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Ceasing participation by children in a municipal recreation setting

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**CEASING PARTICIPATION BY CHILDREN
IN A MUNICIPAL RECREATION SETTING**

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

Todd David Trimble

December 1999

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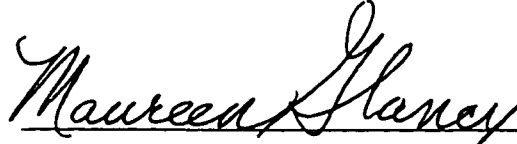
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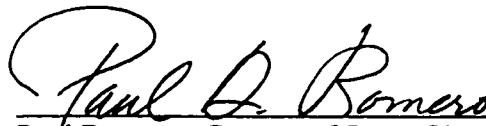
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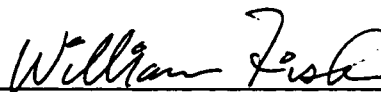


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ABSTRACT

CEASING PARTICIPATION BY CHILDREN IN A MUNICIPAL RECREATION SETTING

By Todd D. Trimble

This study investigated reasons why children cease participation in leisure activities in a municipal recreation setting. Little research exists regarding the impact of constraints and barriers to recreation participation by children aged 3 to 10 years. Subjects of the study were 46 children who participated in recreation activities with the City of Walnut Creek Leisure Services Division during the Fall 1998 or Winter 1999 quarters of programming but who either did not complete the program or did not register for the same program in the following quarter. The mothers of the children responded to a mailed survey. Results indicated that product quality, feeling overwhelmed, and decision orientations were significant reasons to discontinue participation. Several background qualities were associated with each factor.

Acknowledgements

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I thank the cities of Pleasanton and Walnut Creek, my agencies of employment, for their support during this process and especially Walnut Creek Leisure Services Manager Kern Hildebrand and the staff at the Heather Farm Community Center for all their support.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family. My 21-month old baby daughter, Madison, will now hopefully see her daddy much more often. And I thank my wife, Christi, for all her support and assistance and for not letting me forget that I could, and would, do it.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Social Problems of Children

There is a sense of national urgency to deal effectively with irrational and unexpected behaviors by youth who feel alienated and who are exhibiting symptoms of anomie, a state of confusion resulting in some degree of uneasiness and a sense of separation from the group (Merton, 1968). Even youth from "good" families, schools, and neighborhoods are "in trouble." It would seem that, despite efforts to provide high quality, appropriate, and desirable recreational, educational, and extra-curricular programs, some youth do not make it successfully into adulthood. The question is "why?" In school, in recreation, in all areas of life, this situation is universally observed and an equally baffling problem to leaders, organizers, teachers, administrators, and government officials. It seems, though, every adult has an opinion, but none have succeeded in changing youth patterns of dropping out of socially organized systems for growing, learning, gaining useful skills and knowledge, discovering personal interests and talents, and passing, thereby, into adulthood as competent, self-confident citizens.

Search for Solutions

Nationally, public and private discussions are underway to identify what leads to the breakdown in youth so disasters like school-site murders, school arson, parent homicides, and school-site hostage-taking can be prevented. Virtually no reports are available of such acts occurring during supervised or independent, meaningful recreation or on public or private recreation properties. It is a goal of leisure professionals to attract

and retain the attention of youth so their minds and energies will have productive goals on which to focus while they become positively integrated in the social groups which form around recreational activities.

Youth At-risk Socially

At-risk youth have been a major focus of park and recreation professionals since the mid-1990's, instigated by increases in youth gang activity and drug use and a rising high school dropout rate. This evidence of acting out, feelings of alienation from society, feelings of anxiety, and, again, symptoms of anomie such as a lack of standards, are all too common in the communities of today. Leisure professionals and researchers alike continue to seek reasons and underlying factors for this behavior.

The Problem with Dropping Out

Based on the assumption that feelings of alienation and anxiety, along with symptoms of anomie, has something to do with dropping out of society, then the question arises about what prompts children to drop out of organized recreation programs. These are programs which might capture their interests, build their personal skills repertoires, and help them to learn how to practice friendship and be socially at ease in groups. Studying the complex issue of how to help youth integrate successfully into society during their childhood seemed to be a way to approach the problem. Thus, an instance of local youth recreation program participation was selected to examine the factors associated with dropping out from program opportunities.

Rationale -- Dropping Out as a Local Problem

The City of Walnut Creek is located in the eastern portion of the San Francisco Bay area, situated in the center of Contra Costa County. The city has a population of approximately 64,000 and a racial make up, in 1990, of 90.6 percent White, 6.7 percent Asian, 0.8 percent Black, and 1.7 percent other. Walnut Creek can be described as an upper middle-class community based on its median income, according to the 1990 census, of approximately \$60,000 per year and an average detached family home price, in 1995, of \$343,400. Cost of living is roughly comparable to most growing cities in the Bay Area, in other words, much higher than the national average. Thus, affluence judged by income is only relative due to the cost generated by living in the Walnut Creek area.

Overall, delinquent activity and current high school dropout rates in Walnut Creek fall below national averages. According to the Walnut Creek Police Department, the community is experiencing increased delinquent youth activity, such as drug use and gang activity, and truancy. Concerns have been raised, suggesting that problems with youth must be controlled before they get out of hand. Of note, are unsubstantiated reports of a change from a long-standing pattern in recreation in which youth tended to re-enroll in continuing recreation programs or to shift their focus to new programs when re-enrollment was not possible. Today, youth re-enrollment rates are down. Although this does not represent trend data, the differences are significant enough to suggest further study of this change in behavior.

The Local Recreation Situation: A Representative Research Setting

The City of Walnut Creek's Leisure Services Division provides programs and activities for preschoolers, children, adults, seniors, and those with special needs in aquatics, sports, fitness, day camps, special interest classes, and more. The recreation staff work diligently to provide quality programs to satisfy recreation and leisure needs of community members. A constant attempt is made to stimulate the interest of patrons by introducing new classes and activities while expending equal energy to maintain the positive qualities and attractions of existing programs.

Even with the effort put forth by staff, a percentage of the patrons cease their participation in the available activities. Although this phenomenon is not of great surprise, it does prompt questions and raise concerns by the staff regarding the causes of the changed behavior of some youth in the City.

Need for the Study

Recreation professionals need to be aware of the factors behind ceasing participation of their patrons. It is not expected that this knowledge would lead to elimination of the ceasing participation problem, but, to the extent that ceasing participation is directly related to decision-making aspects of program services, it is something that staff can affect. Ceasing participation by individuals who discontinue a program or activity due to a particular characteristic of that program or activity is an outcome that recreation professionals would like to prevent. Knowledge of problematic aspects would allow the professional to intervene, make appropriate changes, and provide more appealing programs.

Research Design

This study focused on ceasing participation exhibited by children aged three to twelve who enrolled in a class offered by the Walnut Creek Leisure Services Division during the Fall 1998 or Winter 1999 quarters of programming, but who failed to re-enroll in the same class during the subsequent programming quarter. Considering the ages of the children involved, it was determined that the parents or guardians would serve as the respondents for the study for the purposes of providing written answers to a survey. It was assumed that the recorded reasons for ceasing participation would be the children's reasons as perceived by the respondents, although it could not be guaranteed that those perceptions would actually be identical with the children's reasons.

Theoretical Framework

Historically, the concept of anomie originally was thought of as a condition of relative normlessness in a society or group. It was considered a property of the social and cultural structure, not one of individuals confronting that structure. However, it was later extended to refer to a condition of individuals rather than of their environments. Anomie signifies the state of mind of one who has pulled up his or her moral roots, who no longer has any standards but only disconnected urges, who no longer has any sense of continuity, of family and friends or of obligation. The anomic person has become spiritually sterile, responsive only to him or herself, responsible to no one. The sociological concept of anomie is conceived as a breakdown in the cultural structure, occurring particularly when there is an acute disjunction between the cultural norms and goals and the social structure capacities of members of the group to act in accord with

them (Merton, 1968). In other words, anomie is an individual condition in which normative standards of conduct and belief are weak or lacking, characterized by disorientation, anxiety, and isolation (Woolf, 1981).

This ultimate lack of spirit, lack of responsibility to others, or lack of moral standards likely begins during the years of early childhood (Erikson, 1963). This study sought to determine reasons behind behavior, specifically re-enrollment in recreation programs, which may be early symptoms of an anomic individual. As such, the purpose of this exploratory study was to determine the primary factors which influence children's decisions to cease their participation in recreation activities.

Statement of the Problem

This was an exploratory study to determine the primary factors which influence decisions by children or their parents to cease participation in organized recreation programs. By being aware of the reasons behind ceasing participation, leisure professionals may be able to create changes in programs, or in the administration of youth programs, that would respond better to the needs of children who drop out. A sub-problem was to determine the extent that parents or guardians influence the ceasing participation of the children. Associated with the sub-problem were efforts to characterize ceasing participants and their parents, looking for patterns that may direct program administrators. Although it was not in the purview of this study to examine the relationship of dropping out to local delinquency, that may be a subject of another study.

Basic Assumptions

Two basic assumptions were made for this study. The first one was that the ceasing participants do, indeed, have one or more reasons for their ceasing participation. This assumption may suppose that the ceasing behavior is rational and could include any number of reasons. For example, Tinsley and Kass (1979) determined that individuals obtain needed gratification through participation in leisure activities. The subjects could have initiated participation in the activity in an effort to gratify a personal need, or needs, and ceased that particular activity to begin another program which could possibly meet that need, or needs, better. It has been concluded that several needs can be satisfied to a significantly greater degree through participation in some leisure activities than by participation in other leisure activities (Tinsley, Barrett, & Kass, 1977).

The second assumption is that the parents and guardians had adequate knowledge of the reasons for their children's ceasing participation. Surveying of parents has been accomplished successfully in similar research (Burton & Martens, 1986).

Research Questions

This study explored the following research questions:

1. What are the primary factors, as perceived by the parents or guardians, which influence the children to discontinue participating in recreation programs?
2. To what extent do the parents or guardians influence the ceasing participation behavior?
3. Can the ceasing participants and parents or guardians be characterized?

Research Focus

Literature is reviewed in two specific areas of research. The first area studied will be the motivations behind, and the benefits of, leisure participation. Before people can cease participating, they must first initiate that participation. Research exists which shows that certain factors affect a person's motivation level. For example, it has been shown that amount of experience within a particular activity can affect motivation to participate (Williams, Schereyer, & Knopf, 1990). This can be a factor for children participating in an activity for the first time as there would be no experience to draw from for motivation. Another study identified four motives as being central to participation by individuals in a wide range of leisure activities. These motivational categories are (a) well-being, (b) social, (c) challenge, and (d) status (Clough, Shephard, & Maughan, 1989). For youth, main reasons for participating in sports include having fun, improving skills, and learning skills (Hayajneh, 1989). Several of the previously mentioned concepts affecting motivation, including experience level, challenge-seeking, improving skills, and learning skills, reflect Erikson's (1963) notion of children striving to become masters of many skills and working at this industriously. These motives are the psychological or foundational skills needed to cope with the drive or crisis associated with mastery in later childhood (Erikson, 1963).

The other area of much research activity is causes of non-participation and ceasing participation in leisure activities. Known as barriers and constraints, the discussion suggests what may lead to a discontinuation of leisure participation. Although work on leisure constraints and barriers dates back at least to the Outdoor Recreation

Resource Review Commission studies of the early 1960's, the main body of empirical research activity has occurred since 1980 (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991). Most of this research, however, focused on older adolescents and adults. Drawing from a study by Hultsman (1990) about why adolescents do not participate in after-school recreation activities, it is reasonable to think that similar reasons may exist for younger and older children. A study by Burton and Martens (1986), which will be detailed later, attempted to answer a question about whether other activities are truly more intrinsically appealing or whether dropouts turn to other activities because a particular sport has failed to meet their achievement needs even though the child's skills may be improving. Research on adolescents and adults can be summarized as producing results that suggest some knowledge of circumstances surrounding the ceasing participation is required for an accurate understanding of it.

Definitions of Terms

It was necessary to define words and expressions that were being used in a precise sense, not because everyone does not know what the word means, but precisely because everyone (figuratively speaking) does know what the word means. There is not always agreement on the meaning one intends for a word or group of words used by a professional in a specific and precise manner. Terms were defined because the proposed research depended upon an operational definition of a term to allow key concepts to be understood and used in the same way throughout the research program and in communicating the program and findings (Mauch & Birch, 1983). In addition, by

documenting sources of terms and research, the writer can credit sources and, thus, lend greater credence to his or her argument (Teitelbaum, 1998).

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions apply:

1. Program--a program can be defined as a tool, used by recreation professionals in their work, that has an effect upon human behavior and experience (Edginton, Compton, & Hanson, 1980).

2. Ceasing Participation--a measure of non-participation used by groups of researchers. The measure of non-participation refers to activities in which participation previously occurred but which has stopped for one or more reasons (Jackson & Dunn, 1988).

