

VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY AS A VALUE ORIENTATION
IN THE LIFESTYLE, LEISURE AND WELL-BEING RELATIONSHIP

By

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I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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ABSTRACT

Leisure typically has been regarded as a positive component in people's lives, and evidence points to its central rather than peripheral role in lifestyle. Further, studies of leisure suggest it is conducive to psychological well-being, to physical health, and to the stability of social groups. The extent to which people are able to reach this potential very much depends on leisure's role in lifestyle, the experience of leisure, and whether conditions in a consumption-oriented society facilitate such positive outcomes. For many, leisure in consumption-oriented lifestyles holds symbolic meaning. Important aspects of personal identity and meaning are found in leisure-related possessions and through leisure activities pursued. For others, leisure represents an internal, inner-directed process through which activities or behaviours are intrinsically motivated, freely chosen, and ultimately satisfying.

In this study, lifestyle was conceptualized and operationalized using a "voluntary simplicity" value orientation, focussing on four main value dimensions: (1) material simplicity, (2) self-determination, (3) ecological awareness, and (4) personal growth. The purpose of the study was to examine the role that lifestyle plays in the relationship between leisure and psychological well-being. A self-administered questionnaire was completed by adults enrolled in general interest and continuing education leisure courses. Five basic concepts were assessed in the questionnaire: (1) leisure participation, (2) importance of leisure activity to lifestyle, (3) leisure experience, (4) psychological well-being, and (5) lifestyle. The highest frequencies of leisure participation per month included reading books, magazines and newspapers, listening to music, and watching television and videos. Leisure experience was characterized by higher challenge and awareness, and lower boredom and anxiety. There was general support for voluntary simplicity values in lifestyle with personal growth, self-determination, and ecological awareness dimensions being higher and material simplicity values being the lowest.

Lifestyles that more strongly embraced voluntary simplicity were associated with higher levels of challenge and awareness, and lower levels of anxiety and boredom in the experience of leisure. The self-determination, ecological awareness, and personal growth dimensions of a voluntary simplicity lifestyle contributed to heightened positive affect within psychological well-being, while lower levels of material simplicity increased negative affect (decreased psychological well-being). When all factors are taken together, a significant proportion of variance in psychological well-being is explained by the *experience* of leisure, especially *high challenge*, and *not* by *leisure participation*, and by a *voluntary simplicity lifestyle* characterized by self-determination, ecological awareness and personal growth values in the *positive affect* dimension, and material simplicity values in the *negative affect* dimension of psychological well-being.

These results suggest that regardless of the type and intensity of leisure involvement, if through heightened awareness, higher challenge and lower anxiety are sought in leisure, especially as expressed within a voluntary simplicity lifestyle, then higher levels of psychological well-being may be achieved. Indeed, by reducing lifestyle complexity and lessening the focus on consumerism, the inherent value of leisure to well-being might well emerge to a greater degree.

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Be authentic, step lightly, live simply but purposefully, and experience life to the fullest.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to both of my parents, but in particular in memoriam to my mother, Anneliese (Hartmann) Range (1917-1999), who inspired in me the love of sociology. Her love of watching people, their antics, and the curious relationships they evolve were a constant fascination and amusement to her. Having made her life on the land, in the garden, and in the home, she instilled in me a love of nature, and the vital, life-giving relationship we have with our natural environment. She lived and practiced simplicity and in her own way taught me the value of stepping lightly and living simply.

Further, my father, Hans Hermann Friederich Range (1919 –), strengthened in me the value and importance of our relationship with nature, through growing up and working on our farm in northwestern Alberta. His self-reliance, self-determination, and love for the outdoors have always been guiding principles to me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The role and importance of leisure in our lives has been discussed for centuries, beginning with philosophers like Socrates and Aristotle who in ancient Greece, over 2000 years ago, first laid foundations for this life dimension. Leisure research indicating it is a positive life element and something to strive for and attain is abundant. The underlying assumption is that leisure is desirable and in fact good for us – that there are benefits to leisure that enhance our lives and communities. “Studies of leisure generally emphasize leisure’s contribution to both the individual and society. These studies contend that leisure activities are conducive to psychological well-being, to physical health, and to the stability of social groups” (Weinblatt & Navon, 1995, p. 309).

The types of beneficial functions that leisure may provide include relaxation, entertainment and development of the personality (Dumazedier, 1967). Leisure can help us cope with stress (Caltabiano, 1994, 1995; Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993); provide opportunity for reflection and pause (Klieber, 2000); allow for self-actualization and self-development (Pieper, 1963); enhance personal and family relationships, and help build communities (Arai & Pedlar, 1997); and allow for the expression of citizenship (Arai & Pedlar, 1997; Hemingway, 1999). Further, recreational activity during one’s leisure can revitalize one for the return to work (Farina, 1980; Robinson & Godbey, 1999); allow for the development of a deep respect for the environment (Devall, 1988); and generally provide us with happiness, satisfaction, and a high degree of well-being.

As a component of most North-American lifestyles (e.g., those of the developed industrialized western world), leisure is expressed outwardly in varying degrees and ways,

and also exists internally to the individual in psychological states of mind like happiness and contentment. Kelly and Godbey (1992) in their examination of life course suggest that there is “evidence that leisure may be central rather than peripheral to life’s central concerns” (p. 270). Further, they note leisure is not a separate domain of life, but is closely connected with family, work, and community. These connections may shift over the life course, and leisure may act to provide continuity through such changes, and act to cope with such change.

In the experience of leisure, freedom and personal volition or choice is central. It has been argued if one is not able to voluntarily choose or act, his/her behaviour cannot justifiably be called leisure. It might be reasonable to think that lifestyles that vary in the degree of freedom or volition in the expression of leisure also would vary in the benefits derived from leisure. From this broader lifestyle perspective, and going beyond just the leisure dimension, are individuals truly free to make voluntary choices? As Elgin (1993) notes with respect to self-determination in making personal choices, being conscious of ‘self,’ or “who we are” is important for “if that ‘self’ is both socially and psychologically conditioned into habitual patterns of thought and action, then behaviour can hardly be considered voluntary” (p. 123).

The ability and/or freedom with which we may choose, enjoy and experience our leisure is as important as the activities we pursue, and is a critical factor to overall benefits obtained. Authors like Hemmingway (1996) have argued that our leisure has been highly instrumentalized by the technical, consumerist nature of modern society and that leisure is offered much more as a product to be consumed rather than an independent process to be undertaken voluntarily. We have been taught to “act” (the behavioural dimension of lifestyle) as opposed to “think” and “feel” (the social/psychological dimension of lifestyle) in our

leisure. Kelly (1992) also commented on the “commodification” of leisure, supporting Hemmingway’s notion of leisure being more product than process (pp. 94-95). Unless leisure itself is freed from the “instrumental deformation” that has historically taken place through the industrialization of our economy and also through the process of commodification, we cannot freely encounter or experience the emancipation leisure has to offer us (Hemmingway, 1996). These thoughts also were voiced by authors like Durning (1993) who suggests that leisure suffers or fares worse among the consumer class than many assume. “The very sources of satisfaction tend to get squeezed out as individuals pursue their high-consumption lifestyles” (Durning, 1993, p. 21).

When examining the satisfaction we get from our leisure experience, a question to be considered is what importance or value does leisure hold for us? For many, current consumption-oriented lifestyles offer opportunities for leisure which hold symbolic meaning (Haggard & Williams, 1992; Samdahl, 1988). Leisure manifests itself in the outward display or “symbolism” of activity – of clothing worn, of equipment used, or of items which subtly imply levels of social or economic status. As Hemmingway (1996) argued, it is this very market-driven consumer-oriented economy that pushes us to seek extrinsic meanings in leisure. In contrast, for others, leisure is a much more internal, inner-directed process in which the activities or behaviours chosen are intrinsically motivated and satisfying. The meaning of leisure in this sense is not found in the reaction or approval of others or in the purchase of goods or services, but in the very pursuit of, or activity itself and what that holds, means, or does for the individual.

The way in which leisure is enacted within a lifestyle is as diverse as there are lifestyles. In modern society, with the exception of negative leisure (i.e., “purple leisure”) or

criminal activity that has been viewed as leisure, the leisure expressions within differing lifestyles are as legitimate as any other. The value of individual freedom along with personal identification appears to be the basis for much of what is done. In support of the symbolic value leisure offers, Haggard & Williams (1992) state “we [consciously or subconsciously] select leisure activities on the basis of their ability to affirm valued aspects of our identities” (p.1).

Since so much of our current way of living is labeled consumerist or consumption-oriented, and takes place in what is commonly referred to as a consumer society, the following examples, using consumption as a distinguishing basis for lifestyle illustrate opposing value-based/attitudinal and behavioural approaches with different meanings for leisure. Individuals in a highly consumptive lifestyle might express their leisure through the many things they own, and fulfill their need of belonging and social acceptance by what they are seen to be doing in their leisure (i.e. leisure offers symbolic meaning). For a person in this lifestyle, owning the newest SUV with an extensive sound system and a powerboat by the cottage on the lake may be important to the way in which he/she enacts his/her leisure, gains the benefits inherent in leisure, and establishes a connection with his/her friends who may be like-minded. Their meals might be prepared on a \$1500 stainless steel barbeque, at a weekend “cottage” that has all the comforts and amenities for year-round living, including a dishwasher, computer, and large screen TV.

In contrast, an individual in a less consumption-oriented lifestyle, may focus on leisure activities that involve fewer purchased items or services, where leisure might be enacted with a view to strengthening personal relationships, and to reducing one’s impact on the environment (i.e. leisure offers intrinsic meaning). For this person, holding a potluck

dinner party where everyone shares in the event and the music is “handmade,” allows for his/her expression or experience of leisure. Similarly, going canoeing or cycling, or on a weekend hike to view birds and wildflowers in a local wilderness area with friends and family is another way in which this person might express their leisure and experiences its benefits.

In both of these examples, the individuals have legitimate personal motives for expressing their leisure and both may claim to be enjoying excellent and full leisure lives. Is there a difference, however, in their experience of leisure, the benefits gained, or the levels of well-being they feel? Is the experience of leisure or benefits gained, a reflection of a particular lifestyle that is defined by a differing set of values, attitudes, and behaviours?

Regardless of how a defining value set is developed, emerges, or is adopted in a given lifestyle, most lifestyles contain values in varying degrees surrounding such life domains or components as work, family, leisure, spirituality, citizenship, community, and the environment. It may be quite logical to think, then, that the way in which a person chooses to live, based on what they value or think is important to their life, may well have a significant affect on various aspects of their life such as leisure, and their overall well-being.

For the purpose of this study, lifestyle is conceptualized and operationalized using a “voluntary simplicity” (Gregg, 1936) value orientation. In essence, the term “voluntary simplicity” (VS) refers to living more simply, “integrating both inner and outer aspects of life into an organic and purposeful whole” (Elgin, 1993, p.24). Gregg’s definition stated that VS involves:

both inner and outer condition. It means singleness of purpose, sincerity and honesty within, as well as avoidance of exterior clutter, of many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of life. It means an ordering and guiding of our energy and our desires, a partial restraint in some directions in order to secure

greater abundance of life in other directions. It involves a deliberate organization of life for a purpose. Of course, as different people have different purposes in life, what is relevant to the purpose of one person might not be relevant to the purpose of another.....The degree of simplification is a matter for each individual to settle for [themselves] (as cited in Elgin, 1993, pp.23-24).

The rationale for using the VS value orientation in lifestyle as a conceptual framework is that like many other typical lifestyle modes, this value orientation underlies and threads its way through the main defining dimensions of a typical lifestyle like work, family, leisure, spirituality, citizenship, community, and existence with a relationship to the environment. Generally speaking, values within these typical dimensions are held by most people, but to varying degrees and for different reasons. The focus or emphasis on VS values, attitudes, and behaviours, as they are expressed within lifestyle, is different from current dominant consumerist lifestyles that are based on materially-oriented values, are market-driven, and consumption-based. A VS value framework within lifestyle provides a vehicle with which to assess value orientation and explore possible differences in the triad of the lifestyle/leisure/well-being relationship.

Purpose Statement

This study examined the dynamics of the relationship between lifestyle, leisure, and well-being. Using a “voluntary simplicity” value orientation as a means of both conceptualizing and operationalizing lifestyle, the role these values play in the relationship between the leisure dimension of lifestyle and psychological well-being was explored. The essential question was how does a voluntarily simpler lifestyle influence, or moderate the relationship between the experience of leisure and consequent psychological well-being?

CHAPTER 2

LEISURE, LIFESTYLE, WELL-BEING AND VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY: A BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW.

Modern leisure: Is it different, or have our ideas just changed?

Leisure, as a central dimension of human life, especially in western industrialized nations, provides opportunities for personal growth, community, reflection, relaxation, and recuperation. In short, it has become understood that a lifestyle without leisure would be a diminished existence. In the last 50 years, much has been written about the important dimensions of leisure, how leisure is perceived and enacted by individuals and groups. However, with significant cultural and societal impacts from technological advancement, growth of personal affluence and changing family structure, for example, the value, role, definitions and understanding of leisure have also changed and continue to evolve.

Consequently, a definition of leisure is helpful because this study explores aspects of leisure, its role within lifestyle, and its relationship to psychological well-being.

Conceptualizing leisure: What do we mean?

Brightbill (1960) operationalized “leisure” in the context of “time,” when people are free to rest or do what they choose. Leisure encompasses all the time beyond that which is needed for basic survival (like sleep) or subsistence (like work or schooling). “It is *discretionary* time (italics and emphasis added), the time to be used according to our own judgement or choice” (Brightbill, 1960, p. 4), and in which feelings of compulsion and obligatory pressures should be minimal and few.

Kleiber (2000) suggests a definition of leisure must also include a relaxation component, and supports Pieper's (1963) emphasis indicating that for too long the focus has been on the recreative or action-oriented aspects of leisure. The important dimension of leisure that involves relaxation, or that attitude of non-activity and receptivity which allows for necessary reflection must not be forgotten.

Relaxation is clearly neglected and subordinated [.....], and as a result so are such things as appreciation, contemplation and peacefulness. [...] I share Pieper's view that leisure is most essentially a position of relaxation, of faithful openness to immediate reality and ease of movement and thinking (Kleiber, 2000, pp.83-84).

It might be argued that recreation takes place during leisure and typically involves action as opposed to rest, but this is a moot point. Some kind of activity, "physical, mental, or emotional action, even if not visible on the surface, is necessary" (Brightbill, 1960, p. 8). Authors like Tinsley and Tinsley (1986) go further to suggest that wholehearted investment in action is the essence of good work and perhaps the nature of true leisure as well (as cited in Kleiber, 2000, p. 83). But, leisure is as much an inner mental process as an outwardly expressed, behavioural one.

Pieper (1963) emphasizes the inner psychological dimension of leisure when he states:

leisure, it must be clearly understood, is a mental and spiritual attitude – it is not simply the result of external factors, it is not the inevitable result of spare time, a holiday, a week-end or a vacation. It is in the first place, an attitude of mind, a condition of the soul [.....] leisure implies (in the first place) an attitude of non-activity, of inward calm, of silence; it means not being "busy," but letting things happen (Pieper, 1963, pp. 40-41).

To summarize, for the purposes of this study, leisure is conceptualized as Pieper (1963) had more or less defined it. Our leisure experience in the first place ought to be a mental and spiritual attitude of the mind, a condition of the soul, of inward calm, silence, and

non-activity; this is the state of “leisure.” In this relaxed state of leisure, we allow the mind to open for reflection and contemplation, two important psychological processes. In this study the term leisure will be used to include the meaning of recreation, although both terms tend to be used interchangeably.

This raises some interesting questions, for example, is a leisurely state of mind a necessary prerequisite to the leisure or recreational choices or decisions made? Does being in a leisurely frame of mind enhance one’s ability to decide which recreational or leisure activity (if any) best suits his/her needs?

The consumer society as a backdrop.

Before the relationships between leisure, lifestyle and well-being are explored, it is also helpful to define the context in which the majority of modern North-American lifestyles exist. Today, the average North-American lifestyle is very much consumption-oriented in nature, indicative of the intense market-based economy that has developed within the last century.

Consumption is almost universally seen as good – indeed, increasing it is the primary goal of U.S. economic policy. The consumption levels exemplified in the 1970’s and 1980’s are the highest achieved by any civilization in human history. They manifest the full flowering of a new form of human society: the consumer society (Durning, 1993, p. 20).

Consumerism is rampant. Rates of consumption in the developed world continue to grow steadily, and are seen by the corporate sector as essential to economic survival. Individuals and families find themselves faced with a tremendous choice of items to purchase that are used either for general living requirements or to enhance their lives in one way or another. Global consumption of goods and services topped US \$24 trillion in 1998, six times

the figure for 1975, and people are consuming more in food, energy, education and transportation, communication and entertainment than ever before (Jolly, 1998).

Not only are people consuming goods and services, but in a highly commodified, post-modern world with an over-abundance of choice, they “consume” lifestyles too. Over 30 years ago the futurist Alvin Toffler predicted that

 faced with colliding value systems, confronted with a blinding array of new consumer goods, services, educational, occupational and recreational options, the people of the future are driven to make choices in a new way. They begin to “consume” life styles the way people of an earlier, less choice-choked time consumed ordinary products (Toffler, 1970, p.305).

This is much the reality today. What has aided the development of consumerism and this busy market economy is an efficient and effective mass media, supported by such technological advances of the past 50 years as television, computerization, and the Internet, to name three. These mass media forms define the “good life” as having those convenience-oriented or pleasure-providing goods and services that give us comfort. “Recreational vehicles, boats, all terrain scooters, ski outfits and designer jeans are just some of the consumer goods that have become part of our popular leisure culture through the mass media’s establishment of a need. Advertisements and reflections of active lifestyles on TV and in the movies create these needs” (Wilson, 1995, p.32).

The influence of the mass media manifests itself through the need for belonging, the process of social comparison, and to be seen with and possess those same status-defining items of others. The mass media exerts an ongoing pressure in the lives of individuals and families to purchase, consume things, and adopt lifestyles for reasons other than basic necessity. “Consumers tend to define their own satisfaction with the amount of material goods they have in terms of a comparison of what they have to others” (Schiffman & Kanuk,

1997, p. 426). Venkat and Ogden (1995) state “if a comparison suggests that they [consumers] have more than others do, then they are more likely to be satisfied” (as cited in Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997, p. 426). The mass media creates an atmosphere of discontent, though, always suggesting that what we have is not good enough anymore, and that there is something new and better that can be purchased (Burch, 1997).

With such a revelation that “as much as half of some people’s discretionary time is spent before the great advertising medium, television,” (Kelly & Godbey, 1992, p.339) it is reasonable to think that there would also be changes in our thought patterns or beliefs about the way in which people choose to live or what might be important in one’s life. This idea is supported by Robinson and Godbey (1999) who indicate that of the approximately five extra hours of free time individuals have per week (from 35 hours to 40 in the period from 1965 to 1985), almost half of that is spent watching TV or using other media. Consequently, people are daily provided with a constant barrage of advertising that not only encourages them to consume, but also depicts lifestyles that they ought to be living and status they ought to aspire to.

Effects of the consumer society on leisure: How has leisure changed?

What has the consumer society and consumerism done to people’s lives, in particular the leisure dimension? How does a heavy emphasis on consumerism in leisure lifestyles affect well-being? Certain evidence points to specific changes in the psychological, social and behavioural dimensions of leisure, especially in the light of current consumer society.

Forty years ago, de Grazia (1962) noted that the “ideal” of leisure no longer existed in the United States. He was already fully aware of the impact of the marketplace on leisure, in

the buildup and acceleration of the post-war economy that we now call the consumer society. For de Grazia, the change from understanding leisure in its original sense of being a state of mind and an intrinsic process, to just free time, or that time that was left after work and other important duties were taken care of, had already taken place, and if one had free time one had access to the good life. He argued that the ideal state of leisure had been lost, and current consumer society was structured against thinking of it in other deeper ways.

The commercial spirit, in business and government both, has no interest that any such ideal, without spending attached to it, should come to prevail. Instead, an ideal of free time, or of the good life, has taken the field. The good life consists in the people's enjoyment of whatever industry produces, advertisers sell, and government orders (de Grazia, 1962, p. 279).

Currently, the focus and importance placed on work in many lifestyles is paramount, and the reasons why so many people work with such great intensity, over and above providing for the basic necessities of life are cause for examination. One suggestion for why people work so hard in this seemingly endless circular pattern – working to make money, only to turn around and spend it on a host of consumer goods and services, and then to go back to work again to make more money – is found in the needs and meanings for consumer goods and services the consumer society or marketplace establishes for them.

