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AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS OF A LEISURE EDUCATION CURRICULUM ON  
DELINQUENTS' MOTIVATION, KNOWLEDGE, AND BEHAVIOR CHANGES RELATED  
TO BOREDOM

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Public Affairs  
in the College of Health and Public Affairs  
at the University of Central Florida  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Adolescents today have more unsupervised and unstructured free time than ever before. Poor decisions by youth during periods of free time may lead to substance abuse, teen pregnancy and juvenile delinquency. The highest frequency of juvenile crime, a major social problem, occurs during the 2-4 hours following the end of the school day.

Research has demonstrated the benefits of engaging adolescents in prosocial leisure activity. However, no research has studied the issues of free time and leisure education with a delinquent population.

This paper documents the impact of a leisure education curriculum on a population of delinquent youth in a randomized experiment. The delinquent youths who received the leisure education reported higher intrinsic motivation and better use of free time. The delinquent youths also reported improved decision making related to their involvement in healthy, prosocial free time activities. Finally, the improvement in the delinquent youths' motivation influenced a significant decrease in the delinquent youths' proneness to boredom during their free time.

I dedicate this work to all the men and women who have committed their life's work to helping troubled youth turn their lives around.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I wish to express my thanks to my committee members, Dr. Sue Mahan, Dr. Joseph Sanborn, Dr. Paul Jacobson, and especially my hardworking Chair, Dr. Thomas Wan.

Thank you so much to my wife, Kym, who has always supported me, encouraged me and kept everything balanced during this pursuit.

Finally, I wish to thank my parents, Paul and Julie, who instilled in me the values of hardwork, education, and kindness. If there were more parents like you, this world would certainly be a better place.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

Juvenile delinquency continues to be one of our most important social problems. The most recent census of juvenile offenders in residential placements found that 108,931 juvenile offenders were incarcerated in the U.S. as of October 27, 1999 (OJJDP, 1999). Juveniles are arrested for approximately 30% of all arrests in our society (FBI, 1996).

Delinquent crimes are a serious social problem that impact not only the adolescents, but their parents and practitioners such as school teachers, residential counselors and law enforcement officials.

As a practitioner in the field of juvenile justice for the past twenty-four years, this researcher has observed several trends related to the socialization of delinquent youth or lack thereof within our communities; If, for example, one were to survey delinquent youth at a juvenile detention facility as to how they spend their free time, some typical responses would be “hanging out”, “chilling”, “sleeping”, “watching television”, “drinking”, “getting high”, or perhaps “getting into trouble”.

How delinquent youth spend their free time is a question never before researched. During the past ten to fifteen years, there has been increased research on issues of free time, leisure, boredom and motivation as they relate to adolescent development. Those studies have contributed to an increased understanding of the development of adolescents. Unfortunately, though, the studies reviewed have all studied adolescents who were not identified as at risk for delinquency.

Most parents are familiar with the notion that the best way to keep children out of trouble is to keep them busy. This common-sense belief parallels Travis Hirschi's Social Control Theory (1969) of how members of society develop bonds with others and our institutions. As youths form such attachments or involvement in positive activities, the likelihood of their committing delinquent acts becomes less because the time invested in those activities lessens the time available for getting into trouble.

Research shows that the highest frequency of juvenile crime occurs during the two to four hours following the end of the school day. Youth who are left unsupervised after school are much more likely to become involved in illegal behavior that can lead to problems in school and arrest for delinquent acts.

The Carnegie Council Report on Adolescent Development (1992) states that about 40 percent of a youth's time can be labeled "free" time. The report states that although there is compelling evidence that involvement in positive free time activities influences positive development, leisure time can also open the door for unhealthy negative behavior (see also Caldwell & Smith, 1995; Levin, Smith, Caldwell, & Kimbrough, 1995).

In light of that free-time paradox, the Carnegie Council report suggests that making creative and positive leisure time available to adolescents is an important task. The report asserts that such leisure activities lead to greater educational and life achievement. However, recent research suggests that what is needed is not just keeping youth occupied in leisure activity, but rather filling their time with activities that develop skills, challenge them, and are fulfilling experiences.

For today's youth, the notion of meaningful use of their free time could be puzzling, or alienating. Much of their leisure time may be dominated by watching television and playing video games (Caldwell & Baldwin, 2004). They often lack the skills to have fun with their friends (Caldwell & Baldwin, 2004). John Dewey suggested in 1912 that one of the functions of schools should be to enable youth to make good use of their leisure time, i.e. leisure education; one of Dewey's seven cardinal principles of education was "to educate for worthy use of leisure time." To this day Dewey's plea has been largely ignored by this country's educational system. Not only does our educational system lack leisure education for youth, but the general public is indifferent toward supporting high school activity programs.

In 2002 the NFHS released a report outlining the importance of sports and other school related activities. Involvement in the school activities teach youth lessons that are critical to their social development.

There is little empirical evidence concerning the use of free time that a leisure education program for young people might have. In 2004 Caldwell and her colleagues conducted a study on the benefits of a leisure education curriculum with middle school students. Caldwell (2004) found that the students in the study who received that curriculum reported more interest (motivation) in free time activities and less boredom than other students.

Are delinquent youth different from other youth in how they use free time and in their motivation to participate in prosocial activities? Are delinquent youth more prone to boredom during free time? Would a leisure education curriculum improve weaknesses in the use made of free time, motivation and proneness for boredom? Research thus far has not addressed these questions.

The purpose of this dissertation research was to conduct an experimental study of a population of male delinquents by gathering data on how they utilize their free time, how motivated they are in their leisure, and to what degree boredom is a problem in an institutional setting. A further purpose was to study the impact of a leisure curriculum on motivation, knowledge, behavioral changes and proneness for boredom. To conduct that assessment, the population of delinquent youth were randomly assigned to either a control group or an experimental group. By examining these areas, this research seeks to contribute data to fill a research void and perhaps to identify one additional prevention and/or intervention tool for those desperately seeking to reduce juvenile delinquency.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

Considering both the immediate and the long-term damage that juvenile delinquency inflicts on our society, exploring preventive strategies for our schools and juvenile justice programs should be a priority.

Although theories abound in the literature that attempt to clarify motivation, boredom, and the effects of leisure activity participation, very few of them have been tested in practical settings. No studies have examined the impact of a leisure curriculum on such areas as knowledge, motivation and use of free time related to boredom of delinquent youth, specifically.

During the design phase of this study an exhaustive search and analysis was conducted of the literature on adolescent leisure, adolescent motivation to participate in leisure activities, adolescent boredom, leisure education with adolescents, as well as the literature on juvenile delinquency. Although initially the literature review focused only on studies specifically of delinquent youth, it quickly became apparent that the search should be expanded to all adolescent studies. Very few of the studies of use of free time, motivation and proneness to boredom focus specifically on delinquent youth, and very few of those studies used a sample of delinquent youth in a randomized empirical study. Moreover, the impact of a leisure education curriculum on delinquent youth has not previously been studied.

This chapter is divided into sections on studies of adolescent use of free time or leisure, studies of adolescent motivation, studies of boredom and studies of leisure education. The research questions, theoretical model and research hypotheses are found at the end of this chapter.

## Adolescent Leisure and Use of Free Time

### Leisure and Family

Parents are extremely important in the developmental process of adolescents. How youth learn to use their free time is an important area where parents can influence the youth's development of decision-making skills and also support the process of autonomy. (Collins et al., 2000).

Adolescence is a time when parents feel a responsibility to manage their youth's increasing amount of free time, but also must take into account the youth's desire for how to spend it. Balancing the relationship between parental authority and the adolescent's desire for autonomy often challenges the youth and parents (Steinberg, 2000). Free time can often lead to strife in the child/parent relationship (Kleiber, 1999).

Like the studies examining parental styles and adolescents' academic achievement, studies examining parental styles and youths' leisure tend to support authoritative parenting practices; adolescents whose parents use that style tend to participate in less risky behaviors. (Caldwell et al., 1999; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). Nevertheless, the difference between support and control is still being investigated. So, too, are all the variations in parenting practices and the developmental consequences for adolescents.

As adolescents age, their free time activities are likely to occur more often out of the sight of their parents. Mahoney and Stattin (2000) discovered that youth whose parents new of

their activities were more likely to avoid unhealthy behavior than those whose parents were unaware of how they use their free time.

Healthy family time is often promoted in family magazines, on television programs, and by park and recreation programs as enhancing family well being (Shaw, 1992). Holman and Epperson (1984) suggested that “both families and professional family helpers see joint leisure time as an important element in promoting marital and family quality.” Yet despite such assumptions, research evidence has increasingly suggested that family leisure activities often create stress for some family members.

The experience of family leisure is affected by differing family roles and life stages (Altergott & McCreedy, 1993; Freysinger, 1995). Such experiences are also affected by what happens in other parts of people’s lives, which differs for fathers, mothers, and young adolescents (Larson & Richards, 1994).

The great majority of men in two-parent families are employed full time, and even when their wives are employed, they are usually defined by the family as the primary bread winner (Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990). Because of their energy spent at work, and of having the bread-winner role, fathers often feel entitled to take less responsibility for daily family and household maintenance and to view the family as mainly a context for personal renewal and leisure (Ferree, 1988; Pleck, 1976; Repetti, 1989). Men are also more likely to view family leisure as an opportunity for attachment and affiliation with their children (Freysinger, 1995).

Mothers’ lives often have a more complex organization than the fathers’. In the majority of two-parent families the mothers now work either part-time or full-time. Regardless of their employment status, mothers are still expected to carry the primary responsibility for day-to-day



care of the children and family (Hochschild, 1989; Skolnick, 1991). As a result, the home and family sphere is less clearly a context of leisure for women than it is for men (Deem, 1982; Shaw, 1992). Women spend much more of their home and family time on housework and caring for family members (Pleck, 1985; Thompson & Walker, 1989). Even during shared family leisure activities, mothers are more often called on to put aside their own leisure interests and play effortful, instrumental roles (Freysinger, 1995; Shaw, 1992). Studies suggest that mothers may have more constraint and less enjoyment during family leisure, since they often put others needs ahead of theirs (Henderson, 1991; Shaw, 1992; Wearing & Wearing, 1988).

Young adolescents' daily lives are organized differently from those of their parents. Adolescents' schoolwork, like their parents' jobs, is demanding and stressful. Unlike parents, however, adolescents have a great deal of free time for leisure activities outside the family, after school as well as on weekends. Many of their activities are carried out away from home and separately from their families (Carnegie, 1992; Larson & Richards, 1991a; Medrich, Roizen, Rubin & Buckley, 1982). Given the time that adolescents spend with friends, family leisure is likely to have a diminished role in their lives. While family and home are the primary context of parents' leisure activities, this is less true for young adults (Holman & Epperson, 1984).

Younger adolescents often do spend substantial free time at home and with their families because they are not very mobile, but family and home may be less psychologically central for them than for their parents. Adolescents' most enjoyable leisure activities are with their peers (Kelly, 1983; Kleiber & Rickards, 1985). In fact, in studies that have asked adolescents to discuss leisure preferences, activities with family are not even mentioned (McMeeking & Purkayastha, 1995; Smith, 1987).

Leisure may also have different functions for adolescents than it has for their parents. For adolescents, one function of leisure is excitement. Adolescents report boredom for one-quarter of their waking hours, much more than adults report (Larson & Richards, 1991b) and they may choose leisure activities to obtain what Hendry (1983) calls an “arousal jag.” A second function of leisure for adolescents is to fulfill their developmental needs for social interactions and peer friendships (Fine, Mortimer, & Roberts, 1990; Marsland, 1982; Smith, 1987). A third function is to address Erikson’s developmental task of establishing identity (Kleiber & Rickards, 1985; Willits & Willits, 1986). All three of these functions of leisure for early adolescents may be more difficult for them when in the company of their parents because: a) parents are at an age when they have less desire for excitement and sensation seeking (Zukerman, 1979); b) parents cannot fulfill adolescents’ need for acceptance by peers; and c) parents often resist adolescents’ attempts to exert individuality (Hauser, 1991).

