

Parent and Child Perspectives of Family Leisure Involvement and Satisfaction with Family Life

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The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between family leisure involvement and satisfaction with family life. The sample consisted of 179 families. Data were analyzed at the parent, child, and family level. Findings indicated that family leisure involvement was the strongest multivariate predictor of family satisfaction from the parent perspective, but was not a significant multivariate predictor from the child's perspective. At the family level of measurement, only the block including Core and Balance family leisure variables explained a significant portion of the variance in family satisfaction. History of divorce was a negative multivariate predictor of family satisfaction across all three perspectives. The nature of the relationships, implications, and recommendations for future research are discussed.

KEYWORDS: *Family satisfaction, core and balance family leisure, divorce, family systems theory*

Researchers have consistently reported positive relationships between participation in joint leisure activities and satisfaction with family life (Holman, 1981; Holman & Jacquart, 1988; Miller, 1976; Orthner, 1975; Smith, Snyder, & Monsma, 1988). These findings have been demonstrated in national and international samples, including those from Australia, England, and Korea (Ahn, 1982; Bell, 1975; Palisi, 1984). Similarly, when studying individuals, researchers have also consistently reported a positive relationship between leisure involvement and life satisfaction (Metzelaars, 1994; Ragheb & Griffith, 1982; Riddick 1986). Pavot and Diener (1993) characterized life satisfaction as the cognitive component of subjective well-being noting that it tends to be more stable over time than the hedonic component of subjective well being, and is a prime indicator of an individual's quality of life. As noted above, a family's joint leisure involvement is positively related to family satisfaction, and family satisfaction is a primary indicator of the quality of family life. However, most previous studies have examined only the leisure of married couples and satisfaction with their marital relationships. Inferences have then been made suggesting that the effects of joint leisure involvement must be similar for the broader family system. Until recently re-

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searchers have not specifically examined perceptions of satisfaction with family life (notable exceptions are Scholl, McAvoy, & Smith, 1999 and Shaw, 1999), and none have done so from multiple perspectives within the same family system. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between family leisure involvement and satisfaction with family life from parent, child, and family level perspectives.

Review of Literature

There has been an increase in the volume of research related to life satisfaction in the last decade. Many approaches to the study of life satisfaction are derived from Shin and Johnson's (1978) definition that explained the construct as a judgmental process in which individuals assess the quality of their lives based on their own set of criteria. Pavot and Diener (1993) elaborated to explain that a comparison is made between one's perceived life circumstances and a self-imposed set of standards. An individual will report higher life satisfaction according to the degree that the perceived conditions match the self-imposed standards. Therefore, "life satisfaction is a conscious cognitive judgment of one's life in which the criteria for judgment are up to the person" (p. 164). These criteria often include satisfaction with various domains of life, one of which is leisure involvement. Several studies have reported significant correlations between satisfaction with one's leisure and satisfaction with one's life (Metzelaars, 1994; Ragheb & Griffith, 1982; Trafton & Tinsley, 1980). Riddick (1986) argued that findings of a number of studies suggest that satisfaction with leisure, rather than other life domains, is the foremost determinant of life satisfaction or mental well-being. In other words, leisure plays a substantial role in an individual's life satisfaction and quality of life.

Family Leisure and Satisfaction

If leisure plays such an integral role in the life satisfaction and quality of life of an individual, it can be hypothesized that family leisure may also be a primary contributor to family satisfaction and quality of family life. Historically, researchers have reported, with little variation, significant positive relationships between participation in joint leisure activities and satisfaction with family life (Holman, 1981; Holman & Jacquart, 1988; Miller, 1976; Orthner, 1975; Smith, Snyder, & Monsma, 1988). Findings from international studies have also supported this relationship in subjects from Australia (Palisi, 1984), England (Bell, 1975), and Korea (Ahn, 1982). However, all of these studies focused on married couples and examined marital variables including joint couple leisure patterns and marital satisfaction. Inferences were then made to broader family systems suggesting a similar relationship between family leisure and satisfaction with family life.

Although a parent couple is a primary component in most family systems, it is not the only component. Families often include multiple members

beyond the couple only, such as children, that influence and are influenced by the joint experiences, inter-relationships, roles, rules, and evolving meanings shared by the family as a whole. Shaw (1997) stated that "almost no data exist on the attitudes and reactions of children to family activities, nor of the outcomes, beneficial or otherwise for these family members" (p. 109). Mactavish and Schleien (1998) found that benefits of family leisure appear to be most effective with the entire family system, much more than for couples alone. Recent studies (Scholl, McAvoy, & Smith, 1999; Shaw, 1999) have begun to examine perceptions of joint family leisure and have indicated positive relationships with family satisfaction. Although studies are beginning to utilize family variables, they still rely primarily on data collected from adult parents only. Mactavish and Schleien (1998) concluded that "concentrating on adult-only perceptions may under-estimate the positive value of shared recreation for the family as a whole" (p. 226). Therefore, it appears that it would be valuable to examine the relationship between family leisure and family satisfaction from a broader family perspective which would include data from both parent and child family members.

Theoretical Framework

Another criticism of the early family leisure literature is that adequate theoretical frameworks have been undervalued and underused by family leisure researchers and therefore have not allowed for the development of a consistent line of research that can effectively examine the family leisure phenomenon (Holman & Epperson, 1984). Yet there are many theoretical perspectives of understanding families that fit well with leisure concepts that could provide the necessary framework. Social exchange and choice theories explain family behavior based on the motivations and self interest of individual family members trying to maximize profits. They suggest that family members are continually engaged in rational cost-benefit analyses that are the basis for actions and decisions. The symbolic interaction framework holds that meaning is socially constructed by family members based on interaction with their environment and perceptions of culturally defined symbols and roles. Variations of this framework used with families include structural, interactional, microinteractional, and phenomenology of the family (White & Klein, 2002). Family development theory focuses on patterns of developmental change of families as they pass through different stages and transitions over time. Unlike individual stage theories that focus on the age of individuals, this approach focuses on a group process with the norms of timing and sequencing of stages and transitions being based on societal expectations. The conflict framework explains family behavior by examining the process of conflict resolution. In the pursuit of limited resources, family members form and dissolve alliances as they negotiate conflict in order to act in their own self-interest. Although it is quite diverse, the feminist framework generally focuses on women's experience and the socially constructed concept of gender, and has as its primary goal the emancipation of women

from the oppression and inequality of a patriarchal society. Family is often viewed as an ideology rather than an empirical group of related members, and attention is focused on identifying how this ideology is a central mechanism in society for perpetuating gender inequalities and the oppression of women (White & Klein, 2002). Ecological theory is also utilized to understand family behavior and focuses on the interaction of families with their environment. It suggests that understanding factors external to the family are necessary, and that the families' ability to adapt depends on their genetic potential and their interaction with environmental factors. Finally, there is the family systems framework, which uses the heuristic or metaphor of a working, interconnected system that is greater than the sum of its parts, and both affects and is affected by its environment, as a way of knowing and understanding family behavior.