Interestingly, these needs and meanings may be viewed as systematic and structural “consumer society” constraints to the way people live, how they work and how they use or experience their leisure. Extra income does not buy the free time that de Grazia (1962), et al., had suggested it might. Rather,

the consumerist treadmill and long hour jobs have combined to form an insidious cycle of “work and spend.” Employers ask for long hours. The pay creates a high level of consumption. People buy houses and go into debt; luxuries become necessities; Smiths keep up with the Joneses. Each year, “progress,” in the form of annual productivity increases, is doled out by employers as extra income rather than

as time off. Work-and-spend has become a powerful dynamic keeping us from a more relaxed and leisured way of life (Schor, 1991, pp.9–10).

In addition to this cyclical “work and spend” behaviour, some authors (Hemingway, 1996; Kelly, 1991; Kelly & Godbey, 1992; Putnam, 1995) also have argued that the highly-technological consumer society has impacted leisure and subsequently well-being significantly on a deeper basis.

To begin with, leisure has become “commodified” (Kelly, 1991, Wearing & Wearing, 1992) and offered as a “product” and not the “process” it originally represented. In so doing people are told by marketers that if they purchase various items or services they will reach a happy state of leisure, satisfaction and well-being. This state, however, tends to be transitory and short lived, like many of the things bought, and soon they begin to look for new experiences that they are told can only be found by purchasing some other thing or service.

Researchers like Kelly and Godbey (1992) add that not only leisure, but other dimensions of people’s lives have become “commodified” by the very structure of the technologically-driven market economy and the incessant push to consume.

Commodification affects quality of life and human behaviour at a very basic level. For example, “leisure that is primarily consumption leads to life that is actually dehumanizing. Leisure becomes a matter of possession rather than action; entertainment versus being engaged in activity with other persons” (Kelly & Godbey, 1992, p. 343).

The basic argument for commodification of leisure may be summarized as a process that has historically followed and includes at least these six sequential elements (Kelly & Godbey, 1992, pp. 344-349):

- 1) Leisure becomes a symbol of social status. As authors such as Veblen (1899) first posited over a century ago, status-based leisure is oriented toward consumption rather than the experience.

- 2) Consumption becomes the central reward for docile participation in the market economy. Consumption-based leisure also becomes central to the economic system as reward. Leisure is not a right, but must be earned. Lifted above survival, workers are to strive to gain a wider range of consumer goods.
- 3) As Veblen (1899) also argued, leisure becomes central to the tastes that divide the society into status groups. Tastes and fashion separate/segment society according to the ability to purchase. Leisure is not only tied to the consumption of things (i.e., goods and services), but to the latest and newest things.
- 4) The “good life” then comes to be defined in terms of such consumption. It is the creation of and positioning of needs by the marketplace, that “something more” that makes life special and that gives us at least the feeling of freedom and choice. Higher cost becomes associated with preference and value. The good life then becomes the more costly environment, event, or relationship. The meaning of life itself becomes “one dimensional” and commodified (cf. Marcuse, 1964; Miller, 1987).
- 5) Leisure, like work and the family, may become commodified and defined as consumption. The freedom of leisure becomes an exercise in market purchasing power. Leisure becomes “a package to be purchased.”
- 6) These market-focused definitions of life and leisure lead inevitably to a similar *definition of self*. The signs of a successful life are easily measured in the accumulation of possessions [or, as a popular bumper sticker notes, “He who has the most toys wins”].

To suggest that leisure is commodified, as Kelly and Godbey (1992) put forth, also suggests being left with a definition of self that is described by the things possessed or services purchased. The essence of leisure has been “packaged up” and reduced to a process enacted in the marketplace, as opposed to being an inner directed process that provides a sense of self not derived from material goods or purchased services. The process of defining self or self-identity formation may be at the root of the lifestyle, leisure, well-being relationship. Is lifestyle an integral aspect of self-identity? Indeed, many have supported this idea (Feldman and Thielbar, 1972; Kelly, 1983; Mitchell, 1983; Toffler, 1970; Veal, 1993).

Essentially “a lifestyle is a vehicle through which we express ourselves. It is a way of telling the world which particular subcult or subcults we belong to” (Toffler, 1970, p. 314).

The economic importance of this personal display and expression in lifestyle has not gone unnoticed, especially in the leisure dimension of our lives.

The significance of owning, possessing, and displaying in leisure styles, especially those of the affluent, cannot be quickly dismissed. At the very least, there is considerable evidence that most leisure is privatized rather than communal, dependent on markets and media for many resources, consumptive rather than vitally active, and of low rather than high intensity and commitment. Nor can it be denied that leisure is big business, a major and growing segment of Western economies (Kelly & Godbey, 1992, p. 352).

Just how important leisure has become in terms of economic spending can be summed up as follows:

Leisure is arguably not yet the centre of our economy, although it is centre stage for most buying and selling. It may be more accurate to say that leisure will be the catalyst for most of the significant changes that our society and economy will undergo as we adapt to the post industrial period (Stynes, 1993).

To put this into perspective, however, it should be noted the argument for commodification of leisure is debatable. Contrary to some of the macro-social evidence about total leisure commodification, typical leisure participation patterns show that

cost-intensive activities are not increasing in participation faster than those that are cost-free; the activities that people do are mostly cost-free; household recreation expenditure remains stable; purchases of new items were more related to durability than fashion; most leisure trips are still by car (85%) and are on a budget; the kinds of activities rated by adults as most important are not cost intensive; and, the diverse studies of anticipated outcomes from leisure experiences suggest multiple meaning and satisfaction (Kelly & Godbey, 1992, pp. 351-352).

It is easy to find examples of individuals or families whose leisure emphasizes purchase and possession, and for which this signifies important aspects of their identity to others, but to say that leisure is commodified for everyone would be overstatement.

Alternatively, there are examples, perhaps fewer, of individuals or families who derive a less materialistically-oriented meaning from their leisure and gain a different, deeper satisfaction from it, as there are those where the source for leisure satisfaction arises more directly from their association and use of consumer goods.

Further changes to leisure are posited by Putnam (1995). He illustrates how the social nature of leisure has been changed by examining leisure's role and importance for the development of social capital. By social capital he refers to "features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (p. 66). He suggests that social capital in North-America is declining because people do not relate to each other, become involved in activities in their communities, express an interest in how their community functions, or volunteer for organizations in their community at the same rates they did decades earlier. These examples of behaviours typically occur during one's leisure time. It is often through leisure that people are given avenues to experience social relationships, be involved in their communities through voluntary organizations, and in essence exercise their democratic prerogative as citizens.

Along with several other possible explanations he posits for this decline, one is specifically the "technological transformation of leisure" (Putnam, 1995, p.75). As part of this discussion, he specifically fingers television as the culprit, although television is arguably a form of rest, relaxation and escape for many.

There is reason to believe that deep-seated technological trends are radically "privatizing" or "individualizing" our use of leisure time and thus disrupting many opportunities for social capital formation. The most obvious and probably the most powerful instrument of this revolution is television. Time-budget studies in the 1960's showed that the growth in time spent watching television dwarfed all other changes in the way Americans passed their days and nights. Television has made our communities (or, rather, what we experience as our communities) wider and shallower. In the language of

economics, electronic technology enables individual tastes to be satisfied more fully, but at the cost of the positive social externalities associated with more primitive forms of entertainment (Putnam, 1995, p.75).

Hemingway (1996), like Putnam, describes similar changes as an “instrumental deformation” of leisure. He cites these changes to leisure as being due to a number of historical developments over the past two centuries, namely:

changes in the structure of work; fears that worker affluence would force the reduction of work hours and threaten economic stability; the search for new market opportunities; and the desire to maintain existing patterns of social, economic, and political dominance.[...]Responses to these factors contributed to the commodification and consumerization of leisure by applying to it an instrumental rationality which increasingly narrowed the range of social roles available within leisure practices (Hemingway, 1996, p. 31).

Leisure is seen as an economic tool, used to create a rested and productive work force, and also a time in which the goods and services produced could be consumed.

Hemingway, focussing on leisure’s social dimension, illustrates the instrumental deformation of leisure by describing how social roles might thus be limited:

to the degree leisure has been commodified and consumerized, the social roles available within leisure practices are grounded in non-emancipatory rationality, conceiving human interaction as essentially aimed at satisfying self-interest in pre-defined situations, rather than at coming to agreement about common interests in a mutually defined situation open to effective criticism (Hemingway, 1996, pp.30-31).

One could interpret this as prevailing thought within present North American consumer society. Social roles are approached from the perspective of individualism versus the common good, where self-interest appears to be the guiding motivation for much activity. In other words, people approach leisure consumption on the basis of “what’s in it for me?” as opposed to “what’s in it for all of us?” or “how might my actions impinge on others?,” a mind-set prevalent in current society.

Juniu (2000), building on Hemingway's (1996) interpretation of Habermas, suggests the important elements of creativity and sociability within leisure also have changed. She notes that:

leisure, conceived as 'culture creating,' has an element of communication and interaction among individuals, while free time, 'culture consuming' leisure, is a means to an end, making use of subjects and objects. Today, consumerism has consumed us in the sense that we are trapped by money, and those elements of creativity and sociability found in leisure are disappearing (Juniu, 2000, p.71).

Juniu also echoes the thoughts of de Grazia (1962), mentioned earlier, where she notes the distinct difference between the original concept of leisure and free time, suggesting that present consumer society leisure attitudes and behaviours focus primarily on free time as the time when "culture consuming" can take place.

Leisure experience: Does value orientation affect leisure experience?

So what is the issue? The foregoing authors have all pointed to important changes in leisure due to the structure and processes of the consumer society. The issue, as these authors suggest, is that more and more of the leisure choices in current society are reflected in commodified values. The meaning of life has been shaped and defined to reflect values seen as desirable by the consumer society. Could it be that the very act of purchasing, of spending hard-earned money is a central focus and what gives people the most joy or satisfaction in their lives? It may be argued that there is nothing wrong with this, morally or socially, but it ought also to be questioned if a highly consumeristic lifestyle is not bereft of meaning and ultimately satisfaction, since there seems to be no end to the way people consume and to the types of "non-essential" items they are lured into buying. People seem to go from one purchase to the next in hopes of fulfilling needs that never seem to be fulfilled.

Commodified, instrumentally deformed, or technically transformed leisure is dehumanizing. People appear to find value and experience generally satisfying leisure through the “toys” they have purchased or through services they have purchased, as opposed to from social leisure experience in relationships with others or through involvement in their communities. For example, as a leisure activity, do individuals value watching television more than conversations with their spouse or family members? Do people prefer to spend hours polishing the car or keeping up the appearance of their home, rather than to go out and visit friends, or volunteer with a community organization?

If the commodification argument is understood correctly, lifestyles in which individuals predominantly buy their leisure, or experience their leisure through “things” may be limiting the experience or well-being derived from leisure. It is apparent the ownership and use of material goods does not always lead to happiness or psychological well-being. “Psychological evidence shows that the relationship between consumption and personal happiness is weak” (Durning, 1993, p. 20). “In fact, some managers and professionals now acknowledge that the emphasis they have placed on career success and earning ‘lots of money’ has not made them happy” (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997, p. 426).

Changes to our perception of leisure: Meaning and value.

Forty to 50 years ago leisure researchers and futurists predicted that by the turn of the century people would be leading more leisurely lives, working less, and enjoying themselves more. In the 1960s, Brightbill argued that individuals need to prepare for leisure because they are “at a time when many people have more leisure than ever before [...and] because [of] the new leisure that is rapidly enveloping Western civilization” (Brightbill, 1960, p.1). He

suggested that leisure, rather than being viewed as a problem, should be seen as an opportunity for enriching life. People must learn to understand the values guiding their lifestyles and inherent in leisure so they can structure opportunities for leisure and tap into its self-developing and actualizing potential, as well as other benefits it can provide.

Dumazedier (1967) also suggested the future for developed societies would hold an abundance of leisure and would require thoughtful planning to prepare for this feature. He posited “to a greater or lesser degree, the problem of leisure is there, to be dealt with at the heart of industrial civilization, whatever may be the degree of technical development and the kind of social structure envisaged” (Dumazedier, 1967, p. 237).

It is now known these predictions of an abundance of leisure have not played themselves out for several reasons. Firstly, the predicted surplus or abundance of leisure time indicated three decades ago has generally not materialized, and if so, only marginally for select lifecycle or lifestyle groups in society (Zuzanek & Mannell, 1998). Some researchers state that we actually do have more free time per week, perhaps as much as five hours week compared to 30 years ago, but almost half of this extra time is now spent watching television (Robinson & Godbey, 1997).

Added to this is the impact on leisure and well-being of an increasing sense of time pressure and stress. Linder (1970) described the effects of the consumer society on leisure in lifestyle, noting the “average earner in the rich country lives nonetheless under the pressure of time. He is a member of the harried leisure class” (p.12). This “harried” pace many are living is similar to Schor’s (1991) idea of the endless “work and spend” cycle. Linder (1970) suggests that as a result of the consumption process people continuously find themselves in a

time deficit because they do not realize that consuming takes time and the goods bought require time for their use.

Also, over thirty years ago Toffler (1970) described how the acceleration of life is a result of the technological developments in society and echoes Linder's concerns.

The speed-up of diffusion, the self-reinforcing character of technological advance, by which each forward step facilitates not one but many additional further steps, the intimate link-up between technology and social arrangements - all these create a form of psychological pollution, a seemingly unstoppable acceleration of the pace of life (p.429).

In addition, Toffler (1970) wrote,

some people are deeply attracted to this highly accelerated pace of life – going far out of their way to bring it about and feeling anxious, tense or uncomfortable when the pace slows. They want desperately to be “where the action is.” But if some people thrive on the new, rapid pace, others are fiercely repelled by it and go to extreme lengths to “get off the merry go round,” as they put it (p. 37).

Toffler's predictions appear to be borne out. People increasingly feel more busy and rushed. “Well over half of Canada's employed population, including over 60% of employed women, felt more rushed in 1992 than ‘five years ago’ ” (Zuzanek & Smale, 1997, p. 95). Further, “higher combined workloads of dual-career families, coupled with the growing cost of domestic personal services (this cost doubled between 1981 and 1992) added to the vicious circle of ‘have-to-be-done’ activities and resulted in an acute subjective sense of time pressure (pp. 96–97). Robinson and Godbey (1999) also echo this by stating “counter to the increase in their free time, significantly more respondents feel time pressure today than 30 years ago” (Robinson & Godbey, 1999, p. 231). They add that stress levels had corresponding increases when compared to time pressure over the same period of time.

Secondly, the understanding and meaning for leisure has changed. Instead of the “state of mind” or process leisure once represented, it seems it is now understood and experienced more as a commodified, instrumentalized, and transformed entity. The context in which the predictions for leisure were made several decades ago, involved a society that was in the middle of a consumption boom, yet not as heavily consumer-oriented as it is now (cf., Jolly, 1998). If leisure is viewed as “free time,” when people are free to purchase and consume, can leisure fulfil the important role in their lives that it should? The issue has become one of changed value and meaning. The meaning of leisure in terms of its value as a commodity seems to have been well-established by the marketplace. Effective consumption of newer and better leisure products and services is the current mode and promotes economic prosperity. The argument returns to the question, does commodified leisure offer a different, perhaps shallower, sense of satisfaction or well-being in comparison to that leisure which may be defined by less commodified values?

Thirdly, leisure as it was conceived, allows capacity for relaxation and reflection, two important functions which seem to have been neglected in the modern hectic pace of life fostered by the consumer society (Kleiber, 2000). “A more mature view sees the importance of relaxation for reflection and planning, for gaining the kind of perspective that leads to an effective change in direction, acceleration of efforts in some direction and deceleration of effort in others” (p. 83). The importance of reflection has been emphasized by Kingwell (1999) too. In discussing what sorts of things contribute to one’s well-being, fulfillment or happiness, he states:

it has to be based on reflection. And I think this is where the crux of the matter lies, because most of what we do under the prescription of “consumer activity” is pre-reflective or unreflective, and necessarily so, because it’s only when we’re in such a state that we are so responsive to these external

messages, these desires that steal inside us from outside. If we start putting ourselves into question in a deep way – that’s really what philosophical reflection is all about – we start to see which things matter to us and which things don’t (as quoted in Eisen, 1999, p. 13).

Can reflection during leisure allow for resistance to occur, the ability to stop and say “no, I don’t need this”, or “I don’t want or need to do this?” The discussion by Kingwell (1999) raises the following question. If one takes the time to think about one’s actions as opposed to reacting spontaneously without prior thought, would those actions be performed differently, for perhaps deeper or more meaningful reasons?

The understanding of leisure is obviously a relative process. Individuals develop their own meanings for leisure, reflected by their values. Most of what is done within lifestyle is based on the values held, and what is considered important and worthy of doing (Kilby, 1993). Do people in fact experience the most satisfying leisure, and can they improve their well-being (i.e., happiness) when they seek to fulfill their leisure through purchase and use of goods and services of various kinds? Are there perhaps other worthy ways of living (i.e., lifestyles) involving different value orientations, which allow for opportunities of deriving deeper satisfaction or a more full experience of leisure, and consequently heighten psychological well-being?

Lifestyle and value orientation

The leisure and social sciences literature reports that the many ways in which people live their lives either on a day to day basis or throughout the various stages of one’s life (i.e., the life course) can be defined with the term “lifestyle,” and represents a personal mode of expression. In support of the symbolic interactionist approach to the function of lifestyle, “a lifestyle is a vehicle through which we express ourselves” (Toffler, 1970, p. 314).

Toffler (1970) argued that the sociological description of lifestyle according to class position in society has changed, and that it may be the value orientations inherent in certain lifestyle modes, what he terms a “subcult” or sub-culture, that help to define lifestyle.

Life style is no longer simply a manifestation of class position. Classes themselves are breaking up into smaller units. Economic factors are declining in importance. Thus today it is not so much one’s class base, as one’s ties with a subcult that determine the individual’s style of life (Toffler, 1970, p. 305).

Along similar lines of thought, Zablocki and Kanter (1976) suggest there are two forms of distinguishing between lifestyles – the classic indicator of socioeconomic status (SES) which describes the economic location of that lifestyle, and secondly, lifestyles that are independent of economic location and are differentiated based on choice of values that do not reflect occupational or economic roles.

In market-based research on values and lifestyle (VALS), Mitchell (1983) used value orientation within a lifestyle as a basis for differentiation between what were described as nine core American lifestyles. This research produced what is known as psychographic modelling, and allows for a broader ability to categorize or segment the consumer market.

Psychographic models assume a causal relationship between values and attitudes on the one hand and behaviour on the other. Generally the models used explore relationships between the values and attitudes of lifestyle groups and their purchasing/consumption behaviour, and sometimes their leisure activities. In this conception values and attitudes are *influences* on lifestyle but not necessarily part of lifestyle itself. So categories produced by psychographics may be said to represent groups who are likely to share similar lifestyles because they have similar sets of values; but the shared lifestyles are not the same as the values; they result *from* the values in some way (author’s italics) (Veal, 1993, p.242).

Veal (1993) identifies an important aspect of value orientation with respect to lifestyle. Essentially, a general value orientation can support a variety of forms of lifestyle

which all adhere to certain aspects of the basic value orientation. Because of the focus on values and attitudes, psychographics may be useful in terms of analyzing leisure lifestyles. As an example, this study will focus on the differentiation of lifestyle according to value orientation, based on the hypothesis that a different value orientation may indicate differences in leisure experience and subsequent change in psychological well-being.

Sessoms (1980) supports the role of value orientation in lifestyle and that over time within this framework one can adopt or change one's personal lifestyle. He summarizes lifestyle as follows:

a lifestyle is really the behaviours and attitudes that characterize one's existence. An individual's behaviours are determined by the unique configuration of social values and personal experiences which influence behaviour and cause him or her to identify with those who also share those behaviours. Generally speaking there is also a dominant force at the centre of one's lifestyle. A lifestyle is dynamic; one may exhibit various lifestyles during a lifetime (p.186).

A similar perspective of lifestyle is a more or less coherent pattern of behaviour freely chosen by an individual or group of persons. In addition, a lifestyle is more likely to change according to individual preference and circumstance than are basic norms or institutions of a culture, and it implies a person's central life interest which spills over into work, family, recreation, and religion (Feldman & Thielbar, 1972).

Although it has been pointed out there can be variations in lifestyle within a similar value orientation, this study aims to examine if a specific value orientation, different from the mainstream, affects the experience of leisure and well-being.