Studies of the effects of self-care or unsupervised activities on a youth’s well-being have generally found an increase in risky behaviors and undesirable outcomes. Steinberg (1986) found that youth unsupervised after school are more influenced by their peers to engage in antisocial activity than are children who are supervised by a parent at home or who care for themselves at home but report to a parent. Other research has linked self-care among adolescents with an increased likelihood of delinquent behaviors (Mott et al., 1999; Mulhall, Stone, and Stone, 1996). Another possible detrimental effect of self-care is the lack of developmental and social benefits and the diminished social capital when parent-child and adult-child interactions are less frequent and when youth have less access to parental networks.

Children who are more responsible and mature can care for themselves better. One factor in the development of maturity and responsibility is a child's age, since older children are usually more psychologically mature. Another factor in the level of responsibility and maturity is whether the child participates in enrichment activities such as sports, lessons (e.g., music, art, or dance), or clubs. Several studies have demonstrated links between adolescents' use of time and their development (Eccles and Barber, 1999; Mahoney and Cairns, 1997; Marsh, 1992; Osgood et al., 1996). Mchale, Crouter and Tucker (2001) also documented a positive relationship between the youth's leisure activities and their healthy development. They viewed the process underlying this relationship as reciprocal: intelligent, well-developed children are selected into structured enrichment activities, and these activities, in turn, enhance positive social, emotional, and behavioral development. Therefore the studies suggest that involvement of self-care youth in structured activities not only enhances the developmental process but also may be a buffer to the possible detriments seen in self-care.

One of the earliest studies on family leisure was conducted by the Gluecks in 1950. The Gluecks studied the families of 500 delinquent boys and 500 non-delinquent boys. The Gluecks discovered that the type of family relationship was the biggest difference in the two study groups. The closer the bond between the youth and parents the less likely the youth would participate in delinquent behavior (Glueck & Glueck, 1950).

Other studies such as Streit (1981) suggest that when youth perceive their parents do not care about them or exhibit hostility may lead to delinquency. Robinson (1978) studied delinquent males who described their fathers as disinterested in their free time and deficient in the area of offering support and approval.

Studies on the importance of family leisure are only beginning to highlight how important family leisure is to the youth's social development. This is an area that is in need of much greater study.

### Gender Differences in Leisure

Although the participants in this study were all male adolescents, any study analyzing leisure and adolescent development must take gender into account. Studies are beginning to demonstrate the developmental differences between male and female leisure activities. Eder and Parker (1987) found differences related to the stereotypical male and female activities, and these different activities reinforced characteristics thought to be typical of being a boy or a girl (Shaw, Kleiber & Caldwell, 1995).

Traditionally sports have been predominantly a male dominated activity. During the developmental process boys who participate in sports learn important lessons of challenge and competition that may reinforce their perception of masculinity (Messner, 1989; Messner & Sabo, 1990).

For girls sports are beginning to show their developmental benefits and allow a different way of thinking about themselves. No longer do girls need to settle on stereotypical activities such as cheerleading. Involvement in sports appears to have a very positive influence on girls social development (Shaw, Kleiber & Caldwell, 1995).

Given the amount of free time adolescents have today, several studies have evaluated how they choose to spend it. Roark (1992) stressed the importance of adolescents involvement

in more “directed” activities. A uniqueness related to at-risk youth is that the at-risk youth report they have too much free time and not enough structured activities during their free time opposed to other youth who state they do not have enough free time for all their activities.

A time allocation study by Bruno (1996) found that, on the whole, girls tend to greatly prefer spending time with their friends, while boys enjoy just hanging out. Bruno (1996) suggested that teachers, administrators, and curriculum specialists should focus more attention on leisure time activities that foster inner directedness (personal development). Unfortunately, as pointed out by Bruno, those are generally the activities cut from school programs for budgetary reasons.

### Social Support and Lifelong Choices

Several leisure studies have suggested that the healthy use of leisure may decrease the likelihood of physical and mental health problems throughout the individual’s lifespan, from adolescence through the senior years (Iso-Ahola & Park, 1996).

According to Deci & Ryan, 1987 individuals who feel in control of their own actions are less prone to illness. Self-determined behavior, especially in determining use of free time, contributes to more enjoyable leisure and appears to have a positive impact on health during an individual’s life. Perceptions of self-control and freedom of choice as they relate to leisure appear to buffer an individual from the negative consequences of life’s stress (Iso-Ahola & Park, 1996).

Social support also appears to moderate stress-illness. A basic human need appears to be that of friendship and companionship (Iso-Ahola, 1980). Participating in enjoyable activities with friends may lead to improved psychological well-being (Crandall, 1979).

Leisure is an area that affords an individual an opportunity to participate in an activity they enjoy and also to enjoy the companionship of others.

Studies on adolescent as well as adult leisure patterns demonstrate the value of familiarizing young people with leisure activities and encouraging their participation in them (Scott & Willits, 1989).

Studies such as Scott & Willits (1989) have identified the lifelong benefits of leisure. In their study they found that individual's choices for leisure remain consistent throughout their lifetime. Their study reinforces the importance of teaching youth at an early age the benefits of leisure activities.

### Leisure Constraints

In the introduction, I note that when you question delinquent youth on how they spend their free time, you may receive such responses as, "hanging out", "chilling", "doing nothing", "getting high," etc. If the next question to them were to ask why they do not participate in positive structural activities such as organized sports, school clubs, band, an after school program, swimming lessons, etc., youngsters may say that they do not have time, their parents would not allow them, they do not have the money, they do not have transportation, their friends

would make fun of them. Such explanations for non-participation in leisure activities are defined as leisure constraints.

Until recently, virtually all research on leisure constraints has at least implicitly conceived of constraints as insurmountable obstacles to leisure participation, ignoring their potential gradient or intensity (Jackson, Crawford, & Godbey, 1993). Researchers have typically assumed that when an individual encounters a constraint, the outcome is nonparticipation. An alternative perspective began to emerge in the mid to late 1980's, most notably in papers by Crawford and Godbey (1987). The authors' useful insight is that people do not necessarily fail to participate when confronted by constraint.

How to negotiate constraints for leisure is still in its formative stages. Some researchers have considered fresh interpretations of their data to attempt to account for certain of their patterns, they have realized that the experience of constraints on leisure does not always and may even rarely culminate in non-participation. Examples include Henderson, Bedini, Hecht, and Shuler (1993) on the experience of constraints by women with disabilities, Samdahl and Jekubovich (1993) on constraint negation in daily life, and Scott (1991) on constraints on participation in contract bridge. All these authors have shown, in Samdahl and Jekubovich's (1993) words, that "people are often creative and successful at finding ways to negotiate those constraints."

In a British study, Kay and Jackson (1991) asked people how they dealt with the two most frequently mentioned leisure-related problems, financial and time constraints. Of those with financial constraints, only 11 percent said that they did not participate at all. The rest chose some form of negotiation strategy: sixty percent said that they reduced their participation, 11

percent saved their money until they could participate, 8 percent tried cheaper activities, and 4 percent made other economies. With regard to time constraints, 71 percent said that they cut down on their leisure in various ways, 27 percent spent less time on household tasks, and 2 percent reduced their worktime.

Jackson et al. (1993) suggested several types of strategies to negotiate constraints. Individuals may choose to modify their schedules to address schedule conflicts or may delay or reduce the amount of time required by the activity. Individuals may also seek out cheaper activities that afford the individual the same benefits when faced with financial constraints.

A study by Samdahl and Jekubovich (1993) derived four constraint categories: health time, money, and relationships. The authors noted several steps people take to alleviate these constraints: controlling routines to guarantee space for desired activities; coordinating free time with that of a partner or spouse; modifying leisure options in the face of financial constraints; finding alternative activities (especially as an adjustment to health concerns or family obligations); and adopting a more positive view of constraints.

For many adolescents, being poor and having limited mobility acts as a challenging leisure constraint. Studies on where communities locate public leisure areas have pointed out the importance of locating these areas convenient to all who could benefit. For example, a communities zoning laws influences where youth can gather as do the availability of public transportation that adolescents may utilize to travel to public activity areas (McMeeking & Purkayastha, 1995).



## High School Activities

The academic, developmental and social benefits of high school extracurricular activities are well documented in the literature. In addition to the academics taught in the classrooms, students may learn lifelong lessons from high school sports, band, government and a wide variety of clubs and organizations.

Unfortunately, there appears to be less opportunities for school activities for youth today (NFHS, 2002).

The National Federation of State High School Associations recently released a report to advocate for the broader funding of high school extracurricular activities. The report enumerated the potential benefits of youth involvement in high school activities. For example, according to the Department of Health and Human Services Report (1995), youth who do not participate in any school activities are 57% more likely to drop out of high school, 49% more likely to use illegal drugs, and 27% more likely to be arrested than youth who participate in a school activity 1-4 hours/week.

### Motivation and Development of the Free Time Motivation Scale

#### Self-Determination Theory

Earlier, this paper describes questions of delinquent youth such as, "How do you spend your free time?" and "Why don't you participate in certain activities?" Another question would

ask delinquent youth, “Why do you do your free time activities?” To this question you might expect responses such as, “that’s what my friends want to do,” “my parents make me,” “I don’t know,” or “because I want to.” Questions and answers such as these deal with motivation.

The literature is rich in theory attempting to explain the complexity of motivation. Like the studies on adolescents’ use of free time, studies assessing adolescents’ participation in leisure activity almost always study populations of well-adapted middle school and high school youths.

One of the purposes of this research was to assess delinquent adolescent male’s states of motivation, knowledge, and behavior about leisure activities, in the institutional setting. An educational intervention with a specialized curriculum on leisure was also assessed for evidence of change in those three areas. The instrument used to gather data on the study participants’ motivation, knowledge, and behavior about leisure activities was the Free Time Motivation Scale for Adolescents (FTMS-A) Baldwin and Caldwell (2003). The FTMS-A was developed as an extension of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Baldwin & Caldwell, 2003 sought to utilize the instrument to gather information from their adolescent subjects on why they do the things they do during their free time.

According to the SDT, self-determined behavior is influenced by a continuum of motivations ranging from intrinsic motivation to extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is related to participating in an activity based upon the individual’s own interest as opposed to extrinsic motivation where involvement in the activity is due to some external influence (Baldwin & Caldwell, 2003).

According to Baldwin & Caldwell (2003) it is important to identify the motivation for participating in an activity. The reason behind involvement would theoretically influence how

much the individual would enjoy the activity, how often they may participate, their ability to overcome constraints and other areas related to their healthy social development (Baldwin & Caldwell, 2003).

Validating the strength of the self-determination theory itself was not a goal of the study, however, evaluating the ability of the leisure education curriculum to improve the intrinsic motivation of delinquent youth in their use of free time was an important goal of the study.

### Boredom

The literature is rich in studies of boredom. The apparent complexity of boredom is evident in the attempts to define it. Boredom has often been thought to exist when an activity is monotonous or repetitive (O'Hanlon, 1981). Boredom is also attributed to a lack of stimulation within one's environment (Vodanovich, 2003); or a state of minimal arousal or lack of satisfaction within one's environment (Vodanovich, 2003).

Boredom during adolescence has begun to receive increasing attention because it has been associated with numerous problem behaviors such as substance abuse (Iso-Ahola & Crowley, 1991; Orcutt, 1985), school dropout (Farrell, Peguero, Lindsey & White, 1988) and vandalism (Caldwell & Smith, 1995).

