to describe these activities. The current study has used SL for the reasons discussed above and there do not appear to be any significant drawbacks to using this label. Further discussion on the usage of SL and its possible benefits and limitations may serve to enrich the research literature on this topic.

#### *8.6 Summary of Limitations*

Several methodological and theoretical issues must be considered with respect to the present study. First, the current results were obtained from a sample of convenience using cross-sectional data, thus limiting the generalizability of the present findings. Although attempts were made to control for factors that have been shown to influence participation in SL activities (e.g., SES, academic ability), the developmental

implications of SL participation are more adequately tested by longitudinal studies where outcome variables are measured on multiple occasions (Larson, 2000). In the absence of longitudinal data, it is impossible to determine whether the current findings are representative of youth in general or may in fact be biased by self-selection. With outcomes measured on only one occasion, speculation on directions of causality must be made with extreme caution. For example, the relationship between SL participation and self-oriented perfectionism can be explained in two ways. First, it is possible that SL participation contributes to the development of self-oriented perfectionism. Alternatively, individuals who are higher in levels of self-oriented perfectionism may be more likely to seek out and participate in SL activities.

A number of other limitations related to the study sample must also be noted. First, the composition of the sample may not be representative of the extent of SL participation. Twenty-nine percent of the current sample reported not being involved in any SL activities over the past month. This proportion is considerably higher than that reported by recent studies using larger and more representative samples. Larson, Hansen, and Moneta, (2006) reported that approximately 12% of their overall sample did not participate in any SL activities over the past three months. Fredricks and Eccles (2006a) indicated that approximately 15% of participants did not participate in any SL activities for the previous six months. One potential reason for this discrepancy may be the time period used to sample SL participation. Unlike these recent studies which prompted participants to estimate their participation rates over three and six months periods, participants in the current study were asked about their SL participation for the

previous month. Utilizing a briefer time period could potentially result in lower rates of reported SL participation as activities that did not occur within the last month are not captured. On the other hand, it is also possible that the SL participation of the study sample was unusually low, relatively speaking.

Second, the low proportion of participants reporting participation in non-sport SL activities such as performance or prosocial activities suggests the study sample may also not be representative of the breadth of SL participation. For example, Fredricks and Eccles (2006b) reported the following proportions of SL activity contexts: sports (64%), prosocial activities (48%), performing arts (44%), academic clubs (32%), school involvement activities (15%). For the current sample 66% of participants reported being involved in sports, 11% reported being involved in prosocial activities, 13% reported being involved in performing arts activities, 3% reported being involved in school involvement activities, and no participants reported being involved in academic clubs. There are various potential explanations for the lack of representation for non-sport contexts. First, the current proportions may simply reflect an accurate representation of the characteristics of participating schools (i.e., more of an emphasis on sports). Second, the under-representation may be related to how SL participation was measured for the current study. For the current investigation, a relatively open-ended format (with examples from different categories of activities) was used to collect data regarding SL participation. In contrast, Fredricks and Eccles (2006b) provided participants with a comprehensive list of activities from the various categories. It is possible that students in the current sample were more likely to spontaneously generate and report sports

involvement as opposed to involvement in the other potentially less salient activity contexts.

Given the relatively low proportions of participants involved in non-sport SL contexts, it is difficult to determine if the current results are applicable to these other activity contexts. It is possible that the predominance of sports activities biased the current results. For example, the relationship between perfectionism and structured leisure variables may be driven by the nature of a sports activity context but may not be reflective of a prosocial activity context (e.g., youth groups, scouts).

The focus group component of the current study also had noteworthy limitations. Although the primary purpose of the focus groups was to facilitate deeper understanding and insight into SL participation, it should be acknowledged that only four focus groups were held which may have been insufficient to achieve saturation of themes. Also, participants self-selected into the groups, which may have resulted in less variability across participants than a random selection method. Steps were taken to ensure a certain level of methodological rigor for the focus group analysis (e.g., transcription of groups, cut and paste method), but in-depth and labor intensive qualitative techniques (e.g., member checking) were not implemented. As such, the level of analysis for the focus group component is considered descriptive. Finally, the questions used for the focus groups may have been too broad in their scope to fully examine the relevant hypotheses. For example, students may not spontaneously comment on feeling connected to their school or experiencing positive or negative

emotions as a result of SL participation, and specific questions on these issues may have led to more varied and insightful themes.

The fact that the current study uses a concurrent quantitative-dominant design (see Chapter 5) also warrants discussion as a potential limitation. It is possible that a mixed methods approach with more equal emphasis on both quantitative and qualitative data may have provided a better understanding of the outcomes and processes associated with SL participation. Qualitative investigations (e.g., Fredricks et al., 2002) have been more likely to demonstrate possible drawbacks of participation than quantitative studies, and augmenting the focus group component (e.g., more participants, involving participants in multiple groups) of the current study may have provided more conclusive support for the relevant hypotheses. Unfortunately, the current study was faced with realistic limitations involving time, finances, and my familiarity with qualitative data and techniques. These issues made placing a greater emphasis on the focus group component difficult. The concurrent aspect of the qualitative and quantitative aspects also may have limited the findings of the study. If the quantitative component had been implemented and analysed first, the focus groups could have been used to further investigate quantitative findings. The above realistic limitations made this approach difficult as well.

One potential drawback of the current study's scope is the focus on the developmental implications of general structured leisure activities as opposed to specific activity contexts (e.g., sports, performing arts). Other investigations on this topic (e.g., Eccles & Barber, 1999; Larson et al., 2006) have examined the

developmental implications of each activity context separately, thereby suggesting that there may be significant differences across contexts. The current study purposefully investigated the leisure components of SL activities irrespective of specific contexts. It is possible that common effects are not present across activities and that each context provides specific developmental benefits and drawbacks.