A couple of scenarios illustrating differing value orientations within lifestyle may help here.

Scenario #1. To Family “A” it is important to have a clean, tidy house situated in a comfortable, neat neighbourhood where most neighbours have orderly landscaping and things generally look very park-like. While they enjoy doing some minor things around the house, most repair and servicing, such as complete lawn care, is done by hired contractors.

The family feels being fit and healthy is very important, and is a regular user of a high-quality “fit club” with excellent personalized training and instruction. Both spouses are also members of a private golf and curling club to which many of their friends also belong. Although they are members of “leisure” clubs and often like to wear their fitness or sports clothing at home while at leisure, because they both work extensively at their jobs, they don’t participate in these activities as regularly as they would like.

Often in the evening the family can be found together in the family room, someone watching TV, someone on the computer, or someone reading the latest magazine or daily newspaper. They would like to volunteer more in their community, but there doesn’t seem to be enough time nor energy left for this.

Scenario #2. For Family “B,” the location of their home is not of prime importance, only that the home is solid, requires minor repair and is a comfortable, functional living space. As opposed to going out for meals, often they prepare a meal together with friends and family who come to visit. They both drive a vehicle, but both vehicles are well used with one, still sound and functional, being over ten years old.

On some evenings they go for walks together as a family, to talk, or just appreciate the seasonal changes occurring. As soon as possible in the spring they plant a vegetable garden in part of their backyard. They have never used chemicals on their lawn or garden.

Over the last few years they have converted much of their lawn area into perennial flower and shrub beds. This is encouraging their neighbours to do the same.

In addition to their regular jobs, both husband and wife volunteer within the community, he as a hockey and soccer coach, and she with the local school council, and as a member of the urban tree committee.

The number and type of lifestyle scenarios are almost endless, but what these examples serve to illustrate is that many different lifestyles based on different value orientations exist. The study aims at addressing the question of whether or not these value orientations have an effect on the experience of leisure within lifestyle, and whether or not well-being is enhanced or diminished.

Most lifestyles are multi-dimensional or reflect personal or social values that differ in degree and often overlap each other. One can usually note the elements of work (occupational and domestic), leisure and recreation, spirituality, personal and social relationships, community relationships, and relationships to the environment in the lifestyles of most people. The importance of these dimensions vary substantially according to the value structure or interests of individuals. For some, spirituality might be the dominant dimension or value, for others it may be their occupational work, and for still others it may be their commitment to community.

The values apparent in a lifestyle, among other aspects, will vary according to life stage, or that point along life's path one is currently living. Lifestyles reflect personally held values that are independent of life stage but are flexible to change over the life course. The origin of values and development of one's values over the life course is influenced by various sources: "family, peers, school and college, religion and church, folk story, personal

experiences, etc.” (Kilby, 1993, p.109). Both lifestyle and life stage act as filters for information and ideas and dictate the behaviours we exhibit or the activities we choose to take part in. “Our life style and stage of life serve as our antennae. We only pick up those vibrations which are in tune with our receiving units. Our psychological readiness is directly related to our life stage and our willingness to participate is a function of our lifestyle” (Sessoms, 1980, p.190). What Sessoms (1980) says is that one’s “receiving units,” essentially one’s values, will dictate the kind of lifestyle choices made, and these may or may not change as one progresses through the life course. In her work on development and perspectives of aging, Neugarten (1973) also notes and describes the shifting importance of various aspects along the life course.

Life is essentially a two-stage phenomenon in which the first stage is devoted to the development of abilities, skills, and mechanisms for dealing with the world and with one’s self. It is an expansive stage. The second stage or phase of life involves the reorganization and evaluation of behaviours. Changes in the quality of social interaction and a growing concern for the inner life are its major components. The maintaining of one’s self and one’s interests becomes paramount (Neugarten, 1973, p.33).

Neugarten (1973) also makes note of the “valuation” process in the second phase of life, wherein personal and social values come more into play in reinforcing or determining the kind of lifestyle adopted at that stage in life. Sessoms (1980) supports this further and notes:

the first stage, that of youth, is quantitative and involves growth, exploration and expanding life experiences. From these a variety of lifestyles may evolve and be tested or temporarily adopted. The adult life stage is characterized by selectivity. Adults tend to sort out activities and channel their energies. These characteristics are typical in the mature stage where one seeks to maintain and stabilize preferred behaviours rather than continue to be explorative. Of course, exploration occurs in all stages of life as does maintenance behaviour; it’s really a matter of degree (Sessoms, 1980, p.190).

The lifestyle of someone in his/her early 20s who is not married and is working, is markedly different from that of the working parent in his/her mid-thirties with young children, and again from that of the “empty nester” whose children have left home. The value orientation within lifestyle may remain more stable around core values (i.e., around work, leisure, spirituality, personal and social relationships, community, and environment) that were formed at an early age, and/or were reinforced by societal institutions like church and school, as opposed to superficial values promoted by the mass media. The examples are many and varied, but elements of core dimensions (or values) identified are typically present in most lifestyles. What may differ for people is the strength of these values, or the shifting importance placed on them.

The role or value of leisure in lifestyle.

The role leisure plays in personal lifestyle, and how this relationship further contributes to personal well-being and general quality of life, illustrates the triad of central relationships that forms the basis of this study. The way in which people live may have an effect on the way they experience their leisure (e.g., the satisfaction gained from it) and this in turn may define the value placed on leisure (i.e., what leisure means for them). Further, this understanding or meaning for leisure may effect the capacity of leisure to enhance well-being.

Kelly and Godbey (1992) argue that leisure is perhaps more central or valuable to lifestyle than people might think, and perhaps acts to tie life together more significantly over the life course than any of the other dimensions. In an analysis of the relationship between leisure and well-being which supports this centrality and focuses on leisure’s capacity for developing intrinsic motivation, Iso-Aholo and Weissinger (1984) state “leisure may remain

the primary, if not the only, avenue for promoting the predisposition toward intrinsic motivation and thereby psychological and physical health” (p. 44). In answer to a previously raised question, it appears, according to Iso-Aholo and Weissinger a leisurely state of mind may indeed be a pre-requisite and foster the necessary motivation for the recreational choices or decisions made.

Within their lifestyle, individuals express their leisure or experience the benefits of leisure differently in accordance with the meaning or value leisure holds for them, whether it reflects more symbolic value (Haggard & Williams, 1992; Samdahl, 1988), or whether the meaning is more intrinsic and personally felt. For example, in consumer society, where commodified values appear to be the norm, the way leisure is enacted is often determined by how it defines personal identity. What does my leisure say about me? There is a need for people to be seen displaying a certain leisure lifestyle, doing recreational activity in their leisure which describes their personal values and identity. The importance and meaning is found in how others may react to one’s leisure choices (Haggard & Williams, 1992). Certainly for some, the value placed on leisure is not the same, and the importance and benefit of their leisure choice is more internal or intrinsic versus outer-directed or externally derived.

In addition, when incorporating the commodification argument and the idea that leisure has been instrumentally deformed, is it reasonable to think that the degree to which some people value consumerism in their lifestyles would also indicate a difference in their experience of leisure or the satisfaction gained from it?

Modern consumerist lifestyles, when focussing on the leisure dimension, are often characterized by increased individual and family levels of stress, particularly time stress

(Linder, 1972; Zuzanek & Mannell, 1998; Zuzanek & Smale, 1997). Even though families have a host of labour and time saving consumer goods, appliances and tools in their possession, they are still caught up in performing other necessary domestic work that seems to fill the space that leisure time ought to. “Contrary to the prognoses of the 1950’s, the introduction of new household appliances and time-saving technologies, convenient and take-out foods, professional services, as well as the downsizing of families, did not result in the expected decline of domestic work” (Zuzanek & Smale, 1997, p. 97). The leisure dimension of lifestyle is directly affected because after occupational and domestic work responsibilities are completed, little time seems to be left over to enjoy leisure, be at leisure, or be involved in activities that will lead to the state of leisure.

Psychological well-being (PWB): How is it affected by consumeristic lifestyles?

The importance and relationship of leisure in one’s lifestyle on psychological well-being has been well-documented in the literature (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997; Myers & Diener, 1995; Smale & Dupuis, 1993). The term well-being is often used together with such other terms as quality of life, happiness, health, wellness, and life satisfaction. What is meant by well-being in this study is described through measures of psychological (PWB) or subjective well-being (SWB) (Diener & Suh, 1996). Psychological well-being measures are based on individuals’ subjective perceptions like feelings of joy, happiness, pleasure, contentment, and life satisfaction in their social or other environments. Would differing value orientations in lifestyle effect the experience of leisure and in turn produce a change in aspects of PWB?

As has been previously stated, consumption of goods and services does not necessarily make one happier and psychological well-being often suffers, although consumerism keeps the economy going and fosters progress in society.

Ironically, high consumption is a mixed blessing in human terms, too. People living in the 1990's are on average four-and-a-half times richer than their grandparents were at the turn of the century, but they aren't four-and-a-half-times happier. [.....]Psychological evidence shows that the relationship between consumption and personal happiness is weak. Worse, two primary sources of human fulfillment – social relations and leisure – appear to have withered or stagnated in the rush to riches. Thus, many in the consumer society have a sense that their world of plenty is somehow hollow – that, hoodwinked by a consumerist culture, they have been fruitlessly attempting to satisfy with material things what are essentially social, psychological, and spiritual needs (Durning, 1993, p. 20).

A characteristic of leisure, as it has been defined earlier, is that it is both a psychological (an internal intrinsic form of “self”) and a social phenomenon (an external extrinsic experience including others and society) which manifests itself in a multitude of behaviours seen as leisure/recreational activities.

The psychological dimension of leisure involves feelings and emotions that are evoked when we experience leisure. In leisure people are freed from the pressures and constraints of work and other problems which may plague them. In this sense, leisure is emancipating or capable of providing freedom (Hemmingway, 1996). Through leisure people also gain a sense of personal control, of confidence and positive outlook about their lives, the future, their friends and family.

Part of the psychological dimension of leisure includes perceptions of time and conditions like stress. Socio-psychological levels of stress have been shown to have increased in the last few decades, and modern lifestyles in particular indicate the presence of stress and time pressure (Zuzanek & Mannell, 1998; Zuzanek & Smale, 1997; Zuzanek &

Veal, 1998). Leisure has been shown to moderate and counter-balance the effects of stress (Caltabiano, 1994, 1995; Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993). Those individuals who specifically utilize leisure as a coping mechanism, or are just more physically active, are better able to ward off the effects of acute or chronic stress in their lives.

Within the social dimension of leisure, on the other hand, meaningful development of and maintenance of vital relationships with friends, family and communities may be fostered. Often it is the special relationships with friends, family or others that provides social support and an important sense of belonging. In times of stress or crisis it is these relationships that help one to cope and to provide personal strength to recover and move on (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993). Within the social dimension of leisure people develop a sense of citizenship, of caring and sharing with others. It is through leisure that people may learn to contribute to their communities through voluntarism, and develop a meaningful sense of social responsibility. What has alarmed authors like Durning, (1993), Hemmingway (1996), Kelly and Godbey (1992), Putnam (1995), is the way consumeristic, technological society has changed leisure's capacity to allow for valuable meanings such as the importance of social relationships to be fostered. Also, it may be questioned if the level of satisfaction experienced in this changed leisure is different from leisure experienced as originally conceived.

The development, maintenance and sustenance of communities is often enacted during leisure, since this is when people are free to be involved in those important social and communal relationships that build community. As Putnam (1995) notes, the issue of reducing or declining social capital is critical because it involves the relational aspects of people's lives. The necessary bonds required to hold communities together are being threatened by, for example, technological impacts of television that tend to remove people from initiating or

strengthening relationships with their neighbours or community organizations, etc. As Brueggemann (2001) notes, the problems are even broader than this and involve issues like increased mobility and decreased available time to focus on “making friends” or developing a sense of being part of a larger community.

Traditional forms and structures of community may no longer be satisfactory or even possible in today’s modern culture, where anonymity seems to rule the day. In modern communities many of us do not even know our neighbours. Interactions with our neighbours may be limited to nodding acquaintanceship. Many neighbourhoods lack even the possibility of developing real community spirit. In our mobile society, people come and go so frequently that they find less time and opportunity for a deepening expression of community spirit” (Brueggemann, 2001, p.122).

The solutions to these issues may lie in part within the way leisure is enacted in one’s lifestyle, and how it functions to strengthen social and communal relationships. The development of social capital, trust, and sense of community through leisure is perhaps more important than previously thought, and if this is viewed as a vital function of leisure in society, the issue of transformation of leisure becomes critical. It is important to understand that the role of leisure in lifestyle has changed, and what leisure’s future relationship to community development ought to be needs to be determined, if broader issues of community development are to be addressed.

In addition, human relationships to the environment are equally as important as social relationships toward others and one’s community, and can be strengthened and developed through leisure. Nature, or the natural environment, has historically provided a realm wherein one could experience leisure in a rich and meaningful way, and has often been associated with spiritual experience (McDonald & Shreyer, 1991). Many people have noted that their connection to the environment and to the earth in general is strengthened and deepened when

they are in natural environments, but this sense of connection is also based on one's values and cultural context (Devall, 1988; McDonald & Schreyer, 1991). The natural environment, even in the midst of large urban centres, can provide an opportunity to re-connect, to relax and to reflect on one's life before returning to regular work commitments. In addition to other dimensions of human life (i.e., leisure, work, community), current consumer society has commodified relationships to the environment too, and certain authors (Rees & Wackernagal, 1996; Sachs & Linz, et al., 1998) have argued what were once stronger value orientations toward human relationships to nature are now marginal at best (as cited in Eisen, 1999, pp. 45-51). The environment is treated as just another commodity to be used and consumed. Often the opportunities to experience the natural world are purchased and people feel free to consume what it has to offer, reducing or marginalizing the idea that ecosystems are dynamic and alive and requiring respect and care in human interaction. Nature or the natural environment, once considered a common good freely accessible by all, is more and more treated as a private good to be bought and sold in the marketplace, bringing with it the shallow commodified values of most consumer goods.

Leisure experience and well-being.

In the context of varied lifestyles within an ever-changing and growing consumer society, there appear to be two kinds of leisure most valued for providing a basis of satisfaction or well-being. Firstly, serious leisure (cf. Stebbins, 1998, 1992) where sustained commitment to developing skills and knowledge in an activity becomes a defining aspect of one's identity. Csikzentmihalyi (1990) argued that having "optimal experience" and

experiencing “flow” in such activity gives meaning to life and is at the core of life satisfaction.

The second kind of leisure is that which involves communicative interaction with people most important to us. This type of leisure not only explores, builds and expresses community, but builds social capital (Putnam, 1995) which is at the root of creating a sense of community. It is a context for the development of relationships of trust, sharing and intimacy (Kelly & Godbey, 1992, p.350).

Commodified leisure lacks both these elements of satisfaction. It is based on being done *to* rather than doing, possession rather than sharing, things rather than people, and instrumental behaviours rather than intrinsic meanings (Kelly & Godbey, 1992, p.350).

What Kelly and Godbey (1992) suggest is that commodification of leisure in current consumer society affects well-being, by not allowing the full benefits of a leisure experience to be experienced. The experience, or the ability to experience has been transformed or instrumentalized, reducing more in-depth benefit or satisfaction.

In this study, lifestyle will be explored not just from a behavioural standpoint, but also from a value standpoint. The value orientation of the typical consumer society lifestyle is one in which the values of “material growth, man over nature, competitive self-interest, rugged individualism, and rationalism” (Shama, 1981, p. 125) dominate. Previous questions raised suggested that different value orientations in lifestyle might affect the leisure/well-being relationship. What follows is a description of a voluntary simplicity value orientation in lifestyle, which focuses on a different value orientation from current consumeristic lifestyles.

The voluntary simplicity lifestyle value orientation

The VS lifestyle value orientation reflects dimensions found in many lifestyles, but varies in the values, attitudes, and behaviours exhibited. For example, the value premises that form the basis of VS are “material sufficiency coupled with psycho-spiritual growth, people [coexisting] with nature (i.e. ecolibrium), enlightened self-interest, cooperative individualism, rational and intuitive” (Shama, 1981, p.125). Examination of this particular lifestyle, because it is different from the mainstream consumption-based lifestyles exhibited by so many, may lead to clues or reveal information about whether this particular value or attitude orientation influences the lifestyle, leisure and well-being relationship in a meaningful way.

A conceptualization of voluntary simplicity (VS)

In defining what is meant by ‘voluntary simplicity’ (VS), several different meanings about this term can be identified: VS has been used to describe a value orientation, an attitude, behaviour, a type of lifestyle, and a social or cultural movement. The term also suggests four conceptual ideas, and its opposites might be expressed as involuntary simplicity, involuntary complexity, and voluntary complexity (Rudmin & Kilbourne, 1996). This study examines VS as a particular value orientation within the context of lifestyle.

There are, in effect, two main components to the VS concept, one of voluntary action, and one which defines qualitatively that action as expressing simplicity, being simple or simplistic. Webster’s dictionary (Palmer, 1998) states that to be voluntary an action must have been freely and willfully chosen; that is, of one’s own volition. To be simple suggests being free from vanity and modest. It involves being free from ostentation or display. A state of simplicity is one of being simple, uncomplicated, or uncompounded (Palmer, 1998).

The composite term 'voluntary simplicity' contains additional meanings and reflects a value or attitude structure that involves various dimensions.

One of the early definitions of VS during the past century was put forth by Gregg (1936). Gregg's view and perception of voluntary simplicity involved:

both inner and outer condition. It means singleness of purpose, sincerity and honesty within, as well as avoidance of exterior clutter, of many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of life. It means an ordering and guiding of our energy and our desires, a partial restraint in some directions in order to secure greater abundance of life in other directions. It involves a deliberate organisation of life for a purpose (Gregg, 1936, p.1).

Voluntary simplicity is described from a behavioural viewpoint when it refers to "choice out of free will - rather than being coerced by poverty, government austerity programs, or being imprisoned - to limit expenditures on consumer goods and services, and to cultivate non-materialistic sources of satisfaction and meaning" (Etzioni, 1998, p. 620). Etzioni (1998) echoes directly the ideas expressed earlier in describing the sources of satisfaction sought through leisure currently appear to be through the purchase of goods and services.

Following with another behavioural definition, voluntary simplicity is defined as the degree to which an individual [voluntarily] selects a lifestyle intended to maximize his/her direct control over daily activities and minimize his/her consumption and dependency (Leonard-Barton, 1981, p.244). Shama and Wisenblit (1984) define a voluntary simplicity lifestyle as a "lifestyle of low consumption, ecological responsibility, and self-sufficiency" (p.231). A similar definition is used by Iwata (1997) who defines voluntary simplicity lifestyles as lifestyles of low consumption which include material self-dependency.

Spina (1998) suggests that voluntary simplicity, as a descriptive title involves a negative connotation. It infers that one is voluntarily reducing aspects of one's life, in

essence by simplifying one is taking something away. “The terms simple, downscaling, downshifting, etc. define only a few characteristics of this phenomenon [of VS] and not its main driving force” (Spina, 1998, p. 15). He proposes an alternative called “intentional conscious living,” because he feels the previous terms suggest people are giving up or sacrificing something. A term such as intentional conscious living implies adding to or improving the quality of living, not taking elements or quality away (Spina, 1998).

Three types of VS lifestyles

Those who subscribe to voluntary simplicity lifestyles also have been categorized according to the degree and intensity to which they simplify. Etzioni (1998) describes three such categories. Firstly, the *downshifter* – people who voluntarily give up certain consumer goods (typically luxuries) but still maintain their incomes and highly consumptive lifestyles. They “play at” simplicity by wearing “retro” clothing, driving older cars, and rejecting many of the modern symbols of success by toning down the ostentatiousness of their lifestyle. This lifestyle is inconsistent, and downshifters often simplify only a part of their lives while remaining in the mainstream for much of the remainder.

Secondly, there are *strong simplifiers* – those who take the next step and actually reduce their income by a significant amount, often by leaving high-paying jobs and taking up employment that is far less stressful, more creative, and often involves more volunteer work. The strong simplifiers are more adherent to voluntary simplicity norms because they have actively reduced their income which motivates them to change their behaviour. Consequently, their outward display is more true to simplicity than the downshifter.

Thirdly, there is the *simple living movement*, which represents those that have adjusted their whole life patterns and dedicated themselves to a lifestyle of voluntary simplicity, often moving from large urban settings to rural, less affluent, or smaller urban centres. These people live and breathe the philosophy of VS, and live low consumptive, self-reliant and yet rich and meaningful lives.

