

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE “FUN” ASPECT
OF FAMILY VACATIONS

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OF FAMILY VACATIONS

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Abstract: Families have been traveling for vacations for decades, with the motive to have fun and enjoy themselves. However academic literature has sparsely delved into the meaning of fun and examined its components. This study examined the concept of fun in a family vacation context. Specifically it aimed to understand if fun led to increased collective family on-the-spot behavior, which, in turn led to increased life satisfaction and greater identification with the collective identity of the family in terms of values and beliefs. The study also investigated whether fun can directly influence life satisfaction and family identity. A quantitative approach using a survey is was employed in this study. The results of the study suggested that when it came to family vacation travelers, destination managers should focus on aspects of fun that lead to greater familial togetherness and life satisfaction. By catering to the needs of the family to bond and feel togetherness, destination managers can likely benefit from higher customer satisfaction and possibly more future loyalty from the families that travel for a vacation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Many families across the US travel annually. This has been reaffirmed through a 2017 survey by New York University's School of Professional Studies, which indicated that 70% of adult parents responded that they were "very likely" to travel with their children in the upcoming 12 months (NYU US Family Travel Survey 2017). Additionally, another survey by the Automobile Association of America (AAA) which revealed that 88 million Americans planned to undertake a family vacation in 2018 (AAA 2018). Families plan and go on vacations for several reasons, such as improving familial well-being (Chesworth, 2003; de Bloom et al., 2010), to increase the feeling of togetherness, increase bonding and improve communication between family members (Lehto, Choi, Lin, & MacDermid, 2009), reduce exhaustion, and improve health (Strauss-Blasche, Reithofer, Schobersberger, Ekmekcioglu, & Wolfgang, 2005).

The age-old adage that "time flies when you are having fun" has stood the test of time. Fun is an essential feature to human life which increases enjoyment with tasks, improves moods and brings joy (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994; Tasci & Ko, 2016). For families, enjoyment might be achieved by engaging in fun activities in the household where all members participate (Churchill, Clark, Prochaska-Cue, Creswell, & Ontai-Grzebik, 2007; Darley & Lim, 1986), but more specifically, having fun is a goal of family vacations (Fu, Lehto, & Park, 2014; Lehto et al., 2009; Lehto, Lin, Chen, & Choi, 2012). However, what is fun for children may not be construed

the same by parents (Carr, 2006; Shaw & Dawson, 2001). This means that a single destination may need to cater to the needs of both children and parents, as well the joint family excursion.

Problem Statement

Research contends that fun impacts the psychological effects of time perception due to the enjoyment associated with it. In other words, individuals tend to lose track of time when having fun. This phenomenon is termed 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1992; Gable & Poole, 2012; Sackett, Meyvis, Nelson, Converse, & Sackett, 2010). Additionally, fun affects human physiology with the release of dopamine, which makes one feel happy (Baldassarre et al., 2014). Fun also positively influences the emotional wellbeing of individuals (Baldassarre et al., 2014; Duman & Mattila, 2005), and this has been observed across different domains, which include work (Karl & Peluchette, 2006; Karl & Peluchette, 2006), consumer shopping (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994), and leisure (Churchill et al., 2007).

Family vacations are intended to be a fun experience, both emotionally and socially. Family travel provides the opportunity to enjoy the company of their family members and feel invigorated in the presence of their loved ones (Lehto et al., 2009, 2012). Additionally, the purpose of a vacation, either solo or with a group such a family, is to relax and enjoy oneself (Lehto et al., 2009). Such experiences elicit happiness, joy and offer an opportunity to step away from routines and everyday challenges. These are critical points for destination managers to be aware of while catering to families when they travel on vacation. In specific, destination managers need to be able to cater to the needs of families by providing opportunities to enjoy each other's company as a collective and to also experience joy at the destination. By doing so, destination managers can ensure greater customer satisfaction, increased loyalty and possibly repeat visits to the destination.

The family vacation literature is rich with analysis and is well researched, both in a vacation decision-making setting (Bronner & De Hoog, 2008; Decrop & Snelders, 2004; Kang & Hsu, 2005), as well as in experiential research on how families function during vacations (Lehto et al., 2009; Yu, Anaya, Miao, Lehto, & Wong, 2018). These studies treat families as a homogenous group where all members partake in a vacation as a collective. The family unit as a whole desires to undertake a vacation to improve familial functioning across a variety of factors such as communication, bonding, reduced stress and increased well-being (Durko & Petrick, 2013). The family may negate differences in individual tastes and preferences in favor of enjoyment for the collective group. Families savor togetherness and conform to a common set of values that they express among themselves through routine discourse and discussion, known as their family identity (Epp & Price, 2008). By engaging in these routine behaviors, families are able to reinforce their collective identity and bring about togetherness in the group.

However, prior research has not established whether fun as a whole or certain aspects of fun are better able to lead to increased family togetherness, joy and satisfaction. The present study is motivated to address this gap in research and establish if the social and emotional aspects of fun affect satisfaction and family identity differently.

Purpose Statement and Research Objectives

The purpose of this study was to explore how fun for families on vacation contributes toward a collective feeling of family identity as well as improved life satisfaction. Additionally, this study aimed to understand how family identity and life satisfaction are affected by collective family behavior. The research objectives of this study are as follows:

- (1) To identify the key factors of fun that encourage collective family behavior.

- (2) To ascertain the relationships among fun, on-the-spot behavior (OSB), family identity and the life satisfaction of a family.
- (3) To establish if socio-demographic characteristics and parenting style cause differences between fun and its proposed relationship with family identity and life satisfaction.

Significance of Study

The results of this research contribute to prior literature in the family identity and family vacation planning domain through the application of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979). Specifically a specific framework derived from Social Identity Theory called family identity is used in a family vacation context. Additionally, this study helps advance the literature stream by examining the effect fun (Tasci & Ko, 2016) has on life satisfaction (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) and family identity (Epp & Price, 2008). Although the concept of fun is not new, in the context of academic research, specifically in the hospitality and tourism domain, it is a relatively new concept (Tasci & Ko, 2016).

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines fun as, “what provides amusement or enjoyment”, when used as a noun. As an adjective, it means, “providing entertainment, amusement, or enjoyment”. Tasci and Ko (2016) consider fun akin to enjoyment. Other researchers grant fun a hedonic value since it does not equate with task completion, but more with personal enjoyment, such as in a shopping context (Babin et al., 1994). In the present study, the social and emotional aspects of fun are applied in a family vacation context to ascertain the effects on satisfaction and family identity.

Additionally, past researchers have employed quantitative methods when studying family vacations (Fu et al., 2014; Lehto et al., 2009, 2012; Yu et al., 2018). This is also the case regarding research in the travel domain on fun (Choi & Choi, 2018; Tasci & Ko, 2016). Therefore, by utilizing quantitative methods, and thus continuing in the same direction as previous studies, this research not only draws from a sound foundation of research, but also builds on it by connecting additional concepts of collective family behavior, family identity and life satisfaction.

On a practical level, this sheds light on the constituents of fun for families. The average cost of a vacation for a family of four is around \$4800 (Forbes 2014). Therefore, the stakes are high for a family to ensure the best possible benefits from their vacation. If destination managers can cater to the needs of a family and ensure they have fun, they can potentially secure consistent revenue and repeat visits from this segment of travelers. For families, traveling on a vacation and experiencing fun can help them bond and reinforce their collective social identity, specifically their family identity (Epp & Price, 2008). As the family identity is reinforced, this will likely result in more collective consumption behavior in the long run (Epp & Price, 2008; Epp, Schau, & Price, 2014). For marketers and destination managers, results from this study can help spur thinking and discussion towards offerings that are fun for the entire family. Specifically, the results of this study have helped identify sub-components of fun that lead to life satisfaction and family togetherness. This in turn, holds the potential to improve overall individual and familial satisfaction with the vacation experience.

Operational Definitions

- Social Identity Theory – An individual’s concept of the self, based on the group they are a member of (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).
- Family Identity – A family’s group identity that is subjective and based upon values and characteristics that it holds unique to itself (Bennett, Wolin, & McAvity, 1988).
- Family Structure – The household setup with regard to number of parents in the household.
- On-the-Spot Behavior – Behavior that reflects engagement and interaction with a destination so as to capture the moment and make it tangible (Bigné, Mattila, & Andreu, 2008).
- Life Satisfaction – A subjective judgement of how satisfied an individual or group is with their present situation in life, according to self-chosen standards (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985).
- Family Vacation –An extended period of leisure and recreation with family members, especially one spent away from home or in traveling (Google Dictionary 2019).
- Fun – amusement or enjoyment (Tasci & Ko 2016). Fun is comprised of the following factors:
 - *Social Vigor* – Energy and excitement as a result of being part of or in company of a particular social group.
 - *Psychological Zest* – Hedonic states of happiness captured in feelings such as joy, excitement, feeling alive and pleasure from an experience.
 - *Emotional Spark* – Heightened emotional state.
 - *Flow* – Distortion of the sense of time

Organization of Thesis

This thesis is divided into five main chapters: (I) Introduction, (II) Literature Review, (III) Research Methods, (IV) Results and (V) Discussion and Conclusion. Chapter I (Introduction) explains the background and justification for this study as well as the theoretical and practical implications anticipated to arise from the study. Chapter II (Literature Review) details the research context of family vacations and role of the family, family structures and gender differences in parenting. The literature then discusses the outcomes of family vacations, as they relate to this study. These outcomes are fun, on-the-spot behavior, family identity and life satisfaction. Chapter III (Research Methods) explains the research design for the study, the target population and sampling strategy, development of the questionnaire including the survey items for the various constructs, and also discusses the data analysis strategy. Chapter IV (Results) discusses findings from statistical analysis that answer hypotheses and address research questions. Lastly, Chapter V (Discussion and Conclusion), discusses the research findings, discussed the connection of the findings from the present study to previous literature, discusses theoretical and practical implications, and address the limitations of the present study and sets up potential future studies. An appendix is included in the end which provides the components of the study questionnaire.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter II reviews literature related to family vacations, collective identity of a family, the concept of fun and its components, collective behavior in the form of on-the-spot behavior, family identity and life satisfaction. The first part of the chapter provides a background on the research pertaining to family vacation, collective identity of the family, family structure and gender differences in parenting. The second part of the chapter discusses concepts that are measured and quantitatively tested for relationships linking fun and corresponding outcomes on behavioral, group, and satisfaction related outcomes. Specifically, the chapter discusses the concept of fun, on-the-spot behavior for tourists, family identity and life satisfaction. The last section of this chapter synthesizes the literature and provides the conceptual framework which guides the study, and then lists the study objectives, research questions and hypotheses.

The Family Vacation Context

Family Vacation

Families travel together on vacations to various destinations in order to get away from daily routines and stresses (Austin, 2006; Fodness, 1994). Research has identified the positive aspects of family vacations associated with cohesion (Lehto et al., 2009), bonding (Hilbrecht, Shaw, Delamere, & Havitz, 2008; Lee, Graefe, & Burns, 2008; Lehto et al., 2009), and well-being (de Bloom et al., 2010; Dolnicar, Yanamandram, & Cliff, 2012; Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004). These benefits allow family groups to experience togetherness and move forward as a single unit. In comparison to individual travel, family vacations allow members to experience each other's company in a setting different from home. Families are able to step away from daily activities and routines, experience a different perspective, and reinvigorate themselves (Fu et al., 2014).

Fodness (1994) offers a taxonomy of motivations for leisure and vacations that offer insights into behaviors that families engage in. He also explains potential motives for relaxation, enjoyment, and for promoting interaction between family members. In the context of family vacations, the four dimensions of motivation described by Fodness (1994) can be understood as: (1) *social-adjustive* need, which states that families travel on vacations to foster interaction and maintain the relationship with one another; and (2) *express value* need, which postulates that tourist families have an opportunity to express their tastes and beliefs to others, within the family group and outside of it. Vacations are also a conduit for self-expression and can serve to symbolize the family's values; (3) *utilitarian* function, which emphasizes reward maximization and (4) *positive-negative polarity* function, which focuses on minimizing punishment and broadening one's worldview. By planning for and traveling on vacations, families not only

engage in behaviors encouraged by the aforementioned motivations, but also get to personalize a unique travel experience around the unique identity of the family.

An added consideration is that unlike leisure activities that are more frequent and accessible, vacations tend to be less frequent, require more planning, time and resources to execute (Fu et al., 2014). Vacation experiences are often novel, and therefore exciting and pleasurable (Choi & Choi, 2018; Gardiner, King, & Grace, 2013). Thus, the importance of vacations for family members is heightened since the opportunities to bond and experience togetherness in a pleasurable setting, free from daily stresses may be few.

Since family vacations tend to also be further away from home, they offer the opportunity to experience a destination that is often different, new and detached from the routine household leisure activity (Carr, 2002; Fu et al., 2014). Taken together, these factors can allow for greater relaxation and provide opportunities to improve quality of life (Dolnicar et al., 2012). Furthermore, since vacations offer the opportunity to potentially participate in a diverse set of activities, they offer a chance for a family to interact with the destination on a personal and active level (Campelo, Aitken, Thyne, & Gnoth, 2014). This promotes family cohesiveness, which also promotes social interaction and communication (Lehto et al., 2009; West & Merriam, 2009). The unique setting a vacation provides, both in terms of destination and atmosphere, coupled with the focus to spend time with each other, drives a family towards a collective purpose (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981).

Another function of family vacations is to promote collective engagement. For families, this might take the form of participating together in cultural events and going on sightseeing tours together. This is in line with tourist actions and behaviors like going shopping together, as indicated by other researchers (Enrique Bigné et al., 2008; Mattila & Enz, 2002). While such

tours could be done individually, the experience of sharing in a unique excursion with loved ones and the interaction during the trip likely etches the experience in memory and drives collective interaction to a higher degree (Orthner, 1975). It is possible that when recollected at a later date, and the feeling of nostalgia, along with positive sensations associated with family bonding and togetherness emanate. Since family vacations are helpful in reinforcing various components of healthy family functioning (Lehto et al., 2009, 2012), the role of fun in driving collective behavior towards well-being and togetherness deserves investigation.

Collective Identity of a Family

Members of a social group are said to have a collective identity that is rich and complex, containing details about acceptable behavior and norms the group members must adhere to (Bettencourt & Hume, 1999; Tajfel, 1981). The basis of this collective identity is social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which further states that to the extent a particular social identity is relevant-attitudes, values and behaviors associated with that identity are most likely to be conveyed through daily interactions (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Epp & Price, 2008).

Parents play an important role in reinforcing this social identity within the family, which is termed family identity (Epp & Price, 2008). One of the roles of a parent is to pass on ideas and values to children so as to maintain a collective identity of the family. This is done when families engage in traditions and rituals that reinforce the collective identity and maintain the family bond (Epp & Price, 2008). In an everyday setting, this may be illustrated by parents regularly asking children to keep their room clean. Other examples include eating meals together and going to religious sermons together. Within families, researchers acknowledge that children are important members within a family and have differing tastes and preferences than their adult parents

(Ekström, 2007; Kerrane & Hogg, 2011). Therefore, it can at times be a challenge for parents to get children to conform to collective consumption and behavior norms, since children may have differing priorities than their parents. In a vacation context, family identity enactment would manifest itself when families choose to go on vacation together and participate in tasks and behaviors that reinforce the collective family identity (Epp & Price, 2008; Lehto et al., 2009, 2012). Such an opportunity can help strengthen family identity, and is likely to build and reinforce existing feelings of trust, togetherness and forgiveness (Soliz & Harwood, 2006). Feelings of trust and togetherness are likely to further result in increased family support, and decreases fragmentation of identities among family members.