Researchers appear to agree that boredom affects adolescents differently from how it affects adults. For adolescents boredom appears often to be a response to external controls. When adolescents feel they are not controlling their situation they may become bored by the activity (Eccles et al., 1993). When adolescents perceive their free time activities are structured

by adults this may cause feelings of boredom and the youth becomes disinterested (Shaw, Caldwell & Kleiber, 1995).

Free time leisure is an opportunity for adolescents to engage in prosocial activities that influence healthy social development, however if these activities are viewed as a requirement, the youth may disengage or refuse to participate (Larson & Richards, 1991).

The physical and psychological issues of boredom may impact on a large range of negative areas for adolescents. Boredom has been linked to problems in school, oppositional behavior, loneliness, substance abuse, over eating, juvenile crime, depression, proneness for accidents and numerous other problem behaviors.

### Leisure Education

As previously stated, the purpose of this study was to determine the general states of delinquent adolescents' motivation, knowledge, and behavior about leisure activities in the institutional setting, and to determine whether an educational intervention with a specialized curriculum on leisure could improve on the motivation, knowledge, and behavioral changes of the delinquent youth in the study.

Interested in free time, motivation, and boredom as they relate to delinquency, the author began reviewing the literature in 2004. Although no studies of a leisure education curriculum for delinquent youth were found, one article did report on a study in process with middle school students: Preliminary Effects of a Leisure Education Program to Promote Healthy Use of Free

Time among Middle School Adolescents, Caldwell, L., Baldwin, C.K., Walls, T., and Smith, T. (2004).

The author contacted Dr. Linda L. Caldwell at Pennsylvania State University, the lead researcher in the study, to learn more about the study. Dr. Caldwell has indicated that she and her co-authors, too, would be interested in their study being extended to a delinquent population, although to date no such research has been conducted. Dr. Caldwell was extremely helpful in sharing data from their study to assist the author in formulating the proposal for the dissertation research.

In the Caldwell et al. (2004) study the researchers developed a leisure education curriculum designed to increase adolescents positive use of free time and decrease the initiation of illegal drug use. Over 600 middle school students participated in the study. Results indicate that the youth who received the leisure education were more motivated, participated more in positive leisure activities and were better able to turn boring situations into more pleasurable free time activities.

The development of the leisure education curriculum, TimeWise, was funded by the US National Institutes of Health and National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA).

TimeWise consisted of six basic lessons where students became more aware of free time and the positive benefits of leisure activities. The participants also learned how to manage boredom, decision making skills, balancing free time and how to pursue interesting free time activities. TimeWise also had a number of skill builders to reinforce the basic curriculum (Caldwell et al., 2004).

Caldwell et al. (2004) reported that the youth in their study who received the leisure education showed higher interest in free time activities and less boredom than the control subjects. The study reported that participation in the leisure education may provide a level of protection for the youth against involvement in negative behaviors (Caldwell et al., 2004).

The students in the Caldwell study were not considered at-risk and the researchers were interested in an evaluation of the application with an at-risk population.

### Working with Delinquent Youth

Although the author's more than 20 years of work with delinquent youth in detention centers and residential programs had accrued the insights of experience, the literature was thoroughly reviewed to seek further insight on how to conduct this research with the delinquent participants most effectively.

As previously stated, there is a void in the literature: few or no studies view any aspect of delinquency or adolescent development with delinquent youth as the participants of the study. There are numerous reasons for that, such as the rights and protections assured to the delinquent youth, agencies' hesitancy to allow research within their delinquent youth facilities, difficulty in ascertaining parental consent, resistance of the delinquent youth themselves to voluntarily participating in studies and the perception by researchers that studying a delinquent population is a difficult challenge.

Yet support does appear to be growing for the point urged by Kraus (1977): subjects such as delinquent youth should be more represented in research.

For the researcher aspiring to study delinquent youth, Hanna et al. (1999) suggested *Fifty Strategies for Counseling Defiant, Aggressive Adolescents: Reaching, Accepting, and Relating*. Those researchers acknowledged that many professionals in the field have noted how difficult it is to engage adolescents in treatment and how they challenge even the most skilled counselors. Some observers have said that youth are the most challenging of clients to work with in counseling (Church, 1994). Trepper (1991) noted that most therapists view working with adolescents as “adversarial sport,” and in some cases even as “blood sport.” This assumption leads many professionals to avoid the prospect altogether, preferring to work only with adults or young children (Biever, McKenzie, Wales-North, & Gonzalez, 1995). Researchers conclude that the marked lack of research on effectiveness with adolescents, especially those who are violent, is not surprising (Tate, Reppucci, & Mulvey, 1995).

Many studies have demonstrated the great turmoil and stress of adolescence. In a study of 3,998 adolescents in a nonclinical setting, Hibbard, Ingersoll, and Orr (1990) found that 20% had reported some form of physical or sexual abuse.

Hanna et al. (1999) found that defiant adolescents have often been deprived of models for how to interact appropriately with others. Amongst those authors’ 50 suggested strategies, some were helpful in this researcher’s study:

- Offer snacks.
- Be genuine and unpretentious.
- Show deep respect for the youth.
- Maintain a sense of humor.
- Be able to laugh at yourself.

- Avoid being a symbol of authority.
- Avoid taking an expert stance.
- Emphasize commonalities by noting similar experiences you have undergone.
- Convey a “brief” attitude to maintain their short attention span.
- Demonstrate admiration.
- Be clear about the boundaries of acceptable classroom behavior.
- Avoid power struggles.
- Tell success stories of other adolescents.
- Stay in touch with your own adolescence.
- Recognize the youth’s desire and need for autonomy.

I agree with Hanna et al. (1999) that working with delinquent youth can be a source of joy and hope rather than frustration and also on how important it is that the researcher genuinely like adolescents and want to focus on them.

### Research Questions and Hypotheses

The examination of the literature has focused on four key areas of this study: the lifelong benefits of positive use of free time, the relationship of motivation to participation in leisure activities, the causes and consequences of adolescent boredom, and finally, the potential benefits of increased motivation and reduced proneness to boredom that adolescents may reap by participating in a leisure education curriculum.



There appear to be a number of reasons, as noted, that this population, delinquent youth, are understudied. Nevertheless, considering the impact of delinquency on those young individuals and on society, researchers must begin to fill the void.

The purpose of this dissertation research was to conduct an experimental study of male delinquents in a court-ordered residential setting by gathering information on how they use their free time, how motivated they are in the area of leisure, and to what degree boredom is a problem for youth in an institutional setting. The intent of this experiment was to generate scientific information to assess the effects of a leisure education curriculum on the motivation, knowledge, and behavioral changes related to leisure among delinquents. A group of youths were selected to participate in a randomized trial. The experimental control groups participated in a regularly planned program.

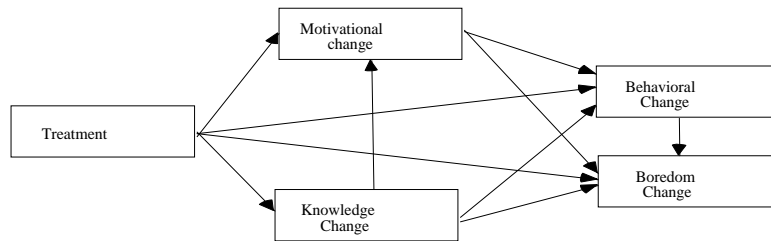
This research employed a confirmatory approach. From the study sample of male delinquents residing in court-ordered residential settings, self-reported data on the areas of free time, leisure, motivation and boredom were gathered. The study used a repeated measurement of process and outcome indicators of knowledge, motivation and behavior. A leisure education curriculum was introduced and was assessed for its effectiveness in improving the participants' knowledge of positive activities to enhance their free time, and in bringing about behavioral changes toward more pro-social attachment to leisure activities during the youths' free time. To address that assessment, the following research questions were examined:

**RQ1:** What are the general states of adolescents' knowledge, motivation and behavior about leisure activities in the institutional setting?

**RQ2:** Does an educational intervention with a specialized curriculum on leisure positively affect the knowledge, motivation and behavioral changes of the youth?

A previous study on the benefit of a leisure education curriculum for middle school students, Caldwell et al. (2004), measured the curriculum's impact of change in the areas of knowledge, motivation, behavior change (better use of free time), and boredom demonstrated after receipt of the leisure education curriculum (intervention). The study found that the youth who had received the curriculum reported greater interest in their activities than did the comparison group of students. Moreover, students who had received the curriculum reported the ability to turn boring situations into more exciting experiences and also demonstrated more initiative. The researchers found that students who received the leisure education curriculum also appeared less likely to initiate risky behaviors, as well as more involved with their environments (Caldwell et al., 2004).

The following hypotheses are the predictions expected from analysis of the conceptual model in figure 1:



**Figure 1: Intervention Effects of Leisure Education on Delinquents: A Conceptual Model**

- H1:** The leisure education curriculum (treatment) will improve the delinquent’s knowledge about leisure.
- H2:** The treatment will improve the delinquent’s level of intrinsic motivation.
- H3:** The treatment will influence behavior change in that delinquents will report better use of free time.
- H4:** The treatment will reduce the delinquent’s proneness to boredom.
- H5:** The more knowledgeable delinquent will be more motivated.
- H6:** The more knowledgeable delinquent will report better use of free time.
- H7:** The more knowledgeable delinquent will be less prone to boredom.
- H8:** The more motivated delinquent will report better use of free time.
- H9:** The more motivated delinquent will be less prone to boredom.
- H10:** The delinquent youth making better use of their free time will be less prone to boredom.
- H11:** The delinquents in Experimental Group 2, who receive the treatment more often, will reflect greater changes in knowledge, motivation, use of free time and less proneness to boredom as compared to the delinquent youth in Experimental Group 1, who receive the basic curriculum.

The next section explains the research methodology selected to test the hypotheses.

### **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

#### Overview

Considering both the immediate and the long-term impacts of juvenile delinquency on government agencies, exploring preventive interventions, especially those applicable in residential commitment programs, should be a priority.

Although the literature offers numerous theories attempting to explain such phenomena as motivation, boredom, and the effects of participating in leisure activity, very few theories have been tested in practical settings. No studies have examined the effects that a leisure education curriculum for delinquents might have on knowledge, motivation, and behavior changes related to boredom.

This study will contribute information on the practical application of the current theoretical models, as well as empirical information about how delinquent youth respond to the curriculum in an actual institutional setting.

Parents, schools, community recreation and leisure departments, as well as juvenile justice agencies could benefit from detailed and reliable information about leisure education and leisure opportunities in relation to at-risk youth.

This chapter presents a detailed description of the research methodology and specific procedures employed: the research population, data collection method, the nature of the treatment, operationalization of variables, and the plan for statistical analysis.

### Research Population

The delinquent youth who were the participants in this study were 15-18 years old and had been found delinquent by a juvenile court and sent to a moderate-risk commitment program within the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) operates or contracts operation of ninety-six moderate-risk residential commitment programs throughout Florida.

Three locations were selected on the basis of proximity to the researcher's work and residence. The three programs are very similar in facility structure, programming, admission and discharge criteria. A youth committed to a moderate-risk program by a juvenile court is equally likely to be assigned to any of the three programs by the Department of Juvenile Justice, because assignments to these three similar programs is typically based upon bed availability and the youth's place on a waiting list for admission.

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice defines their moderate-risk programs as half-way house type residential programs, housing delinquent youth who are characterized by repeated arrests and who present a moderate risk to society. The programs provide care, custody and supervision 24-hours/day. Programming includes traditional academics, vocational programs, social skills, behavior management and structured learning in a therapeutic community. The typical length of stay is nine months; however, misbehavior is punished by lengthier stays (FDJJ Manual, 2003).

Prior to submission of the application for approval by the University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher met with the Program Director at each of the three sites to discuss the research plan and receive their written support of the research.

Approval for the research was received by the University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board as well as the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Institutional Review Board. Copies of the approval letters are in the appendix.