As can be seen in the above three examples, commitment to VS differs among people and as a result there are many forms of behavioural expression within this lifestyle. The voluntary simplicity lifestyle is different from other lifestyles, but contains the core dimensions or elements of work (occupational, domestic, and volunteer), leisure and recreation, spirituality, social (personal and community) relationships, and relationships to the environment, also found in more common consumer lifestyles. It is the VS value orientation that will be examined, and whether this has any effect on the experience of leisure or satisfaction gained and subsequent psychological well-being.

Dimensions of voluntary simplicity

The focus of this study is based on the potential links identified in earlier discussions, and will be to explore voluntary simplicity by examining the values, attitudes and behaviours which are characteristic of a VS lifestyle value orientation. While the purpose will not be to profile the different types of VS lifestyles and measure how many people might actually fall into such categories, the definition and dimensions of the VS value orientation may permit some insights.

Voluntary simplicity has been defined with the following values, attitudes and behavioural characteristics. *Value* or *attitudinal* characteristics include:

- The central intention in life is that of evolving both the material and spiritual aspects of life with harmony and balance (Elgin, 1993).
- A hostility toward luxury and a suspicion of riches (Shi, 1985).
- Identity is revealed in the process of living; identity is experienced as fluid, being born anew in each moment (Elgin, 1993).
- The individual [the self] is experienced as both a unique and an inseparable part of the larger universe; who “we” are is not limited to our physical existence (Elgin, 1993).
- There is a “spaceship earth ethic” in global relations (Elgin, 1993).
- Much emphasis is on connectedness and community (Elgin, 1993).
- A nostalgia for the past and a scepticism toward the claims of modernity (Shi, 1985).
- An aesthetic taste for the plain and functional (Shi, 1985).
- An approach to living that self-consciously subordinates the material to the ideal (Shi, 1985).

Behavioural characteristics, or actions that reflect VS values and attitudes in one’s lifestyle, include:

- Conscientious rather than conspicuous consumption (Shi, 1985).
- Much emphasis is placed on conservation and frugality – using only as much as is needed. A satisfying life arises with balanced growth in cooperation with others (Elgin, 1993).
- A desire for personal self-reliance through frugality and diligence (Shi, 1985).

- The universe is experienced as a vast living organism; it is appropriate to act in ways that honour the preciousness and integrity of life (Elgin, 1993).
- A reverence for nature and a preference for rural over urban ways of life and work (Shi, 1985).
- Much emphasis is placed on life-serving behaviour (give as much of myself to life as I am able, and ask in return no more than I require) (Elgin, 1993).
- “Fair competition” prevails; cooperate with others; intend to earn a living (Elgin, 1993).
- Each person takes responsibility for the well-being of the whole and directly participates in promoting the overall welfare (Elgin, 1993).
- Much emphasis is placed on becoming more self-reliant and self-governing (Elgin, 1993).
- A desire for personal self-reliance through frugality and diligence (Shi, 1985).

The focus of this study is on value orientation within lifestyle. Therefore, an examination of how these authors have conceptualized voluntary simplicity is of particular value. Elgin and Mitchell (1977) selected five basic value dimensions they felt underlie a voluntary simplicity lifestyle and lay a groundwork for the basic dimensions inherent: (1) Material simplicity (nonconsumption-oriented patterns of use); (2) Self-determination (desire to assume greater control over personal destiny); (3) Ecological awareness (recognition of the interdependency of people and resources); (4) Human scale (a desire for smaller scale institutions and technologies); (5) Personal growth (a desire to explore and develop the

“inner life”). Building on this definition of values and characteristic dimensions of VS, five basic dimensions were mirrored and summarized from various literature sources (Elgin, 1977; Elgin & Mitchell, 1977; Leonard-Barton, 1981; Shama, 1981) by Shama and Wisenblit (1984, p.233). These are in essence identical to those developed by Elgin and Mitchell (1977): (1) material simplicity, (2) human scale “small is beautiful,” (3) self-determination, (4) ecological responsibility, and (5) personal growth.

Burch (1997) conducted a “Delphi” consensus-building process over the Internet with several practitioners of VS over a 6 to 8 month period. This was hosted by the Positive Futures component of the Communications for a Sustainable Future organization at Colorado University, USA. Although not very rigorous, and performed with a small group of participants, the results of the “Delphi consultation on the essential values, practices and benefits which characterize voluntary simplicity” (Burch, 1997, p.2) are summarized as follows:

1. Appreciation of the interconnection and interdependence of all Earth's inhabitants and systems and active cooperation with them.

Practitioners of VS understand and value their personal connection with the ecosphere and with other people and express that connectedness through cooperative interdependence in relationships with community and family and activities which help sustain the natural environment. The value of connection also finds expression in concern for equity, international justice, and compassion for oppressed people, as well as appreciation of natural and cultural diversity.

2. Personal authenticity, integrity, healthy autonomy, self-reliance.

Practitioners of VS value personal integrity expressed through congruence of values and actions which they maintain through well-considered choices and the cultivation of healthy self-reliance. This includes the pursuit of work which is meaningful and in harmony with one's values.

3. Sufficiency, minimalism; anti-consumerism; deliberate reduction of consumption, clutter, noise, social over-commitment, superfluous ornamentation, scale.

Practitioners of VS value living with few material possessions, deliberately and selectively chosen so as to reduce the equipage of life to its essentials without compromising aesthetic values. This "aesthetic and functional minimalism" is also carried into the realm of social relations, the organization of daily routines, and one's psycho-emotional storehouse of memories, experiences, and present-moment consciousness. The value of minimalism is also reflected in the pursuit of self-reliance, so that one's needs can be met in the most efficient and simple manner practical.

4. Mindfulness / Spirituality.

Practitioners of VS value a consciously mindful and appreciative approach to living. Some practitioners of VS value mindfulness as a personal spiritual practice and the congruent expression in daily living of the insights to which mindfulness leads as an aspect of personal integrity (Burch, 2000, pp. 11-21; Burch, 1997, pp.2-4).

The four dimensions of VS values summarized by Burch (2000, 1997) are not incongruous with the five dimensions described by Elgin and Mitchell (1977) and are combined in this study as the basis of the value orientation for the lifestyle variable.

For the purposes of this study, the following four value dimensions will be used to characterize the voluntary simplicity value orientation in lifestyle (Elgin & Mitchell, 1977; Burch, 2000, 1997; et. al.). Examples of behavioural practices within each value dimension are included.

1. **Material simplicity**: Sufficiency, minimalism; anti-consumerism; a deliberate reduction of consumption, clutter, noise, social over-commitment, and superfluous ornamentation.
2. **Self-determination**: Personal authenticity, integrity, healthy autonomy, and self-reliance.
3. **Ecological awareness**: An appreciation of the interconnection and interdependence of all Earth's inhabitants and systems, and active cooperation with them. **Human scale** or a "small is beautiful ethic," a preference for smaller more efficient products and

institutions, and which has sometimes been treated as a separate dimension, is also included here.

4. ***Personal growth***: A focus in one's life on creativity, personal development, mindfulness, and spirituality.

The socio-demographics of voluntary simplicity.

The profile of someone having a voluntary simplicity value orientation or living a VS lifestyle may be quite broad and include people from quite different walks of life and a variety of socio-demographic backgrounds. Shama (1988) notes the socio-demographic characteristics of voluntary simplifiers found in his study were consistent with those reported by Elgin and Mitchell (1977), Leonard-Barton (1981), Shama (1981), and Mitchell (1983). Typically, voluntary simplifiers are college graduates, professionals and managers, relatively young, and have above average family incomes (p.862). In addition, as Etzioni (1998) pointed out, those who appear to hold VS values can be grouped into three lifestyle categories. There may be other categories, and we know lifestyles involve a range of socio-demographic variables, so this study will examine such factors as age, gender, financial circumstance, education and work status, to explore if these affect how voluntary simplicity values may be present or how the lifestyle, leisure satisfaction and psychological well-being relationship may be affected.

Regaining the essence of leisure

The foregoing review of literature points to several important changes having occurred or occurring to the leisure component of modern lifestyles and to psychological

well-being as a result of the intense consumer society in which people live. The pressure of today's lifestyles, exacerbated by the systemic structuring of work environments, economic markets, social relationships, and political climate, has changed important elements of lifestyles like leisure, and it is being argued, is reducing quality of life.

The discussion by Juniu (2000, p. 72) raises the following questions. By stepping out of this current paradigm, could people aim for healthier choices of life? Would taking a step toward simplicity be an alternative to this unhappiness and lead one toward a more satisfying way of life? Could simplifying life help regain that quality lost through this modern trend of consumerism?

Juniu (2000) goes further to state that “voluntary simplicity could help us regain the essence of leisure. The focus would no longer be on the quantity of life (i.e., how much we have, or how much we own, or how much we earn) but on quality of life (i.e., how much we enjoy or how much we explore in life)” (p.72).

To restate the purpose laid out in the introduction, this study examines the dynamics of the relationship between the concepts of lifestyle, leisure experience, and psychological well-being. Using a “voluntary simplicity” value orientation as a means of both conceptualizing and operationalizing lifestyle, the role VS values play in the relationship between the leisure dimension of lifestyle and personal well-being were explored. The interest was primarily in exploring how a VS lifestyle value orientation influences or moderates how people experience leisure, and if psychological well-being was positively affected.

The specific research questions include: (1) What is the extent to which voluntary simplicity lifestyle values or dimensions exist in a sample of adults? (2) Is the experience of

leisure and consequent psychological well-being influenced by, or moderated by a voluntary simplicity value orientation in lifestyle?; and, (3) Do factors like age, gender, financial circumstance, employment and education status, affect the lifestyle choice, leisure, and well-being relationship?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The examination of the voluntary simplicity lifestyle value orientation and its relationship leisure participation, the importance placed on leisure to lifestyle, and to psychological well-being (PWB) was facilitated by a survey design approach using a “self-administered questionnaire” (Babbie, 1992, p.147), distributed to adults within the Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario community. The purpose of this type of research design is to be able to make inferences and generalizations from a sample to a larger population (Babbie, 1992) with respect to characteristic values, attitudes, and behaviours of a voluntary simplicity (VS) lifestyle, and their relationship to leisure and PWB.

The “Lifestyle, Leisure, and Well-being” questionnaire survey (see Appendix A) was administered to individuals registered in selected general interest continuing education programs at Conestoga College, Kitchener, and to participants in several general interest leisure programs of the Waterloo Parks and Recreation Department, Waterloo, Ontario (see Table 1, Chapter 4). This community-based adult population represented a large, reasonably complex sample that was readily available and convenient. A self-administered questionnaire was used in this instance primarily because it generated the type of data best suited to answer the research questions. Questionnaires are advantageous because they are economical in design, and in this study, were efficiently and effectively distributed in the chosen setting. In addition, this survey design is also benefited by a rapid turnaround in data collection and the ability to identify attributes of a population from a small group of individuals (Babbie, 1992). The rationale for using this method of data collection was a determined by time and costs,

and as it was done efficiently, both time and funds spent were kept to a minimum. Future studies might benefit from a qualitative research design, which offers different approach and perspective towards data collection.

The sample

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the profile of those having a voluntary simplicity value orientation or living a VS lifestyle may be quite broad and include people from different walks of life and a variety of socio-demographic backgrounds. Shama (1988) noted that typically, “voluntary simplifiers are college graduates, professionals and managers, relatively young, and have above average family incomes” (p.862). Shama (1988) studied 588 adult respondents from three large US metropolitan areas (Albuquerque, Denver, and New York City). Iwata (1997) performed a study using 139 undergraduates from the University of Tokushima, Japan. Iwata (1999) researched 174 adult female graduates from this same university with an “average age of 52.6” (p. 381).

It has been mentioned by several authors (Etzioni, 1988; Rudmin & Kilbourne, 1996) that people adopt VS values when they achieve certain levels of comfort, affluence and are financially secure. Once basic needs in life have been taken care of, people have the freedom to make choices regarding their consumption or leisure, and often there exists a conscious “scaling-back” of consumption. In view of what has previously been said about those who may be called “voluntary simplifiers,” the aim of this study was to specifically address the questions: (1) To what extent do voluntary simplicity lifestyle values or dimensions exist in a sample of adults? (2) Is the experience of leisure and consequent psychological well-being influenced by, or moderated by a voluntary simplicity value orientation in lifestyle? and, (3)

Do factors like age, gender, financial circumstance, employment and education status, affect the lifestyle choice, leisure, and well-being relationship?

The Conestoga College, Kitchener, student population is diverse, and general-interest leisure courses offered through the continuing education department are numerous. Similarly, there are typically numerous general-interest adult leisure courses offered by the City of Waterloo Recreation Department. Prior arrangements were made with personnel of both agencies to gain necessary permission and access to this survey population.

The sampling design for this study was a purposive sample (Neuman, 1994). This choice was based on the accessibility to certain programs within each of the agencies mentioned. The classes were purposively selected from lists supplied by agency personnel. The objective was to obtain a sample of between 200 and 300 participants. The total size of the sample was determined by those instructors agreeing to have their course registrants take part in the survey within the time frame allowed for data collection.

A letter of introduction was sent to the instructors of the selected classes asking for permission to access to their class for approximately 30 minutes to have the course participants students complete the survey (see Appendix B). In addition, a study information letter was given to all students/registrants inviting their participation in the study (see Appendix C). Two complicating factors were involved in achieving a larger sample. Firstly, some instructors did not give permission for access based on personal choice and fear of interrupting the teaching program. Additional classes were selected in view of the time available for data collection. Secondly, participants were given the option of not completing the questionnaire if they so desired (see Appendix D). Overall, the rate of refusal from each of the responding classes was low with less than five people voluntarily declining completion

of the questionnaire. Once it was determined that a suitable sample size had been obtained, and achieving a larger sample would require a larger scale effort, more funds and time, the sampling process was terminated.

A variety of programs were accessed (19 from the College and 6 from the City) and a total of 429 questionnaires were distributed, with the majority returned directly in the program setting (n=396), and the remaining number being mailed back (n=33).

Ethical considerations

The following methods were used to protect the rights of those taking part in the study and ensuring confidentiality: (1) this study proposal was submitted to the University of Waterloo Office of Research for confirmation of ethical requirements; (2) the purpose of the study was made clear to all participants both verbally and in writing prior to completion of the questionnaire, so they had a full understanding of how information was collected and used and had the choice to opt out if they so wished (see Appendix D); (3) verbal permission was obtained from the instructor, prior to approaching each class; In those situations where the instructor administered the questionnaires on behalf of the researcher, a full verbal briefing with the instructor was completed so the purpose would be clearly described to participants (see Appendix E); (4) all participants were informed that the self-administered questionnaire was the only method of data collection used; (5) to ensure research results were available to those wishing access, a summary of the results was published for those respondents who had directly requested these (see Appendix F). Also, the results were published in a bound thesis format, and a copy of the final study outcomes are available for review through the faculty of Applied Health Sciences, and from the author; and, (6) because

there was complete anonymity on the part of the respondents, there was no risk of breaching confidentiality or anonymity in reporting the data.

Relevant concepts in this study

This study incorporated three main concepts or ideas, and also examined the concept of importance or value placed on leisure in one's lifestyle, plus a range of typical socio-demographic factors:

- 1) The *lifestyle* concept. Lifestyle was conceptualized and operationalized using a voluntary simplicity value orientation. In addition, the context of the consumer society as the backdrop against which mainstream current lifestyles exist was assessed with questions concerning values, attitudes, and behaviours surrounding personal consumption particularly with respect to personal leisure.
- 2) The *leisure experience* concept. Specifically, the experience of leisure was addressed using the Leisure Experience Battery (Caldwell, Smith, & Weissinger, 1992). This instrument was employed to measure the psychological component of leisure and examines the psychological states of boredom, challenge, awareness, and anxiety as they relate to leisure experience. Further, a leisure participation profile (Smale & Shaw, 1993) was used to determine the extent of respondents' individual levels of leisure participation in a variety of activities.
- 3) The concept of *importance* or *value* placed on leisure and leisure activity in one's lifestyle. This idea was examined by asking respondents to rate,

regardless of how much or little they participated in a leisure activity, how important this activity was to their overall leisure lifestyle on a 7-point Likert-type scale.

- 4) The *psychological well-being* concept. Psychological well-being is the extent to which a person experiences positive, happy feelings and deems his/her life as good and desirable. Psychological well-being is primarily concerned with the respondents' own judgement of well-being as opposed to those who might assess a person's well-being externally (e.g., psychologists, doctors). With psychological well-being, factors such as feelings of joy, pleasure, contentment, and life satisfaction are paramount (Diener & Suh, 1996, p. 190). The Bradburn Affect Balance Scale (Bradburn & Noll, 1969; Moriwaki, 1974) has been used extensively to measure psychological or subjective well-being, and examines both negative and positive affect (well-being) to determine an overall affect balance or PWB measure.
- 5) *Socio-demographic* variables: This study also examined such factors as age, gender, marital status, combined household income, financial circumstance, and employment status, to explore how these were related to voluntary simplicity values, or how they affected the lifestyle, leisure satisfaction and psychological well-being relationship.

Instrumentation

This study examined relationships between the concepts of lifestyle, leisure satisfaction, and psychological well-being and several standard socio-demographic variables.

The main survey instrument used was a self-administered questionnaire (Appendix A), created from a combination of instruments utilizing scales developed by others. Measurement scales were developed around each of the three main concepts and for several standard demographic characteristics.

Using the concept of “voluntary simplicity” (Gregg, 1936) as a means of both conceptualizing and operationalizing a lifestyle value orientation, the role VS values play in the relationship between the leisure dimension of lifestyle and personal well-being were explored. In essence, the term “voluntary simplicity” (VS) refers to living more simply, “integrating both inner and outer aspects of life into an organic and purposeful whole” (Elgin, 1993, p.24). The interest was primarily in exploring how a voluntarily simplicity value orientation in lifestyle predisposed respondents to certain leisure choices, how they experienced leisure, and consequently how psychological well-being (PWB) was affected. A lifestyle mode based on voluntary simplicity values, attitudes and behaviours provided a means for doing this.

For the values, attitudinal, and behavioural characteristics of the VS lifestyle, the voluntary simplicity scales developed by Iwata (1997, 1999), and the four main VS value dimensions identified by Burch (1997) were used to inform and guide the construction of the lifestyle measure, a modified scale on VS.

In the Iwata (1997) study, a 20 item 5-point scale of voluntary simplicity lifestyles was developed in reference to the items used by Shama and Wisenblit (1984). The questionnaire used by Iwata (1999) contained: (1) this 20-item scale of VS lifestyles; (2) a 13-item, 4-point scale to self-rate the frequency of pro-environmental behaviours; and, (3) 23 5-point scales of VS associated attitudes and behaviours (Iwata, 1997). Regarding all the 5-

point scales, the subjects were asked to read each statement carefully, and to select an appropriate response on a 5-point rating scale, showing the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement. The four main value dimensions identified by Burch (1997) were: Material simplicity, Self-determination, Ecological awareness, and Personal growth. Using value statements created by Burch (1997) within these dimensions, several new items were created and included in the modified scale.

This new scale is consistent with the literature (Burch, 1997; Iwata, 1997, 1999) and represents a reorganization of items, creation of some new items, and rewording of some for clarity. The modified VS scale was also expanded to utilize seven-point Likert-type rating scales to offer a broader range of response, and to match the scales already in existence in the Leisure Experience Battery (Caldwell, Smith, & Weissinger, 1992) for uniformity.

Examples of the items from the modified VS scale and highlighting the four main VS value dimensions are shown following. These statements reflect the way people might live and the beliefs they may have about their lifestyles. Respondents were asked to check the rating scale from “Very strongly disagree” (value=1) to “Very strongly agree” (value=7) in response to statements beginning with “In my current lifestyle...”

Material simplicity statements:

I try to live my life simply.....

I sometimes make impulse purchases when I shop.....

I sometimes buy things that I do not really need.....

“In my current lifestyle...”

Self-Determination statements:

I try to be as self-sufficient as possible

I try to be as self-reliant as possible

When something in my home breaks, I will try to fix it myself before calling a service person

“In my current lifestyle...”

Ecological awareness statements:

I think people are generally unconcerned about the environment

I make a conscious effort not to litter.....

I try to purchase products that can be recycled

“In my current lifestyle...”

Personal growth statements:

I take an active interest in developing my inner self.....

I am concerned with my spiritual growth

I try to maintain a physically active lifestyle.....