Family Structure

Over the course of the last few decades, many families have transitioned from a dual-parent to a single-parent household, and this has had an impact on the time a parent can spend with their children (Ekström, 2007). From the parent-child relationship perspective, feelings of guilt for the parent for not having spent enough time with the child may emanate (Ekström, 2007). Therefore, a single parent may give a child more discretion in familial decisions to make up for their absence. This has been observed by Lee and Beatty (2002), and Thornton, Shaw, and Williams (1997), who found that single parents allowed more discretion to children for certain activities.

Additionally, Manning and Lamb (2003) suggest that single parents often suffer for lack of time and are overburdened with work. In an attempt to make up for their absence, a single parent may have their child accept additional responsibility of contributing towards decision making. In a family vacation context, this might mean that single-parents are: (a) more amenable

to activities that their children want to pursue, and (b) would be more willing to engage in activities that their child wants to engage in with the expectation that this may assist reinforce the collective family identity. The family identity may otherwise not be routinely enforced due to time paucity and limitations of a single-parent family structure (Ekström, 2007). Additionally, single-parent families tend to have less income (Collins & Tisdell, 2002), and are saddled with more stress, as compared to either married or cohabitating parents (Manning & Lamb, 2003). These conditions imply that single-parent families may travel less, and engage in fewer collective vacations (Amato, 2005; Hong, Fan, Palmer, & Bhargava, 2005). This likely implies that the proclivity to reinforce the collective identity and bond with family members may be greater for single-parent families.

Over the past few decades traditional family setups comprised of a biological male and female parent for children, have given way to more blended families comprised of a step-parent. Other forms of non-traditional family setups include cases where partners cohabit, or are same-sex partners who are either cohabitating or married with children (Chen, Zhang, Wei, & Guo, 2018). While existing academic research in hospitality and tourism does not account for family differences stated previously, the present research acknowledges the variations in the dynamics and parental role assignment of blended and non-traditional families. However assessing differences in outcomes based on differences in the above stated family setups is complex and outside the scope of these present study. For simplicity, the present study focuses on differences between dual-parent and single-parent households, and their desires to engage in activities that reinforce the family identity.

Gender Differences in Parenting

The way a parent interacts with their child to instill discipline and teach social competence is important to child development (Baumrind, 1971; Carlson & Grossbart, 1988). Parenting has been demonstrated to be vital towards shaping a child's behavior towards financial decision making (Trice, 2002), internet use (Valcke, Bonte, De Wever, & Rots, 2010), and drug use (Montgomery et al., 2008). In a hospitality context, it has been demonstrated to determine restaurant choice for families (Labrecque & Ricard, 2001), and dining out choices as influenced by children (Chen, Lehto, Behnke, & Tang, 2016).

Specifically, the literature details differences between mothers and fathers in parenting patterns and inclinations to spend time and nurture children. Research in evolutionary psychology posits that a mother's gestation and postpartum care for infants and young children creates a natural need to invest in growth and parenting of the offspring (Glutton-Brock & Vincent, 1991). Additionally, child development researchers state that as compared to fathers, mothers are generally more receptive to needs and influences of their children, are more involved with their daily lives, and spend more time with children (Collins & Russell 1991). Moreover, mothers also tend to be more empathetic to the needs of their children and are more adept at taking their children's perspective on issues (Grusec, Goodnow, & Kuczynski, 2000). These patterns have been documented both for parents of young children (Kochanska, 2017), as well as parents of adolescents (Gondoli & Silverberg, 1997). These qualities are said to facilitate a mutual bi-directional relationship between mother and child, and also greater compliance from children (Grusec et al., 2000). With regards to the larger family group, more mothers as compared to fathers indicated that fun activities were meant for "the whole family" (Churchill et al., 2007 pg. 282). This was true for fun activities participated in at home, as well as away from

the home at sports and social events. More mothers than fathers also noted that these activities were very worthwhile since they promoted relaxation and family togetherness (Shaw & Dawson, 2001; Shaw, Havitz, & Delemere, 2008).

Traditional parenting practices cited mothers in a more indulgent role, and fathers as more authoritarian. This is noted to be a result of distinction in gender roles and differences in work obligations (Grusec et al., 2000). While this would possibly explain mothers frequent interactions and their societal role to care for children, the trend seems to have remained the same, even as western and eastern societies have evolved towards more egalitarian roles across parents (Bornstein & Putnick, 2016; Pleck, 2012). In consideration of all the aforementioned details, it is more likely that mothers, rather than fathers, will be inclined to desire a collective family experience during a family vacation, where the family identity is reinforced.

However, apart from gender, parenting style also determines the parent-child relationship (Baumrind, 1971). Paulson (1994) proposed the parenting responsiveness scale that gauges a parent's responsiveness to their child's needs. It is also helpful as a measure of closeness in the parent-child relationship.

Given that parenting responsiveness can be a determinant of parenting styles, it is likely that the need to reinforce family identity will be different depending on how responsive parents are to the needs of their child. This is so because parenting responsiveness will determine how parents communicate with their children and how rules are enforced by parents. Life satisfaction will also likely be different for the differing levels of parenting responsiveness, which determines how close knit the family feels.

Fun and Associated Outcomes of a Family Vacation

The previous section detailed the context for family vacations, as well as the organization of families and the orientation of parents towards reading children. This section delves into specific components of fun that affect the vacation experience of families as well as related outcomes of fun. Specifically, factors related to on-the-spot behavior for families, as well as life satisfaction and family identity are discussed.

Fun

Fun is considered to be the enjoyment of an activity, and is an important component of leisure (Churchill et al., 2007; Hilbrecht et al., 2008). In addition, research contends that fun relates to feelings of pleasure, spontaneity and excitement (Babin et al., 1994; Poris, 2006). Fun is also an important component of learning as an activity. Learning is also stated to be more effective when fun is incorporated into it, since it arouses curiosity and makes the task more challenging, engaging and more memorable (Lepper & Cordova, 1992; Malone, 1981). Fun is particularly relevant to the tourism industry since fun is a major motivator for tourism and family vacations. Fun also facilitates engagement for travelers with a destination, ensuring that they enjoy the experience while learning about local culture and heritage (Williams, 2006).

There has been limited academic research on fun, given the difficulty in defining a causal relationship between fun and related correlates (Tasci & Ko, 2016). Tasci and Ko (2016) indicate that fun encapsulates concepts related to vigor, emotions, psychological factors and the perception of time. Specifically, they list four components of fun, which are *flow*, *psychological zest*, *emotional peaks* and *social vigor*. Each of these components are explained below.

The first component of fun is *flow* and it is associated with the distortion of time. This happens when an activity is enjoyed and is part of the fluid phase of fun (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1992; Duman & Mattila, 2005). In psychological studies, the distortion of time relates to the importance of fun and its effect on the perception of time, which is sometimes said to be shortened when one is having fun (Sackett et al., 2010). In daily life, a change from routine activities appears to be at the core of the perception of faster passage of time because most people spend much of a typical day engaged in activities that are mundane and require limited conscious thinking (Koster, 2013). Alternatively, fun tasks are associated with heightened enjoyment. Fun activities also distort the sense of time and are an indicator of engagement and the capture of attention (Sackett et al., 2010). In a series of psychology experiments, Sackett and colleagues (2010), demonstrated that when individuals enjoyed completing a task, the feeling that time flew more quickly was especially salient. The researchers believed that time-distortion operated as a cognitive cue, making the participants believe that the task was enjoyable. Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi, (1992) have demonstrated that as a result of being in a state of flow, individuals lose perception of time, have a diminished sense of space and reduced self-awareness. However, participants gain other qualities such as enjoyment, motivation and desire to participate in an activity.

The second component of fun is *psychological zest*, and it is associated with enjoyment of a task. As described by researchers in consumer behavior who study experiential purchases, fun is hedonic since it is more focused on task enjoyment rather than task completion (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Smilansky, 2009). These researchers consider consumers as emotional beings that tend to respond favorably to positive emotional experiences, which lead to moments of happiness (Tasci & Ko, 2016). Also, *psychological zest* is hedonic in nature as it involves

playfulness. Holbrook (2006) stated that tourism denotes a hedonic experience and that fun is an outcome of consumption of products and services driven by experiential value. Another aspect of fun that links to its hedonic value is the novelty of an experience. Novelty is also linked to arousal (Lee & Crompton, 1992), which is caused by activities that provide a change from the usual routine, have an element of surprise in them, and are therefore not boring (Duman & Mattila, 2005). Specific to boredom, it is important to note that researchers contend that any activity that does not grab attention repeatedly, and causes either a reduction in arousal or creation of negative emotion is counter to feelings of fun (Eastwood, Frischen, Fenske, & Smilek, 2012). Therefore, an activity which was fun could become boring if it is the same every time.

The third component of fun is *emotional spark*, which alludes to highs in positive emotions experienced by tourists while on vacation (Tasci & Ko, 2016). The positive emotions are derived from cognitive tasks, which in turn are driven by experiences from events (Choi & Choi, 2018; Mogilner, Aaker, & Kamvar, 2011). Since these cognitive processes are individual specific, the derivation of fun from any particular event is likely to be different for every individual. In a family vacation setting, the prospect of not having to work, do routine activities, and likely being in a new place is likely to arouse pleasing emotions. Research from physiology suggests when unique information is first received in the part of the brain known as the hippocampus, it consolidates information to long-term memory (Baldassarre et al., 2014). Here, the brain attempts to match the new details and information with patterns it recognizes for those stored in long-term memory. When the brain is not able to do so, it releases a chemical called dopamine, which stimulates a part of the brain that affects emotions, called the amygdala. This,

in turn, creates a positive and pleasure inducing feeling which associates the novel experience with the new memory (Baldassarre et al., 2014).

The fourth component of fun is *social vigor* which is the excitement gained from being part of a particular group. In the case of children, Poris (2006) lists various types of fun that children enjoy. Family-fun (doing activities with family members) was ranked as one of the most favored types of fun children considered really interesting and engaging (Poris, 2006). Therefore, activities centered on engaging with the destination along with parents will likely create *social vigor* for the family group (Tasci & Ko, 2016). This participation likely creates lasting impressions of togetherness, and improves overall well-being. Additionally, past researchers have indicated that the inclination to participate in and be part of select activities is often dictated by group affiliation and membership (Burch, 1969; Cheek, Field, & Burdge, 1976). If family members are together at a vacation destination to enjoy themselves, this could be a motivating factor to engage in collective activities that the whole family may enjoy.

In summary, fun is a key component of a family vacation. Specifically, the fact that family members travel together ensures that everyone enjoys the company of each other and gain from social vigor. This is a key difference compared to solo travel. Additionally, fun creates excitement and a level of motivation that drives additional behaviors and feelings of joy and elation. These positive feelings in turn drive satisfaction and collective unity, which are desirable outcomes of a family vacation and highlight the need of importance of having fun during vacation.

On-the-Spot Behavior (OSB)

Emotions affect consumption experiences in profound ways, both for tangible products and for experiential services. Westbrook and Oliver (1991) studied emotions in a consumer products context, identifying those emotions elicited at the time of product purchase as consumption emotions. In a services context, specifically tourism, Gnoth (1997) noted that emotions determined satisfaction and future recommendation power. Emotions drive motivation and are often aroused specific to events and contexts (Bradley & Lang, 2000). For travelers, favorable emotions elicited during vacations may make them act in a way so as to capture these emotions for later reflection and nostalgia (Enrique Bigné et al., 2008; Mattila & Enz, 2002). Emotions may be captured by engaging in actions such as taking photos to capture the destination and the moment, and then potentially posting the photos on social media (Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012), or making a purchase or signing up for a tour. Such actions are considered as being present and engaging with the destination (Campelo et al., 2014), and are considered on-the-spot behaviors (Enrique Bigné et al., 2008).

On-the-spot behaviors affect customer satisfaction, build trust and increase the intention to revisit the destination (Ladhari, 2009). Choi and Choi (2018) state that fun should also be associated with positive emotions and so individuals should be inclined to engage in more on-the-spot behavior. A family is different from other voluntary collective groups, since strong emotional ties founded on love, empathy and support bond family members together (Epp & Price, 2008; Park, Tansuhaj, Spangenberg, & McCullough, 1995). Parents, being the mature agents in the group and who have more agency over their children, have an incentive to show unity in order to maintain the relationship between themselves and their children (Kuczynski, 2003). The intention to maintain the parent-child relationship by engaging in positive on-the-spot

behavior while on vacation will help reinforce the family identity among all members, and display cohesion within the group (Lehto et al., 2012). It will also reinforce psychological needs like empathy (Worthington, 1998) and support (Corfman & Lehmann, 1987). Family vacations allow family members the opportunity to escape from daily routines and reinforce their collective identity. Additionally, families can also put aside challenges and differences across family structures by engaging in fun and enjoyable touristic experiences by bonding on an emotional level. The push to fulfill emotional needs, coupled with the long-term benefit to display unity may manifest itself in collective family on-the-spot behavior, such as taking group photos and making spur of the moment purchases. These collective behaviors also have the potential to result in increased life satisfaction and feelings of being part of a family.

Life Satisfaction

According to Diener (1984), life satisfaction is comprised of components that are cognitive in nature and determine satisfaction in the long-term. The components of life satisfaction are subjective and measure conditions of life that one believes are important to him or her. It is not context specific and is a broader measure of satisfaction. Historically, life satisfaction has been used to measure individual specific judgements of based on subjective criteria specified by the individual (Shin & Johnson, 1978). Additionally, life satisfaction is not a construct that has been utilized in the family research domain previously. However, considering that a family is a cohesive unit that conforms to set of values and beliefs that all members adhere to (Epp & Price 2008), life satisfaction measures for the whole group is likely representative of sentiments of all its members.

In a vacation context, when activities and experiences are perceived as positive, they are likely to reduce stress and allow for a pleasant experience to be imprinted in the memory (de

Bloom et al., 2010; Dolnicar et al., 2012; Yu et al., 2018). Within the domain of family vacations, research has documented the relaxing effects of vacations as those that reduced exhaustion, increased happiness and promoted family well-being, including functions like family bonding and cohesion (Hilbrecht et al., 2008; Kühnel & Sonnentag, 2011; Lehto et al., 2009; Nawijn, 2011). Moreover, engaging in interesting and fun activities during a vacation, while capturing these precious moments, allows a family to relive the nostalgia for many years to come through memories. For a collective group such as a family, vacation experiences are likely to elicit more positive than negative emotions, as well as be an experience that reinforces a social bond between all its members. While emotions may be short lived, enjoyable experiences with family are memorable in the long-term. It is likely that such positive experiences will also manifest themselves in increased life satisfaction (Lewinsohn, Redner, & Seeley, 1991; Sirgy, Kruger, Lee, & Yu, 2011).

The life satisfaction construct does not capture affective components, since affect is fleeting, unconscious and tied to the moment (Pavot & Diener 2009). For a family that travels on a vacation, the group is likely to experience greater joy and elation during the vacation. Also, the conscious assessment of life's conditions are likely to reflect in all areas of life, and the benefits of a vacation are likely to persist even after the vacation is over (Diener, 1984; Pavot & Diener, 2009). Such a result is likely to reflect itself in greater life satisfaction of the family.