A final limitation could involve the operationalizations of play and leisure for the current study. Although fun, free choice, and intrinsic leisure motivation are important components of these constructs, the current investigation did not specifically capture the notion of a loosening of constraints or a change in perspective (e.g., disengaging from everyday life, consequences being less severe). Focus group methodology provided some insight on this issue, but further development from a quantitative perspective is needed to better address this aspect of play and leisure. Indeed, the presence or absence of such a quality could have important implications for youth adjustment in relation to SL participation.

### *8.7 Future Research*

As noted by Mahoney and colleagues (2005), and Fredricks and Eccles (2006b), more research is needed to understand which features of SL contexts are relevant to adolescent development. Some work has been initiated on this topic. For example, in an effort to identify features of organized activities that may promote positive development, Eccles and Gootman (as cited in Mahoney et al., 2005) listed the following eight key characteristics which were derived from a review of positive development research on contexts such as families and schools: (a) physical and

psychological safety, (b) appropriate structure, (c) supportive relationships, (d) opportunities for belonging, (e) positive social norms, (f) support for efficacy and mattering, (g) opportunity for skill building, and (h) integration of family, school, and community efforts. Mahoney and colleagues note that specific research evaluating these features in relation to organized activities is limited but that many high quality organized activities are characterized by many of these features. When these eight features of experience are examined from a structured leisure perspective, there appears to be more of an emphasis on structure (e.g., skill building, structure, positive social norms) as opposed to leisure.

The potential conflict between structure and leisure should be considered when investigating the developmental importance of these activities. As discussed in Chapter 3, SL activities can be seen as an effort to formalize and structure play for children and youth, and the developmental implications of this process may not always be positive. The notion of leisure potentially being maladaptive is also relevant in that participants could potentially be over-invested in their SL activities, or the stress of being highly involved in one activity, or a number of activities, could detract from important leisure components that may be vital for these activities to be developmentally beneficial. A question that needs to be addressed pertains to the purposes of SL activities. Are SL activities primarily intended to provide participants with important life skills that assist them in making the transition from childhood to adulthood, or are they contexts that are meant to provide safe and prosocial avenues to experience play and leisure and to facilitate self-expression? In my opinion, the answer to this question is likely a



combination of these two statements and may also differ for each individual participant/family. Nonetheless, the value of play and leisure components to SL activities needs to be addressed and considered. When these aspects are overlooked or viewed as secondary to other aspects such as skill development or overall achievement/performance, I would argue that there is a potential for developmental drawbacks of SL participation. Future research that highlights the importance of the leisure context (e.g., fun, free choice, intrinsic motivation, loosening of constraints) may bring exciting new insights to this area of research.

Considering SL activities from a leisure perspective potentially leads to a different approach from focusing on different activity types (e.g., sports, performing arts, prosocial activities). Instead of examining the differential patterns of development associated with each activity, commonalities in relation to leisure may be sought out for investigation. It is possible that activities with certain degrees of structure and skill development that occur in the context of leisure contribute to positive adjustment in youth. From the previously reviewed theoretical approaches to SL activities, an emphasis on identity would be most compatible with a leisure perspective. As noted by Kleiber (1999), identity-oriented approaches have not sufficiently addressed how leisure can influence identity. Future research that examines adolescent identity formation (e.g., exploration) in the context of structured activities that involve a loosening of constraints, intrinsic motivation, free choice, and fun may lead to a better understanding of how adolescents ultimately establish their sense of self.

Although there has been a great deal of empirical support regarding the developmental benefits of SL activities, it is clear that the relationship between these activities and adolescent adjustment is complex. In the present study and in the literature in general, limited support has been found for the notion of diminished returns or drawbacks of participation. One possible explanation for these limited findings is that straightforward bivariate relationships may not adequately represent the subtle and complex issues involved in SL participation. For example, the over-scheduling hypothesis, as articulated by Mahoney and colleagues (2006), postulates that participants who are overscheduled will demonstrate poor adjustment relative to those with little or no SL participation and those with moderate amounts of participation. In contrast, positive youth development theory suggests that increasing participation is linked to increasing benefits. It is possible that both perspectives oversimplify the relationship between SL participation and adjustment. In regards to the over-scheduling perspective, an alternative hypothesis would be that participants who are experiencing diminished returns or drawbacks of participation would experience qualitatively different consequences (e.g., high levels of perfectionism which could potentially exacerbate anxiety during times of stress) in comparison to individuals who were not involved in SL activities. Additionally, high levels of SL participation may be beneficial for some individuals and detrimental for others, depending on the contexts (e.g., involvement of supportive and prosocial peers) and qualities of the activities, as well as the characteristics of the individual.

Methodological and statistical issues should also be considered in relation to addressing the complexity of the relationship between SL participation and adjustment. An issue for the current research involved the relatively low number of participants who could be considered to be highly involved. To address this issue one potential solution is to attempt to oversample highly involved SL participants. Such a strategy would ideally provide more adequate representation in terms of SL participation and increase the degree of power to detect moderating and curvilinear relationships (McClelland and Judd, 1993). This approach may be necessary for future research to address the possibility that SL variables such as the extent of participation and the degree of play involved are positively skewed in the general population. If researchers do not attempt to address this potential reality, it is unlikely that investigations into complex relations such as curvilinearity and moderation will produce significant results. A final benefit to oversampling highly involved youth is that having more participants in this category would facilitate a better understanding of not only potential drawbacks of high SL involvement, but also resiliency factors around participation at this level.

In terms of methodological issues, as noted by various scholars (e.g., Larson et al., 2006), both quantitative and qualitative studies are required to better understand the developmental implications of SL participation. In-depth longitudinal qualitative investigations in particular, involving both children and parents, may facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of this topic. It is also possible that a mixed methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative components, may be ideal for understanding the costs and benefits associated with SL participation. A mixed

methods design can be beneficial in that the weaknesses of solely quantitative designs (e.g., inadequate understanding of the context or setting in which participants exist) or of solely qualitative studies (e.g., difficulty in generalizing findings, researcher bias) are offset by the inclusion of both approaches (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The current study, although admittedly not equally balanced in respect to mixed methods, benefited from this approach in various ways. Although there was limited support for the hypotheses, focus group results provided insights that would not have been obtained (e.g., fun distinction, specific examples of drawbacks of participation) in a strictly quantitative study. In addition, participants who were involved in the focus groups were provided with an avenue to discuss and voice their opinions on youth SL participation. Finally, as a researcher I feel that I benefited from the added focus group component in that the focus groups provided me with more concrete and personal examples of SL participation as well as enjoyment in terms of my interactions with focus group participants. Further use of mixed methods approaches may lead to similar benefits for future investigations and consequently may make significant contributions to the literature on youth SL participation.