To measure leisure experience the Leisure Experience Battery (Caldwell, Smith, & Weissinger, 1992) was incorporated. This contains 24 items that are statements about how one feels about their free time (i.e., time outside of school and/or work and required home activities) on dimensions of boredom, awareness, challenge and anxiety. Respondents then indicate by checking categories on a 7-point Likert-type rating scale, which best describes how they feel about each statement ranging from “very strongly disagree” (value=1) to “very strongly agree” (value=7).

The Leisure Experience Battery is a psychological/attitudinal scale containing 24 items about free time perceptions (i.e., time outside of school and/or work and required home activities). Respondents recorded answers on a 7-point Likert-type rating scale which best described their feelings about each statement ranging from “very strongly disagree” (value=1) to “very strongly agree,” (value=7). Further, the Leisure Experience Battery is comprised of four sub-scales – Boredom, Awareness, Challenge, and Anxiety. With respect to the “Boredom” sub-scale, the higher the scores, the more the respondents perceived their leisure to be boring, and the lower the scores, the less boredom presented a problem within their leisure lives. In the “Awareness” sub-scale, the higher the score, the greater the respondents level of awareness of leisure possibilities within their communities. Low scores suggest respondents may need to learn more about what leisure opportunities are available to them.

Similarly, in the “Challenge” sub-scale, higher scores represent respondents seeking challenge and novelty in their free time, whereas low scores indicate a reluctance to try unfamiliar activities or to seek challenges in their leisure. Finally, with the “Anxiety” sub-scale, higher scores indicate respondents are more likely to feel anxious when they have a lot of free time on their hands (i.e., they have a higher anxiety level). This anxiety might stem from difficulties in knowing how to fill their leisure/free time with meaningful experiences.

Within the Leisure Experience Battery sub-scales, a number of items were worded negatively so that responses would be made in a balanced fashion, and a truer indication of each of the four dimensions would emerge. The negatively worded items are reported as they were written. The analysis involved reverse coding items so that the results reported the actual strength of response accurately and consistently with the other items of the sub-scale.

The original Leisure Participation Profile scale (Smale & Shaw, 1993) consisted of 61 items grouped into ten categories, to which responses identifying levels of participation from “never” to “very often” within the previous year are recorded on a 5-point rating scale. For the purpose of this study this instrument was amended so respondents only indicated numerically the average frequency of their participation in selected leisure activities within a typical month. To make it more manageable, the scale was reduced to 25 items using the same categories of activity: Multi Media/Passive, Social Activities, Team Sports, Cultural Activities, Individual Sports, Individual Physical Activities, Outdoor Activities, Hobbies, Personal Development, and Travel and Tourism. Due to the reduction of items the categories of Team sports, Individual sports, Individual physical activity, and Hobbies, contained only one item each.

The participation profile was also expanded to include a question about importance or value placed on a particular leisure activity to one’s overall leisure lifestyle. This was done to gauge, regardless of how much or little they participated, whether respondents valued this activity as part of their leisure lifestyle and to what degree (i.e. how valuable or important was this to them). They were asked to rate the level of importance on a 7-point Likert-type scale.

The Bradburn Affect Balance Scale (Bradburn & Noll, 1969) was used to measure PWB. It is composed of ten statements (five positive and five negative) that measure personal levels of psychological well-being or happiness. Respondents are asked how often they felt in a particular way in the past few weeks, by choosing between “never”, “sometimes,” and “often” when responding to the items. On the scale, the items alternated between positive and

negative statements following the question “During the past few weeks, I have often felt...” as follows:

- On top of the world
- Very lonely or remote from other people
- Particularly excited or interested in something
- Depressed or very unhappy
- Pleased about having accomplished something
- Bored
- Proud because someone complimented me on something I had done
- So restless I couldn't sit long in a chair
- That things were going my way
- Upset because someone criticized me

For the purposes of analysis, since five of the items in the BABS were worded negatively, they were reverse-coded so that comparisons between positive and negative affect could be made, and an overall PWB value obtained. The Bradburn Affect Balance scale (BABS) has been reported extensively in the literature as a measure of psychological well-being (e.g., Moriwaki, 1974, Smale & Dupuis, 1993), and is useful because it not only gives a measure for positive and negative affect separately, but also provides an overall composite measure for PWB or happiness.

The final section of the questionnaire asked respondents to provide some general socio-demographic information about themselves. The specific information requested included: age, gender, residency, marital status, presence of children, combined household income, perception of financial circumstances, and employment status.

Pilot or field testing of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was field or pilot tested in three undergraduate classes within the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, to

establish face validity of the instrument and to improve questions, format, and the scales as outlined (Creswell, 1994). The primary purpose of this exercise was to narrow down the lifestyle (voluntary simplicity) portion of the scale to the most relevant items.

To ensure minimal disruption in the functioning of classes, and in preparation for actual sampling, the use of the questionnaire was timed, so that it did not take respondents more than 15 to 20 minutes to complete. The comments or critique as to its design, or ambiguity concerning questions were accommodated in the final instrument (see Appendix A).

Data Analysis

Upon return of the completed questionnaires, all questions were coded and the data entered into electronic format. Data analysis was performed using a variety of analytical tools available in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and presented as a series of steps (see Chapter 4).

As previously mentioned, the questionnaires were distributed in a classroom or group activity setting, and non-responses was low because the completion of the questionnaires was treated much like any other class or program activity. In the majority of cases, instructors preferred to have participants take the questionnaires home for completion, and volunteered to collect these the following week during the next program session when respondents returned to hand the questionnaires back.

A descriptive analysis of all independent and dependent variables in the study was conducted, and indicated where appropriate, the means, standard deviations, and range of scores for these variables.

The survey items were organized according to the various existing scales representing the independent and dependent variables previously identified. Analysis on each variable, and then on the relationships between variables in the form of t-tests, bivariate analyses (correlations), one-way ANOVA, and hierarchical regression, is presented in a sequential manner. The statistics used to compare groups or relate variables and answer the research questions or objectives of the study were clearly identified as part of the analysis. A rationale for the choice of specific statistics was provided and based on:

- (a) the unit of measurement of scales in the study (e.g., interval measures for the Likert-type scales; nominal measures for categorical demographic statistics; ratio or interval level measures for age and income),
- (b) the intent to relate variables, and,
- (c) whether the data met the assumptions of the statistic.

General reporting of results

The data analysis for all the variables in the study included a descriptive analysis and some initial interpretation of the findings, and where appropriate, were presented in table format to assist the reader in clearly seeing relevant relationships. Further multivariate analyses including tables and discussion summarizing the relationships between variables are also presented and interpreted in Chapter 4.

Discussion of the findings

Summaries of the significant findings of the study are presented based on the descriptive statistics and the multivariate analyses completed, highlighting relationships

between the major variables identified in the study: lifestyle (conceptualized using a voluntary simplicity value orientation); leisure participation and importance; leisure experience; and psychological well-being (see Chapter 4). The relationships of various socio-demographic variables to the main variables in the study are also discussed to enhance understanding of the specific research questions.

The findings and results are related back to literature identified earlier in the study by identifying and discussing how the results add to or are different from information produced by previous authors in this area of study (see Chapter 5).

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

The “Lifestyle, Leisure, and Well-being” questionnaire (see Appendix A) was administered to individuals registered in general interest continuing education programs at Conestoga College, Kitchener, and to participants in several general interest leisure programs of the Waterloo Parks and Recreation Department, Waterloo, Ontario (see Table 1). A variety of programs were accessed (19 from the College and 6 from the City) and a total of 429 questionnaires were distributed. A total of 235 useable questionnaires were returned for a 54.8% response rate.

Characteristics of the sample

The resulting sample ($n = 235$) may be described as follows. Of the total sample, 193 respondents, or 82.1%, were female, and both males and females ranged in age from 18 to 82 years ($MEAN = 39.34$, $SD = 13.02$). This was somewhat surprising because it was anticipated that general interest leisure or continuing education courses would be participated in evenly by both men and women. It may be postulated, certainly from the courses sampled, that women are more interested in such participation or personal development than men are. Ballroom dancing, by its very nature, was the only program with an even split.

Eighty-one per cent of the sample lived in the Kitchener-Waterloo (K-W) area, with the remaining respondents (18.8%) residing in the myriad of smaller communities and cities surrounding the K/W area. By far, the greatest number of the respondents (48.9%) lived in the City of Waterloo (see Table 2).

Table 1

General Interest Leisure Courses
Conestoga College and City of Waterloo

| General Interest/Leisure Courses | Delivered | Returned | % |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----------|------|
| Faux finishes | 19 | 19 | 100 |
| Bunka Embroidery | 10 | 5 | 50 |
| Bartending techniques | 17 | 16 | 94.1 |
| Heart Smart Cooking | 11 | 10 | 90.9 |
| Knitting 1 | 10 | 9 | 90 |
| Photography | 17 | 14 | 82.4 |
| Creative Writing Workshop 1 | 17 | 9 | 52.9 |
| Ballroom Dance (W) | 40 | 18 | 45 |
| Tai Chi (W) | 25 | 1 | 4 |
| Interior Decorating | 40 | 17 | 42.5 |
| Master Gardeners (W) | 30 | 12 | 40 |
| Bartending Techniques #2 | 17 | 8 | 47.1 |
| Allergy Related Food Prep. | 13 | 2 | 15.4 |
| Bertie's Place preschool (W) | 40 | 26 | 65 |
| Wine Appreciation | 24 | 7 | 29.2 |
| Waterloo City Hall Fitness (W) | 18 | 9 | 50 |
| Homer Watson Art courses | 28 | 12 | 42.9 |
| Mom's and Pop's preschool (W) | 25 | 8 | 32 |
| Landscaping for the homeowner | 18 | 0 | 0 |
| Music appreciation | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| From various courses – mailed | 0 | 33 | 100 |
| Total | 429 | 235 | 54.8 |

(W) = City of Waterloo program

Most of the respondents were married (65.8%), 23.5% were single, and the remainder were either separated/divorced or widowed. Only a small number of cases (1.8%) were either single parents or separated/divorced with children, and just over half the respondents reported no children in their households. Those households with children (n=113; 48.1%) reported having children in either categories of “under 5 years”, “between 5 and 12 years”, “between 12 and 16 years”, and “over 16 years” and tended to be married respondents (see Table 2).

Table 2
Characteristics of the Sample (n=235)

| Characteristic | n | % |
|---|----------|----------|
| Gender | | |
| Female | 193 | 82.1 |
| Male | 42 | 17.9 |
| Age | | |
| 18 to 29 | 56 | 24.1 |
| 30 to 39 | 74 | 31.9 |
| 40 to 49 | 47 | 20.3 |
| 50 to 59 | 37 | 15.9 |
| 60 and older | 18 | 6.9 |
| Residency | | |
| City of Waterloo | 115 | 48.9 |
| City of Kitchener | 59 | 25.1 |
| City of Cambridge | 17 | 7.2 |
| Other | 44 | 18.8 |
| Marital status | | |
| Single | 55 | 23.5 |
| Married | 154 | 65.8 |
| Separated/Divorced | 22 | 9.4 |
| Widowed | 3 | 1.3 |
| Households with children (n=113) | | |
| Children under 5 years old | 48 | 20.4 |
| Children between 5 and 12 | 38 | 16.2 |
| Children between 12 and 16 | 22 | 9.4 |
| Children over 16 years | 43 | 18.3 |
| Total household income | | |
| Under \$10,000 to 39,999 | 50 | 23.8 |
| \$40,000 to 69,999 | 54 | 25.7 |
| \$70,000 to 99,999 | 54 | 25.7 |
| Over \$100,000 | 52 | 24.8 |
| Financial circumstances | | |
| I have barely enough to get by | 17 | 7.4 |
| I have enough to get by | 26 | 11.3 |
| I have a little left over | 71 | 30.9 |
| I am quite comfortable | 95 | 41.3 |
| I have all that I need & more | 21 | 9.1 |
| Employment status | | |
| Employed full time | 128 | 55.2 |
| Employed part time | 28 | 12.1 |
| Not employed at this time | 4 | 1.7 |
| Full time homemaker | 29 | 12.5 |
| Student | 8 | 3.4 |
| Retired | 22 | 9.5 |
| Other | 13 | 5.6 |

Note for "Age": Range = 18 to 82 years; Mean = 39.34; SD = 13.02

When looking at family income, 24.8% of the respondents reported a total household income of over \$100,000, indicating a strong likelihood both spouses were working. The average household income for Waterloo based on Statistics Canada census data from 1995 was only \$39,843 for males, and \$22,327 for females, with both of these values being higher than the Ontario averages (\$33,599 for males and \$21,048 for females) (Statistics Canada, 2001). The results of this research indicate a fairly affluent sample, suggesting that personal incomes within the family unit are higher than the census figures. A quarter of the respondents (25.7%) were in the \$70,000 to \$99,999 combined household income category, so together with the “over \$100,000” category, just over half of the sample (50.5%) had combined household incomes over \$70,000.

Most of the respondents indicated they were employed full-time (55.2%). Of the remainder, 12.1% said they were employed part-time, and 12.5% reported being full-time homemakers. Only 1.7% indicated they were unemployed and the remainder either “student” (3.4%), “retired” (9.5%), or described other categories (5.6%) such as working full-time self-employed, or doing contract work. The individuals reporting being full-time homemakers (12.5%) corresponds roughly with the percentage of respondents that indicated being married with children in the home (about 16%), suggesting that being a full-time homemaker typically involved the care, maintenance, and rearing of children.

The relative meaning of household income was reflected by respondents’ perceptions of their level personal/household finances. When asked to describe how they felt about their financial circumstances, only a small number of respondents (n=17, 7.4%) felt they had “barely enough to get by.” Also, a similarly small number (n=26, 11.3%) said they had “enough to get by.” The majority of the respondents fell within the next two categories,

where 30.9% felt they had “a little left over,” and 41.3% of the respondents reported they felt “quite comfortable.” On the top end of the scale, 9.1% reported they felt they had “all that I need and more.” Given the clear breakdown of the five categories of financial circumstance they were reclassified/reorganized into three for subsequent analysis. The first two categories were combined to create a category called “surviving financially,” comprising 18.7% of respondents. The middle category “a little left over” was left on its own and called “some discretionary,” (30.9% of respondents) while the last two categories were combined to create a category called “comfortable plus” (50.4% of respondents). Once again, the perceptions of the sample indicate that they may feel financially well off and comfortable with their level of affluence (over 50%).

In summary, who were the respondents? Most of them lived in Waterloo or Kitchener, were female, and ranged between 18 and 82 years of age (average age 39). They also tended to be married and slightly over half (50.9%) had no children at home. The sample was highly affluent and over half reported combined family household income of \$70,000 or more. In fact, over half the respondents described their financial circumstances as being ‘quite comfortable’ or ‘I have all I need and more.’ Over two-thirds of the respondents were employed and only a smaller number were either homemakers (12.5%) or retired (9.5%). The respondents in this study also found the time to take part in general interest leisure or continuing education courses for personal development.

SECTION ONE: THE RESPONDENT'S LEISURE LIFESTYLE: PARTICIPATION, IMPORTANCE or VALUE, AND EXPERIENCE

Participation in Leisure Activities

How often respondents took part in various leisure pursuits within a typical month was examined to determine if some activities or types of activities were more popular than others, perhaps offering a higher degree of leisure experience or satisfaction to those taking part. In addition, how important each activity was to the respondents personal leisure lifestyle was assessed, and individuals were asked to rate their feelings accordingly on a 7-point Likert-type scale.

The examination of participation in various activities produced the following results, none of which are remarkable, but likely represent typical leisure participation amongst a larger population.

The highest levels of participation were in the Mass Media/Passive category (MEAN=17.83, SD=6.54) showing participation in this type of activity to be on average 18 times per month, or slightly more often than every other day in a typical month (see Table 3). This was expected because the mass media have effectively invaded most households, and TVs and computers, etc., can be found as part of most family's lives. Within this category, the activities included were watching TV/videos (MEAN =23.75, SD=11.55); reading books, magazines, newspapers (MEAN =25.16, SD=13.56), going to movies (MEAN =0.85, SD=1.17), using the Internet/computer (MEAN =14.86, SD=16.89), and listening to music (MEAN =24.46, SD=15.65). From this, it is visible that respondents watched TV, read books, and listened to music at least everyday each month, but went out to the movies on a more limited basis, less than once a month. This is understandable because going out to the

movies involves more effort external to the home and greater personal expense (see Table 3).

The next highest level of participation occurred in the Individual Physical Activity category (MEAN=12.87, SD=10.72) which contained only the item “doing personal fitness.” On average, respondents participated in some form of personal fitness activity every two to three days, which points to a strong interest in maintaining personal fitness levels and regular frequency of participation.

The Hobbies category (MEAN=5.89, SD=7.99) which contained the item of participation in “creative hobbies or crafts,” indicated that respondents choose this type of activity about six to 15 times per month, which is more than once a week to as much as every other day for some.

Similarly, the Social Activities category (MEAN=5.25, SD=4.8) shows that respondents were involved in this type of activity at least 5 to 10 times per month. This category included the following six activities: visiting or entertaining friends (MEAN=7.9, SD=7.04); phoning friends (MEAN=14.57, SD=14.15); going to parties/dancing (MEAN=1.99, SD=3.15); playing cards or board games (MEAN=2.28, SD=4.32); volunteering (MEAN=3.62, SD=9.62), and activity in service clubs (MEAN=1.16, SD=5.26). The most prominent social activity was telephoning friends, reported to occur at least every day or every other day. On average, visiting friends or entertaining occurred about twice a week.

Very close in participation rate to the Social Activities category was the Personal Growth category (MEAN=5.04, SD=5.77) with respondents reporting participation about 5 times per month. This category included only two items, “spiritual activity” (MEAN=7.4, SD=10.88) and “taking interest courses” (MEAN=2.69, SD=3.4) (see Table 3).

The Outdoor Activities category (MEAN=3.45, SD=3.3) was comprised of

Table 3

Leisure participation in selected activities during a typical month

| Leisure Activity | MEAN | SD |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| <i>Mass Media/Passive category</i> | 17.83 | 6.54 |
| Reading books/magazines/newspapers | 25.16 | 13.56 |
| Listening to music | 24.46 | 15.65 |
| Watching TV/Videos | 23.75 | 11.55 |
| Using the Internet/computers | 14.86 | 16.89 |
| Going to movies | 0.85 | 1.17 |
| <i>Individual Physical Activity – fitness</i> | 12.87 | 10.72 |
| <i>Hobbies – Creative hobbies and crafts</i> | 5.89 | 7.99 |
| <i>Social Activities - category</i> | 5.25 | 4.80 |
| Phoning friends | 14.57 | 14.15 |
| Visiting or entertaining friends | 7.90 | 7.04 |
| Volunteering | 3.62 | 9.62 |
| Playing cards or board games | 2.28 | 4.32 |
| Going to parties/dancing | 1.99 | 3.15 |
| Active in service clubs | 1.16 | 5.26 |
| <i>Personal Growth - category</i> | 5.04 | 5.77 |
| Spiritual activity | 7.40 | 10.88 |
| Taking interest courses | 2.69 | 3.40 |
| <i>Outdoor Activities - category</i> | 3.45 | 3.30 |
| Going on day outings/picnics | 3.07 | 4.53 |
| Gardening | 7.07 | 10.20 |
| Outdoor activities/camping | 3.13 | 4.31 |
| Motorized outdoor activity | 0.53 | 2.11 |
| <i>Travel and Tourism - category</i> | 2.40 | 2.39 |
| Travelling to visit friends or family | 3.74 | 4.28 |
| Having short holidays/getaways | 1.23 | 1.63 |
| <i>Cultural Activities - category</i> | 1.20 | 2.42 |
| Being a spectator at sports events | 1.66 | 4.55 |
| Attending concerts/live theatre | 0.75 | 1.25 |
| <i>Individual Sports</i> | 2.06 | 4.62 |
| <i>Team Sports</i> | 1.28 | 3.80 |
| Overall leisure participation | 5.73 | 5.24 |

going on day outings/picnics (MEAN=3.07, SD=4.53), gardening (MEAN=7.07, SD=10.2), outdoor activities/camping (MEAN=3.13, SD=4.31), and doing motorized outdoor activity

(MEAN=0.53, SD=2.11). Gardening was by far the activity most indicated by respondents, and motorized outdoor activity the least. It is reasonable to think that motorized outdoor activities might have lower rates of participation because of the extra threshold costs of participation in this type of activity, e.g., equipment cost, storage, fuel, transportation, etc.