3. Ceasing Participants--children, aged three to twelve, who enrolled in a program offered by the Walnut Creek Leisure Services Division during the Fall quarter of 1998 or the Winter quarter of 1999 but who failed to re-enroll the following quarter.

4. Leisure Services Division--a service division within the City of Walnut Creek which provides recreation, leisure, and community services to the surrounding residential population.

5. Quarter--a method of division for the calendar year utilized by the Leisure Services Division which lasts approximately three months. For example, one year consists of the Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters.

Scope of the Study

A survey was distributed by mail and returned in the addressed, stamped envelope provided by a deadline date. The survey was sent to the parents or guardians of a specific population of the Leisure Service Division's patrons who have ceased participation. This population was selected from the Leisure Service Department's registration information and consisted of every child, aged three to twelve, who discontinued participation in an activity following an opportunity to re-enroll in that activity.

Limitations

A limitation is a factor that may or will affect a study in an important way, but which is not under the control of the researcher. A common limitation for a study such as this, one utilizing a survey, is the willingness and ability of individuals to respond at all, to respond in a timely fashion, and to respond accurately (Mauch & Birch, 1983).

The following limitations of this study were anticipated and may make the findings less generalizable: (a) the adult responses to the survey were their perception of the reasons why their children ceased participating and, therefore, may not be accurate reflections of a child's unwillingness to continue, (b) the validity and reliability of the self-developed survey instrument being used for this study was not formally tested, (c) completing a survey several months following the ceasing participation, the subjects may not accurately remember the reason (s) behind the decision to discontinue, (d) reactive arrangements resulting from the respondents' knowledge that they are participating in a research project may have resulted in inaccurate responses, and, as mentioned, (e) mailed surveys may yield a low return rate, affecting the results.

A delimitation, on the other hand, is a factor which is under control of the researcher that could affect the study. Delimitations in this study were using subjects of young ages as well as the use of particular program quarters, rather than selecting subjects from all the quarters.

Summary

There is a sense of national urgency to deal effectively with irrational and unexpected behaviors by youth. Public and private discussions are underway to identify what leads to the breakdown in youth so disasters can be avoided. As such, youth who are at-risk socially have been a major focus of park and recreation professionals for some time. Both leisure professionals and researchers continue to seek reasons and underlying factors for the at-risk behavior by youth.

The community of Walnut Creek is experiencing increased delinquent activity, including an increase in gang activity, general truancy, and school dropout rates. An example of this behavior is dropping out of socially organized systems for developmental growth and learning. Recreation staff at Walnut Creek Leisure Services Division do have an interest in why local children cease participation. Knowledge of these reasons may give professional staff the ability to change programs for the better, make quality programs more accessible, and, all in all, better provide for the community.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

Although available research focusing specifically on ceasing recreation participation by children is limited, relevant literature was discovered regarding ceasing participation exhibited by adolescents and adults as well as many studies involving non-participation, barriers and constraints to participation, motivation behind participation, and benefits of leisure participation. Following a pertinent section covering the developmental challenges experienced during the childhood, the review of literature will proceed by synthesizing the available research relevant to two topics: motivation behind, and benefits of, leisure participation and causes of non-participation and ceasing participation in leisure activities.

Childhood, The Developmental Challenges

The age span of subjects in the study, three to twelve years, covers three of Erikson's eight stages of the human life span. The first stage being covered, autonomy versus shame and doubt, accounts for children aged approximately 3 to 4.5. In this stage, children are beginning to separate from their parents and are realizing that they are powerful individuals. The sense of shame or self-doubt can be instilled in the child by attempting to over-control or negatively sanction attempts at autonomous behavior. Thus, the parent's or program leader's responses to a child's attempts at doing things on his or her own can be instrumental or detrimental to healthy psychosocial development.

The second stage in early childhood, covering the ages of 4.5 or 5 to 7 years, is the initiative versus guilt stage. Erikson stated that there is in every child at every stage a

new miracle of vigorous unfolding which constitutes a new hope and a new responsibility for all. Such is the sense and pervading quality of initiative. The child at this stage has a surplus of energy which permits him or her to forget failures quickly and to approach what seems desirable (even if it also seems uncertain and even dangerous) with undiminished and more accurate self-direction. Initiative is a necessary part of every act and one needs a sense of initiative for whatever one learns and does, including recreation. The danger in this stage is a sense of guilt over the goals contemplated and the act initiated in one's exuberant enjoyment of new locomotor and mental power. Guilt will also be the result of repeated failure to succeed and can be self-realized or can be the result of perfectionists or controlling adult influences who demand high standards of performance or who find the weakness in what has been done. This resulting guilt can cause a halt to the child's initiative and, therefore, lead to ceasing a recreation activity.

A third stage of childhood development, industry versus inferiority, occurs between ages 7 and 12 for most children. During this stage, the child learns to win recognition and develop a work ethic by producing things. To bring a productive situation to completion is an aim which gradually supersedes the whims and wishes of play. Children are attempting, practicing, learning, and mastering a wide spectrum of skills and developing a sense of self-esteem and pride. The danger, at this stage, lies in forming feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. If a child is not successful in mastering many skills and using them in productive activities, he or she may be discouraged from identifying with peers who have mastered many skills and can put them to use effectively. A child may experience diminishing self-esteem and may discontinue

creative efforts, and, ultimately, revert back to the more isolated behavior of earlier years (Erikson, 1963).

During these three life stages, children face difficult tasks because they must experience, understand, and master rapid and multifaceted changes. This understanding of changes must be integrated cognitively, emotionally, socially, and physically.

Motivation Behind, and Benefits of, Leisure Participation

The purpose of this study was to determine the primary factors which influence the decision of children to cease participation in leisure activities. To understand why people cease participation, it was necessary to examine the primary factors that lead to leisure participation. Before individuals can cease participating, they must first initiate that participation. Following research, Jackson (1983) suggested that participation is a function of a multidimensional complex of factors, that no single factor is of overriding importance in motivating participation in any given recreational activity. Bearing out Jackson's conclusion, a study focusing on youth in America showed some reasons for their participating in sports were to have fun, to improve skills, and to learn skills (Hayajneh, 1989). A study by Clough, et al. (1989) outlined six motivational categories of recreational runners underlying their involvement in the activity. The categories were well-being, social situation, challenge-seeking, status, fitness and health, and addiction to the activity. With research such as that just cited, it is possible to agree with Jackson (1983) that recreation participation is, indeed, a function of a multidimensional complex of factors; however, with the limited research available, it is difficult to suggest a parsimonious list of factors since findings were disparate.

Motivation

Some research on motivation levels exists, but the attempt continues to learn how to measure accurately what it takes to incite individuals to engage in recreation activities. A study done by Lounsbury and Hoopes (1988) examined the factors of achievement, supervising others, social interaction, creativity, physical activity, and mental activity to measure motivations for engaging in a favorite leisure activity over a 5-year period. The results indicated surprising stability over the period for leisure activity participation and, to a lesser extent, the motivation factors. This may suggest values assessed by a participant at one point in time will probably be generalized over a longer period. It may also mean leisure activity and motivation are relatively unyielding and unresponsive to change.

Studies also reveal that certain factors will affect one's motivation level. For example, Williams, et al. (1990) established that amount of experience with a particular activity can affect motivation to participate. Motivation may also be affected by perceived benefits of leisure which is a topic of research in itself. In addition, a few studies indicate considerable gains in factual knowledge, recognition memory, and behavior or skills during leisure engagements (e.g., Roggenbuck, Loomis, & Dagostino, 1990).

Benefits

Some favorable benefits, aside from the very important enjoyment factor, may result from recreation and leisure participation. Analysis suggests that freely chosen activities are accompanied by experiences with higher levels of positive affect, potency,

concentration, and lower levels of tension (Mannell, Zuzanek, & Larson, 1988). An earlier study by Kleiber, Larson, and Csikszentmihalyi (1986) investigated psychological dimensions of leisure for adolescents, examining their experience of freedom, intrinsic motivation, and positive affect or feelings in free time versus productive and maintenance activities. They found that adolescents reported experiencing greater freedom, intrinsic motivation, and greater positive affect in free-time activities than in productive and maintenance activities, but negative affect was associated with unproductive activity such as watching television or “hanging out” with friends. Finally, Jackson (1983) suggested what may be one of the greatest benefits of leisure participation by explaining that the positive reinforcement one receives from a beneficial or rewarding leisure experience results in a desire by the participant to expand his or her recreation and leisure opportunities.

In summary, it has been shown that, although no single factor creates an overriding influence on participation, numerous motives lead to recreation participation, such as to have fun, learn and improve skills, and interact socially. Unfortunately, motivations that prompt people to participate in leisure activities are not everlasting. Thus, interruption and or blocking of the motivation to participate were relevant to this study about why youth stop participating.

Causes of Non-Participation and Ceasing Participation in Leisure Activities

The origins of study of leisure constraints and barriers dates back at least to the Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission studies of the early 1960's; however, the main body of empirical research activity has occurred since 1980 (Crawford, et al.

1991). Much relevant literature discusses constraints which may lead to non-participation and ceasing participation as it pertains to adults and older adolescents. The question with relevance to this study was what similarities exist between the life stage groups as well as what differences affect children in particular.

Early studies, including one by Romsa and Hoffman (1980), suggested that distinct recreation segments exist, in part, due to how individuals perceive recreational opportunities. Particular viewpoints were noted among eight groups of recreation participants being studied. On the basis of their responses, these groups were collapsed into two categories of individuals--users and nonusers. Users stressed time, money, and facilities as barriers. Nonusers suggested lack of interest as the main reason for non-involvement.

Jackson (1990) stated there were two meaningful groups of non-participants in relation to recreation and leisure activity: those who do not wish to participate and those who do wish to participate but for whom a constraint or combination of constraints precludes participation. The next sections discuss Jackson's and others' research on the concept of constraints from a growing body of literature.

Constraints to Participation

Constraints have been defined as "factors that are assumed by researchers and perceived by individuals to inhibit or prohibit participation and enjoyment in leisure" (Jackson, 1991, p. 273). A study by Witt and Goodale (1981) reported barriers of would-be participants included work commitments, overcrowding of facilities, and lack of partners. The idea of constraints was expanded with the growing line of research.

Early research findings suggested no single barrier was of overriding importance in inhibiting participation in any given recreational activity. Rather it was a combination of barriers that was the problem (Jackson, 1983).

General Constraints

Often, ceasing participation is caused simply by a basic or general aspect of a program, not by something unique about its content. For example, it may be that the day and or time of the program conflicts with a child's personal schedule or the parent's schedule. Research done by Howard and Madrigal (1990) concluded that family, particularly mother, plays an instrumental role in shaping the organized recreation participation patterns of children. Children were found to make decisions independently only to a very modest degree. It appeared that this influence is a result of the mother's role as primary caretaker, bearing the responsibility of providing transportation and making schedule adjustments to accommodate the requirement for the child's participation in accord with other family caretaking considerations. Also, some specific situations can each be combated in ways that diminish the rate of ceasing participation. Conflicting program days, for example, may be something that is common to many of the participants, possibly even for common or similar reasons, such as sport team practices or obligatory religious programs. With this, simply changing the day of the program could not only assist with the problem of ceasing participation, but may also make it accessible to a whole new group of people.

Theory of Constraints to Leisure Participation

It is possible that a child's required level of instruction for a particular activity has progressed to a point beyond what is offered by the recreation agency. There is also the factor of "maximum potential," when it may be deemed that a child has reached the peak of his or her ability in a specific activity. Other factors that would be unique to the individual include personal taste for a program, competing interests, conflicting family values, or competing family needs or goals, such as allowing a sibling a chance to enroll in a program if resources are limited. There are social or personality conflicts when a child does not like the program leader and or other participants. Social commitments are factors when, for example, friends are doing a different activity. Finally, we can include a social comparison factor, which occurs when a child feels he or she does not fit in for some personal reason, such as race, religion, appearance, or economics.

Knowing why children discontinue their participation may give recreation staff the ability to make changes in programs, make activities more accessible and, with that, better provide for patrons of the community. It would seem that general factors might be easily identified and appropriate solutions created; however, individual factors may be more elusive, requiring alert and insightful observations and personal outreach by face-to-face program leaders.

Research identifies an unlimited variety of barriers and constraints to recreation and participation, but conceptually they can be generalized in three categories. The categories, with further explanation to follow, include constraints that are external to the individual that can be overcome with effort, constraints that are between the individual

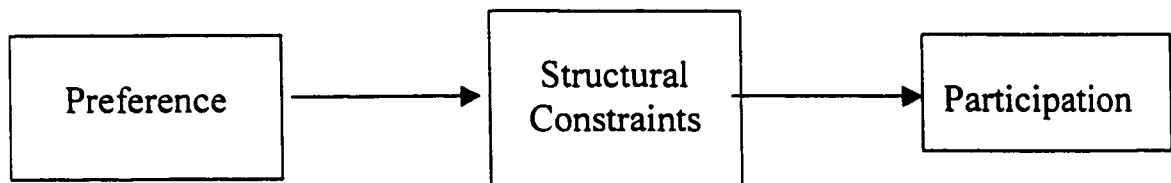
and some element of the social setting, or interpersonal, and constraints that are within the person's mind, the intrapersonal constraints which we create for ourselves.