### *8.8 Conclusions*

The current findings provided partial support for Hypothesis 1 and no support for Hypotheses 2 and 3. No clear drawbacks of participation were identified in the current study and there was no evidence of moderating relationships in regards to play, leisure, or perfectionism. Nonetheless, given the methodological and statistical limitations of the present investigation, research that addresses these issues is warranted.

It is clear from the current literature review that SL activities are associated with a number of developmental benefits for youth participants. However, there continues to be questions posed regarding the potential drawbacks of SL participation (Mahoney et al., 2006). Although the current investigation did not provide conclusive results regarding these issues, notable contributions of this study included emphasis on the complexity of the relationships between SL participation and adolescent development as well as the importance and relevance of leisure theory to this topic. Further research could help shed light on the potential costs related to SL participation. This research should not be viewed as attempting to provide justification for reducing funding to SL organizations/activities or limiting these activities, but as an attempt to make these activities as enjoyable and developmentally beneficial as possible. As noted by Mannell, Kleiber, & Staempfli (2006), there is a growing awareness that leisure-related constructs are relevant to various areas of research. By reincorporating leisure theory into the investigation of structured leisure and adolescent development, a richer and more nuanced understanding of this topic may emerge.

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Appendix A: The Child-Adolescent Perfectionism Scale  
(Flett et al., 2001)

1. I try to be perfect in everything I do
2. I want to be the best at everything I do
3. My parents don't always expect me to be perfect in everything I do
4. I feel that I have to do my best all the time
5. There are people in my life who expect me to be perfect
6. I always try for the top score on a test
7. It really bothers me when I don't do my best all the time
8. My family expects me to be perfect
9. I don't always try to be the best
10. People expect more from me than I am able to give
11. I get mad at myself when I make a mistake
12. Other people think I have failed if I do not do my very best all the time
13. Other people always expect me to be perfect
14. I get upset if there is even one mistake in my work
15. People around me expect me to be great at everything
16. When I do something, it has to be perfect
17. My teachers expect my work to be perfect
18. I do not have to be the best at every thing I do
19. I am always expected to do better than others
20. Even when I pass, I feel that I have failed if I didn't get one of the highest marks in the class
21. I feel that people ask too much of me
22. I can't stand to be less than perfect

Note: Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from *False, not at all true of me* to *Very true of me*). Items 3, 9, and 18 are reversed scored. Self-oriented perfectionism is the sum of items 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18, 20, and 22. Socially prescribed perfectionism is the sum of items 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21.

Appendix B: Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale  
(Reynolds & Richmond, 1985)

1. I have trouble making up my mind.
2. I get nervous when things do not go the right way for me.
3. Others seem to do things easier than I can.
4. I like everyone I know.
5. Often I have trouble getting my breath.
6. I worry a lot of the time.
7. I am afraid of a lot of things.
8. I am always kind.
9. I get mad easily.
10. I worry about what my parents will say to me.
11. I feel that others do not like the way I do things.
12. I always have good manners.
13. It is hard for me to get to sleep at night.
14. I worry about what other people think about me.
15. I feel alone even when there are people with me.
16. I am always good.
17. Often I feel sick in my stomach.
18. My feelings get hurt easily.
19. My hands feel sweaty.
20. I am always nice to everyone.
21. I am tired a lot.
22. I worry about what is going to happen.
23. Other people are happier than I.
24. I tell the truth every single time.
25. I have bad dreams.
26. My feelings get hurt easily when I am fussed at.
27. I feel someone will tell me I do things the wrong way.
28. I never get angry.
29. I wake up scared some of the time.
30. I worry when I go to bed at night.
31. It is hard for me to keep my mind on my schoolwork.
32. I never say things I shouldn't.
33. I wiggle in my seat a lot.
34. I am nervous.
35. A lot of people are against me.
36. I never lie.
37. I often worry about something bad happening to me.

Note: Items are rated dichotomously (*Yes* or *No*).

Appendix C: Children's Depression Inventory-Short Form  
(Kovacs, 1992)

<p>___ I am sad once in a while. ___ I am sad many times ___ I am sad all the time.</p> <p><sup>a</sup> ___ Nothing will ever work out for me. ___ I am not sure if things will work out for me. ___ Things will work out for me OK.</p> <p>___ I do most things OK. ___ I do many things wrong. ___ I do everything wrong.</p> <p><sup>a</sup> ___ I hate myself. ___ I do not like myself. ___ I like myself.</p> <p><sup>a</sup> ___ I feel like crying everyday. ___ I feel like crying many days. ___ I feel like crying once in a while.</p>	<p><sup>a</sup> ___ Things bother me all the time. ___ Things bother me many times. ___ Things bother me once in a while.</p> <p>___ I look OK. ___ There are some bad things about my looks. ___ I look ugly.</p> <p>___ I do not feel alone. ___ I feel alone many times. ___ I feel alone all the time.</p> <p>___ I have plenty of friends. ___ I have some friends but I wish I had more. ___ I do not have any friends.</p> <p><sup>a</sup> ___ Nobody really loves me. ___ I am not sure if anybody loves me. ___ I am sure that somebody loves.</p>
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Note. Items are rated according to severity from 0 to 2. <sup>a</sup> Items are reverse scored.