Family Systems

Family systems theory has evolved from being the unifying framework of the family therapy movement to emerge as perhaps one of the better known and most widely utilized paradigms for family study in the social and behavioral sciences (Broderick, 1993). It holds that families are comprised of multiple members that work as defined, interconnected systems which are goal directed, self-correcting, dynamic, and both affect and are affected by their environment (White & Klein, 2002). Family systems are not chaotic and static, but are ordered and actively seek family goals. Through the different functions of the system, goals are selected, support is generated among members, and tactical steps are calculated. Progress is monitored and corrections are made through ongoing feedback loops (Broderick, 1993).

Family systems tend to seek a dynamic state of homeostasis by continually interacting both within themselves and with their ever changing environment. Families are therefore self-regulatory and utilize different mechanisms to adapt to change and maintain stability which are "both seen as essential elements in family [functioning]" (Broderick, 1993, p. 45). The principle of entropy suggests that a system must continually receive new information and energy as it functions or it will eventually cease to exist. Therefore, family systems have the need to experience and adapt to new situations and challenges while maintaining a certain level of closeness and structure, in order to function and progress. Family systems theory also agrees with the axiom of being greater than the some of its parts. Therefore it assumes that understanding of family behavior is best when viewing the whole, for not only do family dynamics have a major influence on an individual's behavior, but a change in an individual will also affect every other member of a family system (White & Klein, 2002).

Other basic characteristics of the family systems framework include the necessity of boundaries which both define a system and help regulate input and output. There must be a hierarchal set of rules that guide the maintenance of relationships among family members, govern the balance between

bonding members together as a unit and preserving a measure of independent personal identity, and influence the adaptability of the family unit (Broderick, 1993). Family systems also have different levels and subsystems such as sibling subsystems, marital subsystems, and parent-child subsystems. Finally, it is necessary to emphasize that "systems are heuristics, not real things" (White & Klein, 2002, p. 123). The theory is a way of knowing that provides a metaphorical framework for understanding family behavior, and does not suggest that the family system be reified and considered as reality.

There have been a number of models developed based on a family systems framework. One of the most widely used and recognized is Olson's (1993) Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems. This model "has a broad range of applications that successfully cut across the social and behavioral sciences, as well as the diversity of today's families" (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001, p. 281). Beyond the basic characteristics of the systems framework, Olson's (1993) model suggests that family closeness or emotional bonding among family members (family cohesion) and the ability to be flexible, adapt, and change (family adaptability) are the primary dimensions of family functioning. The necessary balance of these two dimensions is said to be facilitated through effective family communication. It has been argued that all three dimensions, as well as other systems characteristics, are facilitated by or are related directly to aspects of family leisure involvement (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001).

Marks (1989) stated that shared family activities may be one of the most salient forces establishing and maintaining boundaries in the contemporary family system. Family leisure provides significant opportunities for interaction both between family members as well as between the family and its' environment, which provides new input, energy, and challenge necessary for continued family system development (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). Shaw and Dawson (2001) found that family systems purposively facilitate family leisure activities in an effort to increase family functioning, including the necessary dimensions of interaction, communication, and cohesion. Referring to six decades of family leisure research, Hawkes (1991) found findings to have demonstrated that family "cohesiveness is related to the family's use of leisure time" (p. 424). Orthner and Mancini stated that family "leisure experiences foster system adaptation to new inputs" (p. 297). Research has also historically found joint leisure to be highly correlated to positive communication (Holman & Jacquart, 1988; Orthner, 1976; Presvelou, 1971). Overall, Orthner and Mancini (1991) summarized by indicating that a systems theory perspective offers "a useful window into the family and leisure relationship" (p. 297).

Core & Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning

A related critique to the lack of theoretical framework is that the family leisure variable has been historically addressed in a simplistic and inconsistent manner. It has often been viewed as any time spent together, or is ex-

plored through lists of activities randomly placed into categories with no theoretical basis or working models for such designations. For example, Berg, Trost, Schneider, and Allison (2001) failed to find a significant correlation between estimated joint leisure time and couples' relationship satisfaction. They identified their leisure measurement as a possible limitation in the measurement of joint leisure patterns and suggested that improved assessment of joint leisure activities would be beneficial to future work.

When examining the leisure behavior of individuals, Kelly (1999) introduced the need for both continuity and change when he explained two basic patterns of leisure activity. He suggested that one pattern of leisure involvement is with familiar activities that are relatively stable and consistent throughout the life course, whereas the other pattern suggests variety or challenge and trends to change throughout the life course. Iso-Ahola (1984) argued that this duality in leisure patterns results from the balance of two opposing needs that simultaneously influence an individuals' behavior. He states that individuals "seek both stability and change, structure and variety, and familiarity and novelty in [their] leisure" (p. 98). This interplay between the need for both stability and change plays an even greater role when examining the needs of family systems. As stated above, this balance is a primary underlying concept of family systems theory. Family systems "have a need for stability in interactions, structure, and relationship, as well as a need for novelty in experience, input, and challenge" (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001, p. 283). As with individuals, it has been argued that families also seek such a balance between stability and change through leisure behavior (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001).

The Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning (Zabriskie, 2000; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001) combines Kelly's (1999) notion of two general leisure patterns with Iso-Ahola's (1984) argument that leisure is used to meet the need for both stability and change, and does so in the context of family leisure. It offers a model of family leisure that fits well with family systems theory, particularly Olson's (1993) Circumplex Model. The Core and Balance Model argues that there are two interrelated categories or patterns of family leisure (core and balance) which families utilize to meet needs of stability and change, and ultimately facilitate outcomes of family cohesion and adaptability.

Core family leisure patterns are depicted by common everyday, low-cost, relatively accessible, and often home-based activities that many families do frequently. This may include family activities such as "watching television and videos together, playing board games, playing together in the yard, shooting baskets together in driveway, gardening, or playing in the leaves once the pile has been raked together" (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001, p. 283). Conversely, balance family leisure patterns are depicted through activities that are generally less common, less frequent, more out of the ordinary, and usually not home based thus providing novel experiences. This may include family activities such as "family vacations; most outdoor recreation (e.g., camping, fishing, boating); special events; and trips to a theme park, a sport-

ing event, or the bowling alley" (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001, p. 284). The model suggests that core family leisure patterns address a family's need for familiarity and stability by regularly providing predictable family leisure experiences that foster personal relatedness and feelings of family closeness or cohesion. On the other hand, balance family leisure patterns address a family's need for novelty and change by providing new experiences that require families to negotiate and adapt to new input, to be challenged, and to develop as a working unit in a leisure context.