Respondents also reported participating in Travel and Tourism activities at least twice a month (MEAN =2.4, SD=2.39). This category contained two items: “travelling to visit friends or family” (MEAN =3.74, SD=4.28), and “having short holidays/getaways” (MEAN =1.23, SD=1.63). It appears respondents were travelling to visit friends and family at least once a week, but managing to get away for a short holiday or weekend getaway about once a month.

Participation in the Cultural Activities category was comparatively low (MEAN=1.2, SD=2.42) but not unexpected. This category was comprised of being a spectator at sports events (MEAN=1.66, SD=4.55), and attending concerts/live theatre (MEAN=0.75, SD=1.25). Participation in these events is low, perhaps due to expensive ticket prices for current major (professional) sports events, or large-scale theatrical productions. Also, it is quite reasonable to assume participation in these activities only happens once in a while. In fact, for some, going once a month might be regarded as frequent participation in such events, and given their relative affluence, the speculation that cost may be a factor is not well-founded.

Finally, The categories of Individual Sports (MEAN=2.06, SD=4.62) and Team Sports (MEAN=1.28, SD=3.8) each contained only one item, and were both marked by low participation. “Overall monthly leisure participation” reflects the average participation of the activities listed in the ten categories (MEAN=5.73; SD=5.24) but may not be a meaningful

value because, given the variety and range of activity, respondents are really involved in some form of leisure activity (at least reading or listening to music) almost every day (see Table 3).

Importance of Selected Leisure Activities to Lifestyle

In addition to being asked to report how many times per month they took part in selected leisure activities, respondents also were asked the question, “Regardless of how often you participate, how important to you is this activity to your overall leisure lifestyle?” The intent was to gauge, regardless of whether they may be currently participating in an activity, the importance or value respondents placed on the activity as part of their leisure lifestyle. Essentially, the term “importance” refers to the value placed on the leisure activity and not the actual behaviour of participation in that activity. This section of the questionnaire focussed on values as opposed to behaviour, and naturally of interest to the overall outcomes of the study, is whether or not participants transfer the value they place on activity into actual behaviour or participation.

Respondents were asked to record their feelings to this question on a 7-point Likert-type scale that ranged from “of little importance” (value=1) to “extremely important” (value=7). Of interest is that even though many participants recorded no participation for various leisure activities in a given month, they still rated activities as being important to them in varying degrees (see Table 4). This may indicate that while they were not currently participating in these activities, they still valued them as important to their leisure lifestyles. Perhaps at other times of the year they did take part, or participation might occur less

frequently than every month, even as little as only once a year (e.g., theatre attendance or travel for a vacation).

In terms of how important certain activities were, respondents placed the highest importance on average on such individual activities as reading books, magazines, and/or newspapers (MEAN=5.62, SD=1.40); visiting or entertaining friends (MEAN=5.30, SD=1.42); travelling to visit friends or family (MEAN=5.26, SD=1.54); listening to music (MEAN=5.25, SD=1.46); doing personal fitness (MEAN=5.24, SD=1.80); talking to friends on the telephone (MEAN=4.91, SD=1.54); and taking short holidays/weekend getaways (MEAN=4.86, SD=1.70) (see Table 4). What is interesting about this list of activities is the overwhelming importance of activities that are social or personal in nature rather than other forms of activity. Certainly the social aspect of this finding supports what Kelly and Godbey (1992) describe as the second kind of leisure most sought for satisfaction and personal reward. It is leisure that involves communicative interaction with people most important to us. These types of leisure activity explore, build and express a sense of community. As these authors note, this type of leisure provides a context for the development of relationships of trust, sharing and intimacy (Kelly & Godbey, 1992, p.350). The importance of personal activities like reading, listening to music or physical fitness, points not only to an interest in individual leisure as part of the daily recovery from work, but perhaps a heightened desire by respondents for personal inner growth, developing themselves, and maintaining their bodies.

The Travel and Tourism category also was rated fairly important (MEAN=5.06, SD=1.39). This included both the activities of travelling to visit friends or family, and taking short holidays/weekend getaways, but as indicated earlier, participation tends to be infrequent.

Table 4

Importance of Selected Leisure Activities to Leisure Lifestyle.

| Leisure Activity | Importance ^a | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------|
| | MEAN | SD |
| <i>Individual Physical Activity</i> – fitness | 5.24 | 1.80 |
| <i>Travel and Tourism - category</i> | 5.06 | 1.39 |
| Travelling to visit friends or family | 5.26 | 1.54 |
| Having short holidays/getaways | 4.86 | 1.70 |
| <i>Personal Growth - category</i> | 4.30 | 1.62 |
| Spiritual activity | 4.16 | 2.26 |
| Taking interest courses | 4.45 | 1.75 |
| <i>Hobbies</i> – Creative hobbies and crafts | 4.27 | 2.06 |
| <i>Mass Media/Passive category</i> | 4.13 | 0.88 |
| Reading books/magazines/newspapers | 5.62 | 1.40 |
| Listening to music | 5.25 | 1.46 |
| Watching TV/Videos | 3.80 | 1.61 |
| Using the Internet/computers | 3.52 | 1.91 |
| Going to movies | 2.42 | 1.52 |
| <i>Social Activities - category</i> | 3.79 | 0.95 |
| Visiting or entertaining friends | 5.30 | 1.42 |
| Phoning friends | 4.91 | 1.54 |
| Volunteering | 3.97 | 1.82 |
| Going to parties/dancing | 3.19 | 1.84 |
| Playing cards or board games | 2.91 | 1.69 |
| Active in service clubs | 2.37 | 1.73 |
| <i>Outdoor Activities - category</i> | 3.62 | 1.15 |
| Outdoor activities/camping | 4.25 | 1.79 |
| Going on day outings/picnics | 4.21 | 1.68 |
| Gardening | 4.17 | 2.03 |
| Motorized outdoor activity | 1.76 | 1.38 |
| <i>Individual Sports</i> | 3.07 | 1.98 |
| <i>Cultural Activities - category</i> | 2.94 | 1.39 |
| Being a spectator at sports events | 2.40 | 1.71 |
| Attending concerts/live theatre | 3.41 | 1.84 |
| <i>Team Sports</i> | 2.41 | 1.87 |

^a “not at all important” =1, and “extremely important” =7

Echoing what was stated two paragraphs earlier, respondents also rated the Personal Growth category fairly highly (MEAN=4.30, SD=1.62), which included the items “spiritual

activity” (MEAN=4.16, SD=2.26) and “taking personal interest courses” (MEAN=4.45, SD=1.75). Developing one’s inner self through spiritual reflection or developing personal skills through ongoing learning is valued leisure activity.

Receiving a similar importance rating was the Mass Media/Passive activity category (MEAN=4.13, SD=0.88) (see Table 4). This category included importance ratings on the items “reading books, magazines, and/or newspapers” (MEAN=5.62, SD=1.40), “listening to music” (MEAN=5.25, SD=1.46), “watching television/videos” (MEAN=3.80, SD=1.61), “using the Internet/computers” (MEAN=3.52, SD=1.91), and “going to the movies” (MEAN=2.42, SD=1.52). It is interesting to note that while television viewing was one of the most highly participated in activities, it is not given as much importance as an activity in the respondent’s leisure lifestyle. In addition, going to the movies may be losing out to watching TV/videos at home, due to cost and effort involved, and thus its lower rating.

Respondents in the study rated certain activities within the Social Activities category (MEAN=3.79, SD=0.95) as being highly important, while others were of lesser importance. For example, “visiting or entertaining friends” (MEAN=5.30, SD=1.42), and “talking to friends on the telephone” (MEAN=4.91, SD=1.54), were regarded as more important than “volunteering” (MEAN=3.97, SD=1.82), and “attending parties/going dancing” (MEAN=3.19, SD=1.84), and much more important than “participating in service clubs” (MEAN=2.37, SD=1.73). The importance of personal relationships appears to be much stronger than relationships involving others or the community.

The Outdoor Activities category overall received a lower importance rating (MEAN=3.62, SD=1.15), and this average is reflective mainly of one item, namely “motorized outdoor activity” (MEAN=1.76, SD=1.38) which was rated much lower in

importance than other outdoor activities. When the other items such as day outings/picnics (MEAN=4.21, SD=1.68), outdoor activities/camping (MEAN=4.25, SD=1.79), and gardening (MEAN=4.17, SD=2.03) are examined separately, their importance scores are substantially higher and on their own would have raised the overall category score (see Table 4).

The importance placed on doing creative hobbies and crafts (overall MEAN=4.27; SD=2.06) compares to the higher rates of participation reported earlier. Respondents felt that having creative hobbies or doing crafts is a somewhat important aspect of their leisure lifestyles.

In the category of Cultural Activities (MEAN =2.94, SD=1.39), respondents rated both items “being a spectator at sports events” (MEAN =2.40, SD=1.71) and “attending concerts/live theatre” (MEAN =3.41, SD=1.84) generally lower in importance on average in comparison to other leisure activities (see Table 4). This is somewhat surprising because, in addition to not being highly valued, monthly participation rates for cultural activities were also low (MEAN=1.20, SD=2.42). These activities, perhaps because they are so narrowly defined (i.e., being a spectator at sporting events, or attending theatre/concerts), or typically have a high cost associated with them, or in the case of theatre/concerts may have the stigma of being “high culture,” were taken part in only once or twice a month. The initial thought might be that these activities are highly rewarding and sought after, but respondents might see these as too “commercial” or costly and therefore choose other cultural activities like going to art galleries, museums, or local performing or visual arts opportunities not mentioned here to fill this void. If this variable were defined more broadly, other results might have been obtained.

Finally, respondents rated the importance of individual sports (MEAN=3.07; SD=1.98), and the importance of team sports (MEAN=2.41; SD=1.87) comparatively lower than other activities. These results correspond to the generally low participation in these two activities, and given the age of the sample, may be a reasonable result since team or individual sports tend to be more the venue of the young (see Table 4).

Dimensions of Leisure Experience

The results of the leisure experience section are presented by reporting the composite scores for each of the four leisure experience dimensions of the Leisure Experience Battery (Caldwell, Smith, & Weissinger, 1992), ‘awareness,’ ‘challenge,’ ‘anxiety,’ and ‘boredom’ and for the various experiential items within each sub-scale (see Table 5).

The “Awareness” sub-scale (MEAN=5.00, SD=0.91) was the strongest indicator of all the leisure experience dimensions, indicating a strong awareness of leisure opportunities and a positive feeling about leisure. The highest item score was for the statement “I’ve never really given much thought to whether free time could be good for me” (MEAN=5.41, SD=1.42). As with several other items in the Leisure Experience Battery this statement is negatively worded and was reverse-coded for analysis. The response indicates that respondents value their free time and look forward to positive experiences within their leisure.

Supporting awareness of leisure opportunity were the statements “I know of places where there are lots of things to do” (MEAN=4.97, SD=1.20), and “my community lacks things for people my age to do” (MEAN=4.94, SD=1.59) (negatively worded statement and

reverse-coded), to which the respondents generally agreed. Respondents appear to be aware of what leisure possibilities are available and what their community has to offer.

Also, respondents were generally in agreement with the statements within the Challenge dimension of leisure experience (MEAN=4.63, SD=0.76) indicating that they felt challenged in the leisure opportunities they pursued. Respondents agreed with the statement “I feel good when my free time activities challenge my skills” (MEAN=5.05, SD=1.04) which shows that seeking leisure activity and opportunity that is equal to or more challenging to their skill level is important to them. They even felt confident enough to try leisure opportunity that they had not tried before, and responded to the statement “I’m willing to try the unknown” (MEAN=4.76, SD=1.17) quite positively.

The Anxiety dimension of leisure experience (MEAN=3.44, SD=0.97) shows that the overall level of anxiety was not high. The highest anxiety score occurred with the statement “I often feel I don’t have enough time to do all the things I have to do” (MEAN=5.21, SD=1.49), which might indicate agreement to a certain degree of time pressure during free time/leisure amongst respondents. This was immediately followed by the statement “Much of the time I feel rushed” (MEAN=4.66, SD=1.48) which supports the foregoing and also indicates mild agreement towards the notion of time pressure, time constraint, or respondents experiencing a fast pace of life. The concept of time pressure may require more analysis and may be able to stand alone as an indicator of anxiety in leisure/free time (cf., Zuzanek & Mannell, 1998; Zuzanek & Smale, 1997; Zuzanek & Veal, 1998). If these two items regarding “time pressure” (being rushed, not having enough time) were used alone to measure anxiety, a different picture might be obtained than if the remaining four items were measured separately (see Table 5).

Table 5

The Leisure Experience Battery:
Awareness, Challenge, Anxiety, and Boredom in Free Time (n=235).

| “Thinking about my free time...” | MEAN | SD |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Awareness | 5.00 | 0.91 |
| I’ve never really given much thought to whether free time could be good for me* | 5.41 | 1.42 |
| I know of places where there are lots of things to do | 4.97 | 1.20 |
| My community lacks things for people my age to do* | 4.94 | 1.59 |
| In the community where I live, I am aware of exciting things to do in my free time | 4.69 | 1.33 |
| Challenge | 4.63 | 0.76 |
| I feel good when my free time activities challenge my skills | 5.05 | 1.04 |
| If I think I might fail at an activity in my free time, I won't do it* | 4.94 | 1.34 |
| I'm willing to try the unknown in my free time | 4.76 | 1.17 |
| I like a challenge in my free time | 4.62 | 1.20 |
| I don't feel that I am challenged in my everyday life* | 4.43 | 1.60 |
| I like free time activities that are a little beyond my ability | 3.97 | 1.30 |
| Anxiety | 3.44 | 0.97 |
| I often feel I don't have enough time to do all the things I have to do | 5.21 | 1.49 |
| Much of the time I feel rushed | 4.66 | 1.48 |
| I feel relaxed when I don't have any plans* | 2.88 | 1.40 |
| When I know I'm going to have some free time, I generally feel anxious | 2.65 | 1.66 |
| I get uptight when I have a whole weekend with nothing to do | 2.65 | 1.74 |
| The worst feeling I know is when I have free time and don't have anything planned | 2.61 | 1.54 |
| Boredom | 2.16 | 0.84 |
| I usually become very absorbed by what I do in my free time * | 2.89 | 1.35 |
| My time is filled with things to do* | 2.52 | 1.24 |
| During my free time, I almost always have something to do* | 2.46 | 1.37 |
| Much of the time I feel bored | 2.00 | 1.20 |
| In my free time, I usually don't like what I am doing, but I don't know what else to do | 1.94 | 1.17 |
| For me, free time just drags on and on | 1.87 | 1.16 |
| We often talk about how bored we are | 1.81 | 1.17 |
| Free time is boring | 1.80 | 1.11 |

* indicates negatively worded statements and reverse coding for analysis.

Respondents rated the other four items on the Anxiety sub-scale significantly lower in comparison, between “disagree” and “strongly disagree,” indicating they generally experienced a low degree of anxiety within their free time/leisure dimension of their

lifestyles. Respondents were in solid disagreement with the statement, “I feel relaxed when I don’t have any plans,” (MEAN=2.88, SD=1.40).

The remaining three items, “When I know I’m going to have some free time, I generally feel anxious” (MEAN=2.65, SD=1.66), “I get uptight when I have a whole weekend with nothing to do” (MEAN=2.65, SD=1.74), and finally, “The worst feeling I know is when I have free time and don’t have anything planned” (MEAN=2.61, SD=1.54), all had very comparable scores. Again, these three statements, including a reverse coded one, indicate a clear disagreement in terms of composite anxiety levels.

Finally, and not unexpectedly, the Boredom dimension of leisure experience (overall MEAN=2.16, SD=0.84) showed respondents strongly disagreed with the majority of the items, and that their level of boredom was quite low. The respondents disagreed by varying degrees with the statements “I usually become very absorbed by what I do in my free time” (MEAN=2.89, SD=1.35), “My time is filled with things to do” (MEAN=2.52, SD=1.24), and “During my free time, I almost always have something to do” (MEAN=2.46, SD=1.37). These three statements were reverse coded in the analysis and reflect the general low level of boredom reported.

They even more strongly disagreed with statements like “For me, free time just drags on and on” (MEAN=1.87, SD=1.16); “We often talk about how bored we are” (MEAN=1.81, SD=1.17); and “Free time is boring” (MEAN=1.80, SD=1.11). The results reflecting this low level of boredom are not unexpected in view of the levels of awareness and challenge reported by respondents. Individuals that are aware of good leisure opportunities within their communities, seek challenging opportunities, and are confident of their abilities are not likely to feel bored about their free time and to making conscious leisure choices.

Psychological Well-Being (PWB).

When thinking about psychological well-being the expectation is that most people would fall into a “well-adjusted,” normal range, or loosely stated, somewhere between “happy” and “sad.” It was not expected that respondents in this study would be overly happy to the point of expressing continuous glee or exuberance, and also, that they would not be walking around moping or in tears, experiencing extreme sadness or depression. Often, when asked how they are today, a person might genuinely answer “not bad,” or “good,” or occasionally might be honest and say they are worried about something or sad about family circumstances, etc.. Generally speaking people try to maximize the feeling of happiness or feeling good in their lives (their PWB), but this is countered or balanced against negative personal states or life events. There is much literature that demonstrates that leisure contributes positively to PWB, and in fact is used to buffer or cope with stress or negative life events (cf. Mannell & Kleiber, 1997).

The Bradburn Affect Balance Scale (BABS) (Bradburn & Knoll, 1969) was used to measure psychological well-being. As mentioned in the methodology, this scale is comprised of both positive and negative affect statements and creates a composite affect “balance” or psychological well-being measure when positive scores are subtracted from negative scores.

Data collection began approximately two weeks after the September 11th, 2002 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center towers in New York City and on the Pentagon, in Washington, D.C. During the data collection phase, many respondents indicated concern about their responses in view of that event and those that followed, saying under normal circumstances they would feel differently and respond to the questions differently.

Examining of the idea that the effects of the September 11th terrorism events might have had an impact on respondent's well-being was completed in the following manner. The sample (n=235) was split in two based on the date of October 11th, 2001, one month after the terrorist attacks. The first group "Up to one month after" (n=122, MEAN= -1.33, SD=2.43) was not significantly different from the second group "Up to two months after" (n=112, MEAN= -1.17, SD=2.68), when an independent samples T-test was performed ($t_{2,232} = -.474$; $p = .636$). It might be speculated that overall the BABS value might have been different had this event not occurred when it did. If psychological well-being data were available for the period prior to September 11th, 2001 a more interesting comparison might be made. On the other hand these events may not have had any effect at all. Bradburn (1969) noted:

Socially stressful events have complex consequences. Some events that one might expect to cause widespread social disorganization, such as the bombing of civilian populations or a wide-spread power failure, appear to produce not only fear and stressful consequences, but also promote social cohesion. Other events, such as the famous "Invasion from Mars" broadcast [Welles, 1938] and some instances of natural disasters, appear to cause panic and social disorganization. Why some events produce almost totally negative reactions and others produce mixed or even predominately positive reactions is little understood (Bradburn, 1969, p. 222).

In addition to the overall value revealed by the BABS affect balance score, the BABS may also be evaluated by examining its constituent dimensions or components (positive and negative affect) separately (cf. van Schuur & Kruijtbosch, 1995). This may be more informative to understanding the complete measure and the results as revealed. For the BABS, respondents could check a three-point rating scale (a choice of 'never,' 'sometimes,' and 'often') whether they agreed with the positive or negative feelings presented by the statements. The scores could range between 5 (all statements answered 'never') and 15 (all statements answered 'often').

Firstly, looking at the positive affect dimension of PWB, respondents indicated often feeling moderately levels of positive psychological well-being (MEAN=11.15, SD=1.92) (see Table 6). On the other hand, they also reported a much similar level of negative affect (MEAN=12.40, SD=2.15) that also indicated often feeling negatively about things. The overall value of the Bradburn Affect Balance Scale (BABS), or the “affect balance” could range between -10 and +10, with an arbitrary mid-point being “0.” The resulting score (MEAN= -1.25, SD=2.55) indicates a slightly negative affect balance. In other words, respondents’ psychological well-being was marginally on the negative side. This is not a result to be overly concerned about, or one that is of great significance. The underlying expectation with the BABS is one of affect balance, or a mid-range score, in this case around “0.” It might be argued that people on the whole ought to be feeling ‘happier’ or ‘up’ (higher positive psychological well-being) than ‘sad’ or ‘down’ (higher negative psychological well-being), but this is essentially what the BABS seeks to discover. The fact that this study sample is marginally on the negative side, especially with a standard of deviation of 2.55, should not be cause for undue excitement. Also, these results reflect one point in time, and psychological well-being, especially if general statements about a larger group of people are to be made, likely requires more longitudinal or extended study.