Family Identity

Family-oriented research is considerably disparate from research on individual consumers or a voluntary group of individuals. This is because the bonds that tie family members together and the relations that members have with one another are founded on love and appreciation (Epp & Price, 2008). Families often consume and behave in accordance to a core set

of values and beliefs (Commuri & Gentry, 2000). Family identity is the manifestation of the common set values and beliefs family members engage in via rituals, narratives and consumption experiences (Epp & Price, 2008). While individual identities might differ in regards to choices and preferences, the collective identity is unique to the family as a group and is co-constructed by behavior and action (Epp & Price, 2008). In a consumption context, this interplay is displayed via consumption decisions, brand choices and activities engaged in during travel with family members (Epp & Price, 2008; Lee et al., 2008; Yun & Lehto, 2009). Epp and Price (2008) suggested that families choose to engage in specific tangible consumption behaviors to display and reinforce their family identity, including oral communication and dialogue. Similar to the second motivation for vacations detailed by Fodness (1994), *express value need*, family identity could potentially also be reinforced by being together and by implicit communication. Regardless of the specific method of identity reinforcement, family identity is co-created by family members and the presence of fun and the associated enjoyment, both in a social and an emotional sense, can likely reinforce family identity.

Conceptual Framework

The theoretical basis of this study is Social Identity Theory, which postulates that an individual's sense of self is drawn from the group they belong to and identify with (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Based on Social Identity Theory, Epp and Price (2008) proposed a framework called family identity. This framework suggests that members within a family identify with each other via the daily rituals, narratives and discourses they have, which are unique among members of a family and reinforce shared values and beliefs. Taking family identity as a foundation, the purpose of this study is to explore how fun for families on vacation contributes toward a collective feeling of family bonding as well as improved life satisfaction. During family

vacations, families engage in overt behaviors like shopping for souvenirs, taking photos and posting about their vacation experience on social media. If such behaviors take place at the spur of the moment, past researchers have termed them as on-the-spot behaviors (OSB), that occur due to an external motivator that bonds family members together in collective action (Bigné, Mattila, & Andreu, 2008; Choi & Choi 2018). Building on this conceptual base, OSB among family members is hypothesized to lead to cognitive and group identity related outcomes. Specifically, cognitive outcome in this study is said to be life satisfaction for the family, and group identity outcomes is an increase in family identity.

Furthermore, the family structure of households such as single-parent versus dual-parent households may experience a higher inclination to engage in on-the-spot behavior and a greater need to reinforce family identity. In addition, given the biological and social role of mothers as the primary caregivers to children, they may be more inclined to reinforce the collective family identity across generations, as compared to fathers. Mothers may also experience a greater life satisfaction from such an experience. Considering parenting styles, permissive and authoritative parenting styles have the potential to yield greater increase in family identity as well as life satisfaction. This may be due to greater need to communicate between parent and child as well as a need to reinforce parental values around following rules.

These points lead to the following research objectives: (1) to identify the key factors of fun that encourage collective family behavior; (2) to ascertain the relationship among fun, on-the-spot behavior (OSB), family identity and the life satisfaction of a family; and (3) to establish if socio-demographic characteristics and parenting style cause differences between fun and its proposed relationship with family identity and life satisfaction. The figure below represents the broad conceptual framework of the relationship between concepts proposed in this research.

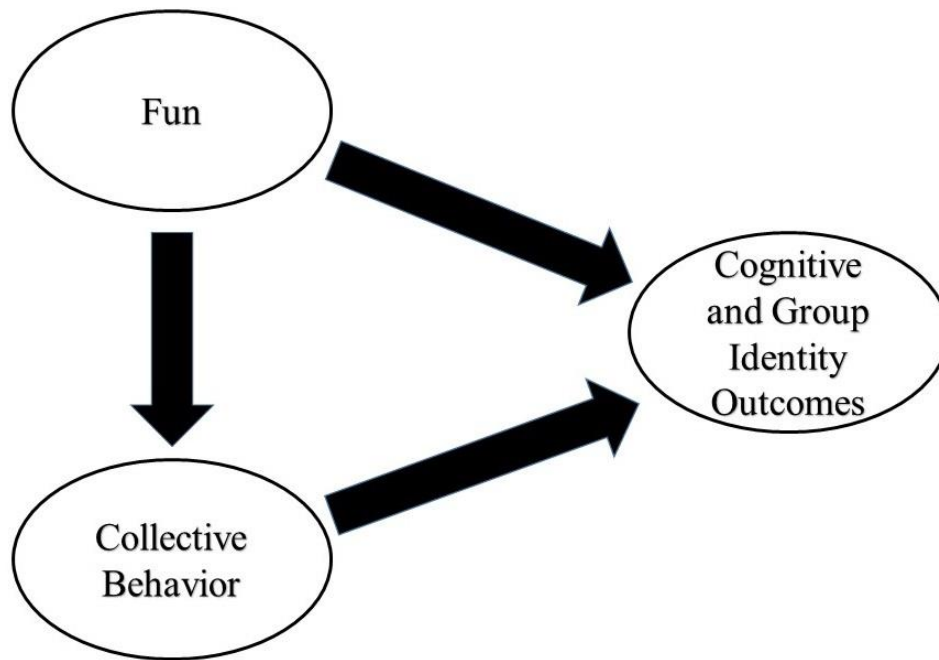


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Fun and Expected Outcomes of Family Vacation

Fun is not a unidimensional construct and has been conceptualized to have four sub-components within it (Tasci & Ko, 2016). Each sub-component is unique in its orientation towards flow, emotional, psychological and social components. Therefore, the relationship of each sub-component of fun and its associated effect can likely be different on collective behavioral outcomes, as well as outcomes related to family identity and life satisfaction. Additionally, engaging in collective behaviors that are motivated by fun is likely to have a corresponding change in life satisfaction and the collective family identity of a group. Furthermore, all these outcomes can possibly differ by socio-demographic characteristics of family groups, namely the family structure, gender differences in parenting as well as parenting styles.

Next, going on a family vacation leads to reduced stress, more focus and better communication between family members (de Bloom et al., 2010; Hilbrecht et al., 2008; Lehto et al., 2009). Engaging in fun activities has been demonstrated to lead to psychological, social and emotional benefits (Choi & Choi, 2018; Tasci & Ko, 2016). Taken together, engaging in fun while on a family vacation is likely to elicit positivity and happiness. In addition, the perception of passage of time is quickened when one is enjoying the moment, and is termed a *flow* (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1992). Since vacation experiences are generally enjoyable, it is reasonable to believe that most visitors on vacation would be in a positive mood. Positivity and enjoyment leads to *psychological zest* in the fun-scale devised by Tasci and Ko (2016). Family vacation experiences of are also likely to provide opportunities for spontaneous excitement and emotional highs, and are termed *emotional spark*. These experiences provide the momentary peak involved with doing novel and pleasurable tasks. Additionally, the social occasion of being with family members is likely to lead to eliciting spontaneous responses in the immediate surroundings of the vacation destination. This is termed as *social vigor*. Collectively, these considerations lead to the following hypotheses and related research question regarding the influence of fun on on-the-spot behavior:

H1: Fun will be positively related to collective family on-the-spot behavior.

H1a: Flow during a family vacation will positively relate to on-the-spot behavior for families.

H1b: Psychological zest during a family vacation will positively relate to the on-the-spot behavior for families.

H1c: Emotional spark during a family vacation will positively relate to on-the-spot behavior for families.

H1d: Social vigor experienced during a family vacation will positively relate to on-the-spot behavior for families.

RQ1: What are the key components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor) that contribute to collective family on-the-spot behaviors?

As stated previously, vacation experiences arouse joy, happiness and delight among travelers (Durko & Petrick, 2013; Tasci & Ko, 2016). When travel excursions take place with family members, they elicit the added excitement of traveling with loved relations (Fu et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2008; Lehto et al., 2009). Travel experiences with family members improves family functioning, offers an opportunity to bond members and reinforces the family identity (Epp & Price, 2008; Lehto et al., 2012). The family identity literature states that identity interplay happens when family members engage in rituals and behaviors that conform to their collective values and beliefs (Epp & Price, 2008; Epp et al., 2014). However, the excitement of traveling to a novel destination on vacation, being in the company of loved ones and experiencing positive emotions, can itself make interaction enjoyable and family members become closer to each other (Lehto et al., 2012). Therefore, having fun with family members leads to the following hypotheses and related research question:

H2: Fun will be positively related to family identity.

H2a: Flow during a family vacation will positively relate to the family identity.

H2b: Psychological zest during a family vacation will positively relate to the family identity.

H2c: Emotional spark during a family vacation will positively relate to family identity.

H2d: Social vigor experienced during a family vacation will positively relate to family identity.

RQ2: What are the key components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor) that contribute to family identity?

Traveling for a vacation with family members could potentially fortify the existing relationship between family members without explicit actions and behaviors enacted. This positive experience could apprise a family that it is content with circumstances, which forms memories that are retained for the long-term. Therefore, all components of fun can, in the absence of directed behavior, also influence life satisfaction positively. This rationale leads to the following hypotheses and related research question:

H3: Fun will be positively related to life satisfaction.

H3a: Flow during a family vacation will positively relate to life satisfaction.

H3b: Psychological zest during a family vacation will positively relate life satisfaction.

H3c: Emotional spark during a family vacation will positively relate to life satisfaction.

H3d: Social vigor experienced during a family vacation will positively relate to life satisfaction.

RQ3: What are the key components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor) that contribute to life satisfaction?

In order to reiterate values and bonds that emphasize closeness among each other, families engage in behaviors that reinforce their collective identity (Epp & Price, 2008). Spontaneous on-the-spot behaviors highlight engagement with activities, partake in rituals and events that highlight the care and affection family members have for each other. One of the ways family members may do so is by using various instruments such as technology to take photos with each other, post them on social media (Epp et al., 2014; Yu et al., 2018). As a tourist, they may also engage in other activities such as participate in group excursions, explore the local culture and go on shopping trips (Mattila & Enz, 2002). Engaging in such behaviors will likely have the impact of bringing family members closer to reinforce their familial identity. It is also likely that participating in such activities will result in positive emotions (Choi & Choi, 2018). Such events and emotions will likely induce family members to reflect on their current life state, and consider that everything is going well. This likely contributes to satisfaction with life. Collectively, these would constitute increased life satisfaction, which is likely to be positive as families engage in on-the-spot behavior. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H4: Engaging in collective family on-the-spot behavior leads to an increase in family identity.

H5: Engaging in collective family on-the-spot behavior leads to an increase in life satisfaction.

As argued above and previously documented in research by Choi and Choi (2018), fun and its sub-components lead to OSB. However, in addition to this direct relationship, it is reasoned that when families engage in OSB, specifically those that involved the collective family, it leads to reinforcement of the values and beliefs that a family holds central to itself and greater family identity (Epp & Price 2008). Also, when family members reflect on these behaviors, specifically behaviors and experiences that are positive from the family vacation, it possibly leads to increased cognitive reinforcement of life satisfaction (Diener 1984). Considered in whole, since OSB itself is affected by fun and its sub-components, and OSB affects family identity and life satisfaction, it is likely that OSB is a mediator. This relationship of OSB mediating the relationship between the sub-components of fun, family identity and life satisfaction is hypothesized below.

H6: OSB mediates the relationship between fun and family identity.

H6a: OSB mediates the relationship between flow and family identity.

H6b: OSB mediates the relationship between psychological zest and family identity.

H6c: OSB mediates the relationship between emotional spark and family identity.

H6d: OSB mediates the relationship between social vigor and family identity.

H7: OSB mediates the relationship between fun and life satisfaction.

H7a: OSB mediates the relationship between flow and life satisfaction.

H7b: OSB mediates the relationship between psychological zest and life satisfaction.

H7c: OSB mediates the relationship between emotional spark and life satisfaction.

H7d: OSB mediates the relationship between social vigor and life satisfaction.

Research on families has noted that over time, many families have moved from a dual-parent to a single-parent setup (Ekström, 2007). This suggests many families are stressed for income and time (Manning & Lamb, 2003). Having fewer resources, both financially and socially has meant that a parent may not have the opportunity to spend as much quality time with their children and have as wholesome a relationship as they would like. In this scenario, traveling on a vacation becomes more meaningful, as an opportunity to bond and reinforce the relationship. Next, within the family research stream, differences in gender roles for child rearing have been observed for mothers and fathers (Glutton-Brock & Vincent, 1991; Grusec et al., 2000; Pleck, 2012). Mothers tend to be more empathetic towards the needs of her children, and children tend to be more compliant to instructions by mothers (Grusec et al., 2000). Such qualities have been noted to remain consistent across time as all cultures around the world have, at different levels, moved towards an equitable social role for mothers and fathers (Bornstein & Putnick, 2016; Pleck, 2012). Also, mothers tend to be more attuned to the needs of their children, and have a higher inclination for collective activities in a social setting (Churchill et al., 2007; Shaw et al., 2008). Additionally, differences in parenting style are also likely to cause differences in family identity and life satisfaction. This leads to the following hypotheses and related research question:

H8a: In a family vacation setting, family identity will be different for single-parent families than for dual-parent families.

H8b: In a family vacation setting, life satisfaction will be different for single-parent families than for dual-parent families.

H9a: In a family vacation setting, family identity will be different for mothers than for fathers.

H9b: In a family vacation setting, life satisfaction will be different for mothers than for fathers.

RQ4: Do different parenting styles affect family identity and life satisfaction differently?

Figure 2 below visually depicts all previously stated hypothesis, except Hypotheses 6(a-b) and Hypotheses 7(a-b).

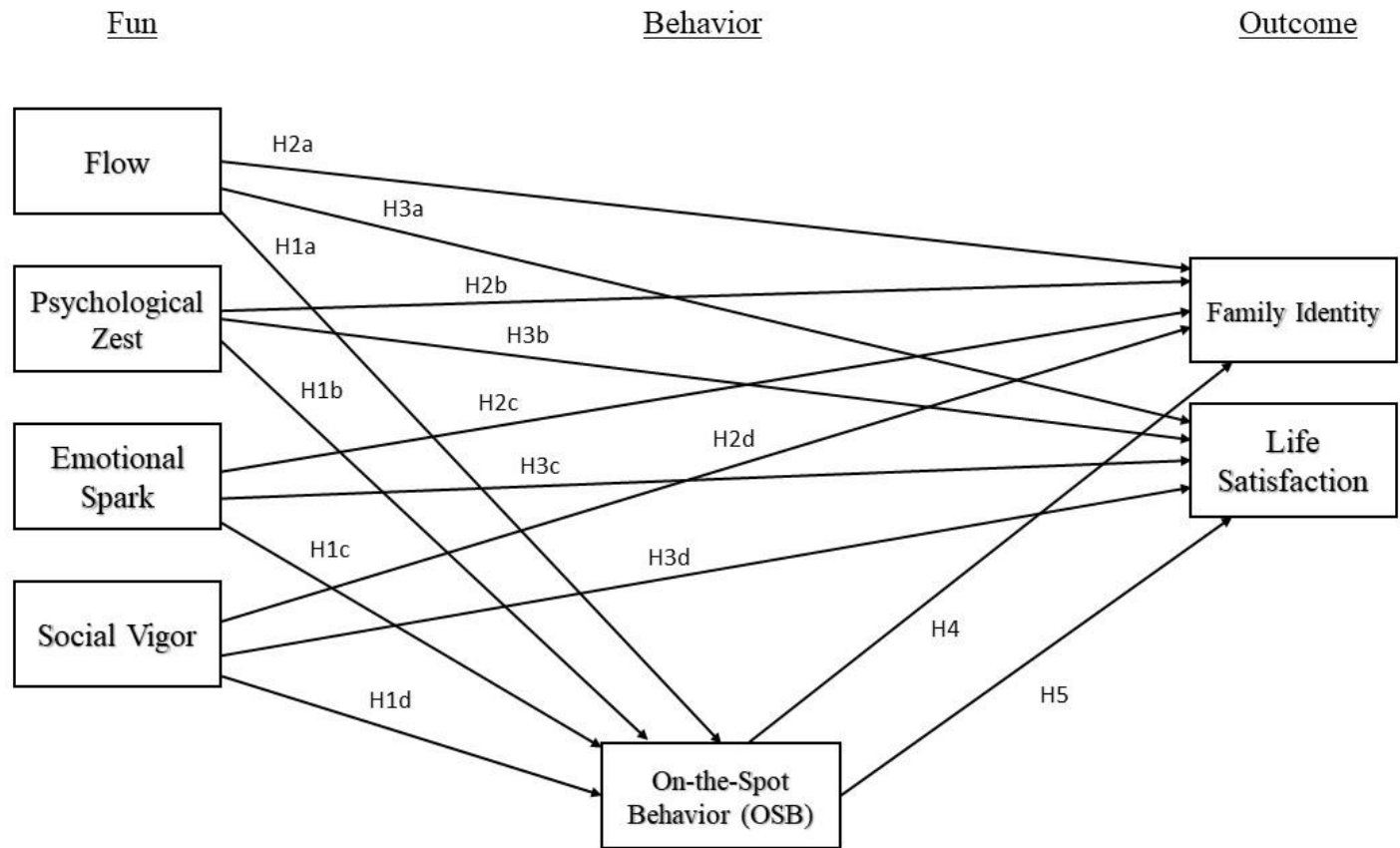


Figure 2. Measurement Model to Examine the Role of Fun on Family Identity and Life Satisfaction

Summary of Study Objectives and Associated Hypotheses and Research Questions

- (1) To identify the key factors of fun that encourage collective family behavior.
 - a. H1: Fun will be positively related to collective family on-the-spot behavior.
 - i. H1a: Flow during a family vacation will positively relate to on-the-spot behavior for families.
 - ii. H1b: Psychological zest during a family vacation will positively relate to the on-the-spot behavior for families.
 - iii. H1c: Emotional spark during a family vacation will positively relate to on-the-spot behavior for families.
 - iv. H1d: Social vigor experienced during a family vacation will positively relate to on-the-spot behavior for families.
 - b. RQ1: What are the key components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor) that contribute to collective family on-the-spot behaviors?