The researcher received a population census from each of the three sites, and from the three programs selected 70 youths with enough time remaining in the program to complete the research study. Of the seventy youths, seven were 18 years old and thus were excluded from the IRB requirement for signed parental consent to participate.

The researcher obtained home addresses and telephone numbers for the potential participants and tried to call all the parents and guardians to explain the purpose of the research and the protections assured those youth who would volunteer to participate. About 75% of the phone calls were successful in either speaking to a parent, guardian or family member or leaving voice mail at the telephone number provided.

Sixty-three parental consent forms were mailed out to the parents or legal guardians. An example of the parental consent form is found in the appendix. The letters outlined the purpose of the study, the requirements of the youth if they volunteered to participate, all the confidentiality protections, and the need to provide written consent to the researcher in order for their youth to participate. Return envelopes with postage and the researcher's address were included in the mail-outs.

Approximately one week after the parental consent forms were mailed, the researcher followed up with phone calls to inquire whether they had received the parental consent form and whether they had any questions, and to encourage them to sign and return the forms if they had

not already done so. Three weeks after the initial mail-out of the parental consent forms, the researcher had received signed consents from parents of thirty-one youths.

The researcher visited the three sites and arranged to speak with the thirty-one youths for whom signed parental consents had been obtained and with an additional seven youths who were 18 years old. The researcher met with the thirty-eight youths individually to discuss the purpose of the research study, the youth's requirements and the protections they were ensured, and to ask them for their voluntary assent to participating. Of the thirty-eight youths, thirty-four agreed to participate and signed the participant assent form. (A copy is found in the appendix.)

Thirty-four youths completed the pretest (described in detail further in this chapter). After the pretest, five youth decided not to participate. After the first class session, two more youths dropped out of the study. Twenty-seven youths in the three programs completed the entire study.

All parental consents, youth assents, and research data are safely secured in the researcher's residence. Extreme measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality of all participants.

### Data Collection Method

Twenty-seven youths, housed in three similar programs, volunteered to participate in this research. The researcher randomly selected one program to serve as the experimental control group. One other program was randomly selected as the experimental (1) group. The remaining program served as the experimental (2) group.

The diagram below outlines the research plan:

Control Group - 8 youth

Pre-Test → Post-Test

Experimental (1) Group – 9 youth

Pre-Test → Leisure Education Curriculum → Post-Test

Experimental (2) Group – 10 youth

Pre-Test → Leisure Education Curriculum →

Advanced Skill-Builders → Post-Test

During the first week of the research study the researcher went to each of the three programs to administer the pre-test. The pre-test was a modified version of the Free Time Motivation Scale – Adolescents (FTMS-A), developed by Baldwin & Caldwell (2003) to evaluate the effectiveness of a leisure education program (Baldwin & Caldwell, 2003).

The FTMS-A is a self-report measure for adolescents. Developed by Baldwin & Caldwell (2003) the instrument has been validated to provide measures for leisure, motivation and proneness for boredom.

Its developers empirically tested the FTMS-A using confirmatory factor analysis to determine levels of fit (Baldwin & Caldwell, 2003). Their findings were published in the Journal of Leisure Research, 2003, Volume 35, No 2, pp. 129-151. The self-report measure of adolescents' free-time motivation was found to be appropriate for use with adolescents. The following levels of construct were reported:



The 114 item pre-test took each of the participants approximately 30 minutes to complete.

During the next five weeks the youths assigned to the study control group continued in their program's normal daily activities and did not receive the leisure education curriculum.

For the five weeks after the pre-test, the youths in the Experimental (1) Group met in a classroom twice a week, and the researcher presented the TimeWise leisure education curriculum (Caldwell et al., 2004). Class time was generally 60 minutes for each of the six classes. During the same period the youths in the Experimental (2) Group also met twice a week for the 60 minute classes with the researcher; however, this group then received two additional classes of TimeWise.

The selected leisure education curriculum used in this research project was TimeWise: Learning Lifelong Leisure Skills (Caldwell et al., 2004). The curriculum-based leisure education program was developed by Linda Caldwell, Cheryl Baldwin, Theodore Walls, and Ed Smith in 2004, who designed TimeWise to teach youths to use their leisure time in healthy and productive ways by helping them analyze current and future leisure interests.

The researcher purchased the Teacher's Manual and a student handbook for each youth from ETR associates.

A brief overview of each of the classes follows:

Class one: Free time and leisure. The youths began to identify how they use their free time and learned about the potential benefits free time activities may provide. The youth also learned about consequences, both positive and negative, associated with free time.

Class two: Motivation for free time activities. The adolescents learned about different motivations associated with their use of free time.

Class three: Interests and dealing with boredom. The participants learned to better understand and deal with boredom. The youth began to identify new interest areas for their free time.

Class four: Planning for free time. The participants learned how to make their own decisions regarding free time activities.

Class five: Balancing free time. In this class the youths learned how to bring about balance in their free time. Sharing activities in a responsible planned fashion.

Class six: Review and reinforcement of concepts.

The Experimental (1) group and the Experimental (2) group received the first six classes as consistently as possible. The experimental (2) group had two additional classes to reinforce what they had learned in the first six classes.

Class seven: The youths were encouraged to share what they had learned with friends who had not been in the class. That would help to reinforce the concepts. During this class, youths also learned about positive and negative leisure risks.

Class eight: The youths learned about leisure flow, which occurs when an individual is totally absorbed with an enjoyable leisure activity. They also learned about managing stress through leisure activities.

After the Experimental (2) Group completed their eighth class, the researcher returned to each of the three sites, and all 27 youths completed the post-test. The post-test was a 60-item modification of the FTMS-A. The youths completed the post-test in approximately 20 minutes.

## Operationalization of Variables

### **Selected Characteristics, Scales and Variables**

The researcher conducted a file review to gather data on each of the youths in the study for comparison of selected characteristics. The statistical analysis compared the similarity of the characteristics among the youths in the three different groups. In addition, the youths were asked whether they received free lunch at school or paid for their lunch. The selected characteristics are:

Age – in years

Race – white or non-white

# of arrests

Length of stay: days in the program

Poverty status: free lunch = yes; paid for lunch = no.

Single head of household

In order to create variables, scales and constructs at Time 1 and Time 2, all the study youths were asked to respond to a survey before the intervention occurred with the Experimental 1 and Experimental 2 Groups, and all responded to a second survey at the end of the study. Although the pre-test was 114 items and the post-test was 60 items, the items or variables of interest were the 60 items within the pre-test that were inclusive of the post-test.

Variables were grouped to create scale areas of interests, and the scales were grouped to create the study's constructs of interest. Both scales and constructs were utilized in the statistical analysis. The following material demonstrates how the scales and constructs were created.

## Construct – Behavior

The Construct of Behavior was created by combining the scales of Leisure Behavior, Participation, and Well Being.

### Scale – Leisure Behavior

3 items (variables)

Youths were asked to indicate how often they participate in the following. The choices were 1 = never, 2 = before, not this year, 3 = 1-2/this year, 4 = 1-2/month, 5 = 1-2/week, 6 = almost every day.

- Go to a natural public area like a park, game lands, or state forest
- Participate in an organized sport activity
- Participate in a school or community club

### Scale – Participation

6 items (variables)

Youths were asked to score the item as it related to their use of free time. The choices were 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

- Have a new activity.
- I developed an interest in a new activity that I do on a regular basis.
- I've made a new friend (or new friends) through my free time activities.
- Hobbies.
- In my free time, I have a good balance of active and non-active things.

- I have a lot of different types of interests.

### Scale – Well Being

4 items (variables)

Youths were asked to score the item as it related to their use of free time. The choices were 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

- Activities are good for me.
- Activities are not healthy (reverse score).
- Activities are not physically healthy (reverse score).
- I feel good about myself in my free time.

### Construct – Knowledge

The construct of knowledge was created by combining the scales of Awareness, Planning & Decision Making, and Ability to Restructure Boring Situations (Caldwell et al., 2004).

### Scale – Awareness

4 items (variables)

Youths were asked to answer questions about their community. The choices were 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

- I wish I knew more about more interesting free time activities to do.
- Places to do things.
- My community lacks things for people my age to do (reverse score).
- I know about exciting things to do.

### Scale – Planning & Decision Making

9 items (variables)

Youths were asked to score the item as it related to their use of free time. The choices were 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

- I know how to plan my free time activities.
- I make good decisions.
- I know how to compromise with friends (so we all do things we enjoy).
- I am a better planner and organizer than most of my friends.
- I choose my activities without my parents help.
- I can plan my activities without help from my friends.
- I get the information needed to make the best choice of what to do.
- I let someone else decide for me (reverse scoring).

### Scale – Ability to Restructure a Boring Situation (Caldwell et al., 2004).

4 items (variables)

Youths were asked to score the item as it related to their use of free time. The choices were 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

- I can turn around a boring situation.
- I can keep up my interest in my activities.
- I can make things more challenging for myself.
- I can make things more fun for myself.

## Construct – Motivation

The construct of motivation was created from the scale of intrinsic motivation. The scales of amotivation, external motivation, identified motivation, and introjected motivation were evaluated as scales only.

### Scale – Intrinsic Motivation

4 items (variables)

Youths were asked to score the item as it related to their use of free time. The choices were 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

- Have fun.
- Enjoy the activity.
- Like it.
- I want to.

### Scale – Amotivation

4 items (variables)

Youths were asked to score the item as it related to their use of free time. The choices were 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

- I don't know and don't care.
- I don't know, nothing is of interest.

- I don't know and haven't thought about it.
- I don't do much of anything.

#### Scale – External Motivation

5 items (variables)

Youths were asked to score the item as it related to their use of free time. The choices were 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

- Avoid trouble.
- Supposed to.
- Rules.
- Avoid others anger.
- My parents.

#### Scale – Identified Motivation

4 items (variables)

Youths were asked to score the item as it related to their use of free time. The choices were 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

- Learn something.
- It's important.
- Develop skills.
- Be a better person.



### Scale – Introjected Motivation

5 items (variables)

Youths were asked to score the item as it related to their use of free time. The choices were 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

- Impress others.
- Feel bad about myself.
- Be liked by friends.
- Be liked.
- Earn trophies and such.

Construct – Boredom

The construct of Boredom was created from the Scale of Bored & Interested.

### Scale – Bored & Interested

8 items (variables)

Youths were asked to score the item as it related to their use of free time. The choices were 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

- Free time drags on.
- It's boring.
- Nothing else to do.
- I almost always have something to do in my free time (reverse scoring).
- My activities are interesting (reverse scoring).

- My activities are more interesting to me than the other things I do during the day (reverse scoring).
- My friends seem more interested in what they do than I do.
- I do a lot of activities even though I'm not really interested in them.

During analysis, scores of 1 indicated low levels and scores of 5 indicated high levels of the variable, scale or construct. The exception was for the leisure participation variable "time spent," where 1 = never, and 6 = almost daily.

### Statistical Analysis

To assess the impact of the leisure education curriculum on the conceptual model constructs of knowledge, motivation, behavior, and boredom, first a series of general linear model (GLM) repeated measure procedures were conducted on each of the study's sixty variables.

The youths' responses to each of the items on the pre-test and post-test were entered into a SPSS data set. SPSS produced mean differences between Time 2 and Time 1 for the individual variables for each study group. Following a number of variable transformations, SPSS was utilized to produce Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for the study scales and constructs described in the variable operationalization section.

Those data were saved in SPSS and used in the study's path analysis of the conceptual model. The use of path analysis is a methodological improvement over the Caldwell (2004) study. Simply utilizing GLM procedures allowed only for analysis of the impact of the leisure education curriculum on the individual constructs of knowledge, motivation, behavior

and boredom. Path analysis provided similar data, but also allowed for analysis of the relationships among the model constructs.