According to the model, families who are involved in both core and balance patterns of family leisure are more likely to have increased levels of both family cohesion and adaptability, which are said to be the primary dimensions of healthy family functioning from a family systems perspective (Olson, 1993). Furthermore, healthier functioning families would also theoretically have higher perceptions of their quality of family life and be more satisfied with their family life, than families that are functioning at lower levels. Therefore, rather than focusing on aspects of family function, the current study focused on the related construct of satisfaction with family life. The study was based in a family systems framework and examined family leisure based on the Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning (Zabriskie, 2000; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001).

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between family leisure involvement and satisfaction with family life from multiple perspectives within the family system. Parent, child, and family level measurements were utilized. Family level measurements were created to examine joint perspective as well as discrepancies in perspectives. It was hypothesized that when controlling for sociodemographic factors there would be a positive relationship between family leisure involvement and satisfaction with family life from all three levels of measurement.

Methodology

Sample

Subject families ($n = 179$) were recruited through middle schools in a small mid-western city. It was determined that access through a school system was the most likely avenue to contact a broad range of families from all areas of the community which cut across sociodemographic lines and that currently had children in the home. Furthermore, students in the middle schools ranged from 12 to 15 years of age which suggested that they had reached the level of cognitive development that includes the abstract thinking process necessary for the completion of the survey instrument. This would allow them to comprehend and make sense of the survey questions, and how they relate to their family life. Psychosocially, children at this age are beginning to individuate from parents, but still rely heavily on the secure base of parents and family members.

The family systems perspective utilized in this study required responses from multiple family members. Although ideally data would be gathered

from every family member, the burden of such a request would have most likely limited possible subjects from participation in the study. Therefore in an effort to avoid taxing subject families and still approach a family systems perspective versus a parent only perspective, data were requested from one middle school aged child and from the parent in the home with the next upcoming birth date. This strategy was utilized in an attempt to obtain a representative distribution of male and female parents as well as male and female children. Such an approach provided information about the same constructs in the same family system from two different perspectives.

Based on an initial appeal for participation sent home through the middle schools, there were 275 families who indicated the intent to participate. Study packets were mailed out to all families indicating the intent to participate and 179 complete responses (1 parent & 1 child) were returned for a response rate of 65%. Therefore, the study sample consisted of 179 parents and their middle school aged children. Although the parent respondents were predominately female (77.0%) (see Table 1), the youth respondents were somewhat more evenly distributed with 59.8% being female. In terms of ethnicity, 89.8% of the parents were Euro-American/White as were 87.7% of their children. This difference was found to be a product of inter-racial marriages which increased the number of youth reported as being of mixed race. Minority groups consisted of Asian (5%), African-American (under 1%), Hispanic (under 1%), Native American (2%), and Multi-racial (2%). Parents' age ranged from 25 to 67 with a mean of 42.6 and their children's mean age was 13.1. The majority of parents were currently married (77%), 30% had been divorced at some time, and 22% reported that they were currently in a single parent family. Families had an average of 4.1 members currently living in the home. Annual family income varied greatly ranging from under \$10,000 to over \$150,000. The modal annual income category

TABLE 1
Summary of Sample Frequencies

	Percent	Frequency	<i>n</i>
Gender (Female, Parent)	77.0	137	178
Gender (Female, Youth)	59.8	107	179
White (Parent)	89.8	158	176
White (Youth)	87.7	157	179
Single never married	1.7	3	179
Married	77.1	138	179
Separated	2.8	5	179
Divorced	16.2	29	179
Widowed	1.1	2	179
Ever divorced	30.2	54	179
Single parent family	22.3	40	179

for subject families was \$61,000–\$70,000 (13%), and the mean category was \$51,000–\$60,000 (7.3%).

In an effort to examine the representativeness of the study sample, sociodemographic data from the U. S. Bureau of the Census (1993) was examined for the city from which data were collected. In terms of ethnicity the population was reported to consist of 93.8% white or majority. Although slightly more diverse, the study sample of 89.8% majority was quite comparable to the overall population. The slight difference in diversity may be attributed to the fact that older retired couples that are likely to be in the majority group are included in the census figures and not in the study sample. On the other hand, the younger families included in the sample may have been drawn to the community for educational and economical reasons, and are more likely to offer ethnic and racial diversity.

Family status data from the census report was also very consistent with that found in the study sample. Of all family households in the city, 76.0% included married couples while 77.1% of the study sample parents reported being married. Single parent homes representing mothers and fathers comprised 23.9% of the population and 22.3% of the sample group. The only other sociodemographic figure that could be compared was that of annual family income. The annual family income mean from the population was \$40,000, while the mean family income for the sample fell into the \$50,000–\$60,000 range. Yet, when one considers the fact that the census data was collected in 1990 (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1993), and the sample data was collected 10 years later, the figures again become quite similar. In light of these strong similarities, the study sample was considered to be adequately representative of the community from which it was drawn.

Instrumentation

The research questionnaire included the following scales: (a) the 5-item Satisfaction with Family Life Scale (SWFL) that measures satisfaction with family life based on the respondents own criteria; (b) the 42-item Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP) which measures family leisure involvement based on the Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning; and (c) relevant sociodemographic questions.

The SWFL is a modified version of the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) in which the words "family life" replaced the word "life" as it was in the original items (see appendix A). The SWFL requires respondents to agree or disagree with five statements about family life on a seven point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Scoring consists of summing all items which produces a satisfaction with family life score that ranges from 5-35. For family level measurement family scores (mean of parent and youth) and family discrepancy scores (absolute difference between parent and youth) were created. The scale has demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties in-

cluding evidence of construct validity, internal consistency ($\alpha = .93$), and test-retest reliability ($r = .89$) (Zabriskie, 2000; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2000).