- (2) To ascertain the relationship among fun, on-the-spot behavior (OSB), family identity and the life satisfaction of a family.
 - a. H2: Fun will be positively related to family identity.
 - i. H2a: Flow during a family vacation will positively relate to the family identity.
 - ii. H2b: Psychological zest during a family vacation will positively relate to the family identity.
 - iii. H2c: Emotional spark during a family vacation will positively relate to family identity.

- iv. H2d: Social vigor experienced during a family vacation will positively relate to family identity.
- b. RQ2: What are the key components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor) that contribute to family identity?
- c. H3: Fun will be positively related to life satisfaction.
 - i. H3a: Flow during a family vacation will positively relate to life satisfaction.
 - ii. H3b: Psychological zest during a family vacation will positively relate life satisfaction.
 - iii. H3c: Emotional spark during a family vacation will positively relate to life satisfaction.
 - iv. H3d: Social vigor experienced during a family vacation will positively relate to life satisfaction.
- d. RQ3: What are the key components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor) that contribute to life satisfaction?
- e. H4: Engaging in collective family on-the-spot behavior leads to an increase in family identity.
- f. H5: Engaging in collective family on-the-spot behavior leads to an increase in life satisfaction.
- g. H6: OSB mediates the relationship between fun and family identity.
 - i. H6a: OSB mediates the relationship between flow and family identity.
 - ii. H6b: OSB mediates the relationship between psychological zest and family identity.

- iii. H6c: OSB mediates the relationship between emotional spark and family identity.
- iv. H6d: OSB mediates the relationship between social vigor and family identity.
- h. H7: OSB mediates the relationship between fun and life satisfaction.
 - i. H7a: OSB mediates the relationship between flow and life satisfaction.
 - ii. H7b: OSB mediates the relationship between psychological zest and life satisfaction.
 - iii. H7c: OSB mediates the relationship between emotional spark and life satisfaction.
 - iv. H7d: OSB mediates the relationship between social vigor and life satisfaction.

(3) To establish if socio-demographic characteristics and parenting style cause differences between fun and its proposed relationship with family identity and life satisfaction.

- a. H8a: In a family vacation setting, family identity will be different for single-parent families than for dual-parent families.
- b. H8b: In a family vacation setting, life satisfaction will be different for single-parent families than for dual-parent families.
- c. H9a: In a family vacation setting, family identity will be different for mothers than for fathers.
- d. H9b: In a family vacation setting, life satisfaction will be different for mothers than for fathers.

- e. RQ4: Do different parenting styles affect family identity and life satisfaction differently?

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

Chapter III describes the methodological techniques utilized in this study. The chapter describes the research design, target population, sampling strategy, and development of the research instrument, as well as the methods used for data analysis.

Research Design

This research study involved using a quantitative survey to achieve the previously stated objectives of the study. It aimed to do so by surveying adult parents with minor children who have taken a family vacation together in the past year. The survey was administered online and data was collected using survey instruments established and tested in prior published studies. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used for analyzing the proposed model and univariate statistical analysis was used to answer select research questions and hypotheses.

Target Population

The target population for this study were adult parents (aged 18 and above) with non-adult children (aged 17 and below), who have traveled on a family vacation within the past 12 months. Adult parents were targeted for this research since access to children is often not possible and at times children are too young to understand survey questions offer meaningful feedback (John 1999).

Sampling Population Size

Qualtrics (2019) suggests the sample size to be calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Sample Size} = (Z\text{-Score}^2 \times \text{standard deviation} \times (1\text{-standard deviation})) / \text{Margin of error}^2$$

Hence, for a 95% confidence level (z-score of 1.96), and a standard deviation of 0.5, which is considered adequate (Qualtrics 2019), and a margin of error of +/- 5%, the sample size needed for this study is:

$$\text{Sample Size} = 1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5) / 0.05^2 = 385$$

Therefore, the suggested sample size for this study was $N = 385$. While the above sample size formula works well for discrete statistical analysis, for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Jackson (2003) suggests following the N:q rule of $N=10$ samples for each q =parameter (item) in the model. The survey questionnaire is detailed in the appendix at the end of this proposal, with 31 parameters, using the N:q of 10 samples for 31 parameters yielded a suggested total sample of $N = 310$ observations. Hence, a total sample of $N = 385$ observations was determined to be sufficient data for both SEM analysis and discrete statistical analysis.

Amazon Mturk was the chosen platform for the collection of survey data for the study. Mturk is a popular crowdsourcing platform used by industry professionals and academic researchers to gather primary consumer data inexpensively. While some academic bodies have raised issues about data quality, other academic studies have established that data quality from Mturk is as good as from traditional sources of data (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Also, the data quality from Mturk has been found to be similar, and even superior to face-to-face methods of data collection as well as data from social media platforms (Casler, Bickel, & Hackett, 2013). Mturk respondents have also been found to be more attentive and reliable than a popular means of data collection in academia, which consists of using college student samples (Smith, Roster, Golden, & Albaum, 2016). While data quality can always be improved, researchers advise best practices while collecting online data from Mturk, such as incorporating attention checks (Rouse, 2015), and using carefully developed screener questions, which has been established to assure that Mturk data is as good as data from online consumer panels supplied by private vendors (Hauser & Schwarz, 2016). Given these considerations, Mturk was decided as the platform of choice to collect data for this study.

Survey Instrument

Data for this study was collected via a self-administered online survey on Qualtrics. The survey consisted of the following sections: (1a) screener questions to ensure the correct target population of adult parents (aged 18 and above) with non-adult children (aged 17 and below), who traveled together for a family vacation in the past 12-months, are selected; (1b) as a recollection exercise, screened participants will be asked to write 1 to 2 sentences about their family vacation experience; (2) perceptions of fun; (3) on-the spot behavior; (4) outcomes of the

behavior which are related to family identity and life satisfaction; and (5) socio-demographic characteristics.

In between sections, attention checks questions were administered to ensure survey participants paid attention to instructions. The attention check questions were, (a) Are you paying attention? Answer choices – Yes, No (b) What is the color of the sky? (Please select orange from the answer choices below so we know you are paying attention) – Answer choices: Blue, Orange. Except for section 5, all other questions were measured on a 7-point Likert-style scale. Questions in section 5 were categorical (refer to appendix for survey questionnaire). Survey items are described in the section below.

Fun

Fun is defined as, “amusement or enjoyment” (Tasci & Ko, 2016 pg 162). In hospitality and tourism research, fun is measured using a four factor scale intended to capture social, emotional and psychological factors (Tasci & Ko, 2016). Thus fun is a multifaceted construct and captures several concepts within it. All items within this construct were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. The scale developed by Tasci & Ko (2016) was chosen as the foundation since it is the only academic research that has attempted to quantify the measurement of fun. In their study, reliability estimates for all the four sub-scales ranged from .82-.88 and validity measures for average variance extracted (AVE) were above the cutoff of 0.5, signaling convergent validity. Additionally the square root of the AVE of each construct was higher than any correlation of a respective construct, signaling discriminant validity. This fun scale has been used in a more recent study by other researchers as well, such as Choi and Choi (2018), for their study of Chinese tourists to Korean travel sites. These authors further refined the original fun scale to streamline items and improve the scales

statistical properties. In their study, the four sub-scales of fun had reliability measures in the range of .86-.88 and AVE measures for all constructs met criteria for convergent and discriminant validity. Additionally, the four factors are described below.

The purpose of using this scale in a vacation context was to assess whether time construal, as well as social and emotional factors enable a family to make unique memories tangible via specific behaviors. This was demonstrated by Choi & Choi (2018) for individuals traveling for vacation. It was hypothesized to also be true for collective group travel, such as for families. Also, since the fun scale was intended to be used for individual travelers, either “I” or “me” in the original scale items were modified to “my family” to make the items representative of the family group.

The first sub-scale is *flow*, which captures the perception of the passage of time and events. Flow is measured by the following five items: “made my family forget about their daily routine,” “made my family forget about time,” “made my family forget about their social status,” “made my family forget about other places,” “made my family forget about their problems.” Fun also captures psychological and emotional aspects of enjoyment as experienced during the vacation. The second subscale is *psychological zest*, which captures feelings of elation and is measured using the following five items: “made my family happy,” “made my family enjoy the experience,” “made my family excited,” “provided pleasurable experiences for my family,” “made my family feel alive.”

The third sub-scale is *emotional spark*, and it captured the strength with which an emotion is experienced. The construct is measured using the following three items: “provided my family emotional peaks,” “made my family feel emotionally involved,” “made my family feel emotionally charged.”

The fourth sub-scale is *social vigor*. It is intended to ascertain whether social elements such as active and social people, present during a vacation energize the respondent. Social vigor is measured using the following five items: “provided my family an opportunity to meet active people,” “offered my family surprising experiences,” “energized my family,” “made my family feel social,” “provided my family members quality time with each other.”

On-the-Spot Behavior (OSB)

In a vacation context, OSB is intended to capture specific immediate actions and behaviors towards touristic events and surroundings. OSBs were reported by Choi and Choi (2018), for individual Chinese travelers on vacation in Korea. In their study, the OSB scale had reliability of .81 and AVE of .55, thus meeting cutoff metrics for both factors (Hair, 2010). The original scale consisted of three items which were: “I made purchases,” “I took photos” and “I shared my experience on social media.” The present study hypothesized that such behaviors will also be mirrored by families when they engage in similar fun touristic activities. Thus, the original three items were modified to read for families as: “made spontaneous purchases at the destination,” “took family group photos,” and “shared family experiences on social media.” Four additional items were added to increase construct reliability, which describes routine behaviors families engage in while on vacation. It read, “went sightseeing together,” “shared a collective meal together,” “went exploring together,” and “engaged in unplanned activities at the spur of the moment.” All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

Family Identity

As families participate in collective activities and spend time together, it is likely that such events enable the family to bond and feel closer together (Lehto et al., 2009). In a vacation context, when families travel as tourists and engage with destinations as a family group and participate in unique excursions, they reinforce their family identity (Epp & Price, 2008; Fu et al., 2014). The construct of family identity was measured using a single factor 4-item scale with items adapted from the shared family identity scale (Soliz & Harwood, 2006) (reliability $\alpha = .90$ and $AVE > 0.5$). Two items from the initial scale were dropped since they were not applicable to the target population of this study. These were, “Above all else, I think of this grandparent as a member of my family,” and “This grandparent is an important part of my family.” Other items from the initial scale by Soliz and Harwood (2006) were retained and the “grandparent-grandchild” relationship was reworded to reflect “my family.” Thus, family identity was measured with the following four items: “made my family believe their shared membership in the same family group is important,” “made my family believe they belong in the same group,” “made my family believe that they are members of the same group,” and “made my family feel proud to be part of the same group.” All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is an indicator of long-term happiness and satisfaction with life (Pavot & Diener, 2009). It was measured by a single factor 5-item scale proposed by Diener (1984). Reliability measures for this scale were .87 and validity measures met relevant criteria; however, validity was measured using older methodology (e.g. correlation with related constructs). In the items, “my life” was replaced with “my family’s life” to reflect the life satisfaction of the family.

In the third item, the statement was extended with the term “the family is satisfied” with the words “the way things are.” The items for the life satisfaction scale were: “in most ways my family’s life is close to the ideal,” “the conditions of my family’s life are excellent,” “my family is satisfied with the way things are,” “my family has gotten the important things they want in life,” “if my family could live life over again, we would change almost nothing.” All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

Socio–Demographic Characteristics, Vacation Preferences and Parenting Style

The final section of this study was intended to document socio-demographic characteristics such as: age, income, ethnicity, education level, and gender, as well as vacation preferences and parenting style. Family structure was categorized as single-parent household, dual-parent household, or other. Parenting style was measured across 4 styles, namely authoritarian, permissive, uninvolved, and authoritative. Respondents were also asked about the number of non-adult children (aged 17 and below) in the household and their ages. Respondents also indicated how long ago their family vacation occurred (within the last 12 months). Since responses to questions could be different if the vacation was taken recently compared to almost a year ago, their response to this question was intended to serve as a control variable. Also, survey respondents were asked how often they take a family vacation as well as the duration of their last family vacation. A question relating to vacation satisfaction for the family vacation was also asked. The questions regarding gender and family structure were intended to help explore differences between mothers and fathers, as well as single-parent and dual-parent households. Additionally, differences across parenting styles were also assessed as they relate to family identity and life satisfaction. Survey respondent were also asked how often they live with their

children. Finally, the survey also assessed how vacation decision were made within the household.

Survey Questionnaire Review

Prior to data collection from Mturk for the study, the survey instrument was assessed by a panel of expert academicians and their feedback was incorporated to refine survey items and questions.

Data Analysis Plan

Data was collected on May 11th, 2019. The collected sample of 400 respondents consisted of 47 respondents that did not pay attention to the family vacation recollection exercise and were disqualified. A second round of data collection to make up for those 47 respondents was conducted on May 12th, 2019, and resulted in 49 additional samples, for a final sample of 402 respondents. All the data was collected via Qualtrics, using Amazon Mturk and was then exported to Microsoft Excel, and was screened for outliers and cleaned of any anomalies. Then, descriptive statistics of all the constructs were created, and statistical analysis was performed using SPSS version 22. Specifically, the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), construct reliability and validity measures were established. The aforementioned steps are precursors to conducting analysis using Structural Equations Modeling (SEM). SEM was performed using SPSS AMOS version 22. SEM was used to study path coefficients and establish whether previously stated hypothesis were supported or not. Specifically, SEM was used to answer Hypotheses 1(a-d), 2(a-d), 3(a-d) 4, 5, 6(a-d) and 7(a-d). In addition, goodness of fit and routine model-fit statistics such as the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) or Normed Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual (SRMR) and Root Mean Square Error of approximation (RMSEA) were reported for the model. Research

Question 1, 2 and 3 were answered by comparing standardized beta weights (β) from SEM results. Next, independent sample t-test was performed to answer hypotheses 8(a-b) and 9(a-b) for differences across family identity and life satisfaction for mothers and fathers as well as single-parents and dual-parents. Also, independent sample t-test was used to answer Research Question 4 about parenting styles and their relationship with family identity and life satisfaction.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Chapter IV presents the results of the data analysis, and the findings used to answer the corresponding hypotheses and research questions. The results section begins by providing a descriptive profile of respondents using frequencies and percentages. This descriptive profile is followed by the statistical analyses and statement of results.