Path analysis was performed by entering the conceptual model into Amos, and SPSS calculated path co-efficients for each path within the model.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the research, in three sections: General states of the motivation, knowledge, and behavior involving leisure activities in the institutional setting; impact of the educational intervention, with a specialized curriculum on leisure, on the motivation, knowledge, and behavioral changes of the youth; and path analysis of the conceptual model.

### Research Question 1

Table 1 shows the comparison of selected characteristics of the study subjects, between the experimental and the control groups. The table was created by entering youth characteristics into SPSS GLM univariate analysis and running a test of between-subjects effects. As shown in Table 1, there are no significant differences among the three groups in any of the selected characteristics.

**Table 1: Comparison of Selected Characteristics of the Study Subjects By Experimental Status**

**Mean and Standard Deviation**

<u>Selected Characteristics</u>	<u>Control</u>	<u>Experimental Group 1</u>	<u>Experimental Group 2</u>	<u>F-Value</u>	<u>Significance Level</u>
Age	17.25/.88	16.22/.83	16.20/1.31	2.739	.085 (NS)
Race	.37/.5	.55/.52	.70/.48	.909	.416 (NS)
# of Arrests	5.25/2.65	8.11/2.71	7.70/3.12	2.45	.107 (NS)
Length of Stay (days)	103.37/43.11	99.11/57.89	107.30/30.75	.079	.924 (NS)
Poverty Status 1 = Yes 0 = No	.62/.51	.55/.52	.80/.42	.638	.537 (NS)
Single Head of Household 1 = Yes 0 = No	.87/.35	.77/.44	.60/.51	.881	.427 (NS)

Note: NS – No statistically significant difference in any characteristics at the .05 level.

Table 2 depicts the general states of knowledge, motivation, behavior and boredom of the study subjects by the experimental status at the pre-intervention period. There are no significant differences in the constructs among the three groups.

**Table 2: General State of Knowledge, Motivation, Behavior and Boredom of the Study Subjects by the Experimental Status at the Pre-intervention Period**

**Mean and Standard Deviation**

<u>Construct</u>	<u>Control</u>	<u>Experimental Group 1</u>	<u>Experimental Group 2</u>	<u>F-Value</u>	<u>Significance Level</u>
Knowledge	3.67/.62	3.61/.35	3.96/.27	1.793	.188 (NS)
Motivation	4.25/.59	4.13/.54	4.27/.57	.148	.863 (NS)
Behavior	3.87/.78	3.27/.40	3.52/.79	1.615	.220 (NS)
Boredom	2.18/.57	2.56/.43	2.28/.54	1.249	.305 (NS)

Note: Items coded on a 5-point scale where 1 indicates a low level of the construct and 5 indicates a high level.

NS – No statistically significant difference in the constructs at the .05 level.

The reader may be interested to know whether there are any differences between the delinquent youth in this study and youth not considered at risk. Although such an analysis is beyond the scope of this study, Table 3 reflects the general state of scaled items for the delinquent population as compared to the middle school students in the Caldwell (2004) study at the pre-intervention period. Table 3 shows that those two populations are similar on most scales, with the exception that the delinquent youth have lower mean scores for well-being and time spent in school or community clubs, and higher mean scores for the boredom proneness scale.



**Table 3: General State of Scaled Items for Delinquent Population Compared to Middle School Students in the Caldwell (2004) Study - Pre-Intervention**

**Mean and Standard Deviation**

<b><u>Scaled Variable</u></b>	<b><u>Delinquent Youth</u></b>	<b><u>Middle School Youth</u></b>
Well-being	3.31/.93	4.10/.65
Planning and Decision Making	3.69/.51	3.76/.54
Ability to Restructure	4.07/.53	3.86/.76
Awareness	3.51/.59	3.29/.89
Time Spent in Parks	4.25/1.22	3.58/1.37
Time Spent in Organized Sport	3.81/1.84	4.41/1.67
Time Spent in School or Community Clubs	2.51/1.94	3.93/1.80
Amotivation	2.0/.69	2.04/.83
External Motivation	2.54/.76	2.32/.86
Introjected Motivation	2.94/.73	3.23/.76
Identified Motivation	3.75/.60	3.97/.65
Intrinsic Motivation	4.22/.55	4.48/.506
Boredom	2.35/.52	1.14/.61

Note: Items coded on a 5-point scale where 1 indicates a low level of the construct and 5 indicates a high level. The exception is for leisure participation “time spent” where 1 = never and 6 = almost daily.

## Research Question 2

Table 4 demonstrates the mean differences between pre- and post-tests of the control group and the youths receiving the education curriculum (Experimental (1) group and Experimental (2) group). As shown in Table 4, the youths who received the leisure education curriculum had significantly higher post-test values for well being, time spent in parks or public areas, and intrinsic motivation.

**Table 4: Mean Differences Between Pre & Post Tests of the Control Group and the Youth Receiving the Education Curriculum**

**Mean and Standard Deviation**

<b><u>Scaled Variables</u></b>	<b><u>Control</u></b>	<b><u>Combined Experimental Groups</u></b>	<b><u>F-Value</u></b>	<b><u>Significance Level</u></b>
Well-being	.06/.62	.78/.64	7.255	.012*
Planning & Decision Making	.06/.47	.32/.39	2.151	.155
Ability to Restructure	-.03/.41	.22/.66	.998	.327
Awareness	.28/.80	-.01/.66	.967	.335
Time Spent in Parks	-.62/.74	.26/1.04	4.712	.04*
Time Spent in Sports	-.12/1.72	.57/1.57	1.065	.312
Time Spent in School or Community Clubs	0/1.92	.89/2.28	.941	.341
Amotivation	.31/.43	-.17/1.15	1.298	.265
External Motivation	.05/.89	-.44/.96	1.514	.230
Introjected Motivation	-.27/.54	.11/.76	1.687	.206
Identified Motivation	-.06/.32	.34/.72	2.249	.146
Intrinsic Motivation	-.03/.41	.46/.56	4.97	.035*
Boredom	-.04/.30	-.32/.69	1.190	.286

Note: \*Significant difference at the .05 level of significance.

Table 5 shows the mean differences in the intervention outcome variables between the pre- and post-tests of the study subjects. Youths who received the leisure education curriculum had higher post-test values for the constructs of motivation and behavior.

**Table 5: Mean Differences in Intervention Outcome Variables Between Pre & Post Tests of the Study Subjects**

<u>Construct</u>	<u>Mean and Standard Deviation</u>			<u>F-Value</u>	<u>Significance Level</u>
	<u>Control</u>	<u>Experimental Group 1</u>	<u>Experimental Group 2</u>		
Knowledge	.10/.49	.35/.30	.02/.40	1.652	.213
Motivation	-.03/.41	.66/.46	.27/.59	4.10	.029*
Behavior	-.03/.68	.43/.24	.71/.52	4.72	.019*
Boredom	-.04/.30	-.45/.54	-.21/.82	.966	.395

Note: \*Statistically significant at the 0.05 or lower level.

### Path Analysis of the Conceptual Model

Path analysis was used to address the second research question, the study hypotheses and the conceptual model (Figure 1).

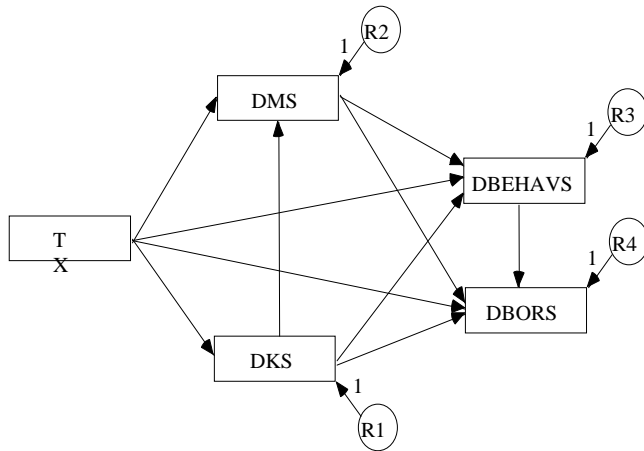
The first step was to enter the conceptual model into Amos. In order to determine the causal relationships of the constructs in the model, the constructs in the model were replaced with values that were calculated based upon the study subjects' responses to the pre-test and post-test surveys. These values were calculated utilizing a SPSS GLM analysis. During the path analysis the study subjects were grouped as either receiving the intervention or not receiving the intervention.

DKS = Differences in Knowledge Score, or (Knowledge T2 – Knowledge T1).

DMS = Difference in Motivation Score, or (Motivation T2 – Motivation T1).

DBEHAVS = Difference in Behavior Score, or (Behavior T2 – Behavior T1).

DBORS = Difference in Boredom Score, or (Boredom T2 – Boredom T1).



**Figure 2. Intervention Effects of Leisure Education on Delinquents: Path Model**

Based upon the path model in Figure 2, four equations of functional relationship are of interest.

$$\text{Equation 1} - \text{DKS} = f(\text{Tx}) + \text{R1.}$$

$$\text{Equation 2} - \text{DMS} = f(\text{Tx}, \text{DKS}) + \text{R2.}$$

$$\text{Equation 3} - \text{DBEHAVS} = f(\text{Tx}, \text{DKS}, \text{DMS}) + \text{R3.}$$

$$\text{Equation 4} - \text{DBORS} = f(\text{Tx}, \text{DKS}, \text{DMS}, \text{DBEHAVS}) + \text{R4.}$$

Data from the path analysis are depicted in Table 6, showing the path analysis results for the intervention effects of leisure education.

**Table 6: Path Analysis Results for Intervention Effects of Leisure Education**

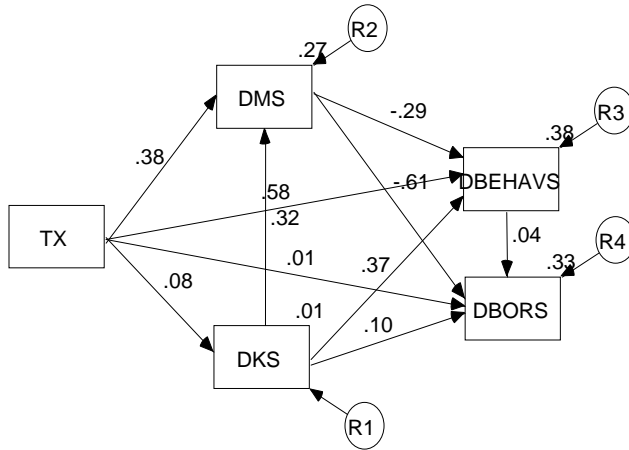
<b><u>Intervention Effect &amp; Predictor</u></b>	<b><u>Estimated Unstandardized Regression Coefficient</u></b>	<b><u>Standard Error</u></b>	<b><u>Critical Ratios t-value</u></b>	<b><u>Standardized Regression Coefficient</u></b>
DKS ← TX	.073	.176	.414	.081
DMS ← TX	.460	.203	2.267**	.381
DBEHAVS ← TX	.729	.213	3.428**	.582
DBORS ← TX	.011	.280	.037	.008
DMS ← DKS	.431	.226	1.910*	.321
DBEHAVS ← DKS	.510	.231	2.213**	.366
DBORS ← DKS	.140	.275	.508	.095
DBEHAVS ← DMS	-.303	.188	-1.617	-.292
DBORS ← DMS	-.666	.215	-3.090**	-.607
DBORS ← DBEHAVS	.040	.215	.185	.038

Note: \*Statistically significant at 0.10 level.

\*\*Statistically significant at 0.05 or lower level.



The following figure was produced by inputting the path model into AMOS and SPSS produced the path coefficients.



**Figure 3. Intervention Effects of Leisure Education on Delinquents: Path Model**



$$\text{DMS} = f(\text{Tx}, \text{DKS}) + \text{R2}.$$

$$\text{R-squared} = .27.$$

This is interpreted as indicating that the conceptual model explains 27% of the variance in the construct of motivation.