The FLAP measures involvement in family leisure activities based on the Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning. Respondents identify leisure activities done with family members across 16 activity categories. Eight categories of activities are representative of core family leisure patterns (e.g., family dinners, home-based TV/videos, games, and yard activities) and eight categories are representative of balance family leisure patterns (e.g., community-based events, outdoor activities, water-based activities, adventure activities, and tourism). A panel of experts ($n = 8$) supported the content validity of the overall domain of leisure as well as that of the core and balance categories based on the theoretical model (Zabriskie, 2000). Each question root asks if the respondent participates in the activity category with family members. Specific activity examples are included to help clarify and delineate between categories. If the answer is yes, respondents are asked to complete ordinal scales of estimated frequency ("about how often?") and duration ("for about how long each time?") that follow each root.

Scores for the FLAP are calculated by first multiplying the ordinal indicators of frequency and duration of participation in each category, and then summing the core categories to provide a core family leisure index and summing the balance categories to provide a balance family leisure index. The total family leisure involvement index is calculated by summing the Core and Balance indices. Multiplicative indices were chosen over the use of either ordinal scaled frequency or duration variables to provide a better measure of overall family leisure involvement. The use of the frequency variable alone would underweight those activities that were done infrequently but for longer durations, and would overweight activities that tend to be done quite frequently for short amounts of time. On the other hand, the use of the duration variable alone would overweight those activities that were done infrequently but for longer durations, and would underweight activities that were done quite frequently for short amounts of time. The product of both ordinal variables provides a more meaningful index representing both frequency and duration of family leisure involvement. Family level scores were created by calculating the mean of the parent and child score for both the core and balance indices. Furthermore, an absolute difference score was calculated to reflect the difference in parent and child perspectives. The FLAP has demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties including evidence of construct validity, content validity, and test-retest reliability for core ($r = .74$), balance ($r = .78$), and total family leisure involvement ($r = .78$) (Zabriskie, 2000).

A series of sociodemographic questions were included to identify underlying characteristics of the sample and to provide possible controlling factors. Items included age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, history of divorce, single parent family, family size, and annual family income. Categor-

ical variables were dummy coded, while continuous variables such as age and family size were used in their existing state.

Analysis

Three data sets were compiled: (a) parent responses; (b) youth responses; and (c) family level measurement which included family mean scores for each subject family. Pearson Product Moment zero-order correlations between variables in youth, parent, and family level data sets were examined for multicollinearity as well as to identify possible controlling factors that could be included in subsequent regression equations. There were some significant zero-order correlation coefficients indicated, but the magnitude of the correlation coefficients did not indicate multicollinearity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Sociodemographic variables indicating significant zero-order correlation coefficients with the dependent variable in each data set were included as controls in the multiple regression models. The control factors were included to examine the unique contributions of family leisure involvement to the satisfaction with family life.

Three multiple regression analyses were conducted using a blocked entry method. The sociodemographic variables were entered in the first block, followed by the family leisure involvement variables in the second block. The regression analyses examined the contributions of family leisure involvement from (a) youth perspective, (b) parent perspective, and (c) family perspective.

Findings

Scores from the SWFL scale ranged from 6-35. Parent's ratings of satisfaction with family life had a mean of 24.85 ($SD = 6.60$). Ratings from youth perspective had a mean of 24.84 ($SD = 6.65$). The family scores for satisfaction with family life had a mean of 24.87 ($SD = 5.74$), and the discrepancy scores had a mean of 5.01 ($SD = 4.27$). Internal consistency alphas were reported at acceptable levels for both the parent ($\alpha = .89$) and the youth ($\alpha = .88$) data sets.

The FLAP provided index scores for Core, Balance, and overall family leisure involvement (see Table 2). Core family leisure index scores from this sample ranged from 10 to 93. Parents had a mean score of 42.95 ($SD = 13.22$), and the youth sample demonstrated a mean score of 41.01 ($SD = 16.08$). The family scores for the Core family leisure index had a mean of 41.99 ($SD = 12.24$), and the discrepancy scores had a mean of 11.20 ($SD = 9.59$). Balance family leisure index scores from this sample ranged from 0 to 160. Parents had a mean score of 60.15 ($SD = 24.80$), and the youth had a mean score of 65.08 ($SD = 29.17$). The family scores for the Balance family leisure index had a mean of 62.61 ($SD = 23.02$), and the discrepancy scores had a mean of 19.92 ($SD = 16.62$). The total family leisure involvement index

TABLE 2
Summary of FLAP Mean Scores (Parent, Youth, & Family Perspectives)

	Parent	Youth	Family ^a	Family D ^b
Core family leisure	42.95	41.01	41.99	11.20
(SD)	(13.22)	(16.08)	(12.24)	(9.59)
(n)	(174)	(164)	(179)	(179)
Balance family leisure	60.15	65.08	62.16	19.92
(SD)	(24.80)	(29.17)	(23.02)	(16.62)
(n)	(171)	(168)	(179)	(179)
Total family leisure	102.52	105.38	104.60	26.03
(SD)	(33.37)	(39.68)	(31.50)	(20.78)
(n)	(167)	(158)	(179)	(179)

Note. ^aMean of parent & youth. ^bDiscrepancy = absolute difference between parent & youth.

scores from this sample ranged from 16 to 234. Parents had a mean score of 102.52 ($SD = 33.37$), and the youth had a mean score of 105.38 ($SD = 39.68$). The family scores for the total family leisure involvement index had a mean of 104.60 ($SD = 31.50$), and the discrepancy scores had a mean of 26.03 ($SD = 20.78$).

Examination of zero-order correlation coefficients indicated a number of significant relationships among the study variables. First, within the youth data set (Table 3), gender, history of divorce, and core family leisure patterns were found to be significantly correlated with family satisfaction. Zero-order correlation coefficients indicated that females and those reporting a history of divorce tended to report less family satisfaction than males or those who had not experienced divorce. In addition, greater involvement in core family leisure was related to higher family satisfaction among the youth who participated in the study. Examination of relationships within the parent data

TABLE 3
Zero Order Correlations Among Study Variables (Youth Perspectives)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age	—	.070	.141	.037	-.042	-.018	-.034	-.017	.009
2. Gender (female)		—	-.007	-.007	-.024	-.082	-.200*	-.170*	-.201**
3. Racial Majority			—	-.111	.016	.102	.129	.076	.026
4. Ever divorced				—	-.334**	-.216**	-.116	.023	-.195**
5. Annual income					—	.319**	.002	.031	.148
6. Family size						—	-.009	-.180*	-.028
7. Core family leisure							—	.553**	.192*
8. Balance family leisure								—	.133
9. Family Satisfaction									—

Note. ** $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed). * $p < 0.05$ (2-tailed).

(Table 4) indicated that while gender was unrelated to family satisfaction, history of divorce and both core and balance family leisure patterns were significantly related to family satisfaction. As with the youth data, history of divorce showed a negative correlation with family satisfaction, whereas both leisure variables were positively related to family satisfaction.