Appendix D: Organized After-School Activities

1. Your Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Do you have a part-time job? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
If yes: Is this job part of a work experience program? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
Approximately how many hours a week do you work? \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Do you currently have a boyfriend or girlfriend? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
If yes: What is this person's first name and last initial? \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Please tell us how much formal education your mother has had (e.g., Did she finish High school, get a university or a college degree)? \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Please put a checkmark by the range that represents your overall grade average.  
<20-50% \_\_\_ 51-60% \_\_\_ 61-70% \_\_\_ 71-80% \_\_\_ 81-90% \_\_\_ 91-100% \_\_\_
  
7. People in Canada have a lot of different cultural backgrounds. Some people have ancestors that came from Europe, others have families that came from India, Africa, or Asia. How you would describe yourself in terms your cultural background (*remember that all questions are optional and you do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable*)?  
\_\_\_\_\_ White (e.g., Caucasian, European descent, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Aboriginal (First Nation, Metis, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Asian (Oriental, Chinese, Japanese, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Black (African, Haitian, Jamaican, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Latin (Spanish, Mexican, South American)  
\_\_\_\_\_ East Indian  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**In the spaces below please list all of the after-school activities that you participate in. These activities can be organized (e.g., being on the school soccer team or drama club) or casual (e.g., playing basketball with friends after school).**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## Structured Leisure and Adolescent Adjustment

### ORGANIZED AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

We are interested in the after-school activities of high school students. In particular we would like to know about the **ORGANIZED** activities that you participate in. Such activities could be provided by your school or they could take place in your community. In the left hand column of the table below, please list the activities that you participate in on a regular basis. Then, for each of the activities that you list, please answer the questions in the columns on the right. Only include the activities that you have participated in within the last month and that have involved some sort of formal coaching or adult guidance. Some **EXAMPLES** of these activities would be:

1. Being on a community soccer team that has a coach
2. Taking music lessons
3. Being on the debate club at school

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<i>In a typical week how many <u>scheduled</u> hours do you spend doing this activity?</i>	<i>In general, how often do you participate in this activity (choose the best option and check ONE space)?</i>	<i>How much fun do you <u>usually</u> have during this activity (circle ONE number)?</i>	<i>I do this activity because other people (e.g., parents, friends) want me to do it (circle ONE number).</i>	<i>Compared to your peers, how good are you at this activity (circle ONE number)?</i>
	____ # hours	Daily.....____ 3 times per week.....____ 2 times per week.....____ Once a week.....____ Once every two weeks...____ Once a month or less.....____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 No fun at all <span style="float: right;">A lot of fun</span>	1 2 3 4 5 Not at all <span style="float: right;">Very True</span>	1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Good <span style="float: right;">Very Good</span>
	____ # hours	Daily.....____ 3 times per week.....____ 2 times per week.....____ Once a week.....____ Once every two weeks...____ Once a month or less.....____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 No fun at all <span style="float: right;">A lot of fun</span>	1 2 3 4 5 Not at all <span style="float: right;">Very True</span>	1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Good <span style="float: right;">Very Good</span>
	____ # hours	Daily.....____ 3 times per week.....____ 2 times per week.....____ Once a week.....____ Once every two weeks...____ Once a month or less.....____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 No fun at all <span style="float: right;">A lot of fun</span>	1 2 3 4 5 Not at all <span style="float: right;">Very True</span>	1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Good <span style="float: right;">Very Good</span>

Structured Leisure and Adolescent Adjustment

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<i>In a typical week how many <u>scheduled</u> hours do you spend doing this activity?</i>	<i>In general, how often do you participate in this activity (choose the best option and check one space)?</i>	<i>How much fun do you <u>usually</u> have during this activity (circle one number)?</i>	<i>I do this activity because other people (e.g., parents, friends) want me to do it (circle one number).</i>	<i>Compared to your peers how good are you at this activity (circle one number)?</i>
	___ # hours	Daily..... 3 times per week..... 2 times per week..... Once a week..... Once every two weeks... Once a month or less.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 No fun at all A lot of fun	1 2 3 4 5 Not at all Very True	1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Good Very Good
	___ # hours	Daily..... 3 times per week..... 2 times per week..... Once a week..... Once every two weeks... Once a month or less.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 No fun at all A lot of fun	1 2 3 4 5 Not at all Very True	1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Good Very Good
	___ # hours	Daily..... 3 times per week..... 2 times per week..... Once a week..... Once every two weeks... Once a month or less.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 No fun at all A lot of fun	1 2 3 4 5 Not at all Very True	1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Good Very Good
	___ # hours	Daily..... 3 times per week..... 2 times per week..... Once a week..... Once every two weeks... Once a month or less.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 No fun at all A lot of fun	1 2 3 4 5 Not at all Very True	1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Good Very Good
	___ # hours	Daily..... 3 times per week..... 2 times per week..... Once a week..... Once every two weeks... Once a month or less.....	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 No fun at all A lot of fun	1 2 3 4 5 Not at all Very True	1 2 3 4 5 Not Very Good Very Good

**Please add any comments that you would like to share with us regarding this study.**

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**We would be interested in hearing more of your thoughts on your after-school activities. If you are interested in participating in a discussion group with other students in your grade (that would take place at your school) please write your full name and phone number below so we can contact you. Thank you again for your participation.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Structured Leisure and Adolescent Adjustment

### Appendix E: Intrinsic Leisure Motivation Scale (Weissinger & Bandalos, 1995)

1. I feel in control of my life during my after-school activities.
2. I am as dedicated to my after-school activities as I am to other parts of my life.
3. I know what I want from my after-school activities.
4. I strive to be effective in my after-school activities
5. I like after-school activities that are a little beyond my ability.
6. I feel like I don't get to do what I want with my after-school activities.
7. I am aware that I feel good about my ability to use my time for after-school activities.
8. My after-school activities absorb all of my attention.
9. My friends think that I am skilled at after-school activities.
10. I like a challenge in my after-school activities.
11. My after-school activities are a central part of my life.
12. After-school activities are important in my life.
13. After-school activities are OK but other things are more important in my life.
14. I am willing to try the unknown in after-school activities.
15. I feel good when my after-school activities time activities challenge my skills.
16. My participation in after-school activities makes me feel competent.
17. The thing I like best about my after-school activities is that I make free choices.
18. I don't enjoy my after-school activities if they challenge my skills.
19. I am not willing to compromise on my after-school activities.
20. After-school activities are what I am best at.
21. I seem to know what will make my after-school activities satisfying.
22. The things I do in my after-school activities make me feel good about my abilities.
23. My after-school activities make me feel like an effective person.
24. I listen to my own needs when deciding how to use my time in after-school activities.