In Equation 3 –

$$\text{DBEHAVS} = f(\text{Tx}, \text{DKS}, \text{DMS}) + \text{R3}.$$

$$\text{R-squared} = .38.$$

This is interpreted as indicating that the conceptual model explains 38% of the variance in the construct of behavior.

In Equation 4 –

$$\text{DBORS} = f(\text{Tx}, \text{DKS}, \text{DMS}, \text{DBEHAVS}) + \text{R4}.$$

$$\text{R-squared} = .33.$$

This is interpreted as indicating that the conceptual model explains 33% of the variance of the construct of boredom.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

### Introduction

In 1968 in Travis Hirschi's Social Control Theory, he suggested that the best way to keep adolescents out of trouble is to keep them busy with prosocial activities. The Carnegie Council report on Adolescent Development (1992) reported that use of time by adolescents is "a matter of risk and opportunity" (Caldwell et al., 2004).

Numerous studies have supported the benefits for adolescents participating in positive leisure activities. In 1996 the Carnegie Corporation reported on the numerous benefits of involving adolescents in sports. Participation in sports can lead to maturing social behaviors, better grades in school, increased levels of self-confidence, higher regard for physical health, and stronger bonds with other people and institutions.

In 1912 John Dewey recommended that one of the functions of schools should be to education students on leisure (Caldwell et al., 2004). Unfortunately, Dewey's suggestion has been largely ignored.

The purpose of this study was to explore the general states of knowledge, motivation, behavior and boredom in relation to leisure activities of delinquent youth in an institutional setting. Additionally, the study evaluated the impact of an educational intervention with a specialized curriculum on leisure on the knowledge, motivation and participation in leisure activities of delinquent youth.

This chapter discusses the study findings, the policy implications of the research, its limitations, and suggestions for future research.

## Overview of Research Questions

To begin to address a void in the research literature, two research questions were examined.

### General State of Knowledge, Motivation, and Behavior as it Relates to Leisure

The first research question examined was: What are the general states of knowledge, motivation and behavior involving leisure activities in the institutional setting. The delinquent youth in the study pretty closely resembled the middle school youth in a previous study in their knowledge about leisure activities and in the five general motivation areas. Several differences were found in the three general states. First, the delinquent youths reported that many of their leisure activities would not be considered healthy. This was apparent in the first class session, when many of the delinquent youth reported that during their free time their favorite activity was to smoke pot and hang out with their friends.

The second difference is in time spent in school or community clubs; the delinquent youths had much lower scores than the middle school youths did. This difference was expected, as many of the youths in this study reported academic and/or behavioral problems in school, which probably interfered with any desire on their part to participate in school clubs.

The third difference is that the delinquent youths' scores reflected more proneness to boredom than did those of the middle school students. This finding was also expected, from the researcher's own observations that delinquent youths appear to become bored more easily than youths do who are not typically considered at risk. The youths in the study reported in class that

they were especially bored in their commitment program because of the daily routine, inability to make their own decisions and the lack of activities that they enjoy. Most of the youth in the study reported that before coming to their program, boredom had also been a problem. Some said that they had had too much free time and nothing to do; others reported that they always did the same things at home; others reported that they could not do the things they wanted to do because their parents would not allow them or because they lacked transportation or money.

From the findings about the general states of the delinquents' knowledge, motivation, behavior and boredom, it appeared reasonable to expect that their participation in the leisure education might influence some positive changes.

### Impact of the Leisure Education Curriculum

The second research question examined the impact of the leisure education curriculum on the study youths' knowledge, motivation and behavior related to leisure.

The short term goal of the curriculum was to introduce the youth to the concepts and skills necessary to make better and healthier use of their free time.

The data show that the youths who received the curriculum reported significantly higher scores in intrinsic motivation and behavior than did those in the study group that did not participate in the leisure education. Furthermore, the more motivated youth had lower levels on the proneness for boredom scale.

These findings are consistent with observations of the youths during the class sessions. They showed interest in learning about the various types of motivation. The curriculum did a

great job of persuading them that they would receive the most benefits by participating in positive healthy activities that were fun and that they enjoyed doing. The youths also were able to demonstrate strategies to avoid or contend with boredom.

The behavioral changes were a reflection of the youths' processing of the entire curriculum. They appeared interested in learning about new activities, things to do, places to go, and people to meet during their free time. The behavioral improvements were also consistent with the youths learning how to balance their free time between structured and unstructured activities, how to balance their time spent with friends, family and self, and exercises on how to plan free time activities to avoid being bored.

The fact that there was not a significant change in the youths' knowledge about leisure is not a major concern; a similar finding occurred in the study with the middle school students. The study youths knew the difference between healthy and unhealthy leisure activities and were at least familiar with some of the concepts of motivation and boredom. The importance of the leisure education curriculum was to enhance these concepts and have the youths buy into the objective of making better use of their free time. The improved intrinsic motivation scores and increased behavioral scores are an indication that participation in the curriculum was influencing some positive changes in the youths' attitudes and active participation in their free time. Perhaps the key finding in this study is that the leisure education curriculum significantly increased the delinquent youths' level of intrinsic motivation, which in turn led to a significant decrease in their proneness to boredom. By learning how to become more motivated to use their free time by participating in positive leisure activities, the youths would find themselves less bored during their free time.

## Overview of Hypotheses Tests

One of the purposes of this study was to evaluate the impact of a leisure education curriculum on a population of delinquent youths' level of knowledge on leisure and use of free time; intrinsic motivation to participate in positive free time activities; level of participation in prosocial activities and the youths' proneness for boredom.

Eleven hypotheses were developed from the conceptual model and tested in this research. An analysis of the data described in the results section support that the leisure education curriculum improved the youths' level of intrinsic motivation as well as the youths' improved participation in prosocial free time activities.

The curriculum alone had no significant impact on the youths' improved knowledge regarding leisure, nor did the treatment alone produce a decrease in the youths' proneness for boredom.

The path analysis data supports by improving the participants' knowledge of leisure, an indirect impact would be an improvement in the level of intrinsic motivation and participation. The data further reveals that by improving participation in activities alone will not decrease the proneness for boredom, atleast not on a short term basis. Future research utilizing a longitudinal design should evaluate this relationship in more detail.

The key finding in this study was that the path analysis data reveals that an indirect effect of the curriculum improving the youths' level of intrinsic motivation was, a decrease in the youths' proneness for boredom. As the youth become more motivated in the better use of their free time, they became more insulated from the potential harms of boredom.



Finally, the last hypotheses suggested that additional exposure to the basic leisure education curriculum may improve the strength of the model. The data in this study did not support this hypothesis.

Following is a summary of the hypotheses findings:

### **Research Hypotheses**

- H1: The leisure education curriculum (treatment) will improve the delinquent's knowledge of leisure. **Rejected**
- H2: The treatment will improve the delinquent's level of intrinsic motivation. **Accepted**
- H3: The treatment will influence behavior change as delinquents will report better use of free time. **Accepted**
- H4: The treatment will reduce the delinquent's proneness for boredom. **Rejected**
- H5: The more knowledgeable delinquent will be more motivated. **Accepted**
- H6: The more knowledgeable delinquent will report better use of free time. **Accepted**
- H7: The more knowledgeable delinquent will be less prone to boredom. **Rejected**
- H8: The more motivated delinquent will report better use of free time. **Rejected**
- H9: The more motivated delinquent will be less prone to boredom. **Accepted**
- H10: The delinquent youth making better use of their free time will be less prone to boredom. **Rejected**
- H11: The delinquents in the Experimental Group 2 who receive a higher frequency of the treatment will reflect greater changes in knowledge, motivation, use of free time and less proneness for boredom when compared to the delinquent youth in the Experimental

Group 1 who receive the basic curriculum. **Rejected**

#### A Revised Path Model

From the findings in this study, a revised path model is called for to guide future studies interested in evaluating the effectiveness of interventions to increase adolescents' knowledge, motivation and behavior as they relate to use of free time, and also to reduce the youths' proneness for boredom during free time.

Although the curriculum in the present study did not significantly change the delinquent youths' knowledge about free time, future studies should strive to create curriculums that would influence such change, given the positive influence that knowledge has on motivation and behavior.

The present study demonstrated that the curriculum alone was effective in increasing the delinquent youths' motivation and behavior, yet did not decrease their proneness to boredom. However, the curriculum increased the youths' motivation to make better use of their free time, and that had a direct effect of reducing the youths' proneness to boredom. Hence, the study empirically demonstrates that interventions that increase the youths' motivation will have an indirect impact reducing the youths' proneness to boredom.

Finally, the use of path analysis in this study allowed for the statistical analysis of indirect causal effects in the model. Very often research simply evaluates the potential impact of one dependent variable from one indirect variable. Path analysis permits the enhanced ability to analyze indirect effects within conceptual models. This data analysis was very beneficial in this study.

The following revised path model was created by eliminating the paths from the conceptual model that data analysis suggested as providing no benefit to better understanding of the model constructs.

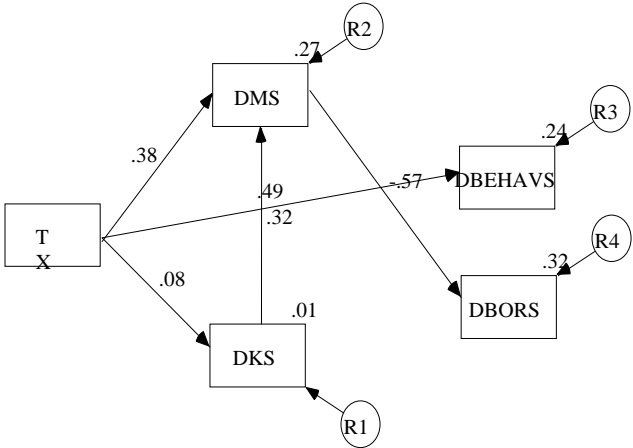


Figure 4. Intervention Effects Of Leisure Education on Delinquents: A Revised Path Model

## Policy Implications and Recommendations

The findings in this study show that a leisure education program can have a positive impact on delinquents' use of free time and can reduce their proneness to boredom. Before participating in the leisure classes, the delinquent youths in the study reported that most of their free time activities were not healthy, that they were disinterested in most school functions, and that they often found themselves seeking something to do out of boredom. After only six classes about the benefits of positive leisure activities, how to motivate themselves to participate in activities, how to balance their free time, how to respond to peer pressure, and other concepts, the youths reported changes in their approaches to leisure - very positive and hopeful changes.

The findings in this study are consistent with those reported by Caldwell et al. in 2004. The difference in this study is that the leisure education curriculum was found to be effective with incarcerated juvenile delinquents.

The policy implications from this study are applicable in several areas that deal with youth, especially at-risk or delinquent youth. A key finding is the relationship by which interventions that increase the youths' levels of motivation have an indirect effect of reducing the youths' proneness to boredom.

That finding is of considerable practical significance because of the literature's revelation of the negative role of boredom. Recent studies have found that boredom is associated with numerous social and psychological difficulties.

As researchers continue to discover interventions to increase youth motivation, policy makers should ensure opportunities for youth to freely participate in positive leisure activities. Policy makers in the following three areas may benefit from the findings in this study.

The first area and probably the most obvious is incorporating leisure education into all aspects of juvenile justice. The literature makes clear that youth who fail to participate in positive extracurricular activities are much more likely to engage in substance abuse, drop out of school and be arrested for a crime.

Every day in this nation, thousands of juveniles are arrested, some for their first offense, many for a repeat offense. In Florida, juvenile offenders are sentenced according to a principle of progressive discipline. Although the severity of the crime also influences the sanctions, a repeat offender may progressively receive sanctions ranging from a diversion program for the first offense to probation, to commitment and eventually to adult jail. In all of the juvenile sanctions it would be suitable to require the youth to participate in a leisure education program.