Prior to creating family mean variables, zero-order relationships within families were examined (Table 5). The rationale was that if there was little relationship between parents and children on the study variables, creating a mean from two unrelated variables made little sense. Table 5 indicates that there were at least moderately strong relationships between parents and children on family satisfaction ($r = .504$; $p < .01$), core family leisure ($r = .493$; $p < .01$), and balance family leisure ($r = .599$; $p < .01$). Finally, the family level measurement (Table 6) showed many of the same basic relationships as the youth and parent data sets. Mean family satisfaction was negatively related to the middle-school child in the family being female, and the family

TABLE 4
Zero Order Correlations Among Study Variables (Parent Perspective)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age	—	-.166*	-.112	.085	.226**	-.004	-.160*	-.040	-.105
2. Gender (female)		—	.129	.158*	-.126	.009	-.096	.012	-.014
3. Racial Majority			—	.063	.057	.064	.133	.098	.007
4. Ever divorced				—	-.334**	-.216**	-.080	.003	-.215**
5. Annual income					—	.319**	-.002	.042	.081
6. Family size						—	.090	-.027	.023
7. Core family leisure							—	.491**	.275**
8. Balance family leisure								—	.264**
9. Family Satisfaction									—

Note. ** $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed). * $p < 0.05$ (2-tailed).

TABLE 5
Zero Order Correlations Within Families on Family Leisure and Satisfaction

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Family Satisfaction (p)	—	.504**	.275**	.264**	.120	.177*	.288**	.196*
2. Family Satisfaction (y)		—	.238**	.184*	.192*	.133	.215**	.170*
3. Core family leisure (p)			—	.491**	.493**	.387**	.759**	.493**
4. Balance family leisure (p)				—	.333**	.599**	.940**	.570**
5. Core family leisure (y)					—	.553**	.449**	.801**
6. Balance family leisure (y)						—	.596**	.942**
7. Total family leisure (p)							—	.618**
8. Total family leisure (y)								—

Note. ** $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed). * $p < 0.05$ (2-tailed). p = parent. y = youth.

TABLE 6
Zero Order Correlations Among Study Variables (Family Mean Perspective)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age (p)	—	-.044	-.166*	.103	-.112	-.052	.085	.226**	-.004	-.146	-.010	-.075
2. Age (y)		—	.007	.070	.069	.141	.037	-.042	-.018	-.026	-.015	.006
3. Gender (female, p)			—	.147*	.129	.061	.158*	-.126	.009	-.092	-.104	-.020
4. Gender (female, y)				—	.137	-.007	-.007	-.024	-.082	-.174*	-.184*	-.159*
5. Racial Majority (p)					—	.588**	.063	.057	.064	.163*	.074	.052
6. Racial Majority (y)						—	-.111	.016	.102	.164*	.071	.028
7. Ever divorced							—	-.334**	-.216**	-.111	.015	-.232**
8. Annual income								—	.319**	.001	.040	.125
9. Family size									—	.042	-.119	-.003
10. Core FL (m)										—	.554**	.262**
11. Balance FL (m)											—	.234**
12. Family Sat. (m)												—

Note. ** $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed). * $p < 0.05$ (2-tailed). p = parent. y = youth. m = mean. FL = family leisure.

having a history of divorce. Mean family satisfaction was positively associated with mean family core and balance leisure patterns.

Following univariate analyses, multivariate analyses were conducted to determine if family leisure contributed to the explanation of overall family satisfaction, beyond the effects of basic family characteristics. In the youth data set (Table 7), it was found that the first block, consisting of only sociodemographic variables explained a statistically significant portion of the variance in family satisfaction ($R^2 = .103$; $p < .05$). Within the first block, gender and history of divorce remained significant predictors of family satisfaction even after the effects of other sociodemographic variables had been accounted for. The addition of the block of the family leisure variables did not result in a statistically significant change in variance explained in family satisfaction ($R^2\Delta = .016$; $p > .05$). Thus, although the core family leisure pattern was related to family satisfaction in the univariate case, this same relationship did not hold in the multivariate case.

When the parent data were examined (Table 8) it was found that, although the block containing the sociodemographic variables did not account for a statistically significant portion of the variance in family satisfaction ($R^2 = .080$; $p > .05$), both age and history of divorce were significant multivariate negative predictors of family satisfaction. In contrast to the youth data set, the additional variance explained by the addition of the family leisure variables block was statistically significant ($R^2\Delta = .083$; $p < .01$). The

TABLE 7
Summary of Blocked Regression Equations Predicting Family Satisfaction
(Youth Perspective)

Variable	B	SE B	β
Block 1 $R^2 = .103$ ($ps < .05$)*			
Age	-.05	.73	-.01
Gender (female)	-3.11	1.11	-.23**
Racial majority	-.56	1.68	-.03
History of divorce	-2.94	1.27	-.20*
Annual Income	.27	.20	.12
Family size	-.60	.50	-.11
Block 2 $\Delta R^2 = .016$ (ns)			
Age	.02	.73	<.01
Gender (female)	-2.70	1.16	-.20*
Racial majority	-.92	1.70	-.04
History of divorce	-2.74	1.28	-.19*
Annual Income	.29	.20	.13
Family size	-.61	.51	-.11
Core Family Leisure	.06	.04	.14
Balance Family Leisure	-.01	.02	-.03

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. $n = 147$

TABLE 8
 Summary of Blocked Regression Equations Predicting Family Satisfaction
 (Parent Perspective)

Variable	B	SE B	β
Block 1 $R^2 = .080$ (ns)			
Age	-.19	.09	-.18*
Gender (female)	-.32	1.29	-.02
Racial majority	-.28	1.78	-.01
History of divorce	-2.67	1.27	-.19*
Annual Income	.18	.20	.08
Family size	-.17	.46	-.03
Block 2 $\Delta R^2 = .083$ ($ps < .01$)**			
Age	-.16	.09	-.14
Gender (female)	.08	1.26	.01
Racial majority	-1.02	1.73	-.05
History of divorce	-2.65	1.23	-.18*
Annual Income	.17	.20	.08
Family size	-.21	.45	-.04
Core Family Leisure	.07	.05	.15
Balance Family Leisure	.05	.02	.19*

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. $n = 153$.

addition of the family leisure variables indicated that although both core and balance patterns were significantly related to family satisfaction in the univariate case, only balance leisure was significantly related to family satisfaction by itself in the multivariate case. In addition, the inclusion of the family leisure variables yielded the relationship between age and family satisfaction no longer statistically significant (Table 8, Block 2). It is likely that this effect is the result of the weak but significant covariance of age and core family leisure (Table 4).