Note: Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from *False, not at all true of me* to *Very true of me*). Items 6, 13, and 18 are reversed scored.



## Structured Leisure and Adolescent Adjustment

### Appendix F: Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (Huebner, 1991)

1. My life is just right.
2. I have what I want in life.
3. My life is going well.
4. I have a good life.
5. I would like to change many things in my life.
6. I wish I had a different kind of life.
7. My life is better than most kids.

Note: Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from *False, not at all true of me* to *Very true of me*). Items 5 and 6 are reversed scored.

Appendix G: Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents  
(Harter, 1988)

1. Some teenagers are often disappointed with themselves BUT Other teenagers are pretty pleased with themselves.
2. Some teenagers don't like the way they are leading their life BUT Other teenagers do like the way they are leading their life.
3. Some teenagers are happy with themselves most of the time BUT Other teenagers are often not happy with themselves.
4. Some teenagers like the kind of person they are BUT other teenagers often wish they were someone else.
5. Some teenagers are very happy being the way they are BUT Other teenagers wish they were different.

Note. Adolescents are asked to choose the statement that is most like them and then to mark whether the statement is *really true* or *sort of true* for them. The score for each item can range from 1 (*least favourable self-perception*) to 4 (*most favourable*). Items 3, 4, and 5 are reversed scored.

Structured Leisure and Adolescent Adjustment

Appendix H: School Values and Involvement Questionnaire

(Berndt & Miller, 1990)

	False, Not at all True of me	Mostly False	Neither True nor False	Mostly True	Very True of Me
1. I think my school work is boring.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I think school is useful for the job I want to get when I'm an adult.	1	2	3	4	5
3. It is important to me to get good grades.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am interested in the things I learn in school.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I would be upset if I got a low grade in one of my subjects.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I think my homework is fun to do at times.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I care a lot about doing my best at school.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I think my education will be valuable in getting the job I want.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I try to get by in school instead of trying to do the best I can.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I want to know even more about some things I learn in school.	1	2	3	4	5
11. It is important for me to be a good student.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I am interested in the work my teachers give me.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I think the facts I learn in school are of no value.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I think I am assigned homework just to keep me busy.	1	2	3	4	5
15. School is useful for helping me to make good decisions in my life.	1	2	3	4	5

Structured Leisure and Adolescent Adjustment

	False, Not at all True of me	Mostly False	Neither True nor False	Mostly True	Very True of Me
16. I care as much about being successful in school as I do about being successful at other things.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I put my best effort into my homework.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I think the things I learn in school are useless.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I think my school work this year will help me in preparing for life after high school.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I take part in class discussions of activities.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I put a lot of energy into what I do in school.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I “doodle” or pass notes a lot in school.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I am willing to do a class presentation of my own work.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I daydream in school.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I feel only half awake during school.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I find myself “clock watching” in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I really pay attention to what the teacher says.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I do extra work on my own in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I really enjoy my school.	1	2	3	4	5

Note. Items 1, 9, 13, 14, 18, 22, 24, 25, 26 are reverse scored.

Appendix I: Focus Group Schedule

1. Introductions
2. Alright, now I have a question about your after-school activities. All of you filled out that questionnaire for me, and I'm curious, what types of organized after-school activities did you list when you did that questionnaire (remember that I asked for the ones you were currently involved in)? If you didn't put down any organized activities could you tell us what you do after-school in general.
3. My next question is how did you first get involved in these activities?
4. What are the some of the things that you like about being involved in these activities (hypothetical for those not involved)?
5. How about things you don't like about being involved in these activities (hypothetical for those not involved)?
6. What role do your parents or other adults (e.g., coaches, instructors) play in these activities? *When you think about your parents or other adults and these activities, what comes to mind?*
  - a. How would they react if you decided to quit one of your activities?
7. What's it like when your friends are in the same activity as you are?
8. My next question is about fun. First off, what do you do to have fun?
  - a. How do you feel when you're having fun?
  - b. Finally, do you get this feeling when you're participating in your various activities?
  - c. What would the consequence be if you didn't/don't have fun in these activities?
9. Why do you do these activities? What's your main goal?
10. Bit of a different question now. I'm curious if there is a time when a person shouldn't participate in these organized after-school activities? By that I mean, are there circumstances when it wouldn't be good for a person to do something like baseball, or drama, or band?
  - a. How often do you see this happen
11. People who study young people's participation in these activities sometimes think that these activities aren't much different from things like school (e.g., they take a lot of effort and they may stress you out sometimes). What do you think of that?
12. We've talked about a lot of stuff today. I'm wondering if there's anything we've missed?

Appendix J: Consent and Assent Forms

**PARENTAL CONSENT FORM  
ORGANIZED AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

Mark Nicoll, Dr. Gerald Farthing, and Dr. Patricia McDougall from the Department of Psychology at the University of Saskatchewan would like to invite your child to participate in a study on Organized After-School Activities. Please read the attached form carefully, and feel free to contact us by telephone (966-8925) or email ([mark.nicoll@usask.ca](mailto:mark.nicoll@usask.ca)) if you have any questions or concerns.