Profile of respondents

A target sample of 400 respondents was collected using Amazon Mturk. The screening criteria were used to garner appropriate respondents. Respondents were required to be adult parents, aged 18 and above, with at least one child in the household aged 17 or younger. Respondents also had to have travelled on a family vacation in the past 12 months. After data cleaning and checking for responses, it was found that 47 respondents had invalid or incorrect responses to the family vacation recollection exercise. These respondents were rejected in Amazon Mturk survey manager view and the survey was administered again to newer respondents. An additional 49 completed responses were collected that met the aforementioned screening criteria and had valid responses to the family vacation recollection exercise. Thus, a final and complete sample of 402 responses was used for data analysis.

The sample of 402 responses consisted of a close to even split between male (50.2%) and female (49.8%) respondents. The majority of respondents were Millennials, born 1981 – 1996 (64.4%), followed by Generation X, born 1965-1980 (28.9%), Baby Boomers, born 1946-1964 (6%) and Generation Z, born 1997 or later (0.7%). The majority of respondents were of white ethnicity (74.6%), were living in a dual-parent household (79.1%), possessed a bachelor's degree (49.3%), and had a household income in the \$50,000 - \$69,999 range (24.4%). Additionally, most of respondents had a single child in the household (48%), and the majority of respondents had their children live with them in the household full-time (90.8%).

Regarding vacation decision making, most respondents indicated that parents made vacation decisions (63.4%), vacations lasted 5-7 days for most respondents (39.8%), and vacations were taken twice a year (38.8%). Finally, considering the time of data collection for this survey was early May 2019, most respondents indicated they took a family vacation within the previous 6 months (16.7%). Additional details are mentioned in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Profile of Respondents

Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Generation		
Generation Z (1997 -)	3	0.7
Millennials (1981-1996)	259	64.4
Generation X (1965-1980)	116	28.9
Baby Boomers (1946-1964)	24	6.0
Ethnicity		
White	300	74.6
Black or African American	58	14.4
Asian	21	5.2
Native American or American Indian	11	2.7
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders	1	0.2
Other	11	2.7
Family structure		
Dual-Parent household	318	79.1
Single-Parent household	84	20.9
Other	0	0.0
How often children live with their parents		
All the time	365	90.8
Half the time	33	8.2
Other	4	1.0
Gender		
Male	202	50.2
Female	200	49.8
Gender variant/Non-conforming	0	0.0
Prefer to self-describe	0	0.0
Prefer not to respond	0	0.0
Number of children in household		
1	193	48.0
2	139	34.6
3-4	60	14.9
5 or more	10	2.3

Table 1. Profile of Respondents (Continued)

Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Education level		
High school degree or equivalent	34	8.5
Some college, no degree	64	15.9
Associate/technical degree	56	13.9
Bachelor's degree	198	49.3
Advanced degree	50	12.4
Annual income		
Less than \$10,000	11	2.7
\$10,000 to \$29,999	47	11.7
\$30,000 to \$49,999	86	21.4
\$50,000 to \$69,999	98	24.4
\$70,000 to \$89,999	68	16.9
\$90,000 to \$149,999	72	17.9
\$150,000 or more	20	5.0

Table 2. Family Vacation Characteristics of Respondents

Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Family vacation decision making in household		
Largely decided by parents	255	63.4
Largely decided by child or children	24	6.0
Mutually between parent(s) and child or children	123	30.6
When was last family vacation?		
1 -2 months ago	102	25.4
3 – 4 months ago	63	15.7
5 – 6 months ago	105	26.2
7 – 8 months ago	36	8.9
9 or more months ago	96	23.9
Duration of a family vacation		
Less than 2 days	11	2.7
2-4 days	122	30.3
5-7 days	160	39.8
7-10 days	70	17.4
10-14 days	29	7.2
Longer than 14 days	10	2.5
Frequency of a family vacation		
Once a month	8	2.0
Once every few months	68	16.9
Twice a year	156	38.8
Once a year	136	33.8
One every two years	21	5.2
One every three years	10	2.5
Fewer than one every three years	3	0.7

Sampling Adequacy

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test for sampling adequacy was used to verify the sampling adequacy for this study. The KMO obtained was 0.96, which is greater than the cutoff level of 0.8 suggested by Hair (2010). Additionally, Bartlett's test for sphericity value of $\chi^2(435) = 8026.67, p=.00$, revealed that the covariance matrix obtained for this study was not an identity matrix and that this data set was satisfactory for factor analysis.

Additional Data Adequacy Tests

Data was tested for normality by assessing the skewness and kurtosis of all item measures. The values for skewness ranged from -1.88 to -.66, which are within the range of +/- 2 to be considered normal (Kim, 2013). Additionally, kurtosis values ranged from a low of .001 to 3.84, which are within the suggested level of <7, thereby meeting normality assumptions (Kim, 2013). Next, the data was checked for multi-collinearity by examining the variance inflation factors (VIF) for all relevant constructs in the model. The largest VIF was 3.64 for psychological zest, followed by 3.53 for social vigor, 2.82 for OSB, 2.68 for emotional spark and 1.94 for flow. All VIF's were bellowed the cutoff level <5 suggested for multi-collinearity (Hair, 2010).

The data was also checked for common method bias (CMB), which can happen particularly with survey data, since respondents answer all survey questions in one sitting (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Harman's single factor test was used to assess whether the cumulative variance across all factors was greater than 50%, when the number of factors were constrained to 1. This resulted in a cumulative variance explained of 44.17%, which is below 50%, thereby indicating that all factors did not account for a majority of variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Therefore, it can be concluded that the data does not suffer from common method bias problem.

Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analyses (EFA) were performed to assess dimensionality of the various constructs and observe their corresponding factor loadings. Specifically, principal component factor analysis was employed with using oblique rotation since factors were expected to be correlated (Hair 2010). The results yielded 7 separate factors, which were flow, psychological zest, emotional spark, social vigor, on-the-spot behavior (OSB), family identity and life satisfaction (Table 3).

The results of the EFA on fun scale yielded 4 distinct factors within the fun construct. The first factor of fun was flow and it retained its original 5 items, as did psychological zest, with factor loadings all above the recommended cutoff point of 0.7 (Hair, 2010). Emotional spark retained its original 3 items, however for social vigor, one item, “provided my family an opportunity to meet active people,” yielded a lower factor loading of 0.66 and was dropped from consideration for the broader construct since it did not meet the cutoff criteria of being >0.7 (Hair, 2010).

The results of the EFA for OSB yielded all items loaded on a single factor. The construct of OSB had similar issues, where 3 out of 7 original items did not meet the cutoff criteria of 0.7 and were dropped from the composite construct. The dropped items were “made spontaneous purchases at the destination,” (factor loading of 0.59), “shared family experiences on social media,” (factor loading of .45), and “engaged in unplanned activities at the spur of the moment” (factor loading of 0.66). Similarly, all 4 original items for the construct of family identity loaded on a single factor and the original 5 items for the construct of life satisfaction loaded on a single factor, having met the item cutoff criteria of having factor loadings above 0.7 and were retained (Table 3).

The EFA was followed by Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to assess item loadings together as a measurement model and to gauge model fit. Specifically, CFA indicated a good model fit, where $\chi^2(384) = 852.57$, $p = .00$, CFI=0.94, TLI=.93, RMSEA=0.55, $C_{\min/\text{dof}} = 2.2$ (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Factor loadings and variance explained for the constructs are provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of Exploratory Factor Analyses

	Item	Factor Loadings	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained (%)	Cronbach's Alpha
Construct 1: Fun					
Factor 1: Flow					
			3.002	60	0.83
1	made my family forget about their daily routine	0.724			
2	made my family forget about time	0.82			
3	made my family forget about their social status	0.749			
4	made my family forget about other places	0.789			
5	made my family forget about their problems	0.789			
Factor 2: Psychological Zest					
			3.72	74.4	0.91
1	made my family happy	0.883			
2	made my family enjoy the experience	0.869			
3	made my family excited	0.842			
4	provided pleasurable experiences for my family	0.878			
5	made my family feel alive	0.84			
Factor 3: Emotional Spark					
			2.328	77.6	0.85
1	provided my family emotional peaks	0.866			
2	made my family feel emotionally involved	0.885			
3	made my family feel emotionally charged	0.891			
Factor 4: Social Vigor					
			2.758	55.2	0.81
1	offered my family surprising experiences	0.776			
2	energized my family	0.815			
3	made my family feel social	0.748			
4	provided my family members quality time with each other	0.773			

Table 3. Results of Exploratory Factor Analyses (Continued)

	Item	Factor Loadings	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained (%)	Cronbach's Alpha
Construct 2: OSB			3.224	46	0.8
1	took family group photos	0.766			
2	went sightseeing together	0.774			
3	shared a collective meal together	0.806			
4	went exploring together	0.82			
Construct 3: Family Identity			3.154	78.8	0.91
1	made us believe our shared membership in the family is important	0.893			
2	made us believe we belong in the same family	0.9			
3	made us believe we are members in the same family	0.868			
4	made us feel proud to be part of the same family	0.89			
Construct 4: Life Satisfaction			3.533	70.7	0.92
1	in most ways my family's life is close to the ideal	0.865			
2	the conditions of my family's life are excellent	0.86			
3	my family is satisfied with the way things are	0.856			
4	my family has gotten the important things we want in life	0.849			
5	if my family could live life all over again, we would change almost nothing	0.769			

Reliability and Validity Analysis

Construct reliabilities were tested using Cronbach's alpha and were at or above the cutoff criteria of 0.8 (Hair, 2010). For validity, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of all constructs was above the threshold value of 0.5 suggesting convergent validity, and the square root of the AVE was above the cross-correlations of the constructs, signaling discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). A summary of these statistics, along with mean, standard deviation, composite reliability and correlations across constructs is provided below in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics, Reliability and Validity Measures

S. No	Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation	AVE	Correlations						
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Flow	5.46	1.03	0.60	1	.619**	.638**	.645**	.558**	.598**	.452**
2	Psychological Zest	6.06	0.98	0.74	.619**	1	.720**	.730**	.713**	.796**	.503**
3	Emotional Spark	5.74	1.03	0.78	.638**	.720**	1	.738**	.660**	.656**	.480**
4	Social Vigor	5.83	0.90	0.58	.645**	.730**	.738**	1	.738**	.726**	.545**
5	OSB	5.92	1.00	0.56	.558**	.713**	.660**	.738**	1	.729**	.504**
6	Family Identity	5.94	1.06	0.79	.598**	.796**	.656**	.726**	.729**	1	.534**
7	Life Satisfaction	5.47	1.09	0.71	.452**	.503**	.480**	.545**	.504**	.534**	1

Note: ** Signifies correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

SEM Model Fit

For the overall measurement model, fit statistics post SEM indicate the following values: $\chi^2(1) = 9.85$, $p = .00$, CFI=0.99, NFI=.99, RMSEA=0.15, SRMR = 0.01. These figures suggest good fit of the final model, except for RMSEA which ideally should be <0.05 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The overall good model fit statistics are likely since all paths across constructs are already hypothesized and captured in the measurement model. The only modification suggested after the SEM analysis by the SPSS AMOS Software was to co-vary the error terms of life satisfaction and family identity. However, doing so would be incorrect since they are separate constructs altogether. Apart from this suggestion, modification indices do not suggest additional pathways between variables that can be drawn to improve model fit.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to Analyze Hypotheses

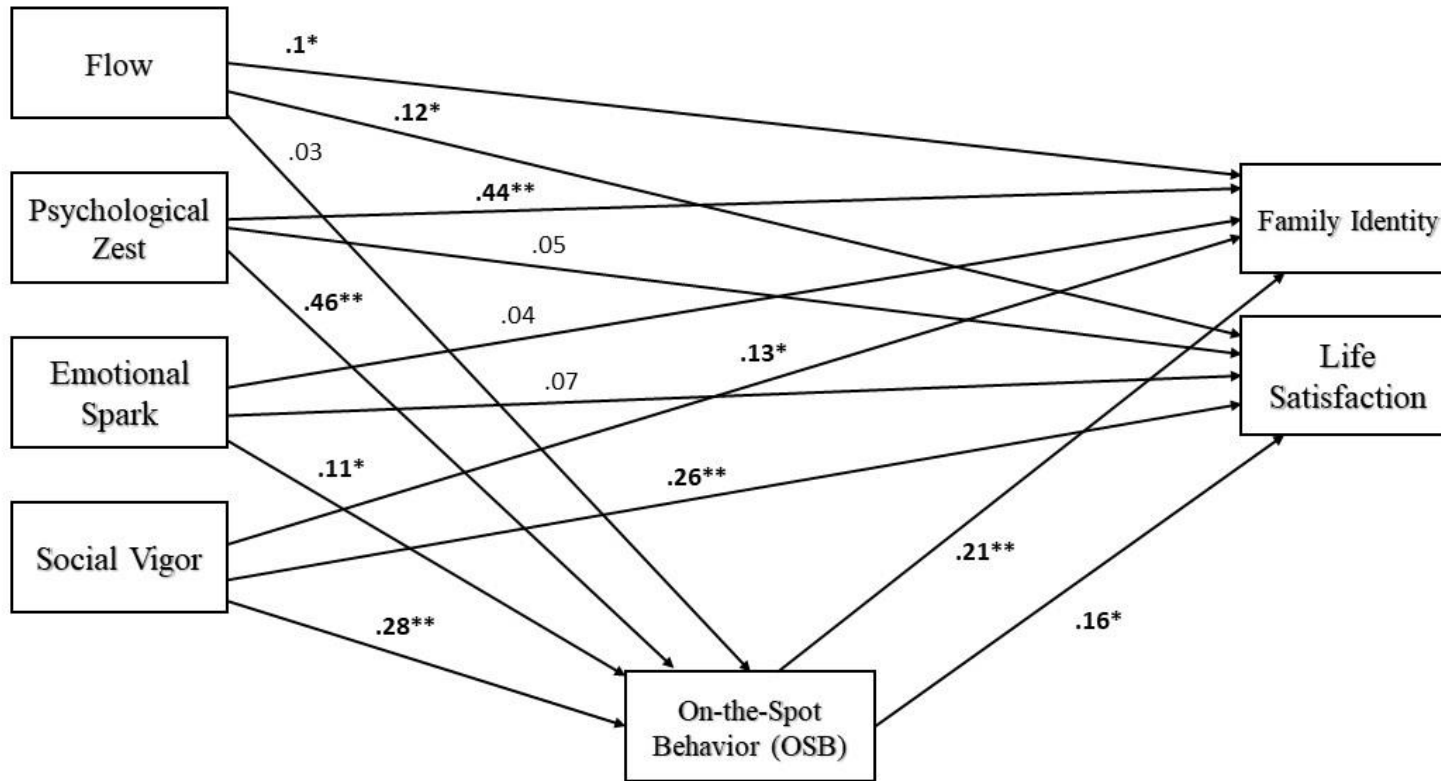
To test the hypotheses of this study, one of the statistical techniques employed was structural equation modeling (SEM). SEM is simultaneous regression which is frequently used in social science research to test causality of a variable directly or indirectly affecting another in the model. In the event of the presence of multiple variables that affect a dependent variable, the effect of these variables affecting the dependent variable simultaneously can also be assessed (Kline, 2015). Summary of direct path relationships and results are listed below in Table 5, and visually represented in Figure 3.