Finally, the last regression analysis examined the relationship of family leisure to family satisfaction using family level measurement. In the family level analysis (Table 9), it can be seen that similar to the parent data, the block of sociodemographic variables did not explain a statistically significant portion of the variance in mean family satisfaction ($R^2 = .099$; $p > .05$). However, history of divorce was found to demonstrate a significant negative relationship to mean family satisfaction in both the first block as well as after the inclusion of the family leisure variables. The addition of the family leisure variables (Table 9, Block 2) added a significant portion of explained variance ($R^2\Delta = .052$; $p = .01$) to the model. At the same time when both family leisure variables were included, neither demonstrated a significant multivariate relationship to family satisfaction by themselves.

TABLE 9
Summary of Blocked Regression Equations Predicting Family Satisfaction
(Family Perspective, Means)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Block 1 $R^2 = .099$ (<i>ns</i>)			
Age (parent)	-.06	.08	-.06
Age (youth)	.15	.59	.02
Gender (female, parent)	.37	1.11	.03
Gender (female, youth)	-1.87	.96	-.16
Racial majority (parent)	1.96	1.98	.10
Racial majority (youth)	-1.30	1.79	-.07
History of divorce	-3.04	1.10	-.24**
Annual Income	.20	.17	.10
Family size	-.55	.40	-.11
Block 2 $\Delta R^2 = .052$ ($ps = .01$)*			
Age (parent)	-.04	.08	-.05
Age (youth)	.27	.58	.04
Gender (female, parent)	.70	1.09	.05
Gender (female, youth)	-1.22	.96	-.10
Racial minority (parent)	1.21	1.96	.06
Racial minority (youth)	-1.61	1.75	-.09
History of divorce	-2.84	1.09	-.23*
Annual Income	.20	.17	.11
Family size	-.44	.39	-.09
Core Family Leisure	.08	.05	.16
Balance Family Leisure	.03	.02	.11

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. $n = 163$

Discussion

The findings of this study provide equivocal support for the hypothesized relationships. The hypothesized relationship between family leisure and family satisfaction, over and above the effects of family characteristics, was found in both the parent and family level data sets. The hypothesized relationship was not supported in the youth data set. In addition, one finding that was consistent across all three data sets was that history of divorce was significantly negatively related to family satisfaction. Finally, the relationship of the gender in the youth data set to both family satisfaction and family leisure is noteworthy.

Family Leisure and Family Satisfaction

Although this study did not indicate a consistent relationship of family leisure to family satisfaction across two different members of the same family,

the findings are still instructive. First, these findings would suggest that previous research that has examined only the leisure of married couples and extrapolated that to the family as a whole may be in error (e.g., Ahn, 1982; Bell, 1975; Holman, 1981; Holman & Jacquart, 1988; Miller, 1976; Orthner, 1975; Palisi, 1984; Smith, Snyder, & Monsma, 1988). In this study, family leisure activity appeared to be more strongly related to family satisfaction for parents than it was for their children. This may have been related to the broader perspective of the family that parents have while trying to strengthen the family system through family leisure involvement. Shaw and Dawson (2001) found that parents of similar aged youth (10-12yrs) "consciously and deliberately" (p. 223) planned and facilitated family leisure activities in order to attain goals of increased family cohesion, interaction, communication, and the learning of new skills and values. Such outcomes are the primary dimensions necessary for improving family functioning from a family systems perspective and would be related to family satisfaction. Shaw and Dawson also found that it was often with a "sense of urgency" that parents tried to spend time together with children participating in family activities before they got older without such experiences. Youth interviewed in their study tended to have a more narrow focus and related satisfaction with family activities to their own personal satisfaction of the activity at the moment. It is likely that parents, who are facilitating family leisure, are observing change or lack of change in dimensions of family functioning, and who are focused on multiple members of a family unit, would have a broader perspective when asked about overall satisfaction with family life.

Other variables, including history of divorce and gender, had a greater relationship than family leisure involvement did with the overall family satisfaction of middle school aged youth. As a systems theory perspective suggests, it appears that the interrelationship of multiple factors is more difficult to distinguish and understand when addressing family constructs such as satisfaction with family life. However, findings at the bivariate level suggest that regular family leisure involvement (core leisure patterns) was the only factor that had a significant positive correlation to the youth's perception of family satisfaction. Other variables including family size, ethnicity, and family income were not significantly related. Balance family leisure patterns were positively related, but the correlation was not significant at conventional levels. Although on the surface it appears more likely for factors such as income or balance family leisure patterns that stand out from the ordinary and are easily compared to those of peers to be related to youth's perceptions of family satisfaction, that was not the case with this sample. The fact that the core patterns stood out among the youth may be related to their need for consistency and stability in family activity patterns particularly during early adolescent development. Such patterns are theoretically related (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001) to outcomes of family cohesion, family identity, and feelings of closeness which provide the necessary foundation for family systems to navigate the changes and challenges of adolescent development.

Although adaptive family skills are also necessary for successful family functioning and satisfaction, such skills may be of little value without the foundation of family cohesion related to core leisure patterns.

Findings from the parent's perspective add empirical support to the body of literature that made inferences from marital variables (e.g., couples leisure, marital satisfaction) to general perceptions of the family as a whole (e.g., Ahn, 1982; Bell, 1975; Holman, 1981; Holman & Jacquart, 1988; Miller, 1976; Orthner, 1975; Palisi, 1984; Smith, Snyder, & Monsma, 1988). In the multivariate case, sociodemographic variables did not yield a significant predictive model of family satisfaction without the addition of family leisure variables. In other words, parents' responses indicated that family leisure involvement was the single strongest predictor of their satisfaction with family life. Such findings stand out in the literature in that they are not based on assumptions from the measurement of related constructs, but come from the measurement of specific family variables. These findings also add further support to more recent literature (Scholl, McAvoy, & Smith, 1999; Shaw & Dawson, 2001; Shaw, 1999) that has identified the extreme high value and importance placed on family leisure involvement by parents including fathers and mothers, as well as those in both single- and dual-parent households. Furthermore, this support comes from a broad sample of families and begins the response to the call for "more research, with a larger sample of parents and using a different methodological approach" (Shaw & Dawson, 2001, p. 229).