Summary of Instructions

1. In order for us to ask your child to participate in this study your consent is needed. Please complete the last page of this form and give it to your child to return to his or her school.
2. In addition to having your child participate in this study, we would also greatly appreciate it if you could fill out a very brief questionnaire regarding your child's participation in organized after-school activities. If you are interested in participating **please include your address on the last page of this form** and we will mail you a copy of the questionnaire along with a prepaid and addressed envelope. PLEASE NOTE THAT YOUR CHILD IS WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE EVEN IF YOU CHOOSE NOT TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

**Purpose and Procedure:** The purpose of this study is to investigate how young people spend their time in organized after-school activities (e.g., sports, youth organizations, music). We are also interested in how these activities are related to the well-being of adolescents. If you choose to allow your child to participate, we will ask your child to fill out a questionnaire regarding how they generally think and feel. We will also ask for information regarding your child's friendships and the various after-school activities that your child participates in. This questionnaire will take approximately 50-60 minutes to complete and would be done during class time. If, after completing the questionnaire, your child is interested, we would like to conduct small discussion groups with students regarding their after-school activity participation. These groups would take place at the school (immediately after classes have ended for the day) and would focus on how students feel regarding their organized after-school activities. We would like to emphasize that the discussion groups are optional to our study and we would be more than pleased if your child only decided to complete the questionnaire.

If you choose to allow your child to participate, Student Information Forms will be provided to your child as part of the study in order to obtain his/her agreement to participate (separate forms will be provided for the questionnaire and discussion group components). These forms will outline the purpose of the study as well as provide contact names and phone numbers if your child has questions or concerns.

**Potential Risks:** It is required that any research associated with the University of Saskatchewan specify if there are any potential risks involved in participating in a study. Participants in our study will be asked to answer questions regarding their thoughts and feelings. While this process may not always involve positive thoughts and feelings it is our experience that participants do not suffer any negative consequences of participation. If you are concerned about any negative consequences to your child resulting from their participation in our study please contact us and we will provide any assistance we can. Additionally, the Student Information Forms will inform participants of how they can access various forms of support (e.g., the school counselor) if they feel upset or have specific concerns.

**Potential Benefits:** Your child may directly benefit from participating in this study by learning more about themselves and about how they feel regarding their participation in organized after-school activities. There may also be broader benefits to both the community and to society in general in that we are learning more about how participation in after-school activities is related to the well-being of adolescents.

**Storage of Data:** In accordance with University of Saskatchewan requirements, all data from this study will be safeguarded and securely locked in Dr. Farthing's University office for a period of five years, and then will be destroyed.

**Confidentiality:** In order to protect the confidentiality of your child, all names will be converted to identification numbers. If your child chooses to take part in a discussion group his/her name will be kept on file only until the group has met. These groups will be audio taped and all participants will be told that the tape recorder can be turned off, at

anytime, at their request. The discussion groups will be transcribed verbatim and will be analyzed for common themes. In order to protect the confidentiality of participants, direct quotations will not be used. We must also remind you that although the research team will safeguard the confidentiality of the discussion groups, we cannot guarantee that other members of the group will do so. We will be asking each student who participates in a discussion group to respect the confidentiality of the other members of the group by not disclosing the contents of the discussion outside the group. Although the data from this study will be published and possibly presented at conferences, it will be reported in aggregate form, so that it will not be possible to identify individuals. Moreover, the consent forms will be stored separately from the questionnaires and discussion group transcripts, so that it will not be possible to associate a name with any given set of responses.

**Right to Withdraw:** It is important to realize that your child may withdraw from the study for any reason, at any time, without penalty of any sort. If your child withdraws from the questionnaire component of the study, any data that he/she has contributed will be destroyed. If your child participates in a discussion group and chooses to withdraw from the study, his or her responses during the group will be deleted as long as it is possible to do so.

**Questions:** If you or your child have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to ask at any time; you or your child are also free to contact the researchers at the number and/or email address provided above. This study has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Research Ethics Board on November 17, 2003. Any questions regarding your child's rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Office of Research Services (966-2084). After this study is completed, a copy of the findings will be sent to your child's school. You or your child may also request the results of this study, after its completion (expected in August 2004), by contacting Mark Nicoll either by email or by telephone at the Department of Psychology.

**We would appreciate your help with the following tasks:**

1. Please indicate on the blue sheet (the last page of this form) whether or not your child has permission to participate. Would you kindly sign and date the sheet and have your child return it to his/her Physical Education Teacher. *All students who have permission slips returned within one week (regardless of whether permission is granted or not) will have the opportunity to win a \$20 gift certificate from a music store.*
2. We would greatly appreciate it if you would be willing to complete a brief questionnaire regarding your child's participation in organized after-school activities. If you are interested in participating **please include your address on the last page of this form** and we will mail you a copy of the questionnaire along with a prepaid and addressed envelope. **PLEASE NOTE THAT YOUR CHILD IS WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE EVEN IF YOU HAVE NOT COMPLETED THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.**



I understand that the study described above on **Organized After-School Activities** has been approved by the School Board, as well as by my child's school principal and teacher. I further understand that this research has been approved by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Research Ethics Board on November 17, 2003. Additionally, I understand that any questions or concerns that I have regarding this research project may be submitted to that committee through the Office of Research Services (306) 966-2084.

**Please check one:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, my son/daughter has my permission to participate in both the questionnaire and the discussion group components of this study.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, my son/daughter has my permission to participate in the questionnaire component, but NOT the discussion group component.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, my son/daughter has my permission to participate in the discussion group component but NOT the questionnaire component.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, my son/daughter does not have my permission to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature of parent or guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(name of child)

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mark J. Nicoll, M.A.**  
Graduate Student, Dept. of Psychology  
Phone: 966-8925 (leave message)

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Patricia McDougall, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Dean, St. Thomas More College  
Phone: 966-8919

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Gerald Farthing, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor, Dept. of Psychology  
Phone: 966-8925

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND HAVE YOUR CHILD RETURN IT TO HIS/HER SCHOOL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.**

I understand that the study described above on **Organized After-School Activities** has been approved by the School Board, as well as by my child’s school principal and teacher. I further understand that this research has been approved by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Research Ethics Board on November 17, 2003. Additionally, I understand that any questions or concerns that I have regarding this research project may be submitted to that committee through the Office of Research Services (306) 966-2084.