Types of Constraints

Crawford and Godbey (1987) proposed "that barriers are conceptualized as affecting the relationship between leisure preferences and participation in three principal ways" (p. 122). The following sections illustrate these principal ways.

Structural constraints. Structural barriers entail the most commonly referred to constraints, those intervening between leisure preference and participation. Examples would be factors such as inclement weather, wrong time of year, does not fit into work schedule, or no transportation (Crawford & Godbey, 1987).

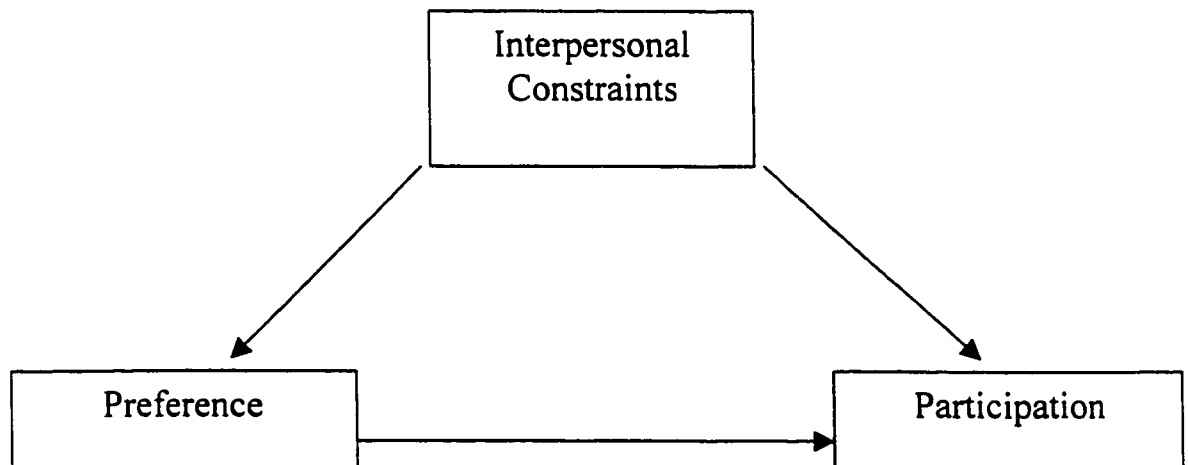
Figure 1. Structural Constraints and the Relationship Between Preference and Participation (Crawford & Godbey, 1987).



Interpersonal constraints. A second category involves interpersonal constraints which stem from social judgements about the relationship between self and others as co-participants. Barriers of this type may interact with preference for, and subsequent participation in, leisure activities which require more than one person. Examples of interpersonal barriers are the inability to find a partner for tennis, a dislike for engaging in tennis with a potential partner, or an inequity in tennis skills which would make play

laborious. For example, normativeness was reported by many women participants; they revealed concerns about socially appropriate behavior for themselves (Woodward, Green, & Hebron, 1989). This form of constraint is interpersonal because it can be understood as social situations that are interposed between a desire or goal to participate and actual participation, thus resulting in an unrealized desire.

Figure 2. Interpersonal Constraints and the Relationship Between Preference and Participation (Crawford & Godbey, 1987).

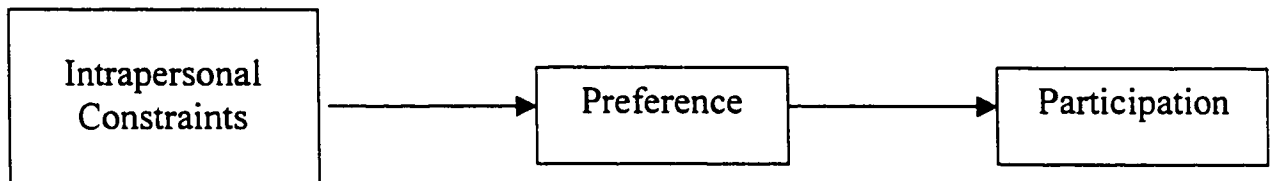


Intrapersonal constraints. Intrapersonal constraints involve individual psychological states and attributes, such as stress, depression, and lack of perceived skill and interact with leisure preference rather than intervening between preferences and participation. Examples of intrapersonal constraints include beliefs about adeptness, aptitude, age-inappropriateness, creative ability, and personal appearance.

After pursuing these three categorical contingencies as causally related to non-participation, Crawford and Godbey (1987) learned that the intrapersonal factor was,

indeed, the most significant for, without a positive self-image, the energy needed to overcome other kinds of constraints was lacking. People who do not believe in themselves easily accept social and or structural excuses for not participating.

Figure 3. Intrapersonal Constraints and the Relationship Between Preference and Participation (Crawford & Godbey, 1987).



Multiple Outcomes Associated with Perceived Constraint

Jackson and Dunn (1991, p. 168) proposed a question, asking "Is constrained leisure an internally homogeneous concept?" Their findings indicated that constrained leisure must be viewed as an internally differentiated concept because various indicators of the concept are not entirely interchangeable with one another. Jackson and Rucks (1993) further examined this concept and, although there was a general trend of similarity in importance of constraints in their study, enough exceptions were found to support Jackson and Dunn's original conclusion that constrained leisure is not an internally homogeneous concept. What this means is that, although a general trend of similarity regarding constraint importance was discovered, findings showed that various indicators of the concept of constrained leisure are not wholly interchangeable with one another

from subject to subject, therefore showing constrained leisure to be an internally differentiated concept.

To Continue, Drop, or Replace a Pursuit

Jackson and Dunn (1988) stressed the need to integrate ceasing participation research with other aspects of leisure behavior. They showed that ceasing participation data alone does not provide a very useful indicator of changes in recreation participation. When interpreted in context, however, ceasing participation data can enhance our understanding of the recreation choice process and provide an indication of trends in leisure behavior. They produced a model of leisure behavior based on ceasing and starting participation that reflected four concept themes: quitters (permanently dropping out), replacers (doing something else instead), adders (adding more participation opportunities), and continuers (maintaining current participation as is). By integrating ceasing participation data with data about participation rates and new activities started, Jackson and Dunn (1988) were also able to suggest two new measures, the personal "dropout rate" and "replacement rate." These concepts allowed for a more accurate interpretation of changes in leisure behavior than did raw data on ceasing participation.

Replacing activities and quitting. Another branch of constraints research focuses on why individuals choose not to participate in an activity after actually beginning the activity. For example, previous research on teenage athletes has generally supported the view that dropping out of sports merely reflects normal sampling of different achievement domains and that athletes cease participating in one activity because they find another one they prefer more (Burton & Martens, 1986). The study by Burton and

Martens attempted to answer a question about whether other activities are truly more intrinsically appealing or whether dropouts turn to other activities because a particular sport has failed to meet their achievement needs. The researchers identified that the problem behind teenage athletes dropping out of an activity is a perception of low ability prompted by consistent failure. Therefore, performance-oriented athletes may continue engaging in sport if they are taught that improving their competence toward a specific and personally desirable goal is more important than comparing their performance to that of co-participants. Thus, positive intrapersonal beliefs and assessments can be taught so achievement of personal goals to raise perceived ability can be attributed to ability and hard work. In a study by Alexandris and Carroll (1997), participants in sport activities reported a wide range of constraints that either limited or blocked their participation. Findings indicated that time and facilities or services-related problems are the most frequently experienced constraints leading to ceasing participation.

Replicating and extending Jackson and Dunn's 1988 study, McGuire, O'Leary, Yeh, and Dottavio (1989) found support for Jackson and Dunn's belief that an understanding of ceasing leisure participation can and should be examined within the context of leisure decision-making as a whole. Another replication study, this by Searle, Mactavish, and Brayley (1993), found not only that the greater one's leisure participation, the higher one's feelings of leisure satisfaction, but also that the more positive one's attitude, the more likely one will be among those described as replacers or adders. Boothby, Tungatt, and Townsend (1981, p. 5) showed that two main factors played roles in adult participants ceasing sports activity. One factor was "changes in the physical

ability of the individual participant" and the other was changes "in the relationship between the individual and his [or her] environment" (Boothby, Tungatt, and Townsend, 1981, p. 5), such as the closing of a recreation facility. A similar study reported that the decision to discontinue participation is influenced by both internal and external factors (Backman & Crompton, 1990).

Adding activities and continuing. It may be likely that the affect of constraints on an individual will not change over time. Jackson and Witt (1994) compared data from two identical constraint surveys involving adults conducted four years apart and found very little temporal change (i.e., time spent in recreational activity) in aspects of leisure constraints. However, a study by Kay and Jackson (1991) suggested that reported constraints do not always prevent participation. Many people participated in activities which they classed as constrained, and described themselves as experiencing constraints even when these could be partly overcome. Furthermore, in some extreme cases, constraints appeared to be reported which may have had no practical effect at all on the frequency of participation. Reported constraints appeared to include potential as well as actual constraints. They included factors which adults experienced but were fully able to overcome. For example, the constraints of household chores and being too tired each affected over 25 percent of the subjects in the study, but were considered major factors by only approximately 5 percent of the adults. As a result, constraints were just as likely to be reported by participants in an activity as by non-participants; in fact, constraints may have been reported more frequently by participants than by non-participants. Any act of participation potentially exposes individuals to constraints that are inherent to the activity

situation. It could therefore be expected that high levels of constraint may be reported by those who participate. An article by Jackson and Rucks (1995) confirmed the proposition that some people negotiate through constraints on their leisure instead of reacting passively to constraints by not participating, allowing the researchers to be confident in rejecting the notion that constraints and barriers are insurmountable obstacles to leisure. Findings by Shaw, Bonen, and McCabe (1991) suggested that more constraints--at least higher levels of reported constraints--do not necessarily mean less leisure and, perhaps, can mean more leisure. Their study reported that increased constraints experienced by adults may not necessarily lead to lower participation and that alleviating such constraints may not necessarily lead to increased participation. The data used by Shaw et al. referred only to participation in physically active leisure pursuits and only to constraints that were reported as barriers to *increased* participation in active leisure. Thus, a mixed picture exists at present in regard to the influence of constraining factors on continuing, or adding to, recreation participation. What is clear is that external constraints can play a motivating role that may be dependent on personal motivation, reward, and intrapersonal constraints.

Other Conceptualizations of Constraints to Leisure

Although the bulk of research on constraints has focused on developing the model relating preferences to participation, other tangents have been followed which add to the scope of knowledge on the subject. The following research reports some of the targeted research topics that have contributed a more complex understanding of the problem.

Loyalty and commitment. Another conceptual framework suggested that loyalty to an activity mediates perception of constraints. Findings implied that undeveloped loyalty is associated with perception of constraints that would lead a current participant to discontinue participation (Backman, 1991). It would seem that one's ability or willingness to overcome perceived constraints must be adequately fueled, perhaps by loyalty or other energizing factors.

Socio-economic constraints. It has also been determined that barriers to recreation participation are not equally distributed across society. For example, barriers exist which are socioeconomic in nature. One study showed that the people most likely to be affected by barriers included the poor, the elderly, and single parents. Recreation professionals have been challenged to develop a greater sensitivity to socioeconomic variables, both social and structural in nature, in order to provide multidimensional service which can lead to diminishing such barriers (Searle & Jackson, 1985).

The role of personal reward. Social exchange theory was one approach shown to provide a well-developed conceptual framework within which future research on ceasing participation could grow. Social exchange theory essentially suggests that individuals enter into relationships seeking some reward. Those relationships are sustained if the rewards are valued and evolve over time, if the other party reciprocates and provides rewards that are deemed fair in relation to others, if the costs of the relationship do not exceed the benefits, if the relationship does not place one party in power-dependent relationship, and if the probability of receiving desired rewards is high. Clearly this theory has the potential to assist leisure researchers in framing future research aimed at

understanding why individuals cease participation in leisure activities which, in turn, help those providing the services (Searle, 1991).

Reasons behind ceasing behavior by children and adolescents may be similar to those reported in studies of adult subjects. A study by Hultsman (1990) focused on why adolescents do not participate in after-school recreation activities. Reasons discovered included belonging to many other activities, not having adequate skills, no way to get to the program site, and not knowing how to sign up. Certain reasons, such as not being old enough, parents not letting them, and not having adequate skills varied in frequency according to grade level; whereas the aforementioned were reported by teens at all grade levels.

Programming constraints. Leisure professionals have been concerned with the matter of constraints for some time and have focused efforts on helping their customers overcome them. Programming efforts of the recreation professionals meet with constraints as well, but research may assist professionals in overcoming specific programming constraints. In a study by Howard and Crompton (1984), lack of motivation to participate was an overriding reason for people discontinuing their participation in leisure activities. In the same study, the researchers noted that municipal recreation providers were serving a fairly limited range of adult clients for this reason. Regardless, research has suggested that investigation of constraints on leisure can provide useful information to recreation service agencies at four levels--philosophy, policy, program planning, and marketing. More specifically, constraints research may help practitioners address five questions: (1) Is the delivery of leisure services adequate, or do

gaps in services create constraints for potential participants? (2) What other constraints affect participation? (3) Which constraints are most appropriately coped with by practitioners, and which are beyond their influence? (4) Are any subgroups of the population at a particular disadvantage with regard to their access to leisure services because of the effects of constraints on participation? (5) What strategies can be developed to alleviate the effects of constraints on participation? (Jackson, 1988, p. 205).