However, the differences between the parent and youth perspectives remind us of the intricacies and interrelationships involved when examining family systems. Perhaps the findings from the family level data set in this study provide us with the best insight into the family as a unit. It appears that utilizing the parent and child's arithmetic means may have tempered some of the extreme scores from one or the other while the consistent trends from both perspectives may have been strengthened, similar to what may happen with characteristics in a typical family system. As indicated in Table 9, the multivariate findings in the first block did not yield a significant predictive model of family satisfaction from the family level perspective. The female gender of the youth was no longer a significant negative predictor of family satisfaction as it was in the youth data set. Having a history of divorce was a stronger negative predictor than in either of the other data sets alone, reflecting a consistent trend from both the parent and youth in the family.

When the family leisure variables were added in the second block, again there was a significant change ($R^2\Delta = .052$; $p = .01$) in the predictive ability of the model indicating that family leisure involvement is predictive of family satisfaction from a family perspective. Again it appears that the consistent trend of core family leisure being a positive predictor from both the youth and parent perspective was strengthened, while the predictive ability of balance family leisure was tempered somewhat when examined from a family level. Therefore, from a family level perspective, total family leisure involve-

ment (both core & balance patterns) was the only variable that positively predicted satisfaction with family life while other factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, family size, and family income were unrelated.

Additionally, the nature of the relationship between the core and balance components of family leisure and family satisfaction should be noted. Previous research has indicated that core and balance family leisure patterns are differently related to different aspects of family functioning (Zabriskie, McCormick, & Austin, 2001). Core family leisure activities have been consistently correlated to family cohesion in a linear fashion, while balance family leisure activities appear to be related to measures of family adaptability in more of a curvilinear manner. In other words, families with very low or very high perceptions of their family adaptability tend to participate in more balance family activities. From Shaw and Dawson's (2001) perspective of purposive family leisure, it appears that parents on either end of the continuum (those who perceive difficulty and breakdown in a family system or those who perceive a highly functioning family in need of further challenge and growth) tend to plan more balance types of family activities in an effort to teach "values" and "expectations about behavior and about life in general" (p. 226). On the other hand, core family leisure involvement is consistently related to higher family cohesion and adaptability across the continuum.

In this study both core and balance patterns were similarly related to family satisfaction among parents; whereas only the core pattern of family leisure was significantly related to family satisfaction among youth at the bivariate level. When considering a family system, parents tend to take a holistic perspective as they assume the primary role for ongoing monitoring and feedback related to the family's overall needs and development. These findings would suggest that they also tend to take a holistic perspective in evaluating the contributions of family leisure involvement to their perceptions of overall satisfaction with family life. Thus, they considered both core and balance patterns, which are related to perceptions of both family cohesion and adaptability, to contribute to family satisfaction. However, there was a slightly greater correlation with balance family leisure among the parents (see Table 8). This may suggest that parents are more satisfied with their family life when they are more involved in family leisure that is new and challenging, thus, addressing the system's need for change and facilitating the teaching and learning of greater adaptive skills. While the youth, in contrast, appear to have a greater need for stability, consistency, and regularity in their preferences for family leisure involvement. These needs are addressed through core activities which are likely to facilitate feelings of closeness, cohesion, and family identity, and made a greater contribution to family satisfaction from the youth perspective. Therefore, while parents may have a greater need to teach new skills and prepare the family for the future with leisure, their children may simply desire to attain a stable sense of belonging and closeness through family leisure.

Although the parent and youth perspectives appear somewhat different, the family perspective may again provide the best insight into this relation-

ship. In the family level data set the core and balance patterns appeared to share much of the same variance with family satisfaction. Neither core nor balance were significant individual predictors of family satisfaction, yet the two variables together did explain a significant portion of the variance. In other words, families in this sample considered both core and balance patterns of family leisure involvement to play an integral role in their satisfaction with family life. This finding adds support to the Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning which holds that relatively equal amounts of both patterns are essential to promote healthy functioning families (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). The model also suggests that high involvement in one type of family leisure with little or no involvement in the other, would not only be less effective, but may actually be harmful in terms of family functioning and therefore in family satisfaction as well (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). Although the level of interdependence between core and balance family leisure patterns is not known, findings from the family perspective unequivocally support the apparent need for family involvement in both. Additionally, at the family level the core pattern appears to have a slightly higher relationship with family satisfaction, which is consistent with findings when aspects of family functioning have been examined (Zabriskie, 2000).

Divorce and Family Satisfaction

The most consistent finding across all three data sets in this study was the negative relationship of having a history of divorce to family satisfaction. Both the youth and the parents reported having significantly lower levels of satisfaction with their family life if they had ever experienced divorce in their family, whether it was a current situation or if it had happened in the recent or even distant past. These findings add further support to landmark studies examining the effects of divorce on children (McLanahan & Sandefeur, 1994; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1979; Wallerstein & Lewis, 1998). In a longitudinal study of children whose parents were divorcing, Wallerstein and Kelly (1979) found that after 18 months not 1 of the 131 children studied was well adjusted, or for whom the divorce was not still the central event of their lives. Researchers (Wallerstein & Lewis, 1998) examined these children and their parents at regular intervals over a 25 year period, and found that children of divorced parents continue to suffer negative effects from the family breakup well into adulthood.

Although there is some criticism of research related to long-term effects of divorce because divorce has become more common and accepted in recent decades, empirical studies continue to identify a variety of negative effects. The results of a meta-analysis (Amato & Keith, 1991) based on data from over 81,000 people in 37 studies concluded that "parental divorce (or permanent separation) has broad negative consequences for quality of life in adulthood" (p. 54). Outcomes related to the long-term effects of parental divorce included aspects of psychological well-being such as depression and low life-satisfaction; family well being such as low marital quality and high

divorce rates; socioeconomic well-being such as low educational attainment and low income; and poor physical health. While findings from the meta-analysis (Amato & Keith, 1991) also indicated that there has been some decrease in the negative impact of divorce in recent decades, the related effects are still found. Findings from the current study add further evidence from a broad non-clinical sample that divorce is negatively related to family satisfaction whether measured from a parent, child, or family level perspective.

Furthermore, while divorce was not the primary focus of the current study, this finding may have significant implications within the framework of family leisure. The limitations of the data set do not allow for specific interpretations regarding effects of family leisure involvement on divorce, but it does appear likely that families with a history of divorce do participate in both core and balance family leisure activities and that this participation is related to perceptions of family satisfaction. Yet, the current family systems perspective would suggest that the experience of divorce is likely to have a significant and long lasting effect on the need for stability within the system, particularly among children. A greater need for family stability would also produce an increased need for core family leisure involvement which is said to address a family's stability needs and produce outcomes of family bonding and cohesion (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). It is interesting to note that while not significant at conventional levels, there is a negative bivariate correlation (see Tables 3) between history of divorce and core family leisure involvement particularly from the youth perspective. This suggests the possibility that families who have experienced divorce may indeed participate in less core family leisure which is likely to have implications for family functioning and family satisfaction. The topic of family leisure involvement and divorce certainly appears to be an area that requires further investigation.