**Please check one:**

Yes, my son/daughter has my permission to participate in both the questionnaire and the discussion group components of this study.

Yes, my son/daughter has my permission to participate in the questionnaire component, but NOT the discussion group component.

Yes, my son/daughter has my permission to participate in the discussion group component but NOT the questionnaire component.

No, my son/daughter does not have my permission to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_ (signature of parent or guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_ (date)

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of child)

**Yes, I would like to receive a copy of the brief parental questionnaire**

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mark J. Nicoll, M.A.**  
 Graduate Student, Dept. of Psychology  
 Phone: 966-8925 (leave message)

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Patricia McDougall, Ph.D.**  
 Assistant Dean, St. Thomas More College  
 Phone: 966-8919

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Gerald Farthing, Ph.D.**  
 Associate Professor, Dept. of Psychology  
 Phone: 966-8925

Student Participant Information Form  
Department of Psychology  
**Organized After-School Activities**

You are being invited to take part in a research project being conducted by Mark Nicoll, Dr. Gerald Farthing, and Dr. Patricia McDougall. The main purpose of this study is to investigate how young people spend their time in organized after-school activities (e.g., sports, youth organizations, music). We are also interested in how these activities are related to the well-being of young people. If you choose to participate, we will ask you to fill out a questionnaire regarding your thoughts and feelings. We will also ask for information regarding your friendships and the various after-school activities that you participate in. This process will take approximately 50-60 minutes to complete. If, after completing the questionnaire, you are interested, we would like to invite you to take part in a small discussion group (4-6 people) about your organized after-school activities. These groups will take place at your school, most likely right after classes have ended for the day. We would like to emphasize that the discussion groups are optional parts of our study and we would be more than pleased if you only decided to complete the questionnaire.

Some of the questions on the questionnaire are personal, and we assure you that all answers will be kept anonymous and confidential. That means that no one will know any of the names of people who participated in the study, and no one except the researchers will be able to read the answers to the questionnaires. You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to. The results of this study will be used for research purposes at the University. After the study is finished, the data will be stored in Dr. Farthing's office for a period of five years and then they will be destroyed. You do not have to participate in this study, and you may stop at any time. If you decide to withdraw from the study please inform

the researcher and your questionnaire will be destroyed and it will not be used in the study. If you decide not to participate, or to withdraw, your decision will not affect your school marks or any other part of your life at school.

Some items contained in the questionnaire deal with some of your personal thoughts and feelings. The past experience with these questionnaires is that they do not create any unusual distress. However, if after you have completed the questionnaire and/or the discussion group, you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact your school counselor (Mrs. Charington: 683-7716). Another resource available to you is the Kids Help Phone (1-800-668-6868). You can also address questions or concerns regarding this study to the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Research Ethics Board at (306) 966-2084 or to Mark Nicoll (966-8925/mark.nicoll@usask.ca). After the study is completed, a summary of the findings will be sent to your school. If you have any questions about this form, please ask before you begin and the researcher will do his best to answer them. Thank you for your time.

---

**Mark J. Nicoll, M.A.**

Graduate Student, Dept. of Psychology

Phone: 966-8925 (leave message)

---

**Patricia McDougall, Ph.D.**

Assistant Dean, St. Thomas More  
College

Phone: 966-8919

---

**Gerald Farthing, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor, Department of Psychology

Phone: 966-8925

**PLEASE READ AND COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW**

I have read the information form above and understand what it says. I also understand that the study described above on Organized After-School Activities has been approved by the School Board, as well as by my School Principal and Teacher. I further understand that this research has been approved by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Research Ethics Board on November 17, 2003 and that any questions or concerns that I have regarding this research project may be directed to that committee through the Office of Research Services (306) 966-2084.

**Please check one of these choices:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I want to take part in this study

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I do not want to take part in this study

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature of student)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mark J. Nicoll, M.A.**  
Graduate Student, Dept. of Psychology  
Phone: 966-8925 (leave message)

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Patricia McDougall, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Dean, St. Thomas More  
College  
Phone: 966-8919

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Gerald Farthing, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor, Department of Psychology  
Phone: 966-8925

**PLEASE KEEP THIS SHEET FOR YOUR RECORDS**

**PLEASE READ AND COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW**

I have read the information form above and understand what it says. I also understand that the study described above on Organized After-School Activities has been approved by the School Board, as well as by my School Principal and Teacher. I further understand that this research has been approved by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Research Ethics Board on November 17, 2003 and that any questions or concerns that I have regarding this research project may be directed to that committee through the Office of Research Services (306) 966-2084.

**Please check one of these choices:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I want to take part in this study

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I do not want to take part in this study

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature of student)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

**We would be interested in hearing your thoughts on your participation in after-school activities. If you are interested in participating in a small discussion group (4-6 people) with other students in your school (that would take place at your school after classes are done for the day) please write your name and phone number below so we can contact you. Thank you again for your help.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mark J. Nicoll, M.A.**

Graduate Student, Dept. of Psychology

Phone: 966-8925 (leave message)

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Patricia McDougall, Ph.D.**

Assistant Dean, St. Thomas More  
College

Phone: 966-8919

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Gerald Farthing, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor, Department of Psychology

Phone: 966-8925

**PLEASE GIVE THIS SHEET TO THE RESEARCHER**

## Structured Leisure and Adolescent Adjustment

### Appendix K: Structured Leisure Activity Groupings

#### *Sports*

Baseball  
Ringette  
Rugby  
Wheelchair Basketball  
Basketball  
Volleyball  
Curling  
Lacrosse  
Hockey  
Football  
Soccer  
Badminton  
Figure Skating  
Golf  
Muay Thai  
Kickboxing  
Kung Fu  
Kayaking  
Gymnastics  
Yoga  
Dance  
Wrestling  
Track & Field  
Horseback Riding  
Lifeguard Swim Club  
Boxing  
Biathlon  
Swimming  
Dog Agility  
Canoe Club  
Walk/Jog Club