Parents as sources of intrapersonal constraint for youthful participants. Results reported in another study by Hultsman (1993) and studies by other researchers (e.g., Szwak, 1988) suggest that, of the various social agents, parental influence is apparent among early adolescents in the decision not to join activities. Parental potential to enhance or devalue a child's experience may be the factor shaping children's actions (Szwak, 1988). Although differences among children moving through adolescence do exist, Hultsman's (1993) study showed a relatively internally homogenous group relative to the perception of parental influence on the decision to join new activities. Research noted earlier by Howard and Madrigal (1990) led to the conclusion that family, particularly mother, plays an instrumental role in shaping the organized recreation participation patterns of their children. Children were found to make decisions independently only to a very modest degree. It appeared that this influence was a result of the mother's role of primary caretaker, bearing the responsibility of providing transportation and making schedule adjustments to accommodate the requirement for the child's participation. What was not clear from the data was whether the particular recreation activity preferences exhibited by mothers for their children was the result of

purposeful parental training or simply due to convenience considerations such as the program being offered at the right time or place. Parental influence decreased as the person moves through adolescence and is allowed to walk or bike further distances, take the bus, or drive. The effects of various social agents appeared to moderate with no singular influence being dominant upon entrance into the high school years. Hultsman (1993) also suggested that the perceived influence of social agents is not internally homogenous as a constraint to leisure. Perceived parental influence appeared to be a stronger determinant in the decision not to join activities than in the decision to drop out. Furthermore, activity leaders appeared to play a greater role in early adolescents' decisions to drop out of activities than in their decision not to join which means that, once children are in a program, it is up to the leader to keep them stimulated, involved, and growing.

From practical perspectives pertaining to recreation programmers, Hultsman's (1993) study may provide professionals with insight into how early adolescents perceive the influence of others in their decisions not to participate. Regarding marketing and promoting recreation programs, the target market for children and very early adolescents might be the mother.

Summary

It has been shown that many factors exist which directly and indirectly affect one's motivation to participate in recreation and leisure activities. There are a variety of situations that seem to enhance personal motivation and, unfortunately, there are also

constraints, both internal and external to the person, which reduce motivation and can put an end to participation, often before it even starts.

Despite recent studies focusing on the negotiation of constraints by adults, it clearly appears that knowledge of circumstances surrounding ceasing participation is required for the accurate understanding of the reasons why people, and especially children, stop doing something (Jackson & Dunn, 1988). The challenge remains to determine those circumstances for all the different situations.

CHAPTER THREE

Method

The purpose of this study was to determine the primary factors that influence the decisions to cease participation in children's programs, to determine to what extent parents or guardians influence the ceasing participation of the children, and to identify relevant characteristics of the ceasing participants and their parents. This chapter explains the study design to aid the reader in understanding the research and to simplify future investigations or replications of this study. It describes the population, study elements, the instrument, method of data collection, and data analysis procedures.

Sample Selection

This was an exploratory, deductive case study, using a purposive sample. The sample consisted of children who participated in recreation classes offered by the Walnut Creek Leisure Services Division, and who met the following criteria: aged three to twelve years, enrolled and participated in a programmed activity during the Fall 1998 or Winter 1999 programming quarters, and dropped out or failed to re-enroll in that same activity the following quarter. The subjects represented the total universe of children meeting the criteria in the given situation and served the purpose of examining a population that may be subject to shared social forces because they lived in the same town.

The study population, which consisted of 84 children and 84 adult parent or guardian respondents, was drawn from all of the available children's programs offered by the Walnut Creek Leisure Services Division. With the permission of the Leisure Services

Manager, the names and addresses of the individuals and their parents or guardians were obtained from registration records by the researcher.

By letter, a parent or guardian of each of the participants was asked to participate in lieu of the child in this project, much the same way in which other researchers (e.g., Burton & Martens, 1986) have surveyed the parents of study subjects. The survey was addressed to both of the child's parents or guardians with the instruction that only one adult need complete the survey. This population included children from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds and represented differences in family status, age, and gender.

Instrumentation

A survey process was considered the best means to contact parents who may have been employed outside of their homes and to discover factors associated with ceasing participation as well as participant and parent characteristics, Appendix A. The study instrument was designed as a series of closed-ended and open-ended questions. Due to the need for clarity, single-subject questions, or questions which contained one idea, were utilized (Patton, 1990). In some cases, space was also provided for additional comments to provide opportunity for a wider range of responses.

Questions were based on concepts and information from several sources, including empirical studies, theory, and professional experience, and were designed to produce data related to the study elements. This type of constraint questioning reflects the work of several researchers (Jackson & Rucks, 1995; Hultsman, 1993; Jackson & Rucks, 1993; Burton & Martens, 1986). In addition, a number of items were obtained

from a Boothby, et al. (1981) study with forty response categories for reasons cited for ceasing leisure activities.

To avoid feelings of inadequacy and anxiety by respondents, several members of the professional leisure services staff reviewed the survey to confirm it was void of complex questions, directions that might be difficult to understand, and confusing organization. The absence of opportunity for immediate interviewer feedback created an especially great need for clear and unambiguous questions on the survey. Since respondents may experience a debate within themselves about how much of their lives they will expose, efforts were taken to "soften" personal questions and eliminate ones determined as potentially objectionable, following Fowler's (1993) recommendations.

Reasons for Ceasing Participation

The main study elements were reasons for ceasing participation which reflected theory of constraints, program replacement, and program dissatisfaction. A series of 26 possible reasons were provided to which respondents selected one of three response options: "mostly because," "partly because," or "not at all because."

Constraints as reasons. Of the 26 reasons, half were related to external constraints that might lead to ceasing behavior. These reasons included an incompatible time and day for the class, the class was too expensive, tried to enroll in the class, but it was full, the child's schedule changed, and the parent's schedule changed. Related to intrapersonal constraints were reasons having to do with the child was bored, the child outgrew the activity, the child had health problems, the child's interests changed, the ability level of the class was too high or too low for the subject, and the child felt he or she made too

many mistakes. The concept of interpersonal constraint was assessed by the item “the child’s friends stopped taking,” “the child experienced a personal injury due to the class,” “the class size was to big,” or “too small,” and “the child felt he or she did not fit in.”

Replacement as reasons. Replacement of the ceased activity was also assessed as a reasonable source of influence on participation. Replacement participation means that the subject was discontinuing the class in question in order to enroll in another recreation activity. One of the responses stated, "my child enrolled in another program instead" and another stated "the class opened a new interest to be pursued."

Program dissatisfaction as reasons. Reflecting a practical business approach to program delivery, an aspect of particular interest to the Walnut Creek Leisure Services Division's staff is program satisfaction typically referred to as program quality indicators. Dissatisfactions as reasons for ceasing participation are those attributes which, theoretically, are interpersonal constraints under control of the division and, had they been absent, the ceasing behavior of the subjects would not have occurred. Some indicators of program dissatisfaction which appeared on the survey included “the child and or parent did not like the instructor,” “the parent did not approve of the class content,” and “the class was not worth the fee charged.”

Influences of Background and Personal Experience

It was important to acquire background and personal experience information on the subjects in an attempt to determine if these areas may have possible influence on discontinuing participation. Personal experience was also a potential factor. Information was solicited concerning types of programs in the recreation division as well as other

extra-curricular programs offered by schools, private instruction, and religious and volunteer agencies. Parents indicated how long in years and how often in times per month the child engaged in other pursuits.

Questions were close-ended response format (fill-in and multiple choice) and included ordered answer choices for clarity and ease in responding and in analysis. For example, to learn about what programs the child has participated in through Walnut Creek Leisure Services Division, a question with fill-in response format was formed:

Question 3. Please tell us what classes and activities your child has completed in the Walnut Creek Leisure Services Program in the past. Fill in under each category.

Aquatics:

Preschool Programs:

Dance:

Physical Recreation and Sport:

Special Interest (for example, carpentry, cooking, babysitting, etc.):

Day Camp and Summer Only Programs:

Other:

The multiple choice format was used when sufficient theory or knowledge of all appropriate categories of response existed such as the following question:

Question 2. For the class we listed in the box on page 1, did your child:

(Check one of the following)

_____ Attend all of the classes during the fall quarter?

_____ Miss only one or two classes during the fall quarter?

_____ Miss more than two classes during the fall quarter?

Three partially closed-ended questions and two open-ended questions regarding specific information about the child were included to personalize responses and could be answered by parents or guardians who felt the questions applied to them. The partially open-ended questions had to do with what other extra-curricular activities the child had participated in, for how long, and what Walnut Creek Leisure Services programs the child had participated.

The two open-ended questions inquired as to what the parent envisioned as the child's gift or talent to be developed and what ability the parent believed the child needed to develop to become a balanced person. These questions were designed to assist the researcher in identifying relationships between the answers and the types of programs in gaining a view of the children through the parent's eyes and in better interpreting ceasing behavior.

Demographic information regarding the child and parent or guardian was requested. Personal information such as age, gender, and income were important as they could be useful in explaining or interpreting reasons for ceasing participation. Efforts were necessary through the wording of the questions to make it as likely as possible that honest and true answers would be obtained. For example, people often round or understate their ages but generally will report their birth dates accurately. People frequently refuse to tell strangers their income, but they are much more willing to state the range in which their income falls (Weisberg & Bowen, 1977). This information was utilized in designing certain demographic questions.

Follow-up Telephone Survey

Ten respondents to the written survey were selected by random drawing to participate in a short, follow-up telephone survey. The telephone survey consisted of six questions designed to verify responses from the mailed survey and to solicit new information pertaining to the child's leisure participation, Appendix B.

The six questions followed an order and purpose. First, verification of the main reason for the child ceasing participation in the class in question was requested. Following that, the parent was asked whether there were any other activities the child chose to drop during the last 12 months. Information was solicited about any continuing activities and any new activities added during the 12-month period. The fifth question inquired how the child generally traveled to the recreation center for activities. Finally, the sixth probed for an explanation of what the respondent felt were the benefits and problems of the child attending the class in question.

Data Collection Procedures

Before any part of the actual research took place, the Human Subject-International Research Board at San Jose State University granted approval for the study. This was a means to identify and treat any ethical or safety concerns which foreseeably could arise, see Appendix C. Changes requested were implemented and made part of the final data collection package: cover letter and survey instrument. As stated, the researcher obtained the class participant lists for the quarters of Fall 1998 and Winter 1999 from the Leisure Services Division. Surveys were mailed using first class postage to the parents or guardians of the children who enrolled for a class(es) during the Fall or Winter but not during the following quarter. Exceptions were made for classes which did not meet the next quarter after doing so in the previous quarter, unless the class was canceled due to lack of enrollment. Thus, children for whom continuing class enrollment was not possible were eliminated from the study group. The surveys, accompanied by a cover letter written on official City of Walnut Creek letterhead and personally signed by the researcher (Appendix D), were sent to the addresses which corresponded with those from the participant lists. The cover letter explained who was conducting the survey, stated the circumstances behind and purpose of the study, assured confidentiality of responses, stated the importance of a timely response, provided additional directions for completing the survey, and thanked the respondent in advance for his or her assistance. The accompanying letter attempted to reward the respondent by showing positive regard, utilizing a consulting approach and offering written appreciation. The researcher's letter also attempted to establish trust with the respondent by revealing identification with an

established organization. This identification may have established an exchange relationship with the respondent because the subject may have been more likely to return the survey because they received past benefits from the Leisure Services Division (Dillman, 1978).

A separate questionnaire was used for each child participant. The responding parents and guardians having more than one child meeting the specified criteria received, in separate envelopes, as many questionnaires as they had children meeting the criteria. These respondents were instructed to draw from information specific to each child and to complete and return the questionnaires separately. Care was taken to make the survey as clear and concise as possible so as to keep time and effort costs experienced by the respondents to a minimum. The time required to complete the survey was about ten minutes per child.

The surveys were mailed out in September 1999. A deadline date occurring two weeks following the mailing was set for completing the survey. A stamped, addressed return envelope was enclosed. A short note serving as a follow-up notice and emphasizing the importance of the study and of a high rate of return (Appendix E) was sent one week following the original mailing. A week after mailing the reminder note, a final letter reminder, again emphasizing the importance of a high rate of return, and another copy of the questionnaire was mailed to the remaining non-respondents, Appendix F (Fowler, 1993).

Data Analysis

The following section explains the procedures carried out to analyze the quantitative survey data. In addition, this section will discuss treatment of missing data, analysis of open-ended questions, and analysis of the follow-up telephone survey.