Gender, Family Leisure, and Family Satisfaction

Another notable finding in this study was the negative relationships identified with the gender of the youth. The female youth in this sample reported lower family satisfaction and lower family leisure involvement (both core & balance) than the males did. These relationships were not only significant at the bivariate level but at the multivariate level as well. In fact, the negative relationship with female gender was the single most contributive factor in both the first and second blocks of the regression equations predicting family satisfaction from the youth perspective. In other words, the youth in this sample were less likely to be satisfied with their family life if they were female, or if their parents had experienced a divorce. Although there have been consistent gender differences identified in the leisure literature when examining adult samples and related variables such as parental satisfaction, life satisfaction, or marital satisfaction (Freysinger, 1994; Holeman & Jacquart, 1988; Shaw 1992), this stands out as one of the first gender related findings when examining the specific variable of family satisfaction and does so from an early adolescent perspective.

One explanation for this gender difference may be related to the critical juncture identified in the psychological development of early adolescent girls (Gilligan, Brown, & Rogers, 1990). Giligan (1996) explains that early adolescent girls (typically 11-12 years old) find themselves in a dilemma between their intense interest in intimacy and the societal values of a male dominant culture. They become less confident, more self-doubting, and ambivalent which often translates into depression and eating disorders. Researchers (American Association of University Women, 1993; Rosner & Riedan, 1994) have also found that girls had a greater drop in self-esteem during adolescence than boys did. These characteristics among young girls are likely to influence their family leisure involvement and satisfaction with family life, at least for a period of time. Additionally, the negative bivariate relationship between being female and family leisure involvement may also suggest a possible suppression effect when using family leisure involvement to predict family satisfaction from the youth perspective.

The fact that there were no gender differences among the parents in this sample is also noteworthy. As noted above, gender differences among adult parents are often reported in the leisure literature (Freysinger, 1994; Shaw, 1992) as they relate to marital and individual variables. However, recent findings (Shaw & Dawson, 2001) have reported no gender differences or gender related issues among parent samples when referring to family variables such as family leisure involvement. The current study found no significant gender relationships with family satisfaction or family leisure involvement in either the parent or the family level data sets, which adds further support to Shaw and Dawson's findings (2001). The current family system framework holds that individual members and sub-systems (eg. parent dyad) must maintain a degree of independence and differentiation, while also being part of the family unit and focusing on family goals and development. Therefore while parents do identify differences (eg. gender) among individual and marital variables related to leisure and satisfaction, they appear to be quite consistent when focusing on overall family variables such as family leisure involvement and satisfaction with family life.

Recommendations

Overall, findings from this study indicate that there is a positive relationship between family leisure involvement and satisfaction with family life, primarily from the parent and family level perspectives. If indeed family satisfaction is a primary indicator of the quality of family life, parents and families in this sample have indicated that involvement in family leisure is one of the most significant factors contributing to a high quality of family life. Yet, it must be recognized that this research did use correlational techniques to identify relationships. Therefore, interpretations in terms of the directionality of the relationships can not be made without further study and refinement. Families that are already satisfied with their family life may be inclined to participate in more family leisure activities. It can be argued however, that in order to be satisfied with family life the family must first

spend some quality time together. The majority of such family interactive time in today's society is likely to be during family recreation and leisure. Mactavish and Schleien (1998) found that families viewed shared family recreation and leisure time as a means for promoting family unity, a sense of connection and belonging, and increasing family health. All of which can be argued as contributors to satisfaction with family life. Therefore, it is likely that family leisure is generally an antecedent to satisfaction with family life, although this directionality has not been empirically tested. In order to effectively examine the causal effects of family leisure involvement on family satisfaction or other related outcomes, future research must begin to approach experimental designs. Studies including pre-tests, different levels and types of family leisure involvement, post-tests, extended follow-up tests over time, and control groups for comparisons, although difficult, are necessary to empirically address the question of directionality.

On the other hand, qualitative methodologies with smaller samples are recommended to gain further insight into the relationship between the core and balance family leisure patterns. The findings from broad samples support the notion that they contribute to family outcomes in different manners and also suggest that they are interrelated. Qualitative approaches including in-depth interviews and observations within a core and balance framework, could provide great insight into this interrelationship and into the meaning of both types of family leisure involvement for different family members. Such knowledge would make a meaningful contribution to this line of research and to the family leisure literature

The findings related to divorce also merit future research. Although, this study was not designed to examine the relationship of family leisure involvement to divorce, the consistent findings related to family satisfaction does bring up the question, "Does family leisure involvement influence family stability"? Using data from a five year national study on couples, Hill (1988) found a significant positive relationship between spouses' shared leisure time and lower divorce and separation rates, even when controlling for a number of other factors that could influence stability, including presence and age of children in the home. Her findings stand out in the literature as one of the few that has been able to offer supporting evidence of a causal relationship between leisure and successful families. Further research with a similar longitudinal design examining the directional relationship between family stability or divorce and different patterns of marital and family leisure involvement is strongly recommended. Additionally, examining the contribution of family leisure patterns to the adjustment and coping faced by family systems during or after a divorce may also be beneficial.

The gender differences related to family variables among the youth in this sample beg further attention as well. It is likely that the gender differences were primarily related to factors of early adolescent development among girls and will change as the youth mature. A related study (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001) examined similar variables among a young adult college student sample and found no significant gender related findings. A longitudinal approach that examines youth perceptions during early adoles-

cence, late adolescence, and again in early adulthood would add insight into the developmental explanation. However, qualitative approaches would also be useful in understanding the meaning of family leisure for youth during the critical early adolescent juncture. Therefore, further study of the gender relationship to family leisure and satisfaction among middle school aged youth is recommended.

Another useful contribution from this study was not only the value of gathering data from both a parent and youth perspective in the same family, but the additional insight provided by utilizing a family level analysis process. Future research may benefit by gathering data from additional family members including the other parent and older children. Further examination of the absolute differences between perceptions of separate family members would also be useful in gaining a greater understanding of family variables.

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Appendix

List of Items on the Satisfaction with Family Life Scale (SWFL)

1. In most ways my family life is close to ideal.
2. The conditions of my family life are excellent.
3. I am satisfied with my family life.
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in my family life.
5. If I could live my family life over, I would change almost nothing.