#### *Performing Arts*

School Musical  
Singing Lessons  
Piano  
Guitar  
French Play  
Drama Club  
Violin  
Jazz Band  
Stage Band  
Handbells

#### *School Involvement Activities*

School Newspaper  
Yearbook Club  
Student Government  
School Ambassadors  
Cheerleading

#### *Prosocial Activities*

Church Youth Group  
Bible Study  
Bible Quizzing  
Students Against Drunk  
Driving  
Cadets  
Junior Achievement

## Structured Leisure and Adolescent Adjustment

### Appendix L: Nonsignificant *F* Values

Variable	Main Effect for Sex	Main Effect for Grade	Sex x Grade Interaction
Well-Being	-	$F(2, 202) = 1.53$	$F(2, 202) = 1.86$
School Orientation	$F(1, 202) = 0.00$	-	$F(2, 202) = 1.39$
Academic Average	$F(1, 202) = 2.17$	$F(2, 202) = 2.87$	$F(2, 202) = 1.16$
CAPS: Global	$F(1, 202) = 0.81$	$F(2, 202) = 2.47$	$F(2, 202) = 2.41$
CAPS: SOP	$F(1, 202) = 1.59$	$F(2, 202) = 1.80$	$F(2, 202) = 2.68$
CAPS: SPP	$F(1, 202) = 0.08$	$F(2, 202) = 1.92$	$F(2, 202) = 1.04$
SL Hours	$F(1, 142) = 0.09$	$F(2, 142) = 0.18$	$F(2, 142) = 0.30$
Play	$F(1, 142) = 1.07$	$F(2, 142) = 1.36$	$F(2, 142) = 0.82$
ILM: Global	$F(1, 142) = 0.36$	-	$F(2, 142) = 0.99$
ILM: Self-Determination	$F(1, 142) = 3.74$	$F(2, 142) = 1.64$	$F(2, 142) = 0.59$
ILM: Competence	$F(1, 142) = 0.18$	-	$F(2, 142) = 1.27$
ILM: Challenge	$F(1, 142) = 0.00$	-	$F(2, 142) = 0.56$
ILM: Commitment	$F(1, 142) = 0.08$	$F(2, 142) = 2.52$	$F(2, 142) = 1.66$

*Note.* CAPS = Child and Adolescent Perfectionism Scale. SOP = Self-Oriented Perfectionism. SPP = Socially Prescribed Perfectionism. ILM = Intrinsic Leisure Motivation.



## Structured Leisure and Adolescent Adjustment

### Appendix M: Nonsignificant T-test Values: Presence Versus Absence of SL Involvement

Variable	<i>t</i> -values
Well-Being	-1.69(208)
School Orientation	-1.57(208)
Academic Average	-
CAPS: Global	-
CAPS: SOP	-
CAPS: SPP	-.45(208)

*Note.* CAPS = Child and Adolescent Perfectionism Scale. SOP = Self-Oriented Perfectionism. SPP = Socially Prescribed Perfectionism.

Appendix N: Variables Used in Regression Analyses by Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Step 1 Predictor Variables	Step 2 Predictor Variables	Step 3 Predictor Variables	Outcome/Criterion Variables	# of Regressions
Hypothesis 1	Age SES Sex Academic Average <sup>a</sup>	SL Participation (Linear)	N/A	Perfectionism: Self-Oriented Academic Average	2
Hypothesis 2	Age Sex Academic Average <sup>a</sup> SL Ability	SL Participation (Linear) ILM: Global	SL Participation x ILM: Global	Well-being Perfectionism: Self-Oriented Perfectionism: Socially Prescribed School orientation Academic average	5
	Age Sex Academic Average <sup>a</sup> SL Ability	SL Participation (Linear) Play	SL Participation x Play	Well-being Perfectionism: Self-Oriented Perfectionism: Socially Prescribed School orientation Academic average	5

Hypothesis	Step 1 Predictor Variables	Step 2 Predictor Variables	Step 3 Predictor Variables	Outcome/Criterion Variables	# of Regressions
Hypothesis 3	Age Sex Academic Average <sup>a</sup>	SL Participation (Linear) Perfectionism: Self-Oriented Perfectionism: Socially Prescribed	SL Participation x Perfectionism: Self- Oriented SL Participation x Perfectionism: Socially Prescribed	Well-being School orientation Academic average	3

*Note.* <sup>a</sup> Not included in analyses where academic average was the criterion variable.

Appendix O: Author's Personal Biases and Experiences Regarding SL Participation

1. Believe that these activities can be detrimental to some participants. Largely in part because of a heavy influence on achievement as opposed to focusing on the process itself. Also believe that leisure is neglected in society and that overall this is detrimental. We have a fear of not being productive.
2. SL activities may sometimes not be a different context for participants. Also may be related to consumption in general.
3. Also believe that these activities can be very beneficial for kids. Having a sense of accomplishment and achievement is important along with having fun. Kids need to have these activities because they can provide very positive experiences. Many young people do not have the opportunity to get involved and therefore miss out on the benefits.
4. I am looking for negative experiences in particular and thus I need to be even more vigilant for discovering positive themes.
5. My own background definitely plays a role. My experiences with baseball and youth group were mixed at best. Football was a very positive experience. I also grew up in a fairly achievement oriented family and there came a point where I began to realize that if I gave 110% in all aspects of my life I would be very tired. I also realized that I need to have a reason for wanting to continually improve. I like challenge but what if it is a challenge to just do less?
6. I feel that this research may help improve SL activities for many different types of participants. If a participant is not very skilled at the activity it may help if a coach/leader sets appropriate goals for that person; if an average participant is involved it may help to focus on both fun and skill; finally, if a very skilled participant is involved it may help to have them examine why they are doing the activity and what their ultimate goal is.