Analysis of the Quantitative Survey Data

The researcher coded the quantitative responses to the survey for data entry and analysis. Frequencies were computed for the demographic information and background and personal experience data and reasons for ceasing participation. Reasons for ceasing participation were examined statistically to reduce the data into more meaningful form. A principal components factor analysis with a varimax rotation was conducted to discover patterns of thinking that might exist among the reasons for ceasing participation. To learn whether factors representing ceasing participation could be characterized by particular background or experience attributes, bivariate correlations were performed with the factor scores and personal background and recreation experience variables. The level of significance applied to statistical results was the conventional level (.05) for social science research (Babbie, 1992). Results of the statistical procedures were displayed in tables and interpreted for meaning. The researcher was aware that there are no absolute rules except to do the very best to fairly represent the data and communicate what the data reveal given the purpose of the study (Patton, 1990).

Treatment of Missing Data

For the variables being statistically analyzed, listwise deletion was employed. Any survey missing data was dropped from the analysis for that statistical procedure only.

Analysis of Open-ended Questions

Ceasing participation was qualitatively examined by content analysis of the open-ended questions. Constant Comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1979) was initially used with the addition of constant comment (Glancy, 1988).

Using constant comparison, each comment, phrase, and idea was written on a sheet of paper. The comments and phrases were analyzed independently and interdependently and sorted into groups by comparing the words being used. The researcher rearranged the comments several times into various groups looking for patterns, themes, categories, and or relationships to emerge. It was common for some categories to be related and others to appear quite independent (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The constant comparison method was enhanced by constant comment (Glancy, 1988) which is a technique for isolating symbolic language. Glancy (1993) noted how an outsider was uninformed and ignorant about the deeper meaning of the language used and how insiders could imply more than the universal meaning which shorthand language offers. Thus, the researcher, as a professional in the leisure field, used his insider status when looking for themes to analyze the comments for hidden meaning. On the basis of these analysis activities, a conceptual theme was generated for each group of comments.

This kind of analysis stimulated the generation of potentially relevant categories and concepts, and was of value in the process of establishing comparisons (clustering, distinguishing, differentiating) necessary in the search for individual differences (Glaser & Strauss, 1979; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Analysis of the Follow-up Telephone Survey

Content analysis was again utilized to examine the results of the telephone survey. Answers to the first question were compared to the similar question (question number 4, on page 3) in the mailed survey. The remaining questions were investigated for new information pertaining to the child's leisure participation. Conclusions were drawn from the responses for reliability verification purposes.

Summary

This chapter described the methodology of the study on ceasing participation by child participants of municipal recreation programs, including discussion of the sample, instrument, and data collection and analysis procedures. The information from the survey was designed to indicate concepts underlying reasons for ceasing participation by children and the types of influences associated with parents, children, or the children's home life which may be related to reasons for discontinuing recreation participation.

By using both quantitative and qualitative methods of analyzing the data, a richer understanding of the findings was possible, leading to clearer implications for further research and replications of this study. In addition, by using more than one method for both quantitative and qualitative data analysis, a multimethod approach to achieving construct validity was planned (Campbell & Stanley, 1963).

The results of this study were made available to participants and personnel of the Walnut Creek Leisure Services Division for educational purposes. Anyone with interest had full access to the results of the study upon request, excluding the respondents' surveys which were not made public for reasons of confidentiality.

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis of Data

This chapter reports the sample description and statistical treatment of the data collected on background and personal experience data, reasons for ceasing participation, and the influence of personal descriptors with reasons for ceasing participation. Findings are summarized for qualitative data which was examined by content analysis for themes that could assist and validate interpretation and discussion of findings.

Data Handling Procedures

All mailing procedures, telephone follow-up procedures, and data coding, entry, and analysis were managed by the researcher. To assure confidentiality of respondents and their children, several steps were taken. The mailing list was destroyed following distribution of the second survey. The name of the child that appeared on the survey was blocked out immediately upon receipt of a completed survey and surveys were numerically coded for confidentiality. Surveys were kept in a locked drawer when not being used for tabulation. Telephone numbers were blocked out immediately following completion of follow-up telephone interviews.

Sample Description

Review of program enrollment records revealed 84 children who met the criteria for study of ceasing participation. Of the 84 parents (none were found to be guardians) who received surveys, reminders, and or second surveys, 46 returned completed surveys and all were usable. This number equated to a 55 percent return rate. Several recognized studies (e.g., Samdahl & Jekubovich, 1997; Hultsman, 1995; Backman & Crompton,

1990) have utilized a similar number of subjects, justifying what turned out to be a relatively small number of individuals. Following Dillman's (1978) mailed survey, instructions produced 13 surveys not returned by the end of the first week; use of follow-up contacts was beneficial in this project.

Children in the Study Group

Descriptive statistics for the children revealed a reasonable distribution within each of the attributes selected for the study, Tables 1 and 2, Appendix G. The 46 children ranged in age from 3 years to 10.5 years with a mean age of 6.5 years. Forty-eight percent of the subjects were male, and fifty-two percent were female. Eighty-five percent of the subjects had siblings. Overall, the number of siblings for the subjects ranged in number from 0 to 5, with a mean of 1.30, suggesting that most children came from small families.

Review of Table 3 in Appendix G offers insight into the lifestyle of the children in the study group. Overall, it can be said that the parents and certain attributes of their lives were comparable to demographic descriptions of residents in the Walnut Creek area. The respondents were generally white or of majority ethnicity (83% of those who responded to the question), were married (91%), owned their own homes (83%), and mainly reported household incomes of \$50,000 or more (90%). Mother's education levels were relatively high with 54 percent possessing Baccalaureate or graduate degrees. Approximately 15 percent of the mothers worked full time, and a significant number were not employed outside their homes (46%). Fathers were reported as working full time; none were homemakers or employed part-time. Thus, it can be seen that, for the

majority of the children who ceased participating in a recreation program, their home life could be described as stable, upper-middle class, and living in upscale suburban neighborhoods.

Classes Sampled

The classes from which children were identified as ceasing participants represented a typical array of children's recreational programs and included Hawaiian and Tahitian Dance, Kid's Carpentry, Children's Tahitian Dance, Beginning Gymnastics, Tiny Tumblers, Ice Skating, Beginning Hula Dance, Jujitsu, Hula and Tahitian Dance, Gymnastics, Drama, Cooking, and Babysitting. Only 11 of the 13 classes were represented in the analysis, however, because the 9 parents of children previously enrolled in Cooking and Babysitting did not return surveys. Since failure to return surveys was equally as likely in all the other classes, this finding was not taken as unusual or a result of bias.

Ceasing participants included in the study were similarly distributed across the 11 classes with the exception of one class which produced 16 responses amounting to 35 percent of the group being studied, Table 4, Appendix H. This large proportion of the sample was expected to influence findings, making it important to acknowledge the presence of this potential bias wherever it might have affected findings.

Reasons for Ceasing Participation

This section explains the factor analysis procedures conducted on the reasons for ceasing participation furnished in the survey. Also clarified and discussed are the significant relationships determined to be associated with the acquired factors and

personal background and recreation experience variables belonging to the subjects and their families.

Underlying Themes of Ceasing Participation

To discover what patterns might exist among the reasons for ceasing participation by the subjects, the researcher conducted a factor analysis. Of the 26 reasons provided in the survey, 22 were deemed appropriate for further analysis based on the varying responses received. Four reasons were dropped from further analysis because all the respondents indicated the “not at all” answer, making these irrelevant constants rather than contributing reasons. The four items dropped due to non-response were “the class size was too small,” “a major family event intervened,” “my child went through puberty,” and “my child has health problems.”

Two principal components factor analyses with varimax rotations were conducted on the remaining 22 items. The first analysis, using the eigen value limit of not less than 1.00 resulted in nine statistically significant factors. Due to the limited sample size and the small number of items available for the factor analysis, a conservative approach was employed, and output in a second factor analysis was limited to three factors. These factors appeared strong, with eigen values of not less than 2.20, a cut-off well above the scree level, and each was considered independent due to the varying values of items (significance was plus or minus .20 or higher, the SPSS statistical program default) which were retained in more than one factor array. Factor scores for each child in the study were created for use in later analyses. Each factor was examined for its underlying meaning, taking advantage of the idea that factor analysis, particularly principal

component factor analysis, can represent the cognitive framework of the individuals whose attitudes, decisions, preferences, or the like are being studied. This suggested that the three factors could be interpreted for their manifest meanings that might represent the thinking of the children and or their parents in regard to ceasing participation in a recreation class.

Factor one. Factor one explained 13.3 percent of the variance in reasons for ceasing participation by children, Table 5. The factor array shows values for the components retained for significance in the factor. Factor one is called the Program Quality factor because of the evaluative nature of the most significant reasons (values from .6 to .8) which contrasted with the more personal reasons appearing further down in the factor list.

Table 5. Array of Significant Reasons Forming Factor One, Program Quality.

<u>Program Quality</u>	
Parent did not approve of class	.863
Child did not like instructor's leadership	.725
Child did not like class content	.647
Parent did not approve of instruction	.636
Class not worth fee charged	.609
Child injured due to class	.248
Child felt he or she made too many mistakes	.182
Child's schedule changed	-.117
Child's interests changed	-.119
Enrolled in another program	-.123
Child felt he or she did not fit in	-.140
Class too expensive	-.226
Class time and or day not compatible	-.228

According to this factor, the reason for ceasing participation is centered in negative evaluation of the program and much less so as a negative evaluation of the participant's experience or competing elements in the child's life. This factor refers back to the discussion regarding aspects of the program that are under the control of the professional. These are elements of the program that can be, or at least should be, corrected by the program planner, given knowledge of participant attitudes. Especially evident is the idea that better communication of program intent and how a class will operate is needed. It may also be useful to consider added or different training of leadership personnel. Noting the variety of significant items in the array, it would appear that, once a child and or parent has found fault with a class or its leadership, then negative assessments of the child's experience and other negative judgements may be made. Program quality, then, is a matter of negative judgements that can evolve into decisions to discontinue participation.

Factor two. Factor two has been interpreted as a Sense of Being Overwhelmed, and it explains 10.5 percent of the variance in reasons for ceasing participation by children. The array in Table 6 shows the components retained in this factor, many of which imply personal discomfort in different ways.

This factor indicated that children feel psychologically overwhelmed by their experience in a recreation program. The resulting effect was that parents and or children felt the program was too difficult for the child or that, for some other reason, the program just was not right for the child. A majority of elements in this factor are under control of

Table 6. Array of Significant Reasons Forming Factor Two, Sense of Being Overwhelmed.

<u>Sense of Being Overpowered</u>	
Class ability level too challenging	.814
Child felt he or she did not fit in	.809
Child felt he or she made too many mistakes	.459
Class size too big	.383
Child did not like class content	.377
Child injured due to class	.346
Class time and or day not compatible	.336
Child did not like instructor's leadership	.172
Parent did not approve of class content	.135
Class too expensive	.106
Class opened new interests	-.229
Friends stopped taking class	-.232
Class was full	-.293

the child, not the service provider, and are primarily intrapersonal in nature. It would appear that children may be unable to become involved or committed to the activity because of feeling out of place, judging by the polar distancing of “opened new interests” and “friends stopped taking the class.” It would seem, then, that children can feel overwhelmed in an instructional setting even when it is for recreational purposes. Class size or leadership style may make it difficult for leaders to identify and assist the timid or unconfident child.

Factor three. Factor three has been interpreted to suggest a duality of Decision Orientation, either concept of which can result in ceasing participation, Table 7. This factor is a bipolar factor, due to equally strong values at both ends of the factor array.

Although it is not possible to know which end of the factor a child or parent may represent in decisions, it is likely that their reason(s) reflect one orientation or the other. This factor explained 9.8 percent of the variance in reasons for ceasing participation.

Table 7. Array of Significant Reasons Forming Factor Three, Decision Orientation.

<u>Decision Orientation</u>	
Child bored	.525
Child schedule changed	.520
Enrolled in another program	.483
Child's interests changed	.414
Child outgrew activity	.394
Child did not like class content	.266
Class time and or day not compatible	.221
Child did not like instructor leadership	.119
Class ability level too hard	-.196
Parent did not approve of instruction	-.198
Class opened new interests	-.225
Class was full	-.317
Class not worth fee charged	-.327
Class size too big	-.360
Parent's schedule changed	-.512
Class too expensive	-.572

This factor related to how the decision to cease participation was made and in reference to what or whom. The elements with positive values appeared to be connected to decisions made by the child and were personal in nature. One can imagine a parent listening to a child and deciding that the class is not worth continuing because of the child's self-assessments. By contrast, the parent may take a more directive and less-personalized view of continuing participation in a class, recognizing cost, new and

competing interests, or class size as detractors. Overall, decisions to discontinue participation in a class may have to do with how decisions are made in a family; the child may control the decision-making process with facilitative or non-directive parents, and the parent may be the authority in other families.