Despite the fact that sampling was completed shortly after the terrorism events in the USA in 2001, the overall level of affect balance or PWB reported by the respondents in this study was relatively speaking, “balanced,” when discussing their psychological well-being or general level of happiness (see Table 6).

Table 6

Psychological Well-being based on
Bradburn Affect Balance Scale (n=235)

| Bradburn Affect Balance Scale | MEAN | SD |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Positive Affect | 11.15 | 1.92 |
| Negative Affect | 12.40 | 2.15 |
| BABS (Affect Balance) | -1.25 | 2.55 |

Examining lifestyle: The voluntary simplicity lifestyle mode.

The idea that the kind of lifestyle we lead might affect the way in which we experience our leisure, and consequently our psychological well-being, is foremost in this study and forms the basis of the main research questions. Lifestyle, although difficult to define, is more than just the way we live. Lifestyles, as identified in the literature review, are multi-dimensional and reflect personal or social values that differ in degree and often overlap each other. One can usually note the elements of work (occupational and domestic), leisure and recreation, spirituality, personal and social relationships, community relationships, and relationships to the environment in the lifestyles of most people. The importance of these dimensions varies substantially according to the value structure, attitudes, behaviours or interests of individuals. The origin of values and development of one's values over the life course is influenced by various sources: "family, peers, school and college, religion and church, folk story, personal experiences, etc.," (Kilby, 1993, p.109). For some, spirituality might be the dominant dimension or value, for others it may be their occupational work, and for still others it may be their serious leisure (Stebbins, 1998) or their commitment to community.

The values apparent in a lifestyle, among other factors, will vary according to life stage, or that point along life's path one is currently living. Lifestyles reflect personally held values that are independent of life stage but are flexible to change over the life course. Essentially, what Kilby (1993), Sessoms (1980), Neugarten (1973), et al., have said is that our values will dictate the kind of lifestyle choices we make, and these may or may not change as we progress through the life course.

In the study, four value dimensions were used to characterize the voluntary simplicity value orientation in lifestyle: (1) Material simplicity; (2) Self-determination; (3) Ecological awareness; and (4) Personal growth (Burch, 1997; Elgin & Mitchell, 1977). The lifestyle section of the questionnaire included a scale constructed of items from the voluntary simplicity scales developed by Iwata (1997, 1999). The four main voluntary simplicity value dimensions identified by Burch (1997) were used to inform and guide the construction of the lifestyle measure, a modified scale on voluntary simplicity. These are, briefly, as follows:

1. Material simplicity: Sufficiency, minimalism; anti-consumerism; a deliberate reduction of consumption, clutter, noise, social over-commitment, and superfluous ornamentation.
2. Self-determination: Personal authenticity, integrity, healthy autonomy, and self-reliance.
3. Ecological awareness: An appreciation of the interconnection and interdependence of all Earth's inhabitants and systems, and active cooperation with them. "Human scale" or a "small is beautiful ethic," a preference for smaller more efficient products and institutions, and

which has sometimes been treated as a separate dimension, is also included here.

4. Personal growth: A focus in one's life on creativity, personal development, mindfulness, and spirituality.

Initial scale development involved pilot testing the lifestyle and belief items with students from three undergraduate classes within the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies (n=84). With the data from the pilot study, a series of factor analyses and reliability analyses were conducted. Six of the original 49 statements were dropped because of (1) interpretation problems, (2) low reliability, and (3) debatable centrality to the dimension. The following three "self-determination" statements were dropped: "I try to be as self-sufficient as possible," "Given the choice, I would avoid doing household chores," and "I will not purchase something if I can make it myself." These statements reflect self-sufficiency or self-reliance more than self-determination (control over personal decisions) and the testing revealed this. Also, the following three ecological awareness statements, "Given the choice, I purchase products that will last longer," "I find I waste a lot of the food I buy," and "I think people are generally unconcerned about the environment," were dropped possibly because they may have been confusing or difficult to interpret.

Several other items were deemed to be borderline according to the first two criteria, but based on their face validity, they were retained for the main study, where an adult general population would hopefully provide a clearer picture and understanding. The overall scale and its dimensions were assessed again with data gathered from the general population (n=235).

The modified scale of 43 items was consistent with the literature and represented a reorganization of items, creation of some new items, and rewording of some for clarity. For example the statement “I try to live simply and not buy articles that are unnecessary” (Iwata, 1999), was re-worded to “I try to live my life simply” to reduce confusion, improve clarity and for ease of understanding. Another statement from Iwata (1999) “I do not do impulse buying” (good or positive statement) was re-worded into “I sometimes make impulse purchases when I shop” (not good or negative statement), because the statement was now more readable and respondents would have contrast in the type of questions presented.

Using Burchs’ (1997) delphi exercise on values and practices of VS for reference, some new statements like “I deliberately try to employ more environmentally sustainable forms of transportation (e.g., bike, walk, public transit),” “I deliberately try to reduce the amount of material possessions I have,” and “I try to reduce unnecessary complexity in my life” were created. These were subsequently amended for clarity in understanding to “Whenever possible, I walk or bike rather than drive a car,” “I make a conscious effort to reduce the number of material possessions I have,” and “I make a conscious effort to reduce the complexity in my life.”

The modified VS scale was also expanded to utilize seven-point Likert-type rating scales to offer a broader range of response, and to match the scales used in the Leisure Participation Profile (Smale & Shaw, 1993) and Leisure Experience Battery (Caldwell, Smith, & Weissinger, 1992), also used in the study. Responses on the scale could range from “Very strongly disagree” to “Very strongly agree.” Of the 43 items in the VS scale, seven were negatively worded to create variation in response and these statements were then reverse-coded for analysis.

Factor analysis and reliability testing were again completed on the individual items within each of the four dimensions of the scale to further reduce the “Voluntary simplicity” scale to 34 remaining items. The factor analysis examined commonality amongst the scale items, and allowed for removal of any items that did not have much in common with others. Reliability analysis assisted this process by providing an overall indicator of scale strength or “conceptual togetherness” of items. The reliability analysis on the “Voluntary simplicity” scale using the final data set (n=235) is presented in Table 7. An acceptance level of 0.70 is considered the norm for the Cronbach’s alpha statistic (Diekhoff, 1992).

The reliability analysis also revealed that the Self Determination dimension may include two or more separate concepts or ideas. After the final reliability analysis, only three items remained in the Self Determination dimension (see Table 8). In hopes of discovering something akin to “self reliance” or self-sufficiency, an additional factor analysis of the removed items found no commonality, plus a reliability analysis showed a very poor alpha level ($\alpha=.3581$), suggesting they were not strongly related conceptually. It is argued, however, that the current “Self Determination” dimension could be labeled “Self-reliance” or “Self-sufficiency” based on the nature of the items. Also, the items removed could easily fall within the ideas of “self-reliance,” “self-sufficiency,” or “self-determination,” although the statements need to be reworded for conceptual and interpretive clarity, and re-tested for reliability. Interestingly, one of the statements included, “I try to be as self-reliant as possible,” added considerable strength to the self-determination dimension as it stands. A future study utilizing this scale ought to examine these concepts and numerous statements closely. Self-reliance, self-determination and self-sufficiency are integral to the voluntary

simplicity lifestyle mode, and clearer definition of the statements would aid in understanding this dimension.

Table 7

Voluntary simplicity scale - Reliability analysis (n=235).

| Dimensions of voluntary simplicity | # of items | Cronbach's α |
|---|-------------------|---|
| Personal Growth sub-scale | 14 | .8379 |
| Ecological Awareness sub-scale | 9 | .7845 |
| Self – Determination sub-scale | 3 | .7787 |
| Material simplicity sub-scale | 8 | .7770 |
| Voluntary Simplicity Scale | 34 | .7316 |

The Personal Growth dimension of the voluntary simplicity lifestyle

The personal growth dimension of the voluntary simplicity lifestyle sub-scale included 14 items and had the highest reliability score of all the dimensions (Cronbach's α = .8379) in the reliability analysis, indicating high commonality between items, and the appearance of consistently measuring the same idea. As outlined earlier, the personal growth dimension reflected a focus in one's life on creativity, personal development, mindfulness, and spirituality (Burch, 1997; Elgin & Mitchell, 1977).

When looking at the overall mean and standard deviation scores for this dimension (MEAN=5.45, SD=0.64) the majority of the responses were between "agree" and "strongly agree" for these items (see Table 8). The respondents in this study placed as much emphasis or agreement on family connections, developing oneself personally, and personal health, for example, as they did with the self-determination dimension in which they supported self-reliance and personal decision making.

The highest rated item in this dimension was “I place my family before everything else” (MEAN=6.09, SD=1.04) followed closely by “I would rather be healthy than wealthy” (MEAN=6.03, SD=1.06). It is interesting to note that the lowest item score, although between “undecided” and “agree” was for the statement “I take an active interest in issues involving my community” (MEAN=4.47, SD=1.24), which indicates respondents may only have marginal interest in local politics or volunteering. On the other hand, respondents did indicate being concerned for the welfare of their community (MEAN=5.39, SD=0.99) which might mean they care about their communities emotionally, but might need a push to put thought into action.

The Self-determination dimension of the voluntary simplicity lifestyle

The self-determination dimension of voluntary simplicity was earlier described as those values of personal authenticity, integrity, healthy autonomy, and self-reliance (Burch, 1997; Elgin & Mitchell, 1977). When looking at the self-determination dimension the strength of the responses (MEAN=5.45, SD=0.94) indicate a reasonably solid to strong agreement around the idea of being self-reliant, and to having control over personal decisions (see Table 8). This is somewhat comforting when time pressure studies and other leisure research are showing a feeling or sense of loss of control in personal lives.

The Ecological Awareness dimension of the voluntary simplicity lifestyle

The values in the ecological awareness dimension of the voluntary simplicity lifestyle (9 items) were also generally supported, with respondents on average agreeing with the statements comprising the dimension (MEAN=5.09, SD=0.78). This dimension of VS refers

to an appreciation of the interconnection and interdependence of all Earth's inhabitants and systems, and active cooperation with them. Human scale, or a “small is beautiful” ethic (Schumacher, 1973), a preference for smaller more efficient products and institutions, is also included as part of this understanding (Burch, 1997; Elgin & Mitchell, 1977). In many ways, this dimension or sub-scale may be largely concerned with what is commonly referred to as environmental issues.

For example, the highest scoring item was “I make a conscious effort not to litter” (MEAN=6.35, SD=0.97), in which respondents show a definite preference for not polluting the environment. Respondents agreed with the majority of the items in this dimension. It is interesting to note that the scores for last statement, “Whenever possible, I walk or bike rather than drive a car” (MEAN=4.06, SD=1.64) might indicate some reluctance to part with the use of the personal car. Respondents indicated only a marginal agreement towards the notion of taking the bike or walking. Regardless of how well the Kitchener–Waterloo community may be designed to accommodate walkers and bikers, or that people may just opt do these activities in their leisure time and use their autos if they have to do business or runs errands, it appears as if they still prefer to use their personal car if given a choice. On the whole, respondents supported the value orientations presented by the ecological awareness statements (see Table 8).

The Material Simplicity dimension of the voluntary simplicity lifestyle

Finally, one of the core tenets of the voluntary simplicity lifestyle, material simplicity, was the least highly supported by respondents. As Burch (1997), Elgin & Mitchell (1977), and others have pointed out, this dimension contained items concerned with values of

Table 8

Voluntary Simplicity Lifestyle Value Orientation
 – Support or agreement for the values or behaviours (n=235).

| Dimension Item | MEAN | SD |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| <i>Personal Growth Dimension</i> | 5.45 | 0.64 |
| Place family before all else | 6.09 | 1.04 |
| Rather be healthy than wealthy | 6.03 | 1.06 |
| Time to relax is essential | 5.95 | 0.95 |
| Nurture relations with family | 5.82 | 1.05 |
| Be healthy in mind and spirit | 5.66 | 1.14 |
| Nurture relations with friends | 5.56 | 1.01 |
| Like intellectual challenge | 5.55 | 1.03 |
| Try to be physically active | 5.46 | 1.18 |
| Concern for community welfare | 5.39 | 0.99 |
| Enjoy creative activity most | 5.25 | 1.21 |
| Develop my inner self | 5.15 | 1.22 |
| Seek time for reflection | 4.95 | 1.06 |
| Concerned with spiritual growth | 4.93 | 1.52 |
| Interest in community issues | 4.47 | 1.24 |
| <i>Self Determination Dimension</i> | 5.45 | 0.94 |
| Try to be self-reliant | 5.66 | 1.06 |
| Make my own decisions | 5.53 | 1.07 |
| Depend on myself to choose | 5.17 | 1.27 |
| <i>Ecological Awareness Dimension</i> | 5.09 | 0.78 |
| Make effort not to litter | 6.35 | 0.97 |
| Separate recyclables from trash | 5.64 | 1.37 |
| Try to conserve electricity | 5.28 | 1.18 |
| Try to conserve water | 5.24 | 1.15 |
| Upset at useful things being thrown | 5.14 | 1.19 |
| Purchase recyclable products | 4.91 | 1.15 |
| Consider environment impacts | 4.66 | 1.17 |
| Seek less packaging on products | 4.55 | 1.26 |
| Walk or bike when possible | 4.06 | 1.64 |
| <i>Material Simplicity Dimension</i> | 4.23 | 0.76 |
| Try to live life simply | 5.20 | 1.14 |
| Prefer simple products over complex | 4.98 | 1.17 |
| Effort to reduce complexity | 4.92 | 1.11 |
| Purchase only if really needed | 4.57 | 1.31 |
| Sophisticated products not needed | 4.17 | 1.22 |
| Effort to reduce material possessions | 3.83 | 1.28 |
| Buy things I don't need * | 3.13 | 1.22 |
| Sometimes impulse buyer * | 3.01 | 1.28 |

* indicates reverse coding for negative statements

sufficiency, minimalism, anti-consumerism, and a deliberate reduction of consumption, clutter, noise, social over-commitment, and superfluous ornamentation.

It is not surprising that the material simplicity dimension score (MEAN=4.23, SD=0.76) is not higher because the impact of the North American consumer society on our lives (i.e., commodification), and the rampant practice of consumerism as identified in the literature review section of the study, is tremendous (see Table 8). The individual item scores also support this with the highest scores being shown for the three statements, “I try to live my life simply” (MEAN=5.20, SD=1.14), “I prefer products with simple functions to those with complex functions” (MEAN=4.98, SD=1.17), and “I make a conscious effort to reduce the complexity in my life” (MEAN=4.92, SD=1.11). These three statements all focus on the notion of living simply, and received higher support than the five remaining statements that tended to focus on consumerism and buying products or things. The scores for the statements, “I make a purchase only after seriously considering if I really need the product” (MEAN=4.57, SD=1.31), “Sophisticated functions on products are unnecessary” (MEAN=4.17, SD=1.22), and “I make a conscious effort to reduce the number of material possessions I have” (MEAN=3.83, SD=1.28), were supported less, indicating an indifference by the respondents. The statements, “I sometimes buy things that I do not really need” (MEAN=3.13, SD=1.22), and “I sometimes make impulse purchases when I shop” (MEAN=3.01, SD=1.28), were negatively worded statements and reverse coded for analysis. What these statements indicate is that respondents feel they generally make conscientious and necessary purchases and perceive themselves as not being impulsive shoppers or buyers. These statements support the notion of material simplicity (see Table 8).

People appear to be very active consumers and the notion of personal over-emphasis on materialism, or even a feeling of being overwhelmed by materialism, seems to be only marginally recognized. Respondents seem to agree about the basic idea of living simply, but were more undecided about putting that into action especially with their consumer behaviour. The material simplicity dimension could also be split into two, perhaps along the lines of a “value” or “attitudinal” component (the first three statements about living more simply) and a “behavioural” component (the statements about purchasing items and consumer behaviour), although these results may indicate that actions speak louder than words, in other words people might find that “unconscious” consumer behaviour is the norm.

The Voluntary Simplicity measure overall

All four dimensions within the voluntary simplicity lifestyle scale (personal growth, self-determination, ecological awareness, and material simplicity) were examined together to achieve a composite indicator of voluntary simplicity for the sample (MEAN=5.06, SD=0.57) (see Table 9).

Table 9

Voluntary simplicity and Its Dimensions (n=235).

| Voluntary Simplicity Dimensions | MEAN | SD |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Personal Growth | 5.45 | 0.64 |
| Self Determination | 5.45 | 0.94 |
| Ecological Awareness | 5.09 | 0.74 |
| Material Simplicity | 4.23 | 0.76 |
| Voluntary Simplicity | 5.06 | 0.57 |

The composite mean value suggests that, overall, the respondents in the sample generally agreed with the idea of voluntary simplicity as a value orientation, and agreed with what could be called voluntary simplicity behaviour, represented by the various items in the scale.

SECTION TWO: THE ROLE OF SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS IN LEISURE, LIFESTYLE, AND WELL-BEING.

This section begins by focussing on the relationships of socio-demographic factors to leisure, in fact, leisure participation, importance of leisure activity to one's lifestyle, and perceived leisure experience. The analyses proceed to further examine relationships between these socio-demographic factors and lifestyle dimensions (the voluntary simplicity value orientation) and finally with psychological well-being (PWB), in this study measured by the Bradburn Affect Balance scale (Bradburn & Noll, 1969).

The relationship of socio-demographic variables to leisure participation, and to importance or value placed on certain leisure activity.

In this section, participation in various leisure activities is examined for its relationship with each of the main socio-demographic variables. Not all relationships produced significant results, in fact, for the majority of comparisons there were no significant relationships or differences to highlight. Even though there may not have been group differences in comparison on some of the variables, it is interesting to compare activities as well as the level of importance or value respondents attached to them. Although many of the results are not necessarily remarkable or strong, there appear to be similarities in activities like those in the outdoor activities category (i.e., going on day outings or picnics and

gardening), or going to parties/dancing, and attending concerts or live theatre, that reoccur throughout the analysis.

In addition to reporting participation levels for various activities, participants in the study could report their feelings regarding each of the leisure activities and of what value or importance this activity was to their leisure lifestyle, irrespective of how much they actually took part. Similar to the results in leisure participation, the comparisons in the value or level of importance respondents attach to some leisure activities as part of their overall leisure lifestyle are not overly remarkable, but do highlight some differences. In view of this, and in general, it makes sense to discuss the importance of leisure (attitudinal/value) results together with the participation (behavioural) results, because they further enrich the analysis and understanding of leisure overall, and its relationship to the main variables in the study. Also, the relationship between importance placed on a leisure activity (the value or attitude towards the activity) and the behaviour or actual participation in that activity is of interest, because this is often questioned in the literature. Similar to previous analyses, slightly over half the leisure activities in the questionnaire (25 items total) did not produce statistically significant differences.

Differences in leisure participation and value of activity by gender.

Out of 25 activities (in 10 categories), only eight produced significant differences in levels of participation when men and women were compared (see Table 10). Participation in mass media activities was reasonably similar for both men and women. Both genders watched TV and videos (overall MEAN=24.99; SD=11.50), read books, magazines and

Table 10

Differences in average monthly *mass media* leisure participation by gender (n=211).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Watching TV/Videos | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 26.68 | 11.57 | 1.65 | .100 |
| Women | 173 | 23.29 | 11.43 | | |
| Reading books, magazines, etc. | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 25.79 | 10.45 | 0.28 | .780 |
| Women | 173 | 25.10 | 14.26 | | |
| Going to movies | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 1.00 | 1.21 | 1.04 | .299 |
| Women | 173 | 0.79 | 1.13 | | |
| Using the internet/computer | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 22.03 | 22.86 | 2.95 | .004 |
| Women | 173 | 13.23 | 14.97 | | |
| Listening to music | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 21.87 | 12.16 | -1.09 | .279 |
| Women | 173 | 24.93 | 16.41 | | |
| Mass media activities (category) | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 19.47 | 6.77 | 1.72 | .086 |
| Women | 173 | 17.45 | 6.50 | | |

newspapers (overall MEAN=25.45; SD=12.36), and listen to music (overall MEAN=23.40; SD=14.29) almost on a daily basis. In contrast, both men and women only went to the movies about once a month (see Table 10). Interestingly, men used the computer or Internet significantly more than women did, almost twice as much in an average month ($t_{2,211}=2.95$; $p=.004$). It is difficult to tell if this is for pleasure or work is taken home and completed on the computer.