Table 5. Summary of Direct Path Relationships Assessed by SEM

Independent Variable		Dependent Variable	Standard Regression Weight	P-Value	Hypotheses	Support
Flow	→	OSB	0.03	0.54	H1a	No
Psychological zest	→	OSB	0.46	0.00**	H1b	Yes
Emotional Spark	→	OSB	0.11	0.03*	H1c	Yes
Social Vigor	→	OSB	0.28	0.00**	H1d	Yes
Flow	→	Family identity	0.10	0.01*	H2a	Yes
Psychological zest	→	Family identity	0.44	0.00**	H2b	Yes
Emotional Spark	→	Family identity	0.04	0.37	H2c	No
Social Vigor	→	Family identity	0.13	0.02*	H2d	Yes
Flow	→	Life Satisfaction	0.12	0.03*	H3a	Yes
Psychological zest	→	Life Satisfaction	0.05	0.51	H3b	No
Emotional Spark	→	Life Satisfaction	0.07	0.29	H3c	No
Social Vigor	→	Life Satisfaction	0.26	0.00**	H3d	Yes
OSB	→	Family identity	0.21	0.00**	H4	Yes
OSB	→	Life Satisfaction	0.16	0.02*	H5	Yes

Note – Significant paths highlighted in bold; **p<0.01; *p<0.05

Figure 3. Results of Analysis of the Role of Fun on Family Identity and Life Satisfaction



Note – Significant paths highlighted in bold; **p<0.01; *p<0.05

With regards to testing the various hypotheses, Hypothesis 1 was tested first, and it stated the following:

- f. H1: Fun will be positively related to collective family on-the-spot behavior.
 - i. H1a: Flow during a family vacation will positively relate to on-the-spot behavior for families.
 - ii. H1b: Psychological zest during a family vacation will positively relate to the on-the-spot behavior for families.
 - iii. H1c: Emotional spark during a family vacation will positively relate to on-the-spot behavior for families.
 - iv. H1d: Social vigor experienced during a family vacation will positively relate to on-the-spot behavior for families.

In order to assess Hypotheses H1a-H1d, causality is tested between variables listed below. Reviewing the standardized regression weights and significance levels listed in Table 4, flow ($\beta=0.03$, $p=0.54$) was non-significant on OSB, therefore Hypothesis H1a was not supported. Psychological zest ($\beta=0.46$, $p=0.00$), emotional spark ($\beta=0.11$, $p=0.03$), and social vigor ($\beta=0.28$, $p=0.00$) were all significant, indicating that hypotheses H1b, H1c and H1d were supported.

Next, Hypothesis 2 was tested, which stated the following:

- a. H2: Fun will be positively related to family identity.
 - i. H2a: Flow during a family vacation will positively relate to the family identity.
 - ii. H2b: Psychological zest during a family vacation will positively relate to the family identity.

- iii. H2c: Emotional spark during a family vacation will positively relate to family identity.
- iv. H2d: Social vigor experienced during a family vacation will positively relate to family identity.

In order to assess Hypotheses 2a-2d, causality was tested between variables listed below. The variables flow ($\beta=0.1$, $p=0.01$), psychological zest ($\beta=0.44$, $p=0.00$), and social vigor ($\beta=0.13$, $p=0.02$) had a positive and significant relationship with family identity. This confirmed that Hypotheses 2a, 2b and 2d were supported. However, emotional spark ($\beta=0.04$, $p=0.37$) was non-significant and Hypothesis 2c was not supported.

Next, Hypothesis 3 was tested, which stated the following:

- a. H3: Fun will be positively related to life satisfaction.
 - i. H3a: Flow during a family vacation will positively relate to life satisfaction.
 - ii. H3b: Psychological zest during a family vacation will positively relate life satisfaction.
 - iii. H3c: Emotional spark during a family vacation will positively relate to life satisfaction.
 - iv. H3d: Social vigor experienced during a family vacation will positively relate to life satisfaction.

In order to assess Hypotheses 3a-3d, causality was tested between variables listed below. Considering the standardized regression weights and significance levels, flow ($\beta=0.12$, $p=0.03$)

was significant on life satisfaction, and so was social vigor ($\beta=0.26$, $p=0.00$). Therefore Hypothesis 3a and 3d were supported. Psychological zest ($\beta=0.05$, $p=0.51$), emotional spark ($\beta=0.07$, $p=0.29$) were non-significant and therefore H3b and H3c were not supported.

Next, Hypotheses 4 and 5 were tested. The two hypotheses stated the following:

- a. H4: Engaging in collective family on-the-spot behavior leads to an increase in family identity.
- b. H5: Engaging in collective family on-the-spot behavior leads to an increase in life satisfaction.

To confirm the positive relationship between OSB and family identity and life satisfaction, standardized regression weights and significance levels were reviewed between these constructs. OSB on family identity ($\beta=0.21$, $p=0.00$) and OSB on life satisfaction ($\beta=0.16$, $p=0.02$), indicated a positive and significant relationship. This result supports both Hypotheses 4 and 5.

Indirect Mediation Effects

The mediating effect of OSB between the sub-components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark, social vigor) on family identity and life satisfaction were addressed in Hypothesis 6 and 7. Specifically, the hypotheses are restated below:

- a. H6: OSB mediates the relationship between fun and family identity.
 - i. H6a: OSB mediates the relationship between flow and family identity.
 - ii. H6b: OSB mediates the relationship between psychological zest and family identity.
 - iii. H6c: OSB mediates the relationship between emotional spark and family identity.
 - iv. H6d: OSB mediates the relationship between social vigor and family identity.
- b. H7: OSB mediates the relationship between fun and life satisfaction.
 - v. H7a: OSB mediates the relationship between flow and life satisfaction.
 - vi. H7b: OSB mediates the relationship between psychological zest and life satisfaction.
 - vii. H7c: OSB mediates the relationship between emotional spark and life satisfaction.
 - viii. H7d: OSB mediates the relationship between social vigor and life satisfaction.

For this purpose, coefficients obtained during the SEM analysis of the indirect effect between constructs were compared. The indirect effect was calculated by performing a 95% bias

corrected bootstrap analysis with 5000 resamples (Kline 2015). It was revealed that OSB mediated the effect of psychological zest on family identity ($\beta=0.1$, $p=0.00$, $CI = 0.04/0.2$) and on life satisfaction ($\beta=0.08$, $p=0.03$, $CI = 0.02/0.16$), thereby confirming Hypotheses 6b and 7b. OSB also mediated the relationship between social vigor and family identity ($\beta=0.06$, $p=0.00$, $CI = 0.03/0.1$), as well as on life satisfaction ($\beta=0.05$, $p=0.03$, $CI = 0.01/0.09$), thereby confirming Hypotheses 6d and 7d. There was no mediation for flow on family identity ($\beta=0.005$, $p=0.61$, $CI = -0.011/0.027$) or life satisfaction ($\beta=0.004$, $p=0.45$, $CI = -0.007/0.024$). Also there was no mediation for emotional spark on family identity ($\beta=0.02$, $p=0.053$, $CI = 0.003/0.05$) or life satisfaction ($\beta=0.02$, $p=0.06$, $CI = 0.001/0.05$). The results are summarized in Table 6 below:

Table 6. Bootstrapped Indirect Effect Estimates of Mediation

Indirect Path	Standardized Regression Coefficient	P-Value	Confidence Interval
Flow → OSB → Family Identity	0.005	0.61	-0.011/0.027
Flow → OSB → Life Satisfaction	0.004	0.45	-0.007/0.024
Psychological Zest → OSB → Family Identity	0.1	0.00**	0.04/0.2
Psychological Zest → OSB → Life Satisfaction	0.08	0.03*	0.02/0.16
Emotional Spark → OSB → Family Identity	0.02	0.053	0.003/0.05
Emotional Spark → OSB → Life Satisfaction	0.02	0.06	0.001/0.05
Social Vigor → OSB → Family Identity	0.06	0.00**	0.03/0.1
Social Vigor → OSB → Life Satisfaction	0.05	0.03*	0.01/0.09

Note – Significant paths highlighted in bold; ** $p<0.01$; * $p<0.05$

Independent Sample t-test to Assess Differences by Socio-Demographic Characteristics

This section explains the results of differences in family identity and life satisfaction by socio-demographic characteristics. Specifically, the objective for this section was to gauge if

differences between parental genders and differences in family structures (single-parent versus dual-parent) households. Specifically, the hypotheses addressed in this section are listed below:

- a. H8a: In a family vacation setting, family identity will be different for single-parent families than for dual-parent families.
- b. H8b: In a family vacation setting, life satisfaction will be different for single-parent families than for dual-parent families.
- c. H9a: In a family vacation setting, family identity will be different for mothers than for fathers.
- d. H9b: In a family vacation setting, life satisfaction will be different for mothers than for fathers.

In order to assess Hypothesis 8a, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare family identity for single-parent and dual-parent families. Results indicated there was a significant difference in the scores for family identity for single-parent families ($M=5.61$, $SD=0.99$) and dual-parent families ($M=6.01$, $SD=1.06$); $t(394) = 3.02$, $p=0.00$ (Table 5). To assess Hypothesis 8b, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare life satisfaction for single-parent and dual-parent families. Results indicated there was a significant difference in the scores for life satisfaction for single-parent families ($M=5.04$, $SD=1.19$) and dual-parent families ($M=5.58$, $SD=1.04$); $t(394) = 4.02$, $p=0.00$ (Table 5). Thus, the results suggest that family structure does have an effect on family identity and life satisfaction. Specifically, the results suggest that dual-parent families enjoy greater family identity and life satisfaction from a family vacation compared to single-parent families.

In order to assess Hypothesis 9a, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare family identity for mothers and fathers. There was a significant difference in the scores for family identity for mothers ($M=6.15$, $SD=0.97$) and fathers ($M=5.73$, $SD=1.1$); $t(394.37) = -4.05$, $p=0.00$ (Table 5). To assess Hypothesis 9b, the same independent sample t-test was conducted to compare life satisfaction for mothers and fathers. There was a significant difference in the scores for life satisfaction for mothers ($M=5.61$, $SD=1.11$) and fathers ($M=5.34$, $SD=1.06$); $t(400) = -2.49$, $p=0.01$ (Table 5). The results suggest that gender does have an effect on family identity and life satisfaction. Specifically, the results suggest that mothers enjoy greater family identity and life satisfaction from a family vacation compared to fathers. A summary of the results are listed below in Table 7

Table 7. Summary of Independent Sample t-test Results for Family Structure and Gender

Family Identity		Mean	SD	t-value	dof	p-value
H8a: Family Structure	Dual-parent	6.01	1.06	3.02	394	0.00
	Single-parent	5.61	0.99			
H9a: Gender	Male	5.73	1.10	-4.05	394.37	0.00
	Female	6.15	0.97			

Life Satisfaction		Mean	SD	t-value	dof	p-value
H8b: Family Structure	Dual-parent	5.58	1.04	4.02	394	0.00
	Single-parent	5.04	1.19			
H9b: Gender	Male	5.34	1.06	-2.49	400	0.01
	Female	5.61	1.11			

Analysis for Research Questions

Standardized regression weights obtained from the SEM analysis of the sub-components of fun were compared across each other to assess which sub components of fun had a larger effect on OSB, family identity and life satisfaction. These relationships were specified in Research Questions 1, 2 and 3:

RQ1: What are the key components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor) that contribute to collective family on-the-spot behaviors?

RQ2: What are the key components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor) that contribute to family identity?

RQ3: What are the key components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor) that contribute to life satisfaction?

To answer RQ1, a comparison across the sub-components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor) that had a significant relationship with OSB and a comparison across standardized regression weights, psychological zest ($\beta=0.46$) had the most impact on OSB, followed by social vigor ($\beta=0.28$) and emotional spark ($\beta=0.11$). Flow was non-significant. To answer RQ2, it was observed that psychological zest ($\beta=0.44$) had the highest impact on family identity, followed by social vigor ($\beta=0.13$) and flow ($\beta=0.10$). Emotional spark was non-significant. Finally, to answer RQ3, it was observed that social vigor ($\beta=0.26$) had the largest impact on life satisfaction, followed by flow ($\beta=0.12$). Both psychological zest and emotional spark did not have an impact on life satisfaction since the relationships were non-significant. The results are summarized below in Table 8.

Table 8. Summary of Independent Sample t-test Results Examining Research Questions

Independent Variable		Dependent Variable	Std. Reg. Weights	P-Value
<u>Research Question 1</u>				
Flow	-->	OSB	0.03	0.54
Psychological zest	-->	OSB	0.46	0.00
Emotional Spark	-->	OSB	0.11	0.03
Social Vigor	-->	OSB	0.28	0.00
<u>Research Question 2</u>				
Flow	-->	Family Identity	0.10	0.01
Psychological zest	-->	Family Identity	0.44	0.00
Emotional Spark	-->	Family Identity	0.04	0.37
Social Vigor	-->	Family Identity	0.13	0.02
<u>Research Question 3</u>				
Flow	-->	Life Satisfaction	0.12	0.03
Psychological zest	-->	Life Satisfaction	0.05	0.51
Emotional Spark	-->	Life Satisfaction	0.07	0.29
Social Vigor	-->	Life Satisfaction	0.26	0.00

Note – Significant paths highlighted in bold

Next, Research Question 4, stated the following:

RQ4: Do different parenting styles affect family identity and life satisfaction differently?

To answer RQ4, the construct of parental responsiveness was split at its median value (Median=6.00, SD=.87), with values above the mean as ‘high’ (n=228) in parental responsiveness, and values below the mean as ‘low’ (n=174) in parental responsiveness. This was done in order to assess differences across the parental responsiveness spectrum and to be able to discriminate between parents who are less responsive to the needs of their children compared to those that are more responsive. This rationale is consistent to the parental styles scale dichotomy devised by Carlson and Grossbart (1988), across the warm-hostile and

permissive-restrictive scales. Additionally, the median split method to bifurcate groups is a routinely used statistical technique group to split groups into two halves (Hair 2010; Locabucci et al., 2015) for further comparison. Researchers in the field of marketing have split groups by the median into high-low categories in prior research to gauge effects between the groups and be able to discriminate between them (Burton & Soboleva 2011; Barone et al., 2007). An independent sample t-test was performed to assess the impact of high (M=6.43, SD=0.77) and low (M=5.29, SD=1.04) parental responsiveness on family identity. The difference was significant $t(307.001) = -12.19, p=0.00$. Additionally, high parental responsiveness (M=5.87, SD=1.03) was significantly different than low parental responsiveness (M=4.95, SD=0.94); $t(400) = -9.18, p=0.00$, in relation to the impact of parental responsiveness on life satisfaction.

The results suggests that parental responsiveness does have an effect on family identity and life satisfaction. Specifically, the results suggest that parents who are more responsive to the needs of their children have greater family identity and life satisfaction from a family vacation compared to parents who are less responsive to the needs of their children. The results are summarized below in Table 9.