Characterizing Ceasing Participation

Factor scores produced from the factor analysis were used as three new variables for each subject. To learn what might characterize children and perhaps their families in regard to each of the factors, a bivariate analysis was carried out. Pearson-Product-Moment correlations were calculated for each factor with every personal background and recreation experience variable. There were a total of seven significant relationships, three with factor one, and two each with factors two and three. Different personal attributes formed significant relationships in each case, suggesting differences in the people whose reasons for ceasing might be conceptualized by each of the different factors. Since the overall number of subjects is small, these relationships may be suspect, but, in any case, the findings are based on conventional judgments of statistical worth, the minimum .05 level of significance (two-tailed test of significance). There was no attempt to calculate multiple correlation regressions due to the small sample size. The researcher studied the significant correlations with each factor and the resulting analysis was developed.

Factor one associations. Three of the personal background and experience variables proved to have significant correlations with factor one, Program Quality. Two of the three correlations were negative, Table 8, indicating a negative relationship of respondent's marital status and household income with ceasing participation due to

judgments about program quality. The third variable found to be significant in characterizing ceasing participation related to program quality showed a positive relationship of number of years spent taking music lessons or playing with a band and the program quality factor.

Table 8. Significant* Background and Personal Characteristics with Program Quality Factor.

<u>Background Variable</u>	<u>Correlation</u>	<u>Significance Level</u>
Marital status of respondent	-.497	.01
Household income	-.412	.01
Years taking music lessons or band member	.297	.05

*two-tailed test of significance

What is suggested by these apparently divergent background effects of marital status and household income is a consumer role perspective. For women who are single heads of households and for families with limited income (relative to the affluence and high cost of living in the area) there is an economic perspective which influences recreation participation. With limited time to indulge in extra-curricular activities of their children and or limited financial resources, parents may tend to be more critical of program quality. In addition, children and parents of children who have increasing years of experience engaging in private instruction and performance quality training have also developed attitudes about what the marks of quality are, or should be, in their child's extracurricular activity, using their firsthand knowledge of the teaching, skills, and standards of competence-building associated with playing musical instruments.

Factor two associations. Two of the personal experience variables of the subjects proved to have significant positive correlations with factor two, Sense of Being Overwhelmed. Participating in tutoring and participating in pre-school recreation programs were both significant, Table 9.

Table 9. Significant* Background and Personal Characteristics with Sense of Being Overwhelmed Factor.

<u>Background Variable</u>	<u>Correlation</u>	<u>Significance Level</u>
Tutoring	.314	.05
Participation in pre-school recreational programs	.305	.05

*two-tailed test of significance

Since both of these variables have a positive association with the factor, the interpretation is that, as tutoring activity or pre-school recreation participation increases, there is an increasing likelihood that a child will experience feelings of being overwhelmed, whether that means a sense of personal incompetence or insecurity, being out of control of his or her personal life, or simply being physically and or psychologically tired of organized learning and social expectations.

Factor three associations. Two personal background experience variables proved to have significant correlations with factor three, Decision Orientation. A positive relationship was found with respondent's education level, and a negative relationship occurred with involvement in religious activities, Table 10.

Table 10. Significant* Background and Personal Characteristics with Decision Orientation Factor.

<u>Background Variable</u>	<u>Correlation</u>	<u>Significance Level</u>
Respondent's education level	.373	.05
Number of years involved in religious clubs or activities	-.315	.05

*two-tailed test of significance

It appears there is an influence of mother's educational accomplishment on who makes decisions, or how decisions are made, to cease participation in recreation classes. The more education mothers have, the greater the probability that decisions about continuing or ceasing participation will be an issue. Also a factor in decisions is years of involvement with religious activities with ceasing participation more likely as the number of years decreases. In this case, the less religious involvement a child has, the more likely she or he will be to cease recreation class participation because of decision-making issues. Bipolar factors are difficult to interpret. It seems the more a child is involved with religious activities or the less well-educated a mother is, the less continuing in a recreation program is an issue for discussion and a resulting decision to dropout.

Analysis of Open-ended Questions

The survey contained two open-ended questions, allowing the respondents to be more specific in their answers. The questions assisted the researcher in identifying relationships between the answers and the types of programs in which the children were enrolled as well as in identifying the types of programs the parents would like the Leisure Services Division to offer. Slightly more than half (52%) of the respondents completed

one or both of the questions. The first question asked parents to describe the child's talent or gift to be developed. Table 11 shows the responses grouped by constant comparison and interpreted by constant comment.

Table 11. Children's Talents To Be Developed. (Number of respondents = 22*).

<u>Creative-Expressive</u>		<u>Personality Traits</u>	
<u>Comment</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
art	5	strong character	1
artistic	1	desire to achieve	1
drama	3	integrity	1
music	3	dedication	1
creative writing	1	astuteness	1
dance	1		
desire to create	1		
storytelling	1		
<u>Total</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>5</u>

<u>Sociability</u>		<u>Kinesthetic</u>	
<u>Comment</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
friendly	2	mechanical	1
outgoing	1	swimming	1
social	1		
<u>Total</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>2</u>

* Some respondents listed more than one talent, thus the grand total of frequencies exceeds 22.

Of the talents parents most wish their children to develop, clearly the creative-expressive theme emerged most strongly. Only two of the comments seemed to be conceptual (artistic and desire to create), references to art appeared to be a general categorization, and the scope of specific expressive media (creative writing, drama, dance, music, and storytelling) is varied and performance-based. What seems to be

communicated by this creative-expressive theme is a general desire by parents to see their children develop a range of skills, including knowledge and abilities to perform, in the arts that form a basis for personal aesthetic capability.

Parental desire for their children to develop good personality traits was the second strongest theme in the data. All of these traits can easily be connected to the independence and productive challenges which children must master from ages 5 to 12. It might be that, for these parents, personality traits are envisioned as the source from which talent can be discovered and developed in a disciplined way.

Sociability traits received a similar number of comments as personality traits and, likewise, are a large part of a child's development during the early stages of life span according to Erikson (1963). It can be suggested that, by enrolling their child in a recreation activity, the parent was seeking an opportunity for the child to develop and or improve this trait.

The smallest number of parents aspired for the development of kinesthetic traits, but the traits were noted nonetheless. These traits can be related to Erikson's industry versus inferiority development stage in which the child wins recognition by producing things and is attempting to master a wide spectrum of skills.

The second question asked the parent what ability the parent felt the child needed to develop to be a balanced person. Table 12 shows the responses grouped by constant comparison and interpreted by constant comment.

Table 12. Abilities Children Need to Be Balanced Person. (Number of Respondents = 23).

<u>Broad Scope of Mastered Skills</u>		<u>Social Ability</u>	
<u>Comment</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
well-rounded	1	social skill	2
variety of experiences	1	more outgoing	2
exposure to things	2	Total	4
all	1		
coordination & intellectual skill	1	<u>Self-Discipline</u>	
intellectual, motor, & social skills	1	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
social, music, drama	1	self control	1
drama, public speaking	1	organization	1
Total	10	patience	1
		work hard, succeed	1
		Total	4

<u>Self-Assurance</u>		<u>No Specific Needs</u>	
<u>Comment</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
feels good about self	1	already balanced	2
self-confidence	1	none (already balanced)	1
Total	2	Total	3

Of the abilities parents felt children needed to be balanced persons, comments involving a broad scope of mastered skills theme occurred most often. It is apparent that parents possess a sense of the importance of skills mastery as an integral part of child development. These feelings of parents may be seen just as easily through their enrolling their child in recreation classes.

Themes of social ability, self-discipline, and self-assurance emerged, although without the frequencies of the skills group. These abilities all assist the child with establishing necessary independence and initiative and moving them toward becoming a developmentally complete individual.

Three respondents noted their children possessed no specific needs, indicating the children are already balanced. Considering that none of the subjects were older than 10.5 years, it is difficult to understand these answers as the developmental process will continue for many years. Perhaps, however, the parents were indeed considering the age of the subjects, stating the abilities they possessed were appropriate for their current level of development.

Analysis of the Telephone Survey

Ten respondents, selected randomly by a blind draw of subject identification numbers, were contacted by the researcher approximately one week following receipt of written surveys. All ten of the individuals contacted agreed to participate in the follow-up telephone survey. The results of the first question, pertaining to the main reason causing the child's ceasing participation, were consistent with the responses on the mailed surveys, indicating that the findings can be assumed reliable.

Only one affirmative answer was received for inquires about activities the child dropped during the last year, meaning that 9 of the 10 children did not drop out of any other activities. For the third question, three respondents noted there were activities in which the child continued to engage since the time ceasing participation in the particular recreation class occurred. All three continuing activities were recreation activities that were noted on the written survey as additional recreation interests, so confirmation was received. In response to the question regarding new activities added in the past 12 months, two respondents verified that their children had added new activities.

The question about the method by which the subject generally traveled to the recreation center for activities solicited an identical answer from each mother. Each respondent noted that she, as the mother, drove the child to the recreation center for the activity. Although five of the respondents worked part-time and one was a single parent who worked full-time, all still drove their children to the recreation activity. It would seem that, in this community, transportation to recreation class programs is a mother's role responsibility which is carried out independently, that is, without car pooling, school bus drop-off, or self-transport by children on bicycles or public busses.

Finally, all ten respondents identified commonly understood benefits of the child attending the recreation class. For example, "working with his hands" was noted as a benefit of participating in the carpentry class. In addition, none of the respondents reported any additional problems with their child attending the class than were noted on the mailed questionnaire.

Summary

Findings of this study proved significant in several ways. Three interpretable factors emerged to suggest reasoning frames of reference which families may use in deciding to discontinue a child's participation in a recreational class. These factors centered around evaluations of program quality, a child's feeling overwhelmed, and issues with decision orientation. Several background variables were found to illuminate the nature of those who might cease participation if reflected by one of the three factors in this study. Negative effects of mother's marital status and household income and positive effects of number of years in music or band created a template by which to understand the child whose ceasing participation had to do with program quality

judgments. Positive associations were found between children engaged in tutoring or pre- school recreation programs with the idea that ceasing participation may have to do with some children feeling overwhelmed. Mixed findings with a positive association of mother's education level and a negative association of years of religious activity helped clarify some of the possible decision orientations of parents or children when the child did not feel like continuing with a class. The findings were considered reliable based on a telephone reliability check although validity could be an issue due to sample size.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion and Conclusions

This research investigated primary factors that influence decisions about children's ceasing participation in organized municipal recreation programs. An added goal was to examine the extent to which specific characteristics of parents, their children, and the lifestyle they create related to ceasing participation factors. The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate interpretations of the findings and evaluate limitations in the study of children's ceasing participation in recreation classes. Discussion focuses on the significant co-relationships for each of the three factors with certain personal background and experience variable of the subjects and or their parents. Interpretations from open-ended questions and personal written comments provide added insights about influences on reasons for ceasing participation. Conclusions provide useful concepts that can advance the theory and professional practice of recreation programming. There are suggestions for further research and replication of the study.

Reasons for Ceasing Participation

Reasons for ceasing recreation participation have been little studied for youth and not investigated at all for children. More research has focused on adult problems with engaging in or ceasing participation with recreation programs. The basic theory holds in this exploratory case study for children that constraints to participation, or continuing participation, do generally represent three courses, external, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. In addition, the significance of items associated with intrapersonal assessments and attitudes appeared to weigh most heavily with interpersonal constraints

following as a second major category of reasoning in the three-factor solution. External and interpersonal constraints were present in all three factors, but were considered less weighty than the more frequent intrapersonal constraints in decisions to cease participation for the children in this city during the period studied. The strongest components of program quality judgments had to do with attitudes about the social situation that really would vary from person to person. For example, parental interpersonal attitudes, such as disapproval of the class, would vary as would a child's attitude toward an instructor's leadership; whereas external constraints would be reflected in the less important components of schedule incompatibility and expense involved. Intrapersonal components figured heavily in the second factor, sense of being overpowered, with such items as ability level too challenging and child felt she or he did not fit in. The factors themselves can be discussed from broader social perspectives, enabling professionals to recognize where weak communication links between the agency staff and participants result in interpersonal and intrapersonal reasons for ceasing participation.

In respect to program quality, poor economic value is the apparent perception by parents and perhaps the child. Most important are the effects of limited resources on decisions to continue engaging in recreational classes, but also influencing decisions is a personal perspective of consumer savvy developed through experience with performance-based instructional experiences in the private sector and possibly at school. The longer the individual participates in performance related activities, the more the individual will focus on the program quality. A parent of a child who has received

quality music instruction is conceivably familiar with the aspects of a program that exhibits high standards of service. Therefore, aspects of program quality would be more evident to this parent. Were this a frequent behavior of the parent(s), then effects of experience with dropping out behavior can mount over time. Underlying these reasons is the formation of social attitudes which permit critical judgments to be made.

Developmentally, there may be reason to investigate the effects on children of strongly formed parental attitudes about continuing or discontinuing participation. It is possible that critical parents not only teach their children a mode of thinking but also convey an attitude having to do with perfectionism. Children learning autonomous behavior can be reluctant to leave the parent's side, not knowing how or if to trust the recreation leader, the program experience, and fellow participants. Trust of self is difficult to develop if something like a class is discontinued due to critical evaluations that may not make sense to a very young child, and parental attitudes are easily adopted.