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice is currently conducting empirical research on all of their prevention and intervention programs. The initiative has been called "What Works?" The findings from this study will be presented to this Department initiative, and it is to be hoped that we can begin implementing such a curriculum in DJJ programs in Florida.

The next area for potential policy implications is our schools. The majority of youth in this study reported that they had dropped out of school, been expelled from school, were attending an alternative school, or were behind in school. It was no surprise that most of the delinquents reported very little participation in school activities.

It appears that since the tragedy of Columbine as well as others, school systems across the nation have moved to a zero-tolerance policy for adolescent misbehavior. Those youths who misbehave are expelled, often arrested, and if permitted to continue in school it may be an

alternative site. For those youths, participation in traditional school activities, during and after school, may no longer be available.

In addition to the stricter disciplinary rules, schools in general have reduced and in many cases eliminated extracurricular activities. Some school officials blame budget cuts, rising insurance rates, or even an attitude that schools should be for academics. The findings of this study and a number of other studies in the literature, demonstrate that extracurricular activities are worth the small investment and do teach valuable life lessons. As previously cited, in 1912 John Dewey suggested that leisure education should be a required course of study for all school students.

The final area where I would suggest that policy implications exist is in our communities. The youths in this study reported real constraints on their pursuit of positive, free-time activities. Half of them were living in poverty. Three-fourths had a single parent at home. Obstacles such as lack of transportation and lack of money almost certainly had a deterrent affect on any motivation they ever had to participate in an organized sport, take a lesson or join a health club.

A parent today who wants their son to play Pop Warner football must expect to spend over \$200 for registration, shoes and other equipment. That parent would have to make travel arrangements for practice after school, probably two evenings per week, and for most of their day Saturday, for the game. Considering this reality, it was no surprise that almost 100% of the delinquents in this study reported that they had never participated in an organized sport.

Our communities need to make activities, especially after school activities and programs, easily available to our youth. Communities must face up to the fact that most of the youth who could benefit the most will not have the money to pay for the activity or for transportation to

travel to the activity. In class discussions, the youth in this study all said that they wished their communities had more activities for them to participate in.

### Limitations of the Study

A number of limitations of the current research must be acknowledged when considering the findings and policy implications. First, the policy issues discussed are based solely on observations of 27 youth classified as moderate risk juvenile delinquents. The media, researchers and policy makers often lump all delinquent youth together. That is an unhelpful over-simplification of this population. Delinquent youths should be treated according to their differing needs. Research shows very specific differences in the socialization process and leisure interests of male and of female adolescents. Differences in race and cultural differences add other variables to be considered when searching for effective prevention and intervention strategies. Moreover, first-time offenders have different needs and respond to treatment efforts differently than do the youth classified as serious habitual offenders. The current study used a small, specific category of delinquent youth. Future research on the effectiveness of a leisure education curriculum should study the broad variety of delinquent youth.

Another limitation concerning the participants, is the possibility of a selection bias with the final 27 participants. Of the seventy youth identified for possible inclusion in the study, only 27 youth could be studied as 43 youth either did not receive parental consent and/or the youth did not volunteer to participate in the study. Potential selection biases will likely exist in future studies due to the necessity for ensuring protections of this population and requiring the parental

consent and youth assent. Absent the youth's signed parental consent and the youth's assent, no data could be gathered to allow for analysis of the potential selection bias.

Other limitations of this study are the minimal time available for presentation of the curriculum, and the inability of the study to determine its effectiveness on the youth when they returned to their communities. Time constraints would not allow for a longitudinal study with this population. (Receiving the IRB approval from the University of Central Florida, the IRB approval from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice and the parental consent process took approximately nine months of the study duration.) It is critical to be able to evaluate how effectively the youth apply the new concepts and leisure skills after they are released from their programs if we are to understand the overall impact of this type of intervention.

The reader should also be aware that the phenomena of boredom is very complex. This study evaluated the youth's proneness for boredom based upon the youth's responses to nine survey questions. Future studies designed to evaluate interventions for boredom should seek to improve the assessment of boredom in these studies.

Finally, the researcher also assumed the role of teacher in this study. And although the chosen leisure education curriculum, TimeWise, appeared suitable for the study, additional applications would strengthen the presentation of the material. Modifications of the curriculum could improve those areas of the curriculum that the study youths found deficient and perhaps eliminate those that suggested little benefit to them.



## Future Research

From the study findings, it is recommended that several areas of future research be explored. First, this research should be replicated with the different categories of delinquent youth: female delinquent youth; first time offenders, perhaps as part of a diversion sanction; youths who are deeper in the system, youths on juvenile probation. Perhaps the curriculum could be evaluated for youth who are under aftercare supervision upon their return to their communities from a commitment program.

Second, additional research should follow a longitudinal model. Youth ideally would receive the leisure education curriculum and receive skill boosters at regular intervals, and data would then be gathered for periods of perhaps one or two years to allow study of the effectiveness of the curriculum for behavioral changes of the youth in a more practical setting, for a longer duration of time.

Such applications of the study would be best applied through an agreement with the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. As part of the ad-hoc to this dissertation, the researcher will present the study findings, including the potential policy implications and need for additional research, to the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

Finally, it should be noted that this study produced data identifying the key importance of interventions that influence a positive change in a delinquent youth's intrinsic motivation. Very often interventions are designed to address such a specific deficiency; for example, substance abuse programs are designed to increase the participants' knowledge of the detriments of substance abuse.

When designing and evaluating interventions, researchers should investigate secondary or indirect impacts of all the variables. The use of path analysis in the current study produced data that might have been overlooked if the data analysis design had examined only the impact of the leisure education curriculum on the individual dependent variables. Absent the path analysis, this study would have concluded that the leisure education curriculum had no significant impact on reducing the delinquent's proneness to boredom. Path analysis, however, revealed that as the leisure education increased the delinquents' level of intrinsic motivation, that had the indirect effect of significantly reducing their proneness to boredom.

### Conclusion

The choices adolescents make about how they spend their free time may lead to either success or failure in school, to initiation of substance abuse, or even to arrest for a criminal act. This dissertation research supports previous studies suggesting that youth can learn to improve their leisure skills. With a little motivation, the youth may engage more frequently in positive leisure activities that will not only reduce their proneness to boredom, with its possible negative consequences, but also enhance their socialization in becoming healthy, productive adults.

Considering the extensive social costs of juvenile delinquency, and the apparent lack of agreement on prevention and intervention strategies, it would appear reasonable for policy makers in our communities, schools and juvenile justice agencies to consider the benefits of a leisure education curriculum that this study has demonstrated.

**APPENDIX A: UCF IRB APPROVAL LETTER**



Office of Research & Commercialization

December 19, 2005

Paul Finn  
1450 Alden Street  
Deland, FL 32720

Dear Mr. Finn:

With reference to your protocol #05-3102 entitled, "**An Evaluation of the Effects of a Leisure Education Curriculum on Delinquents' Motivation, Knowledge, and Behavior Changes Related to Boredom,**" I am enclosing for your records the approved, expedited document of the UCFIRB Form you had submitted to our office. **This study, was approved on 12/21/05. The expiration date will be 12/20/06.** Should there be a need to extend this study, a Continuing Review form must be submitted to the IRB Office for review by the Chairman or full IRB at least one month prior to the expiration date. This is the responsibility of the investigator. **Please notify the IRB office when you have completed this research study.**

This protocol was reviewed by both the IRB Vice-Chair and the prisoner representative, Michele Saunders. All requested changes have been made and approved.

Please be advised that this approval is given for one year. Should there be any addendums or administrative changes to the already approved protocol, they must also be submitted to the Board through use of the Addendum/Modification Request form. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 407-823-2901. Please accept our best wishes for the success of your endeavors.

Cordially,

*Barbara Ward*

Barbara Ward, CIM  
UCF IRB Coordinator  
(FWA00000351, IRB00001138)

Copies: IRB File  
Thomas Wan, Ph.D.

BW:bw

**APPENDIX B: DJJ IRB APPROVAL LETTER**



**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE**  
Governor Jeb Bush Secretary Anthony J. Schembri

April 26, 2006

Paul Finn  
1450 Alden Street  
Deland, FL 32720

Dear Mr. Finn:

RE: An Evaluation of the Effects of a Leisure Education Curriculum on Delinquents' Motivation, Knowledge, and Behavior Changes Related to Boredom

I am pleased to inform you that the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed study. This approval covers only the study identified in your proposal.

The following conditions apply to this approval:

- DJJ would like a report of the findings with a discussion of the practical application of these findings for the programming needs of youth in the Florida Juvenile Justice System.
- All information obtained from DJJ is confidential. It may not be disclosed to any person, business, government agency, or other entity unless the disclosure is authorized in writing by DJJ.
- You may not disclose any information that could reasonably lead to the identification of any individual youth. All data resulting from this research project must be published in aggregate form.
- Any person working on this research project must agree to be bound by these conditions concerning confidentiality of information.
- Any person working on this research project that has direct contact with youth must obtain a DJJ background screening prior to the start of the project.
- We require that you provide the DJJ with a review copy of the final publication with a reasonable comment period prior to publication of the study findings. Please send to the IRB in the address listed below.
- Please complete and sign the following security agreement and send it back to us at Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2737 Centerview Drive, Suite 100, Tallahassee, Florida 32399 to the attention of Susan Quinn. The study shall not begin until the security agreement has been signed and received by the Department.

Cordially,

Ted Tollett  
Institutional Review Board

2737 Centerview Drive • Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3100 • (850) 488-1850  
<http://www.djj.state.fl.us>

*The mission of the Department of Juvenile Justice is to protect the public by reducing juvenile crime and delinquency in Florida.*

## **APPENDIX C: PARENTAL CONSENT**

May 2006

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am a graduate student at the University of Central Florida under the supervision of faculty member, Dr. Thomas T.H. Wan, conducting research on the effects of a leisure education program on youth in an institutional setting on motivation, knowledge, and behavior changes related to boredom. The purpose of the study is to; (1) determine the general states of the motivation, knowledge and behavior involving leisure activities in the institutional setting, and (2) determine if an educational intervention with a specialized curriculum on leisure positively impacts on the motivation, knowledge and behavioral changes of youth. Youth from three separate programs, such as the one your son is in, will be asked to volunteer in the study. There are no anticipated risks for participating in this study. There are no guaranteed benefits for participating in this research, however in a similar study the youth who participated reported an increased interest in activities and a reduced level of boredom.

With your permission your child will be asked to voluntarily complete a short survey that addresses leisure participation in their life, their motivation to participate in leisure activities and their proneness for boredom. The survey will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. Your child will not place their name on the survey as the researcher will assign codes in place of the youth's names and the researcher will not reveal your child's name in any reports. During the next six weeks your child will be asked to participate in a 45-minute class twice/week. A leisure education curriculum will be taught. The classes will cover; free time leisure, motivation, dealing with boredom, developing a leisure plan, goal setting and a review of lessons taught. It will not be necessary for your child to place their name on any class activities and he may choose to not participate in any of the class activities. At the completion of the class your child will be asked to complete another brief survey addressing leisure participation, motivation and their proneness for boredom.

Completion of the surveys and class attendance will take place in the evening and will not interfere with any important program activity your child would normally be participating in. Participation or nonparticipation in this study will not affect the youth's status in this program.

This study has been approved by the University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice as well as the program where your child currently resides. You and your child have the right to withdraw consent for your child's participation at any time without consequence. Group results of this study will be available in Summer 2006. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me at (386) 822-4578 or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Thomas T.H. Wan, at (407) 823-3678. Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the UCFIRB office, University of Central Florida Office of Research, Orlando Tech Center, 12443 Research Parkway, Suite 207, Orlando, FL 32826. The hours of operation are 8:00am until 5:00pm, Monday through Friday except on University of Central Florida official holidays. The phone number is (407) 823-2901.