Table 9. Summary of Independent Sample t-test Results of Parental Responsiveness

Family Identity		Sample Size	Mean	SD	t-value	dof	p-value
Parental Responsiveness	High	228	6.43	0.77	-12.19	307.001	0.00
	Low	174	5.29	1.04			
Life Satisfaction		Sample Size	Mean	SD	t-value	dof	p-value
Parental Responsiveness	High	228	5.87	1.03	-9.18	400	0.00
	Low	174	4.95	0.94			

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The final chapter of this study discusses the results of data analysis and its relations to past literature, proposes hypotheses and research questions. It then discusses theoretical and managerial implications of the results. This section concludes by outlining limitations and suggestions for future studies.

Discussion of Results

Family vacations are a decades old ritual that families participate in, in order to improve functioning, cohesion, and overall well-being (Fu, Lehto, & Park, 2014; Lehto, Choi, Lin, & MacDermid, 2009; Lehto, Lin, Chen, & Choi, 2012). The opportunity to travel and be with family members is often cherished and helps members bond together and have fun. Having fun is a major motive of family vacations (Fu, Lehto, & Park, 2014; Lehto et al., 2009; Lehto, Lin, Chen, & Choi, 2012). However, there have been few studies examining the effect of fun, and none specifically in the family vacation context. Therefore, this study examined the effects of fun, specifically its sub-components of flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor and how they contribute to increased family identity and life satisfaction. Additionally, this study also contributes to academic literature in the travel domain by examining the role of fun in a family vacation context. The study also applies the concept of family identity to research in travel and tourism.

Overall, a summary of key findings from the study are listed below, and discussed further in the sections below:

- Flow impacted family identity and life satisfaction, but not OSB.
- Psychological zest had the biggest impact across all sub-components of fun on the outcome variables of OSB and family identity, but did not impact life satisfaction.
- Emotional spark influenced OSB but did not influence family identity and life satisfaction.
- Social vigor impacted all outcome variables, which were OSB, family identity and life satisfaction.

- Family identity and life satisfaction were higher for dual-parent families than single-parent families.
- Family identity and life satisfaction were higher for mothers than for fathers.
- Parents who were more responsive to the needs of their children had higher family identity and life satisfaction.
- OSB mediated the effect of psychological zest and social vigor on family identity and life satisfaction.

Discussion on the Relationship of Fun with On-the-Spot Behavior (Hypothesis 1 and Research Question 1)

The study gathered data pertaining to the different sub-components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor), as well as data related to OSB by a family during their vacation. This was used to answer Hypothesis 1, which stated:

Fun will be positively related to collective family on-the-spot behavior.

Analysis of the data revealed that psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor were positively and significantly related to OSB, however flow was not. Feelings of positivity and happiness, captured in the construct of psychological zest would encourage a family to engage in collective behavior. This was represented in the positive relationship between psychological zest and OSB. Similar findings were revealed in the study by Choi and Choi (2018) where psychological zest was positively related to OSB, however their sample of respondents were individual tourists, and not families. Next, the occasion of being with family members and engaging with them socially, represented by social vigor also had a positive relation with OSB at the vacation destination. Research from the family identity stream suggests

families engage in various behavior and rituals in order to reinforce their collective identity, and make it tangible (Epp & Price, 2008). Therefore, in the context of family vacations, it seems reasonable that social vigor would prompt families to engage in OSB.

In addition to Hypothesis 1, this section of data also attempted to answer Research Question 1: *What are the key components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor) that contribute to collective family on-the-spot behaviors?*

Results indicate that psychological zest had the biggest impact on OSB, followed by social vigor and emotional spark. Flow was the only sub-component of fun that did not have a significant influence on OSB. A possible explanation could be that vacation excursions typically do not involve experiences and tasks that make vacationers delve deep into them. In contrast, most vacation experiences likely involve relaxation and involvement in a series of different activities at a shallower level (Brey & Lehto 2007; Van Raaij & Francken, 1984). This likely does not permit for persistence and therefore engagement in a flow state. Therefore it can be inferred that happiness and pleasure during a family vacation affect the spontaneous engagement in OSB more than being part of a specific social group, which is the family. Stated differently, the act of being with family does not by itself prompt them to engage in OSB. The presence of emotion, specifically happiness had the most influence on engagement in OSB, and being with family was an additional factor that contributed to OSB. In a similar vein, Choi and Choi (2018), in their study of solo tourists found that psychological zest had a positive relationship with OSB, however in their study, the relationship between social vigor and OSB was non-significant. The latter result is expected since the target population for the survey were solo tourists. Therefore the present study confirmed the findings by Choi and Choi (2018) as well as extends the findings on the social aspect of traveling and spending time with family members, which is reflected in

the construct of social vigor having a positive and significant relationship with OSB, and is a contribution of this study. Specifically, when it comes to the effect on OSB, psychological zest is more influential than social vigor by one-third and is almost four times more influential than emotional spark. A possible explanation for this is since happiness, represented by psychological zest is a bigger motivation to engage in spontaneous behavior during a vacation than the degrees of happiness experienced, represented by emotional spark and social vigor. Since one of the most important factors of fun is happiness, and since happiness is also an important component of a vacation, this helps offer a plausible explanation of why psychological zest has the biggest impact on OSB.

Discussion on the Relationship of Fun with Family Identity (Hypothesis 2 and Research Question 2)

Hypothesis 2 stated the following: *Fun will be positively related to family identity.* To address this hypothesis, the relationship of the sub-components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor) were analyzed with family identity.

Flow, psychological zest and social vigor influenced family identity; however, emotional spark, or the degree of happiness did not affect family identity. Traveling with family members for a vacation has been shown to elicit happiness and elation (Fu et al., 2014; Lehto et al., 2009). This causes one to lose track of time due to the enjoyment associated with a vacation event, thereby resulting in a flow state (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1992). The trip also gives an opportunity to bond and experience togetherness (Lehto et al., 2012), while also likely reinforcing family identity (Epp & Price, 2008). It is plausible that happiness experienced during a vacation, represented by psychological zest and not the degree of happiness, represented by

emotional spark, affects family identity. In other words, the family vacation trip itself and being with loved family members is enough to reinforce family identity, and the degree of happiness or peaks in joy are not relevant to reinforcing the collective identity. Additionally, family identity is concerned with behavior that family members engage in to reinforce their collective set of beliefs and values (Epp & Price, 2008). The event of traveling for a family vacation itself with family members could possibly fulfil that requirement, and the resulting positive emotions reinforce family identity.

This section also aims to answer Research Question 2, which asked: *What are the key components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor) that contribute to family identity?* Results indicated that psychological zest affected family identity the most, followed by social vigor and the flow. Specifically psychological was four times as influential as flow and three times more influential than social vigor, as they all influenced family identity. However, emotional spark was not influential in its effect on family identity. These findings, which are similar to the results for RQ1, suggest that there is more to just being part of a family. In the context of a family vacation, enjoying the vacation is more important than going for a vacation with the family. Stated differently, enjoyment and the positivity associated with a family vacation does more to reinforce the collective sense of belonging to a family. Finally, losing a sense of time as a result of enjoyment and being part of the family group also helps reinforce family identity.

Discussion on the Relationship of Fun with Life Satisfaction (Hypothesis 3 and Research Question 3)

Data collected during this study on life satisfaction was intended to answer Hypothesis 3, which stated: *Fun will be positively related to life satisfaction*. For the purposes of analyzing this hypothesis, the relationship of the sub-components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor) were analyzed with life satisfaction. Results indicated that, flow and social vigor had a positive influence on life satisfaction. However, psychological zest and emotional spark did not have any influence on life satisfaction.

Life satisfaction is a cognitive construct which concerns itself with a subjective evaluation of the circumstances of one's life, in this case the family's life, against self-determined criteria (Diener, 1984, 1994). It does not concern itself with affective responses, and since psychological zest and emotional spark are constructs related to emotions, they likely do not influence or determine life satisfaction. This also potentially explains why flow, which is cognitive in nature influences life satisfaction. Specifically, if families engage in experiences that enables them to be engaged and therefore lose track of time, it is likely that the task will be related with life satisfaction. Next, social vigor represented as the group membership in the family and spending time with them during a vacation being members closer together in an enjoyable setting. This makes family members likely believe that everything is going well and make them believe that they are satisfied with life. This is an important finding since life satisfaction is known to have long term effects (Diener, 1984), which possibly persist for some time after the family vacation is over. First, greater life satisfaction from a vacation will likely help a family bond and have positivity persist. Next, if family vacations provide higher life satisfaction, it is possible that families also experience higher customer satisfaction. This will

likely bode well for vacation destination with regards to tourist reviews and intent to recommend the destination. Additionally, the life satisfaction construct is broad in nature and is likely affected by several factors, apart from just vacation experience. Specifically, the perception of life satisfaction for an individual or group may be determined by other factors related to general life, such as monetary status, factors related to a job, and personal physical health, among others. Furthermore, factors that affect life satisfaction may impact it differently based on context and life stage. Thus, a factor that may be influential on life satisfaction at one stage in life, may be less influential at another point in life. For instance, an individual who may be going through financial challenges will be more likely to have lower life satisfaction based on his or her current financial situation. Similarly other factors may increase or decrease in their importance on determining life satisfaction at different points in time.

This section also aimed to answer Research Question 3, which asked: *What are the key components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor) that contribute to life satisfaction?* Results indicated that social vigor had twice the influence on life satisfaction than flow, implying that bonding and feeling part of a family has a larger bearing on life satisfaction than losing sense of time. However, psychological zest and emotional spark did not have any significant influence on life satisfaction. These findings have implications for customer satisfaction and intention to revisit the vacation destination in the future. If families are able to bond and spend quality time together during a vacation, they will likely have higher life satisfaction. This is an important finding. If families spend quality time with each other and have positive experiences together, this is likely to elicit a stronger bond among all family members. The positive experience will likely be captured and relived as fond vacation memory, and also manifest itself as life satisfaction. This is a relevant takeaway from the present study as increased

life satisfaction from the family vacation will likely leave customers satisfied with the vacation experience. This will possibly present a positive image for the vacation destination and likely boost recommendations for tourist visits to that destination in the future. It will also likely benefit the family by improving well-being and cohesion.

Discussion on the Relationship of OSB with Family Identity and Life Satisfaction

(Hypothesis 4 and 5)

Hypothesis 4, stated that: *Engaging in collective family on-the-spot behavior leads to an increase in family identity.* Data analysis of OSB and its influence on family identity and life satisfaction indicated that OSB had a positive relationship with family identity, thereby supporting Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 5 stated: *Engaging in collective family on-the-spot behavior leads to an increase in life satisfaction.* Since OSB also had a positive relationship with life satisfaction, it supported results from Hypothesis 5. These results support the rationale that engaging in OSB as a way to reinforce shared beliefs and values brings family members closer together, and leads to family identity. Moreover, specific collective behaviors such as taking group photos together, having a collective meal and sightseeing together with family members allows everyone to spend quality time with each other and bond. This experience likely also promotes togetherness. Additionally, engaging in OSB and the positive memories captured through associated experiences likely results in increased life satisfaction. By engaging in positive and stimulating behaviors collectively as a family, family members can believe that things in their life are good. This possibly results in increased life satisfaction.

Discussion of the Mediating Effects of OSB (Hypotheses 6 and 7)

This section focuses on discussing mediation effects of OSB on family identity and life satisfaction. Specifically, Hypothesis 6 stated: *OSB mediates the relationship between fun and family identity*, and Hypothesis 7 stated: *OSB mediates the relationship between fun and life satisfaction*. Results suggested that OSB mediated the effects of psychological zest and social vigor on family identity and life satisfaction. However, OSB did not mediate the effect of emotional spark and flow on family identity and life satisfaction.

As prior literature suggests, tourists would want to capture positive emotions and happiness, represented by psychological zest and therefore engage in OSB (Choi & Choi, 2018; Enrique Bigné, Mattila, & Andreu, 2008; Mattila & Enz, 2002). This further results in increased family identity, since engaging in behaviors and consumption practices that represent the values and beliefs held by the family, reinforces togetherness. Stated differently, the collective identity of the family, represented as family identity, is enacted via consumption behavior. Family vacations are a conduit for the creation of memories that last for the long-term, and positive experiences during a vacation likely promote life satisfaction (Diener, 1994). The mediating effect of OSB during a family vacation suggests that OSB offers an opportunity to make events and experiences tangible through positive behaviors that form memories, which further lead to increased life satisfaction and family bonding. The mediating role of OSB is in addition to the direct relationship between psychological zest and social vigor on family identity and life satisfaction. This suggests that external and potentially controllable conditions such as taking family group photos, going sightseeing, exploring a vacation destination and eating collective meals together, prompt families to engage in OSB and can add to the family vacation experience. This is a useful finding, since destination managers can cater their offerings and provide

potential opportunities for families to engage in OSB, so that family customers on vacation can experience increased life satisfaction and family identity. This, in turn is likely to lead to better customer satisfaction.

Discussion on the Relationship of Gender, Family Structure and Parenting Style with Family Identity and Life Satisfaction (Hypotheses 8 and 9 and Research Question 4)

Socio-demographic data collected in this study was intended to capture differences in family identity and life satisfaction by gender, family structure and parenting style. These results were intended to answer Hypothesis 8a which stated: *In a family vacation setting, family identity will be different for single-parent families than for dual-parent families*, and Hypothesis 8b which states: *In a family vacation setting, life satisfaction will be different for single-parent families than for dual-parent families*.

The results revealed that in a family vacation setting, dual-parent families and single-parent families had significant differences on family identity and life satisfaction. Specifically, dual-parent families had 7% more family identity than single-parent families and 11% higher life satisfaction. A possible explanation could be the complexity between dyadic relationships (parent-child) and triadic relationships (father-mother-child) that need to be exercised and reinforced in a dual-parent family. This complexity likely benefits from a relaxed atmosphere a family vacation provides, thereby promoting cohesion and well-being in the group. Furthermore, it is possible that dual-parent families reinforce collective values and beliefs among the group differently than single-parent families. Results of the study suggest that dual-parent families benefit from a family vacation more than single-parent families. While the need to relax and get away from routine is needed for both dual-parent families and single-parent families, it is

possible that bonding and achieving family identity as well as experiencing greater life satisfaction is more difficult for single-parent families than dual-parent families.

Next, socio-demographic data on gender and its effects on family identity and life satisfaction was used to address Hypothesis 9a, which states: *In a family vacation setting, family identity will be different for mothers than for fathers.* Hypothesis 9b, which states: *In a family vacation setting, life satisfaction will be different for mothers than for fathers.* Results indicate that family identity and life satisfaction are significantly different for mothers and fathers. Specifically, mothers had 7% greater family identity and 5% higher life satisfaction than fathers. A possible explanation could be that mothers and fathers prioritize the needs of children and communication with them differently (Churchill, Clark, Prochaska-Cue, Creswell, & Ontai-Grzebik, 2007; Grusec, Goodnow, & Kuczynski, 2000; Shaw, Havitz, & Delemere, 2008). Prior literature has also documented that children feel closer to their mothers and respond to them more (Grusec, Goodnow, & Kuczynski, 2000). Therefore the well-being of children and more broadly the integrity of the parent-child relationship encapsulated in the broader family identity framework matter more to mothers than fathers. Mothers and fathers place different emphasis on family togetherness and the need for the family group to bond (Churchill et al., 2007). Additionally, family bonding and the satisfaction derived from it has been established and documented in prior leisure studies (Churchill et al., 2007; Shaw & Dowson 2001), and is supported by the results of the present research.