For children learning to take initiative, there is a different way to conceive of the risk in coping. Their major challenge at this stage is to learn to make and carry out plans on their own. Any critical judgments and endings are easily imagined by the child as failures to perform well. Children learn to take pride in doing things on their own: changing into pajamas, brushing teeth, "reading" to themselves, getting the mail, and so forth. The risk of emotionally involving self in a program can be questioned by the child who hears parental doubts about the class or is no longer allowed to participate in the activity. Doubts in the parent's mind are easily transferred to the child's mind, and

children who are learning to “do the right thing” will guess that the right thing is to be dissatisfied just as the parent is.

Older children may lose confidence in their ability to judge situations because often they adapt well and learn to pursue goals that continue to make the situation challenging, fun, and worthwhile. Indeed, mastery may take on a very threatening image in their minds if, too often, they hear “not good enough” from a parent.

In any of these stages, it is not that children would be better off remaining with a poor-quality program but that decisions to terminate perhaps should be reviewed in light of a variety of potential personality- or character-building benefits to the child such as stability versus change, personal challenge versus social interaction, or standardized performance versus expressive outlet. It asks that parents (and their children) learn to take the *other's* perspective, that is, to be able and open-minded to see other ways of understanding the particular recreation situation. Certainly, ending one class experience should not be problematic, but if this were to become a pattern, then the child coping with autonomy, initiative-taking, or mastery will be at a disadvantage developmentally. Recreation participants ought not to be consumers of services; they should be facilitated to be co-creators of their re-creative experience. Thus, they can be given more of a role in the creative aspects of program development. One approach to assisting in changing problems with ceasing behavior is to bring parents (and children, perhaps) into direct communication on programs. Opportunities such as children's program committee membership and parent program advisors with each class to help facilitate organization and communication with other parents. A precursor to their child's initial enrollment in a

recreation class could be the parent's participation in an education program. Professional staff would offer information concerning child development, the positive effects of leisure, and what specific values the particular program will provide as well as what parents can do to help their children get the most from the leisure activity.

The child who ceases participation for reasons associated with feeling overwhelmed may reflect the trend in American suburban culture, to schedule children's free time with constructive or goal-directed activity, most of which is centered in group experiences. Underlying these feelings may be unsatisfactory coping with autonomy, initiative-taking, and mastery of skills. Therefore, children may already be feeling guilt, shame, doubt, and inferiority. Whether recreational classes are more or less goal-directed is a moot question; rather, one must wonder whether recreation is experienced solely as adult-directed learning of skills *in children's minds*. If this be the case, then recreational classes become an adjunct to school-type program rather than leisure opportunity with its sense of freedom to explore and self-direct one's own growth without comparison to standards or to others' performances.

The times of the local recreation department-sponsored playground programs are virtually gone, victims to bottom-line driven programming practices and fear of crime in public areas. Child abductions, drive-by shootings, and an ever-growing video game industry led to the demise of "free play" and supervised play. The impromptu style and free flowing activities consistent with school yard and parks programs of the recent past afforded children vast opportunities to develop creative-expressive talents desired by their parents. There was no better resource for acquiring the abilities a child needed to

become a balanced person. These activities were constructive and goal-directed, but they proceeded on the child's terms. The child learns through playing with challenge and risk. Play is the work performed by children as they grow developmentally. Somewhere along the line, play was forced to conform with adult direction and standards of performance; now it is behaviorally consigned to objectives to accomplish. Pre-school-aged children are feeling overwhelmed following what may be increasingly group-organized daily schedules, including recreation classes and tutoring of children.

Placing the blame entirely on the parents would not be fair. Some professionals have adapted the leisure opportunities to the culture by providing structured activities with performance based on standards. We should not forget young children will naturally attempt autonomous behavior and self-direction (initiative-taking) provided no sanctions prevent such action. Certain programs are still offering "play" and "free time," but someone needs to take the lead in making them commonplace, not the exceptions, and parents must be fully knowledgeable about the values and benefits of such programs.

Quitting was also realized as having something to do with who makes decisions and how they are made in the family. The link with religious group participation was interesting to consider because it may relate to developing a clear and unambiguous framework for living, a contrast to the idea of doing what feels good and not doing what does not. Does religious group activity carry with it learning to be un-self-centered or uncritical? Does the mother with less education believe that recreation classes are an unquestionable benefit for her child? Reviewing the factor array, Table 7 (p. 53), the idea that comes to mind is whining, either by a child, considering the group of items with

positive values, or by the parent, considering the items with negative values. Parents in the study were well-educated, but there was a sense that they were indulgent of their children's wishes and feelings. Children need opportunities to separate from their parents and realize themselves as individuals. If parents do not sanction these attempts, the child establishes a sense of shame and self-doubt. Likewise, high demands on performance can halt the development of initiative and mastery-building and lead to guilt or feelings of being inferior. Children need to learn and grow in a supportive environment but one that is focused on new experiences and responsibility through a framework of valued ways of thinking, reacting emotionally, and behaving.

Limitations

The sample proved a reflection of the surrounding community, allowing this research design to be used as model or example for replication and extension, but with caution about the special character of the up-scale, suburban community that may limit generalizability in this case. The advantages gained by using a case study approach were the possibility of capturing local cultural thinking patterns in examining the reasons for discontinuing participation in recreation classes and ease in gaining access to confidential program records from an administrative unit. A more realistic view of people's thinking may be accomplished when surveying people who share a common social world. These two points may balance the lack of representativeness in the sample.

It should be noted that potential bias may have occurred in the Kid's Carpentry class during the Fall 1998 and Winter 1999 quarters due to the large number of ceasing participants (number = 27) and the consequent large number of returns (number = 16).

The usual instructor was not teaching, a familiar cause for participant dissatisfaction. In addition, the substitute experienced several personal and family problems at the time and was forced to cancel the class on several occasions, adding to the problematic situation. Although the Leisure Services Division reimbursed all students for the missed classes, it can be conceived that the instances of an absent teacher and the resulting canceled classes caused memorable feelings of dissatisfaction. In addition, new students responding to positive word-of-mouth advertising and attending the class for the first time, may have been disappointed in a class which, although possessing a long and successful programming history, appeared unorganized and poorly instructed. Kid's Carpentry classes represented 35 percent of the returned surveys, by far the largest number for a single class. That figure combined with the fact that 75 percent of the ceasing participants in the class were first time students adds to the probable power of their reactions and influence on results. However, since these conditions are typical of the unpredictable events which occur in recreation programming, it was not deemed necessary to drop these subjects from the study.

It is also very likely that the researcher missed one, or several, important reasons for ceasing participation in the survey. This was due in part to a lack of an empirical model (only one study, Boothby, et al. 1981), provided useful guidance for these questions defining reasons for ceasing participation behavior. Reasons for ceasing participation could also vary regionally due to culture or demographics.

The length of time elapsing between the end the classes used for sampling and survey mailing was also a possible limitation since forgetfulness, particularly of

unpleasant situations may increase over time. The fact that the researcher did not check the subjects who failed to return a survey against those who did for bias in regard to personal and background characteristics was a weakness that may have unknowingly affected the findings of the study.

Suggestions for Further Research

Regarding recommendations for additional research, this researcher would suggest using a larger sample and also studying samples of working mothers who are single, separated, and or divorced. Locational bias must be studied as well, so sampling different municipalities and using cross-sectional sampling methods would help generally advance knowledge.

On a larger scale, it would be interesting to undertake a panel study of children and teens who enrolled in recreation programs and, whether they continue participation or not, follow them for a period of fifteen years to learn whether any engaged in delinquent and or anti-social behavior. Researchers could then test the relationship between ceasing recreation participation and increasing delinquent behavior as a sign of alienation.

Conclusions – What Has Been Learned?

Although generalizing to other youth populations is not advisable due to sample size, composition, and unmeasured intervening influences, several conclusions can be drawn. First, it is clear that program quality can play a large role in ceasing recreation participation, but that is due to social attitudes that may be changed by changing communication with parents. For this reason, some sort of parent education process and

parent involvement opportunities are needed. Program dissatisfaction can serve as both a significant interpersonal constraint and intrapersonal constraint, suggesting an important, but seldom acknowledged professional role responsibility for skillfully facilitating the social situations we create in recreation programs. Thus, the interface of professionals with the public should be increased with direct interaction, leadership, and advising. Conclusions provided by this study have furnished recreation professionals with some justification that feelings of program dissatisfaction as well as parent influence, particularly by mother, have a significant impact on the reasons behind why children cease participation in recreation activities.

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Appendix A

Children's Program Service Survey
City of Walnut Creek Leisure Services Division

"Where are Johnny and Janie?"

*We want to find out why some children choose to drop out of our recreation programs.
Please help us learn how to improve our services to children*

Surveys have been sent out to parents or guardians to complete for one or more children who enrolled in a Winter 1999 quarter activity program with Walnut Creek Leisure Services but did not complete the program or did not re-enroll in the same program in the following quarter.

IMPORTANT If you received more than one survey, please complete each one separately, drawing from information specific to the child and class/program which appears below.

Child's name:
Class title:
Class day, times, and dates:

ALL ANSWERS ARE CONFIDENTIAL

ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S RECREATION INTERESTS . . .

Please help us understand your child's recreation interests by circling the response that generally reflects his or her participation since last January.

1. Did your child participate in any of the following types of activities this past winter?

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------|---------------|--------------|---------------------------|------------|
| School clubs..... | Weekly | Twice a month | Once a month | A few times in the winter | Not at all |
| School sports..... | Weekly | Twice a month | Once a month | A few times in the winter | Not at all |
| Tutoring..... | Weekly | Twice a month | Once a month | A few times in the winter | Not at all |
| Religious clubs/activities.. | Weekly | Twice a month | Once a month | A few times in the winter | Not at all |
| Private club activities..... | Weekly | Twice a month | Once a month | A few times in the winter | Not at all |
| Youth group (like scouts)... | Weekly | Twice a month | Once a month | A few times in the winter | Not at all |
| Music lessons/band..... | Weekly | Twice a month | Once a month | A few times in the winter | Not at all |
| Other (please specify):
_____ | Weekly | Twice a month | Once a month | A few times in the winter | Not at all |

2. How many years has your child participated in each of the following types of activities?

School clubs.....	Less than 1 year	1 - 2 years	3 - 4 years	5 or more years
School sports.....	Less than 1 year	1 - 2 years	3 - 4 years	5 or more years
Tutoring.....	Less than 1 year	1 - 2 years	3 - 4 years	5 or more years
Religious clubs/activities..	Less than 1 year	1 - 2 years	3 - 4 years	5 or more years
Private club activities.....	Less than 1 year	1 - 2 years	3 - 4 years	5 or more years
Youth group (like scouts)...	Less than 1 year	1 - 2 years	3 - 4 years	5 or more years
Music lessons/band.....	Less than 1 year	1 - 2 years	3 - 4 years	5 or more years
Other (please specify): _____	Less than 1 year	1 - 2 years	3 - 4 years	5 or more years

3. Please tell us what classes and activities your child has *completed in the Walnut Creek Leisure Services Program* in the past. Fill in under each category.

Aquatics:

Preschool Programs:

Dance:

Physical Recreation and Sport:

Special Interest (for example, carpentry, cooking, babysitting.....):

Day Camp/Summer Only Programs:

Other:

4. What do you see as your child's talent or gift to be developed? _____

5. What ability do you believe that your child needs to develop to be a balanced person? _____

ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S WINTER 1999 CLASS

1. For the class we listed in the box on page 1, was Winter 1999 the first time he or she enrolled in this activity program?

- Yes, it was the first time.
 No, it was not the first time.

2. For the class we listed in the box on page 1, did your child:

(Check one of the following)

- Attend all of the classes during the winter quarter?
 Miss only one or two classes during the winter quarter?
 Miss more than two classes during the winter quarter?

3. For the class we listed in the box on page 1, did your child:

(Check one of the following)

- Choose to miss classes on his or her own?
 Have to miss classes due to circumstances beyond his or her control?
 Did not miss any classes

4. We would like help in understanding why your child did not return to this program during the spring quarter. Please check the response category that best represents his or her feelings. Circle one answer for each item.

<u>ANSWERS</u>			<u>ITEM</u>	
a	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	My child enrolled in another program instead
b	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	He/she tried to re-enroll in the class but it was full
c	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	The class time or day was not compatible
d	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	The class size was too big
e	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	The class size was too small
f	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	The class was too expensive
g	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	My child did not like the instructor's leadership
h	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	My child did not like the class content or activity
i	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	My child's schedule changed
j	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	Parent/guardian's schedule changed
k	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	Parent/guardian did not approve of the instruction
l	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	Parent/guardian did not approve of class content
m	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	The class was not worth the fee charged

<u>Continued</u> <u>ANSWERS</u>			<u>ITEM</u>	
n	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	The ability level of the class was too low
o	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	The ability level was too challenging
p	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	My child was bored
q	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	A major family event intervened
r	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	My child outgrew the activity
s	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	My child went through puberty
t	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	My child had a personal injury due to the class
u	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	My child has health problems
v	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	My child's interests changed
w	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	The class opened a new interest to be pursued
x	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	My child's friend(s) stopped taking the class
y	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	My child felt like he/she did not fit in
z	Mostly because	Partly because	Not at all because	My child felt like he/she made too many mistakes

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The following information will help us understand your answers on this questionnaire. We appreciate your helping us learn how to improve service to children in Walnut Creek.