Your child is free not to participate in this study. If you and your child choose to participate, you and/or your child are free to withdraw consent/assent and discontinue participation in this study at any time without this decision affecting your child's care and treatment by the Department of Juvenile Justice. If you have any questions regarding your and your child's rights as a participant, you may phone the DJJ Institutional Review Board (IRB) office at (850) 488-3102.

Also, if you or your child wish to stop participation in this research study for any reason you should contact Paul Finn at (386) 822-4578. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) office at (850) 488-3102.

Paul Finn will protect the confidentiality of your records to the extent allowed by law. You understand that the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Institutional Review Board has the right to review your records.

Thank you for your consideration of your child participating in this study. If you approve of your child's participation, I would kindly ask that you complete below and return in the envelope attached and return to me as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Paul Finn, UCF Doctoral Student

I voluntarily give my consent for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in Paul Finn's study on the effects of leisure education.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

## **APPENDIX D: YOUTH ASSENT**

May 2006

Dear Participant,

I am a graduate student at the University of Central Florida under the supervision of faculty member, Dr. Thomas T.H. Wan, conducting research on the effects of a leisure education curriculum on delinquent's motivation, knowledge, and behavior changes related to boredom. The purpose of the study is to; (1) determine the general states of motivation, knowledge and behavior involving leisure activities in the institutional setting, and (2) determine if an educational intervention with a specialized curriculum on leisure positively impacts on the motivation, knowledge and behavioral changes of youth. Youth from three separate programs such as yours will be asked to volunteer in the study. There are no anticipated risks for participating in this study. There are no guaranteed benefits for participating in this research, however in a similar study the youth who participated reported an increased interest in activities and a reduced level of boredom.

With your permission you will be asked to voluntarily complete a short survey that addresses leisure participation in your life, your motivation to participate in leisure activities and your proneness for boredom. The survey will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. You will not place your name on the survey as the researcher will assign a code in place of your name and the researcher will not release your name in any reports.

During the next six weeks you will be asked to voluntarily participate in a 45-minute class twice/week. A leisure education curriculum will be taught. The classes will cover; free time leisure, motivation, dealing with boredom developing a leisure plan, goal setting and a review of leisure taught. It will not be necessary for you to place your name on any class activities and you may choose to not participate in any of the class activities. At the completion of the class activities, you will be asked to complete another brief survey addressing leisure participation, motivation and your proneness for boredom.

Completion of the research activities will take place in the evening and will not interfere with any important activity you would normally be participating in. Participation or non-participation in this study will not affect your status in your program.

This study has been approved by the University of Central Florida, The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice as well as the program you currently reside. You have the right to withdraw your consent to participate at any time without consequence.

Group results of this study will be available in Summer 2006. You will receive a contact list with phone numbers should you have any questions during the study.

You are free not to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in this research study at any time without this decision affecting your care and treatment by the Department of Juvenile Justice. If you

have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, you may phone the Institutional Review Board (IRB) office at (850) 488-3102.

If you wish to stop your participation in this research study for any reason, you should contact Paul Finn at (386) 822-4578. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) office at (850) 488-3102.

Paul Finn will protect the confidentiality of your records to the extent allowed by law. You understand that the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Institutional Review Board has the right to review your records.

Thank you for your consideration to participate in this study. If you agree to voluntarily participate I would kindly ask that you complete the paragraph below.

Sincerely,

Paul Finn, UCF Doctoral Student

I, \_\_\_\_\_, voluntarily give my consent to participate in Paul Finn's study on the effects of leisure education.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **APPENDIX E: PRETEST**

LEISURE EDUCATION PROJECT

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire! Please remember that all of your answers are confidential. Your identity will not be included in any published reports, so please be honest when answering the questions!

Thanks Again!

Leisure Education Project

Assent to Participate in Research

You are being invited to participate in a research study. The Principal Investigator will describe this study to you and answer any of your questions. If you have any questions or complaints about the informed consent process or the research study, please contact the Department of Juvenile Justice Institutional Research Board (IRB), the committee that protects research participants at (850) 488-3102.

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Participant's Name

Mr. Finn has explained the nature and purpose of this research and the benefits and risks that are involved in this research protocol.

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Paul Finn  
Ph.D Student Researcher

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Date

You are free to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in this research study at any time without this decision affecting your care and treatment by the Department of Juvenile Justice. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, you may phone the Institutional Review Board (IRB) office at (850) 488-3102.

If you wish to stop your participation in this research study for any reason, you should contact Paul Finn at (386) 822-4578. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office at (850) 488-3102.

Paul Finn will protect the confidentiality of your records to the extent allowed by law. You understand that the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Institutional Review Board has the right to review your records.

You have been informed of the above described procedure with its possible benefits and risks. You have given permission for your participation in this study.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

In this survey, I am asking you to think about your free time. Free time means things that you do outside of school. These can include after-school activities like sports or clubs, and activities like music, spending time with friends, reading, and watching TV.

**Directions:** Circle the answer that best reflects WHY you do what you do in your free time.

I DO WHAT I DO IN MY FREE TIME  
BECAUSE....

		STRONGLY		NEITHER		STRONGLY
		DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NOR	AGREE	AGREE
				DISAGREE		
1.	I want to have fun.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I can make new friends.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I don't know why I do my free time activities, and I don't really care	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I want people to think I am good at what I do.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I want to understand how things work.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I would get in trouble if I don't.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I experience satisfaction in learning new things	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I feel satisfied when I overcome interesting challenges.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I know I will succeed in what I do.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I don't know, nothing much interests me.	1	2	3	4	5



11.	I don't know, I have never really thought about it	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I am supposed to.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I will feel badly about myself if I don't	1	2	3	4	5
14.	What I do is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I enjoy what I do.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I can explore interesting things.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I feel good when I do things better than the last time I did them.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I like to use my skills	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I can stay close to my family	1	2	3	4	5

I DO WHAT I DO IN MY FREE TIME  
BECAUSE...

		STRONGLY		NEITHER		STRONGLY
		DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NOR	AGREE	AGREE
				DISAGREE		
1.	I want to impress my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I like what I do.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I develop skills that I can use later in life.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	My activities help me learn more about things that I am interested in.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I don't know, but it doesn't matter because I don't do much of anything	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I feel good when I do more than I thought I could.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I like to develop my skills.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I enjoy being with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	That is the rule in my house.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I want people to like me.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	The activities help me develop into the person I want to become.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I want to learn new things.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I feel satisfied	1	2	3	4	5

	when doing my best at complicated activities					
14.	I want to feel good about my abilities	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I feel connected to pets or other animals.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Then others won't get mad at me.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I want to earn rewards, medals, trophies, or certificates	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Of the sense of freedom I experience.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I want to feel connected to nature.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	My parents expect me to.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I want to.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I want to keep the friends I have.	1	2	3	4	5

**Directions:** Now circle the answer that best reflects why you DON'T do some free time activities.

I DON'T DO SOME THINGS THAT I  
**WOULD LIKE TO IN MY FREE TIME**  
 BECAUSE...

		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1.	I would get in trouble if I did them.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I am not allowed to do them.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	My parents would yell at me.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I would get grounded	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Others will get mad at me.	1	2	3	4	5

**Directions:** Now I would like you to think about your community – where you live. Circle the answer that best reflects how much you agree or disagree with the following.  
 IN MY COMMUNITY...

		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1.	I wish I knew more about more interesting free time activities to do.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I know of places where there are lots of things to do.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	My community lacks things for people my age to do.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I know about exciting things to do.	1	2	3	4	5

**Directions:** Keep thinking about the things you do in your free time. Circle the answer that shows how much you agree or disagree with the following.

		STRONGLY		NEITHER		STRONGLY
		DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	AGREE	AGREE
				NOR		
				DISAGREE		
1.	I think that most of my free time activities are good for me.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I like free time activities that are a little beyond my ability.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	My parents have too much control over what I do in my free time.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	For me, free time just drags on and on.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	My free time activities are very interesting to me.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	My parents would not approve of what I do in my free time.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	The things that I do in my free time are not healthy	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I like a challenge in my free time.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	There are things I would like to do in my free time, but I am not allowed to do them.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Free time is boring.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	My activities are more interesting to me than the other things I do during the day.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	My parents would be unhappy if they knew how I spent my free time.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	The things that I do in my free time are not physically active.	1	2	3	4	5

14.	I feel good when my free time activities challenge my skills.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	My parents have a lot of influence over what I do in my free time.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I usually don't like what I am doing in my free time, but I don't know what else to do.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	My friends seem more interested in what they do than I do.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I feel good about myself in my free time.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I do a lot of activities even through I'm not really interested in them.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I almost always have something to do in my free time.	1	2	3	4	5

**Directions:** Circle the answer that best indicates how much you agree or disagree that you know how to do the following things during your free time.

### I KNOW HOW TO...

		STRONGLY		NEITHER		STRONGLY
		DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	AGREE	AGREE
				NOR		
				DISAGREE		
1.	Turn a boring situation into something that is more interesting to me.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Keep up my interest in my activities.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Make things more challenging for myself	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Make things more fun for myself.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Enjoy an activity even if I feel like I have to do it.	1	2	3	4	5

**Directions:** Circle the answer that best indicates how much you agree or disagree with the following.

**IN THE LAST 6 MONTHS...**

		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1.	I learned a new activity.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I developed an interest in a new activity that I do on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I have made a new friend (or new friends) through my free time activities.	1	2	3	4	5

**Directions:** Circle the appropriate number to indicate how OFTEN you do the following.

**HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU DONE THE FOLLOWING?**

		Never	Before, but not this year	Once or Twice this year	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Almost every day or daily
1.	Participate in an organized sport activity	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Go to a natural public area like a park, game lands, or state forest	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Purposely damage someone's property or belongings	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	Participate in a school or community club (acting club, band, swimming club, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6

**Directions:** Circle the answer that best reflects how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

IN MY FREE TIME...

		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1.	It is important to me that my friends think that what I do is cool.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I know how to plan my free time activities.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I can overcome things that get in the way of doing what I want to do.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	If I enjoy something, I will keep after it, even if I'm not that good at it.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I have at least one hobby that I am really interested in.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I make good decisions about what I do in my free time.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	In my free time, I have a good balance of active and non-active things.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I know how to compromise with my friends	1	2	3	4	5



	(so we all do things we enjoy).					
9.	I would like to hang out with another group of friends than I do right now.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I am a better planner and organizer than most of my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	If I don't do well at first in an activity, I'll keep trying to do better.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I choose my activities with a purpose in mind.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I can plan activities for myself without help from my parents.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	In my free time I have a lot of different types of interests.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I can plan activities for myself without help from my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I give up easily if things don't go my way.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	There are too many things that get in the way of doing what I want to do.	1	2	3	4	5

18.	It is easiest to do what everyone else wants me to do in my free time.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Sometimes I do things in my free time to get back at my parents.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I have too many rules placed on me in my free time.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	In my free time, my friends have a lot of influence on what I do.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Sometimes I do things in my free time to get back at society.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	I'm too embarrassed to try out new activities in front of my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	My friends are great, but sometimes we get into trouble.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	In my free time I usually do what my friends want to do.	1	2	3	4	5

**Directions:** Circle the appropriate number to indicate how OFTEN you do the following.

**WHEN PLANNING MY FREE TIME  
ACTIVITIES, I . . .**

		Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Almost Always	Always
--	--	-------	-----------------	-----------	------------------	--------

1.	Get the information needed to make the best choice of what to do.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Let someone else decide for me.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Make the best choice and then just do it.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Just let it happen.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Think about what will happen for each choice before doing anything.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Do what everyone else is doing.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Think of as many possible choices as I can.	1	2	3	4	5

***Thank you for filling out the questionnaire!!***

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