Finally, data pertaining to parenting style, captured as parental responsiveness, was also assessed to answer Research Question 4, which asked: *Do different parenting styles affect family identity and life satisfaction differently?* Parental responsiveness is a behavioral construct and represents parenting traits that entail closer parent-child relationships. Results indicated that

differences existed between respondents who were ‘high’ versus those who were ‘low’ on the parental responsiveness scale. Specifically, parents who are more responsive to the needs of their children had 22% more family identity and 19 % greater life satisfaction than parents who were less responsiveness to the needs of their children. In a family vacation context, parents who valued the relationship they had with their child, and more broadly the family identity they held salient, benefitted more from a family vacation than those that valued the parent child relationship less. In the study, almost 57% or the majority of respondents identified as ‘high’ on parental responsiveness. Therefore, extended to the broader population, if the majority of families traveling for a family vacation have a high level of parental responsiveness, catering to their needs by facilitating experiences which can further strengthen the parent-child bond will likely lead to greater family identity and life satisfaction. This can lead to benefits for the family in terms of improved familial functioning, and better customer satisfaction and positive destination image for the destination.

Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to academic literature in the fun and family vacation domains in several ways. First, the study tested the influence of fun and its sub-components on OSB, which was previously tested in research by Choi and Choi (2018), and they did so only on solo travelers. Next, the study extended the effects of fun and its sub-components on outcomes other than OSB (Choi & Choi, 2018), which were family identity (Epp & Price, 2008) and life satisfaction (Diener, 1984). It also established the mediating impact of OSB between sub-components of fun and outcomes of family identity and life satisfaction. Of the various sub-components of fun (flow, psychological zest, emotional spark and social vigor), this study

established that psychological zest was the most impactful factor while social vigor had the wider impact on all outcomes, which were OSB, family identity and life satisfaction. Additionally, this study noted that life satisfaction and family identity were different between dual-parent and single parent households, where the former group had higher life satisfaction and family outcomes from a family vacation. Additionally, mothers had greater life satisfaction and family identity than fathers from a family vacation. These results are novel to the fun and family vacation literature and have not been examined prior to this study.

The present research also examines fun in a family vacation context, which has not previously been done. The initial fun-scale developed by Tasci and Ko (2016) gathered data from a sample of individual travelers. Choi and Choi (2018) also used the fun-scale and extended their research on a sample of individual travelers. Therefore, the present study applies the fun-scale in a group travel context, specifically for families and family vacations, and not for individual travelers. Finally, the present study applies the family identity framework (Epp & Price, 2008) to the family vacation stream of research. Family identity is based on the collective identity enactments of families through consumption behaviors and actions, and is itself based on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In summary, findings from the study contributes to academic literature by extending the research on fun by examining its effects on group and cognitive outcomes. The results of this study can inform destination managers to better cater to the needs of family travelers and potentially increase satisfaction.

Managerial Contribution

The results of this study have several implications for destination managers. Since family travelers are different to solo travelers, plans and efforts should be differentiated in order to cater

to the needs of family travelers. Specifically, if as a family can experience happiness and togetherness during their vacation, the family is more likely to bond and have a memorable visit. Offering experiences that enable a family to participate and be together, while also providing positive and memorable experiences will likely help maximize destination engagement for family vacationers. This is evidenced in the finding that psychological zest, represented as happiness had the most impact across of sub-components of fun. This presents an opportunity for destination managers to capitalize on, as the results of this study suggest happy customers will engage in greater OSB and family identity. However, it also presents a great risk. If the vacation experience for family members is marred by any negative experience or slack in service quality that diminishes the happiness of the family, the results of this study suggest it will likely leave a greater impact than any other factor. Prior research from psychology, specifically prospect theory indicates that losses are valued and felt more than gains (Kahneman & Tversky, 2013). In a service context this can be understood as negative vacation experiences are likely to hold more weight than positive ones. Thus, a single negative experience can possibly ruin the vacation experience. Since psychological zest or happiness was the sub-component that had the biggest impact on outcome variables, it is vital that destination managers ensure excellent service quality and that no instance causes a reduction in happiness of family vacationers.

Next, social vigor had the widest impact across all sub-components of fun. Therefore, a collective social activity such as sightseeing, or an excursion to sample the culture and cuisine at a vacation destination together as a family will likely captures both the social as well as happy dimension of a family vacation. Such engagements will be beneficial for business. Additionally, destination managers are encouraged to provide opportunities for families to tangibly demonstrate their happiness and social togetherness by engaging in spontaneous behaviors such

as, site-seeing, exploration, sharing a meal and take group photos. This is further likely to facilitate life satisfaction and family identity, which was demonstrated by the mediating effect of OSB between psychological zest and social vigor on life satisfaction and family identity. Satisfied customers are more likely to leave with positive impressions of their experience and of the destination. They will potentially also consider revisiting the destination and recommend the destination to others.

Finally, given the findings that family identity and life satisfaction are different for dual-parent and single-parent families, this suggests that changing family structures warrant a review for personalized service offering by family structures, destination managers could consider personalizing and differentiating offerings for both dual-parent and single-parent families. The opportunity to participate socially and experience happiness could possibly result in higher satisfaction and feelings of togetherness for the family. The present study also noted differences by gender, where mothers had higher levels of family identity and life satisfaction from family vacations than fathers did. By being cognizant of differences by family structure and gender for different sets of travelers, destination managers could offer more tailored services and experiences to families with different dynamics, they could possibly achieve greater satisfaction.

Limitations and Future Studies

While this study provides several contributions, it also has several limitations. First, the data collected is online via Amazon's Mturk. While other academic studies have established that data quality is adequate from Mturk, some researchers doubt the generalizability of survey results as well as the incentives of survey respondents to answer the survey for monetary rewards. This casts doubt among some academic researchers to accept the results of studies that

collect data online via Amazon Mturk. To address this, survey administered to a pre-screened purposive sample of respondents that meet the screening criteria of this study could possibly alleviate the aforementioned limitation. Next, while the data collected for this survey did not reveal any common method bias (CMB), some researchers doubt survey data emanating from a single source. They propose data collection from multiple sources or advocate for the use of mixed methods for data collection to improve the external validity of the study. Therefore, in addition to an online survey, future studies should incorporate data collection from multiple sources such as purposive in-person surveys as well as qualitative data collected via interviews or focus groups.

Additionally, the data collected for this survey was from an adult parent who was answering the survey on behalf of the whole family. A more accurate representation of the vacation experience for a family would have been to capture data from all family members. This would have enabled a more accurate description of the vacation experience of the family. The family research stream also recognizes the complexity of research on families and the difficulty of measuring the interaction among family members as well as their consumption patterns and behaviors (Commuri & Gentry, 2000). Additional modes of data collection such as qualitative data via interviews would have allowed for deeper insights into the dynamics of family vacation experiences and would have provided a rich perspective along with survey results. Specifically, in addition to parents, data collected in interviews of children would help bolster findings and add an additional perspective to research findings. Also, the profile of survey respondents consists mostly of millennials and other generations of respondents are not as accurately represented in the survey sample. This is another limitation of the study.

Therefore, future studies would benefit from data collection that is more representative of the general population. Next, future studies that collect data from children as well as parents to reflect an accurate description of the family vacation travel experience is proposed. The present study also generalizes fun, and does not differentiate between activities that are more fun and others that are less so. In specific, it also does not distinguish between activities or identify the types of activities that are fun for adults and those that are fun for children. Future research that separates and delves into different types of activities that are fun for parents and children would help focus attention towards potentially offering different activities for parents, children and for the collective family that can maximize fun for the individual and the collective family group.

Next, the findings of this study suggest that social vigor influences life satisfaction. Future research could investigate why social vigor affects life satisfaction. Any findings from such studies could then help inform destination managers how families could benefit from greater life satisfaction, if they are provided with a social activities during a vacation. With regards to family structure and parental gender, future research should consider looking into reasons why dual-parent families and mothers have higher life satisfaction and family identity in a family vacation context. Findings from such research could help destination managers devise strategies and plans to offer tailored experiences based on the socio-demographic characteristics of family travelers. Also, future research that addresses the needs of family travelers by generation such as millennials and Generation X would be beneficial, since both these generations of travelers constitute the majority of travelers and have differing patterns of behaviors and preferences. Additionally, more families have indicated that they are willing to travel as a multigenerational group for family vacations (AAA 2018). Specifically, how multigenerational families plan to have fun and fulfil the needs of all traveling members would

be relevant research in the family vacation domain. Other factors such as vacation profile of families could also be analyzed to assess patterns of vacations and associated preferences. This can help inform destination managers about different profile of family vacation travelers and their associated vacation preferences. Finally, the this research stream could be extended to study the effects of fun on additional service related outcomes such as vacation satisfaction, customer loyalty, intention to recommend the destination, and intention to review the vacation destination positively.

APPENDIX A

Survey Questionnaire

Screener Question

Opening:

Q1: Are you an adult parent aged 18 and above?

Yes - *Respondent continues with survey*

No – *Respondent thanked and exits survey*

Q2: Are you a parent?

Yes - *Respondent continues with survey*

No – *Respondent thanked and exits survey*

Q3: Do you have at least one child in the household aged 17 or younger?

Yes - *Respondent continues with survey*

No – *Respondent thanked and exits survey*

Q4: Have you traveled with your family on a vacation (extended period of leisure and recreation with family members, especially one spent away from home or in traveling) in the past 12 months?

Yes – *Respondent continues with survey*

No – *Respondent thanked and exits survey*

Recollection exercise: Take a moment and think about a family vacation (extended period of leisure and recreation with family members, especially one spent away from home or in traveling) you took within the last 12 months. Then in the text box below, briefly describe that experience in 1 to 2 sentences. (Open text box)

Fun (with sub-scales) - Items in *italics* added separately to scale

Tasci, A. D., & Ko, Y. J. (2016). A fun-scale for understanding the hedonic value of a product: The destination context. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 33(2), 162-183.

Choi, H., & Choi, H. C. (2018). Investigating Tourists' Fun-Eliciting Process toward Tourism Destination Sites: An Application of Cognitive Appraisal Theory. *Journal of Travel Research*, 0047287518776805.

Question stem: Thinking about the recent vacation you undertook with your family, it....

Scale: (1=strongly disagree – 7=strongly agree)

Flow:

1. made my family forget about their daily routine.
2. made my family forget about time.
3. made my family forget about their social status.
4. made my family forget about other places.
5. *made my family forget about their problems.*

Psychological Zest:

1. made my family happy.
2. made my family enjoy the experience.
3. made my family excited.
4. provided pleasurable experiences for my family.
5. made my family feel alive.

Emotional Spark:

1. provided my family emotional peaks.
2. made my family feel emotionally involved.
3. made my family feel emotionally charged.

Social Vigor:

1. provided my family an opportunity to meet active people.
2. offered my family surprising experiences.
3. energized my family.
4. made my family feel social.
5. *provided my family members quality time with each other.*

Collective family on-the-spot behavior (adapted from individual on-the-spot behavior):

Items in *italics* added separately to scale

Choi, H., & Choi, H. C. (2018). Investigating Tourists' Fun-Eliciting Process toward Tourism Destination Sites: An Application of Cognitive Appraisal Theory. *Journal of Travel Research*, 0047287518776805.

Question stem: Thinking about the recent vacation you undertook with your family, the family...

Scale: (1=strongly disagree – 7=strongly agree)

Family on-the-spot behavior (OSB):

1. made *spontaneous* purchases at the destination.
2. took *family group* photos.
3. shared family experiences on social media.
4. *went sightseeing together.*
5. *shared a collective meal together.*
6. *went exploring together.*
7. *engaged in unplanned activities at the spur of the moment.*

Shared Family Identity (adapted from shared-family identity scale and family cohesion scale):

Soliz, J., & Harwood, J. (2006). Shared family identity, age salience, and intergroup contact: Investigation of the grandparent–grandchild relationship. *Communication Monographs*, 73(1), 87-107.

Question stem: Thinking about the activities your family undertook during the vacation, they...

Scale: (1=strongly disagree – 7=strongly agree)

1. made my family believe our shared membership in the family is important.
2. made us believe we belong in the same family.
3. made us believe we are members of the same family.
4. made us feel proud to be part of the same family.

Life Satisfaction scale: - Items in *italics* added separately to scale

Pavot, W., & Diener, E. (2009). Review of the satisfaction with life scale. In assessing well-being (pp. 101-117). Springer, Dordrecht.

Question stem: Thinking about the activities your family undertook during the vacation, it felt...

Scale: (1=strongly disagree – 7=strongly agree)

Life Satisfaction:

1. in most ways my family's life is close to the ideal.
2. the conditions of my family's life are excellent.
3. my family is satisfied *with the way things are*.
4. my family has gotten the important things they want in life.
5. if my family could live life over again, we would change almost nothing.

Vacation Satisfaction scale: - Items in *italics* added separately to scale

Magi, Anne W. (2003), "Share of Wallet in Retailing: the Effects of Customer Satisfaction, Loyalty Cards and Shopper Characteristics," JR, 79 (2), 97-106.

Question stem: Thinking about the most recent vacation you undertook with your family, please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Scale: (1=not at all – 7=extremely)

Vacation Satisfaction:

1. How satisfied was your family with their vacation experience?
2. How well did the vacation meet the expectations of your family?
3. How close to the ideal was the vacation experience for your family?

Socio-demographic variables:

1. Age – (Drop down box for age)
2. Income - \$0-\$20,000; \$20,001-\$40,000; \$40,001-\$60,000; \$60,001-\$80,000; \$80,001-\$100,000; More than \$100,000
3. Ethnicity – Native American or American Indian; Black or African America; Asian; Hispanic or Latino; White; Middle-Eastern; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders; Other race(s): please specify
4. Education – Less than high school degree; High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED); Some college but no degree; Associate degree in college (2-year); Bachelor's degree in college (4-year); Advanced degree (e.g. MS, PhD, MD)
5. Gender: Male, Female, Gender variant/Non-conforming, Prefer to self-describe____, Prefer not to respond
6. Family Structure: Single-parent; Dual-parent; Other – (open text box)
7. Parenting responsiveness - A measure for parenting style (1=Strongly Disagree – 7=Strongly Agree):

- a. I expect my child to tell me when s/he thinks a rule is unfair.
 - b. I encourage my child to talk with me about things.
 - c. I explain the rationale to my child when I expect him/her to do something.
 - d. I often praise my child for doing well.
 - e. I usually tell my child reasons for rules.
 - f. I take an interest in my child's activities.
8. Number of children in the household – Age categories – 0-2; 3-5; 6-10; 10-13;14-17, followed by drop down to select number of children in each age category.
9. How long ago was the family vacation? – Dropdown from 0-12 for months.
10. How often do you take vacations with your family - more than once a year; once a year; once in two years; once in three years; once in four years; once in five years; less than once in five years.
11. What was the duration of your last family vacation? (Drop down menu)
12. How often do your children live with you? – All the time, Half of the time, other: Please specific (Open text box).
13. How are vacation decisions made in your household? – Largely decided by parent(s), Largely decided by child/children, Mutual decision between parents and children, other: Please specify.

APPENDIX B: IRB Approval



Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: 05/07/2019
Application Number: HS-19-28
Proposal Title: An Investigation into the "Fun" Aspect of Family Vacations

Principal Investigator: ADITYA UDAI SINGH SINGH
Co-Investigator(s):
Faculty Adviser: Stacy Tomas
Project Coordinator:
Research Assistant(s):

Processed as: Exempt
Exempt Category:

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in 45CFR46.

This study meets criteria in the Revised Common Rule, as well as, one or more of the circumstances for which continuing review is not required. As Principal Investigator of this research, you will be required to submit a status report to the IRB triennially.

The final versions of any recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRBManager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be approved by the IRB. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, adviser, other research personnel, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any unanticipated and/or adverse events to the IRB Office promptly.
4. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB Office at 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Sincerely,
Oklahoma State University IRB

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