1. What was your child's age *last winter* rounded to the nearest half year?

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3.0 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 5.0 | <input type="checkbox"/> 7.0 | <input type="checkbox"/> 9.0 | <input type="checkbox"/> 11.0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3.5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5.5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 7.5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 9.5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 11.5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4.0 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6.0 | <input type="checkbox"/> 8.0 | <input type="checkbox"/> 10.0 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12.0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4.5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6.5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 8.5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 10.5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12.5 |

2. What is the gender of your child? Male or Female

3. What grade-level did your child study at last winter?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool | <input type="checkbox"/> Third | <input type="checkbox"/> Seventh |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kindergarten | <input type="checkbox"/> Fourth | <input type="checkbox"/> Eighth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First | <input type="checkbox"/> Fifth | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Class |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Second | <input type="checkbox"/> Sixth | <input type="checkbox"/> Home School |

4. Are there brothers or sisters at home?

- No
- Yes 1 2 3 4 Younger than this child
- 1 2 3 4 Older than this child

5. About you What is your gender? Female or Male

6. About your marital status

- Single
- Separated
- Divorced
- Married or living with your spouse or partner

7. Regarding time spent outside of the home...

- About YOU Paid or voluntarily employed full time
- Paid or voluntarily employed part time
- Not employed outside of the home

About your spouse or partner

- There is no spouse or partner
- Paid or voluntarily employed full time
- Paid or voluntarily employed part time
- Not employed outside of the home

8. Annual household income, rounded to the nearest thousand

- Less than \$50,000
- \$51,000 to 100,000
- \$101,000 or more

9. Your education level

- Less than high school graduation Some college 4-Year college graduate
- High school graduate 2-Year college graduate Post-graduate degree/s

BACKGROUND INFORMATION - continued

10. Do you currently own your home? _____ or rent? _____

11. How long have you lived at your present address? _____

12. What is your zip code? _____

13. Which ethnic category are you in:

American India _____

Asian _____

Black _____

Filipino _____

Hispanic _____

White _____

Other _____

Ten parents will be contacted randomly to participate in a very short, follow-up phone interview regarding this survey. Will you please list the best telephone number to contact you during daytime hours. Thank you again for your cooperation and support.

Daytime phone number: _____

Appendix B

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FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions will be used to verify data on surveys returned by a sample of the respondents (10 family interviews will be conducted). Answers will be probed with requests such as, "can you think of any other reasons why your son (or daughter) may have decided not to continue with the class?"

1. As you recall, our survey asked about your son's (daughter's) decision not to continue with the _____ (fill in) class he completed in December of 1998. Will you think back with me and tell me what you believe was the main reason for the decision not to continue this program?

Probe other reasons

2. Were there any other activities which he (she) chose to drop last year?

Probe why...

3. Were there any other activities in which he (she) continued to engage in from fall into the spring of 1999?

Probe for scope

4. What new activities did he (she) add during the fall of 1998 or spring 1999?

Probe for scope

5. Would you describe how your child generally gets to the recreation center for activities?

Probe about transportation

6. Would you explain what you think the benefits and problems were with your son (daughter) attending a class like _____ last fall?


Appendix C



**San José State
UNIVERSITY**

Office of the Academic
Vice President
Associate Vice President
Graduate Studies and Research
One Washington Square
San José, CA 95192-0001
Phone: 408 924-2400
Fax: 408 924-2477
E-mail: gsr@csj.sjsu.edu
http://www.sjsu.edu

TO: Todd Trimble
5001 Totem Court
Antioch, CA 94509

FROM: Nabil Ibrahim, 
AVP, Graduate Studies & Research

DATE: September 24, 1999

The Human Subjects-Institutional Review Board has approved your request to use human subjects in the study entitled:

**"Ceasing Participation by Children in a
Municipal Recreation Setting"**

This approval is contingent upon the subjects participating in your research project being appropriately protected from risk. This includes the protection of the anonymity of the subjects' identity when they participate in your research project, and with regard to any and all data that may be collected from the subjects. The Board's approval includes continued monitoring of your research by the Board to assure that the subjects are being adequately and properly protected from such risks. If at any time a subject becomes injured or complains of injury, you must notify Nabil Ibrahim, Ph.D., immediately. Injury includes but is not limited to bodily harm, psychological trauma and release of potentially damaging personal information.

Please also be advised that all subjects need to be fully informed and aware that their participation in your research project is voluntary, and that he or she may withdraw from the project at any time. Further, a subject's participation, refusal to participate, or withdrawal will not affect any services the subject is receiving or will receive at the institution in which the research is being conducted.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (408) 924-2480.

The California State University
Quadrangle at Four
University Plaza, Sacramento, CA 95817
San Francisco, Hayward, Modesto
Long Beach, Los Angeles, Monterey Park, Orange
Merced, Maryknoll, Fresno
Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego
San Francisco, San Jose, San Luis Obispo,
San Marcos, Sonoma, Stanislaus

Appendix D



September 17, 1999

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Hello! My name is Todd Trimble. I am a Senior Recreation Supervisor with the City of Walnut Creek Leisure Services Division and am pursuing my Master's Degree in Recreation Administration. For my thesis, I am conducting a study of why children cease participation in recreation and leisure activities.

Please spend fifteen minutes completing the enclosed survey, which is designed to determine the reasons children may cease participation in these activities. Specifically, why your child/children enrolled in an activity through the Walnut Creek Leisure Services Division in Fall 1998 but did not enroll in the same activity in Winter 1999. We are hoping to learn how to improve our services and keep the young people of Walnut Creek active and interested in worthwhile recreational experiences while they are young and forming values that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. What you tell us may be about your hurried lifestyle, but it may also be information about ways we have to change to appeal to youth.

The survey is confidential and is to be completed by you, the parents/guardians. Unfortunately, the time lapse involved could not be avoided. Please do your best to recall, as accurately as possible, the reasons for stopping the participation. Truthful answers will be very important to correctly understanding what children in this City want and need.

The results of this study may be published, but any information that could result in your identification will remain confidential. You should understand that your participation is voluntary and that choosing not to participate in this study will not affect your relations with the Walnut Creek Leisure Services Division.

Feel free to phone me at (925) 943-5858 with any questions or concerns. You may also contact Kcm Hildebrand, Walnut Creek Leisure Services Manager, at (925) 943-5858. If you have any questions or complaints about research subject's rights, please contact Nabil Ibrahim, Ph.D., San Jose State Acting Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research, at (408) 924-2480. I thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Please return the survey in the envelope provided by October 1, 1999.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Trimble". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above it.

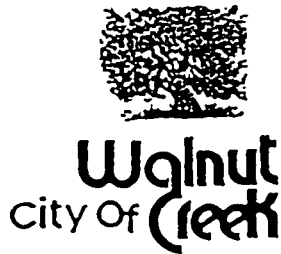
Todd Trimble

Senior Recreation Supervisor

P. O. Box 8039 ♦ 1666 North Main Street ♦ Walnut Creek, California 94596-8039 ♦ (925) 943-5800

♻️ Printed on Recycled Paper

Appendix E



October 1, 1999

Dear Parent and Guardians:

By now, you have likely received a copy of a survey I distributed as part of my thesis project studying why children cease participation in recreation and leisure activities.

If you have already responded to the survey, I thank you very much for your cooperation and ask you to please disregard this note.

The City of Walnut Creek and the Leisure Services Division is hoping to learn, as part of this project, how to improve our services and keep the young people of Walnut Creek active and interested in worthwhile recreational experiences while they are young and forming values that will remain with them for the rest of their lives.

Please spend fifteen minutes completing the survey and return it in the envelope which was provided. You are welcome to contact me at (925) 943-5899 x420 with any questions. I thank you again for your support and cooperation.

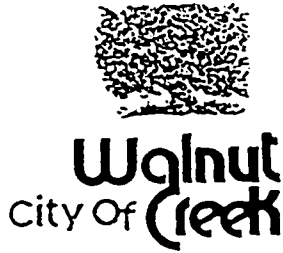
Sincerely,

Todd Trimble
Senior Recreation Supervisor

P. O. Box 8039 ♦ 1666 North Main Street ♦ Walnut Creek, California 94596-8039 ♦ (925) 943-5800

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Appendix F



October 19, 1999

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Hello again! As you may recall, my name is Todd Trimble. I am a Senior Recreation Supervisor with the City of Walnut Creek Leisure Services Division and am pursuing my Master's Degree in Recreation Administration. For my thesis, I am conducting a study of why children cease participation in recreation and leisure activities.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would please spend fifteen minutes completing the enclosed survey, which is designed to determine the reasons children may cease participation in these activities. Specifically, why your child/children enrolled in an activity through the Walnut Creek Leisure Services Division in Fall 1998 but did not enroll in the same activity in Winter 1999. We are hoping to learn how to improve our services and keep the young people of Walnut Creek active and interested in worthwhile recreational experiences while they are young and forming values that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. What you tell us may be about your hurried lifestyle, but it may also be information about ways we have to change to appeal to youth.

The survey is confidential and is to be completed by you, the parents/guardians. Unfortunately, the time lapse involved could not be avoided. Please do your best to recall, as accurately as possible, the reasons for stopping the participation. Truthful answers will be very important to correctly understanding what children in this City want and need.

Feel free to phone me at (925) 943-5858 with any questions or concerns. You may also contact Kern Hildebrand, Walnut Creek Leisure Services Manager, at (925) 943-5858. If you have any questions or complaints about research subject's rights, please contact Nabil Ibrahim, Ph.D., San Jose State Acting Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research, at (408) 924-2480. I thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Please return the survey in the envelope provided by October 25, 1999.

Sincerely,

Todd Trimble
Senior Recreation Supervisor

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Appendix G

Background and Personal Experience Descriptive Statistics

Table 1. Gender of children in study group

Gender	Percent	(Number)
Girls	52%	(24)
Boys	47%	(22)
Total	99% ¹	(46)

Table 2. Personal characteristics of children in study group

Characteristic	Mean	Range	Standard Deviation	Number	No Response	Total
Age	6.5	3.0-10.5	2.1	46	0	46
Grade	2.2	0.0-6.0	1.9	45	1	46
Older Siblings	0.7	0.0-3.0	0.8	46	0	46
Younger Siblings	0.7	0.0-3.0	0.7	46	0	46
Total Siblings	1.3	0.0-5.0	1.3	46	0	46

¹Percent Total does not equal 100% due to rounding error

Table 3. Personal characteristics of parents (no guardians) of children in study group.

Characteristic	Percent	(Number)	No Response
Respondent's marital status			0
Single	4.3	(2)	
Separated	2.2	(1)	
Divorced	2.2	(1)	
Married	91.3	(42)	
Total	100.0	(46)	0
Mother's education level			1
Less than high school graduate	0.0	(0)	
High school graduate	4.3	(2)	
Some college	17.4	(8)	
2-year degree	21.7	(10)	
4-year degree	28.3	(13)	
Graduate degree(s)	26.1	(12)	
Total	97.8	(45)	1
Mother's work			1
Full-time homemaker	45.7	(21)	
Part-time paid work	37.0	(17)	
Full-time paid work	15.2	(7)	
Total	97.9	(45)	1
Partner's work			5
Full-time homemaker	0.0	(0)	
Part-time paid work	0.0	(0)	
Full-time paid work	89.1	(41)	
Total	89.1	(41)	5
Annual household income			7
Less than \$50,000	8.7	(4)	
\$51,000-\$100,000	45.7	(21)	
\$101,000 or more	30.4	(14)	
Total	84.8	(39)	7
Respondent's ethnic status			5
Majority	73.9	(34)	
Minority	15.2	(7)	
Total	89.1	(41)	5
Home ownership ²			1
Rent	15.2	(7)	
Own	82.6	(38)	
Total	97.8	(45)	1

²Years in residence at this home ranged from 4 months to 16 years with an average of 6.3 years for the families of the children in the study group

Appendix H

Frequency of ceasing participation for the 11 selected children's recreation activity classes.

Activity Class	Frequency	(Percent)
Hawaiian/Tahitian Dance	6	(13.0)
Kids' Carpentry	16	(34.8)
Children's Tahitian Dance	1	(2.2)
Beginning Gymnastics	3	(6.5)
Tiny Tumblers (tumbling)	6	(13.0)
Ice Skating	4	(8.7)
Beginning Hula Dance	3	(6.5)
Jujitsu	2	(4.3)
Hula/Tahitian Dance	1	(2.2)
Gymnastics	1	(2.2)
Show Biz Kids (drama)	3	(6.5)
Total	46	(99.9) ¹

¹Percent total does not equal 100% due to rounding error