In comparison to participation, there were no significant differences between men and women in the importance placed on mass media leisure activities. Outside of going to

Table 11

Differences in average monthly *social* leisure participation by gender (n=211).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------|-------|--------------|-----------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Visiting or entertaining friends | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 6.61 | 5.85 | -1.23 | .219 |
| Women | 173 | 8.16 | 7.25 | | |
| Phoning friends | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 7.18 | 6.62 | -3.65 | <.001 |
| Women | 173 | 16.17 | 14.85 | | |
| Going to parties/dancing | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 1.89 | 2.10 | -.186 | .853 |
| Women | 173 | 2.00 | 3.35 | | |
| Playing cards or boardgames | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 1.87 | 4.04 | -5.82 | .561 |
| Women | 173 | 2.32 | 4.37 | | |
| Volunteering | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 3.34 | 6.10 | -.219 | .827 |
| Women | 173 | 3.72 | 10.32 | | |
| Active in service clubs | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 1.61 | 5.38 | .560 | .576 |
| Women | 173 | 1.08 | 5.27 | | |
| Social activities (category) | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 3.75 | 3.11 | -2.11 | .036 |
| Women | 173 | 5.55 | 5.04 | | |

movies, which was valued somewhat less, the level of importance or value placed on the other mass media activities in their leisure lifestyles was reasonably similar for both genders (overall MEAN=4.19; SD=0.90).

On average, per month, women took part in social activity more than men (overall MEAN=5.55; SD=5.04), although the difference for most of the individual activities was not statistically significant (see Table 11). Men were marginally more involved and active in

Table 12

Differences in *importance of social* leisure activity to lifestyle by gender (n=211).

| Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | | |
|--|----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------|
| Leisure activity / Groups | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Visiting or entertaining friends | | | | | |
| Male | 38 | 4.92 | 1.38 | | |
| Female | 173 | 5.43 | 1.37 | -2.08 | .039 |
| Phoning friends | | | | | |
| Male | 38 | 3.89 | 1.57 | | |
| Female | 173 | 5.12 | 1.44 | -4.68 | <.001 |
| Going to parties/dancing | | | | | |
| Male | 38 | 3.13 | 1.85 | | |
| Female | 173 | 3.20 | 1.85 | -.196 | .845 |
| Playing cards or boardgames | | | | | |
| Male | 38 | 2.63 | 1.70 | | |
| Female | 173 | 2.92 | 1.68 | -.970 | .333 |
| Volunteering | | | | | |
| Male | 38 | 3.66 | 1.79 | | |
| Female | 173 | 3.99 | 1.83 | -1.03 | .303 |
| Active in service clubs | | | | | |
| Male | 38 | 2.32 | 1.88 | | |
| Female | 173 | 2.38 | 1.70 | -.193 | .847 |
| Social activities (category) | | | | | |
| Male | 38 | 3.43 | 0.91 | | |
| Female | 173 | 3.84 | 0.95 | -2.46 | .015 |

service clubs (MEAN=1.61; SD=5.38) than women were, but women participated in the social activity of phoning their friends ($t_{2,209}=-3.65$; $p<.001$; MEAN=16.17; SD=14.85) more than twice as much in a month than men did (see Table 11). It is reasonable to expect that women rely more on their close friends for social support than men do, and talk to them frequently, either over the telephone or in person.

As far as which social activities were valued more, women placed significantly more value or importance on visiting and entertaining friends (MEAN=5.43; SD=1.37) ($t_{2,209}=-2.08$; $p=.039$) than men did (MEAN=4.92; SD=1.38). Similarly, women placed significantly more value or importance on phoning friends (MEAN=5.12; SD=1.44) ($t_{2,209}=-4.68$; $p<.001$) in their leisure lifestyles than men (MEAN=3.89; SD=1.57). Overall women place higher value on social activity than men ($t_{2,209}=-2.46$; $p<.015$) (see Table 12), and this is supported by the participation results.

In outdoor leisure participation, women participated in day outings and picnics significantly more than their male counterparts ($t_{2,209}=-2.12$; $p=.035$; MEAN=3.37; SD=4.82), on average over twice as often in a month (see Table 13). Even in motorized outdoor activity, usually considered a male-oriented activity, the average monthly rate of participation, although very low, was still marginally higher for women (MEAN=0.56; SD=2.21) than for men (MEAN=0.39; SD=1.70).

Surprisingly, outdoor leisure activities, as a category, were taken part in significantly more by women than by men ($t_{2,209}=-2.22$; $p=.027$; MEAN=3.69; SD=3.48) (see Table 13). This points to women feeling comfortable and confident in their abilities out-of-doors, and to enjoying popular activities like gardening perhaps more so than men. Both men and women were very similar in the importance or value they placed on outdoor leisure activities (overall MEAN=3.48; SD=1.11), and no differences were shown.

Although none of the differences between the genders in cultural activity were statistically significant, the participation values for women are all marginally higher than for men (see Table 14). In an activity like spectating at sports, this difference might be due to

women feeling more responsibility for taking their children to minor sporting events than their husbands, as opposed to going to major professional sporting events, but this could be

Table 13

Differences in average monthly *outdoor* leisure participation by gender (n=211).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|-------|--------------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Going on day outings/picnics | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 1.66 | 2.54 | -2.12 | .035 |
| Women | 173 | 3.37 | 4.82 | | |
| Gardening | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 5.26 | 8.11 | -1.26 | .211 |
| Women | 173 | 7.57 | 10.64 | | |
| Outdoor activities/camping | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 2.21 | 2.45 | -1.48 | .141 |
| Women | 173 | 3.35 | 4.62 | | |
| Motorized outdoor activity | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 0.39 | 1.70 | -0.435 | .664 |
| Women | 173 | 0.56 | 2.21 | | |
| Outdoor activities (category) | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 2.38 | 2.29 | -2.22 | .027 |
| Women | 173 | 3.69 | 3.48 | | |

examined in greater detail. Also, men and women did not differ in the level of importance they placed on these various cultural activities (overall MEAN=2.87; SD=1.38).

A similar interpretation may be offered for the personal growth activities shown in Table 15. Although the differences between the genders in this type of leisure pursuit is not statistically significant, women, on average, are shown having higher rates of participation in both spiritual activity and in taking general interest courses (Overall MEAN=5.25; SD=5.88). It appears as if spiritual activity is at least still a weekly activity for both men and women, although church attendance was not examined (see Table 15).

Table 14

Differences in average monthly *cultural* leisure participation by gender (n=212).

| | | Average monthly participation | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Leisure activity / Groups | | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Spectating at sports events | | | | | | |
| | Men | 38 | 1.42 | 4.36 | -.333 | .740 |
| | Women | 173 | 1.69 | 4.62 | | |
| Attending concerts/theatre | | | | | | |
| | Men | 38 | 0.63 | 1.20 | -.636 | .525 |
| | Women | 173 | 0.77 | 1.27 | | |
| Cultural activities (category) | | | | | | |
| | Men | 38 | 1.03 | 2.25 | -.469 | .640 |
| | Women | 174 | 1.23 | 2.46 | | |

Table 15

Differences in average monthly *personal growth* leisure participation by gender (n=212).

| | | Average monthly participation | | | | |
|--|-------|--------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Leisure activity / Groups | | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Spiritual activity | | | | | | |
| | Men | 38 | 5.03 | 10.20 | -1.46 | .145 |
| | Women | 173 | 7.86 | 10.93 | | |
| Taking interest courses | | | | | | |
| | Men | 38 | 2.50 | 2.39 | -.345 | .731 |
| | Women | 173 | 2.71 | 3.60 | | |
| Personal growth activities (cat.) | | | | | | |
| | Men | 38 | 3.76 | 4.89 | -1.46 | .147 |
| | Women | 174 | 5.25 | 5.88 | | |

In support of the participation results, personal growth activity was valued more by women (overall MEAN=4.46; SD=1.61) than by men (overall MEAN=3.65; SD=1.40), and in particular, women (MEAN=4.40; SD=2.19) placed a significantly higher amount of

importance on spiritual activity in their leisure lives than their male counterparts

(MEAN=3.08; SD=2.24) ($t_{2,210}=-3.39$; $p=.001$) (see Table 16).

Table 16

Differences in ***importance of personal growth*** leisure activity to lifestyle by gender (n=212).

| Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | | |
|--|----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|
| Leisure activity / Groups | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Spiritual activity | | | | | |
| Male | 39 | 3.08 | 2.24 | -3.39 | .001 |
| Female | 173 | 4.40 | 2.19 | | |
| Taking interest courses | | | | | |
| Male | 39 | 4.23 | 1.60 | -.951 | .343 |
| Female | 173 | 4.53 | 1.78 | | |
| Personal growth activities (cat.) | | | | | |
| Male | 39 | 3.65 | 1.40 | -.290 | .004 |
| Female | 173 | 4.46 | 1.61 | | |

Table 17

Differences in average monthly travel and tourism leisure participation by gender (n=212).

| Average monthly participation | | | | | |
|---|----------|-------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Leisure activity / Groups | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Travelling to visit friends/family | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 2.82 | 3.73 | -1.46 | .145 |
| Women | 173 | 3.94 | 4.41 | | |
| Having short holidays/getaways | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 1.45 | 1.74 | .914 | .362 |
| Women | 173 | 1.18 | 1.62 | | |
| Travel and tourism (category) | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 2.13 | 2.32 | -1.00 | .318 |
| Women | 174 | 2.56 | 2.41 | | |

The rate of participation in travelling to visit friends or family, or just to take a short holiday appear quite similar for both genders, and no significant differences were reported (see Table 17).

It was shown earlier that women place more value on social activity than men do. In Table 18, women placed more importance on travelling to visit friends and relatives (MEAN=5.36; SD=1.52) than men did (MEAN=4.79; SD=1.61) ($t_{2,218}=-2.08$; $p=.039$). This difference may be because in many families, the role of planning and scheduling family activities (keeping the family “social calendar”) is that of the woman in the household. These results support the importance of social activity for women (see Table 18).

Table 18

Differences in *importance of travel and tourism* leisure activity to lifestyle by gender (n=220).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|------|------|--------------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Travelling to visit friends/family | | | | | |
| Male | 39 | 4.79 | 1.61 | | |
| Female | 181 | 5.36 | 1.52 | -2.08 | .039 |
| Having short holidays/getaways | | | | | |
| Male | 39 | 4.67 | 1.72 | | |
| Female | 181 | 4.90 | 1.70 | -.759 | .449 |
| Travel and tourism (category) | | | | | |
| Male | 39 | 4.73 | 1.45 | | |
| Female | 181 | 5.13 | 1.38 | -1.61 | .108 |

Some significant differences between men and women were revealed in the remaining leisure activities identified in Table 19. Women were more frequent participants in such activities as creative hobbies or crafts (MEAN=6.52; SD=8.04; $t_{2,209}=-3.01$; $p=.003$) and in doing personal fitness (MEAN=13.59;SD=10.86; $t_{2,209}=-2.02$; $p=.045$) than men. For

example, the latter result is supported by typically high participation in such fitness activities as “aerobics” or “dancercize” programs, which men tend to shy away from. On the other hand, men reported doing individual sports significantly more often than women ($t_{2,209}=2.74$; $p=.007$; MEAN=3.66; SD=6.49) (see Table 19).

Table 19

Differences in average monthly leisure participation (remaining activities) by gender (n=211).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|-------|--------------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Playing team sports | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 2.21 | 5.39 | 1.66 | .098 |
| Women | 173 | 1.09 | 3.34 | | |
| Doing individual sport | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 3.66 | 6.49 | 2.74 | .007 |
| Women | 173 | 1.57 | 3.61 | | |
| Doing personal fitness | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 9.74 | 9.71 | -2.02 | .045 |
| Women | 173 | 13.59 | 10.86 | | |
| Creative hobbies and crafts | | | | | |
| Men | 38 | 2.37 | 5.79 | -3.01 | .003 |
| Women | 173 | 6.52 | 8.04 | | |

Also, in the remaining activities listed in Table 20, some significant differences between men and women in the importance they place on these activities are shown. For example, and perhaps not unexpectedly, based on the participation results, men placed significantly higher importance or value on playing individual sports (MEAN=3.64; SD=2.15) in their leisure lifestyle than women did (MEAN=2.90; SD=1.91) ($t_{2,203}=2.12$; $p=.035$). In contrast, women not only took part in these more, but placed much higher importance on creative hobbies and crafts (MEAN=4.52; SD=3.08) than their male

counterparts (MEAN=3.08; SD=2.06) ($t_{2,203}=-4.04$; $p<.001$). Both men and women valued personal fitness activity and playing team sports on a similarly (see Table 20).

Table 20

Differences in *importance* of leisure activity to lifestyle by gender (remainder) (n=205).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------|------|--------------|-----------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Playing team sports | | | | | |
| Male | 39 | 2.72 | 2.14 | 1.03 | .306 |
| Female | 166 | 2.37 | 1.82 | | |
| Doing individual sport | | | | | |
| Male | 39 | 3.64 | 2.15 | 2.12 | .035 |
| Female | 166 | 2.90 | 1.91 | | |
| Doing personal fitness | | | | | |
| Male | 39 | 4.82 | 2.17 | -1.63 | .105 |
| Female | 166 | 5.34 | 1.70 | | |
| Creative hobbies and crafts | | | | | |
| Male | 39 | 3.08 | 2.06 | -4.04 | <.001 |
| Female | 166 | 4.52 | 1.99 | | |

In summary, it may be said that men and women place reasonably equal importance or value on leisure activity in lifestyle, and significant differences occur in only a limited number of leisure activities in a variety of categories.

Differences in leisure participation and value of leisure activity by age group.

Age group differences in leisure participation were examined using the three categories of age group previously established: young adults (18 to 34 years), mid-life adults (35 to 54 years), and older adults (55 to 82 years). When comparing age group to leisure activity only four activities stood out showing significant differences between these groups.

For example, the older adults had the highest propensity for reading books (32 times per month on average) compared to the other two age groups (see Table 21). All three groups read a considerable amount, but those over 55 read significantly more. Not unexpectedly, young adults went to movies significantly more than older adults, because for them it is very much a social opportunity to be with friends. All three age groups watched TV or videos at home, used the

Table 21

Differences in average monthly *mass media* leisure activity participation by age group (n=212).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | F | p |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|-------------|----------|-----------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Watching TV/Videos | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 24.91 | 11.73 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 119 | 22.82 | 12.25 | 1.03 | | .360 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 25.37 | 8.32 | | | |
| Reading books, magazines, etc. | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 20.66 ^a | 14.63 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 119 | 24.95 ^a | 12.03 | 8.46 | | <.001 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 32.09 ^b | 13.20 | | | |
| Going to movies | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 1.14 ^a | 1.59 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 119 | 0.79 ^{a, b} | 0.97 | 3.19 | | .043 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 0.54 ^b | 0.82 | | | |
| Using the internet/computer | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 15.97 | 13.50 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 119 | 16.03 | 19.08 | 1.82 | | .165 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 10.06 | 13.48 | | | |
| Listening to music | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 26.09 | 17.53 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 119 | 23.64 | 14.73 | .524 | | .593 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 25.34 | 15.51 | | | |
| Mass media activities (category) | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 17.75 | 6.55 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 119 | 17.64 | 6.87 | .341 | | .712 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 18.68 | 5.69 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

Internet or computer, and listened to music to a high degree (see Table 21).

In comparison to the rate of participation in mass media activities, these three age groups were highly consistent in the value or importance they placed on each activity (overall MEAN=4.14; SD=0.91) but showed no significant group differences. Of interest, all age groups seemed to value going to movies as part of their leisure lifestyle considerably less than the other mass media activities (overall MEAN=2.39; SD=1.46). Reading books, magazines and newspapers (overall MEAN=5.67; SD=1.34), and listening to music (overall MEAN=5.38; SD=1.39) were all valued reasonably highly as leisure activity, in comparison to an activity like watching TV or videos (overall MEAN=3.75; SD=1.58). These results correspond to participation in mass media leisure activity.

It may be seen in Table 22 that a social activity like visiting or entertaining friends is oriented more towards young adults, but only marginally to the other age groups. Adults in mid-life also tend to participate in parties or go dancing less than either young adults or older adults do, perhaps because of the time pressures of dealing with older children or their work, reflecting their life balance in general. This tends to be the stage in life when people are at their maximum productivity, so work may be the prime personal focus, and there may be little energy or time left at the end of a day to take part in this activity. All three groups telephone their friends regularly (almost every second day) and although average monthly levels of participation are much lower (one to four times in a month), play board games, volunteer in the community, or are active in service clubs on a similar basis (see Table 22).

With respect to social leisure activity, young adults (MEAN=3.77; SD=1.70) placed a significantly higher value or importance on going to parties and dancing than either mid-life adults (MEAN=2.89; SD=1.76) and older adults (MEAN=3.17; SD=2.16) ($t_{2,209}=-4.63$;

p=.011) (see Table 23). This is understandable since young adults were also shown to have higher participation in this activity compared to the older groups. Although just outside the

Table 22

Differences in average monthly *social* leisure participation by age group (n=211).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | F | p |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------|------|------|---|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Visiting or entertaining friends | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 10.03 ^a | 8.36 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 7.13 ^b | 6.46 | 3.57 | .030 | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 7.31 ^{a, b} | 5.96 | | | |
| Phoning friends | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 15.53 | 12.30 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 13.42 | 14.35 | .672 | .512 | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 15.83 | 14.65 | | | |
| Going to parties/dancing | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 2.74 ^a | 3.06 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 1.53 ^b | 2.71 | 3.28 | .039 | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 2.40 ^{a, b} | 4.33 | | | |
| Playing cards or boardgames | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 2.34 | 4.06 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 2.00 | 3.66 | .780 | .460 | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 3.03 | 6.35 | | | |
| Volunteering | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 1.52 | 4.41 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 4.13 | 9.42 | 2.32 | .101 | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 3.03 | 3.63 | | | |
| Active in service clubs | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 1.05 | 4.29 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 1.24 | 6.04 | .024 | .976 | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 1.17 | 5.28 | | | |
| Social activities (category) | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 5.54 | 3.56 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 4.91 | 5.24 | .444 | .642 | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 5.17 | 4.60 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

acceptable confidence limit, it was shown that mid-life adults (MEAN=4.18; SD=1.76) placed slightly higher importance on volunteering than both older adults (MEAN=3.74; SD=1.67) and young adults (MEAN=3.52; SD=1.92) (see Table 23). Again, this may be a

Table 23

Differences in *importance of social leisure* activity to lifestyle by age group (n=210).

| Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| Leisure activity / Groups | n | Mean | SD | F | p |
| Visiting or entertaining friends | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 61 | 5.56 | 1.37 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 114 | 5.25 | 1.39 | 1.07 | .344 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 5.26 | 1.42 | | |
| Phoning friends | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 61 | 5.00 | 1.47 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 114 | 4.82 | 1.59 | .264 | .768 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 4.91 | 1.48 | | |
| Going to parties/dancing | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 61 | 3.77 ^a | 1.70 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 114 | 2.89 ^b | 1.76 | 4.63 | .011 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 3.17 ^{a, b} | 2.16 | | |
| Playing cards or boardgames | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 61 | 3.07 | 1.76 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 114 | 2.86 | 1.64 | 1.07 | .346 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 2.54 | 1.70 | | |
| Volunteering | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 61 | 3.52 | 1.92 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 114 | 4.18 | 1.76 | 2.89 | .058 * |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 3.74 | 1.67 | | |
| Active in service clubs | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 61 | 2.41 | 1.65 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 114 | 2.40 | 1.76 | .206 | .814 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 2.20 | 1.78 | | |
| Social activities (category) | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 61 | 3.89 | 0.90 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 114 | 3.74 | 1.00 | .863 | .423 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 3.64 | 0.92 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05). * indicates notable result

reflection of the role parents play in supporting organizations in their communities that program for children. Interestingly, both the activities of playing cards and board games (average MEAN=2.87) and being active in service clubs (average MEAN=2.37) were valued considerably lower than other social activities like visiting or entertaining friends (average MEAN=5.34) and telephoning friends (average MEAN=4.89) (see Table 23).

Although no statistically significant differences between age groups were shown, all three groups took part in outdoor leisure activities on a similar basis, with average participation in the outdoor leisure category close to once a week (slightly less than four

Table 24

Differences in average monthly *outdoor* leisure participation by age group (n=211).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|-------|-------------|--------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | F | p |
| Going on day outings/picnics | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 3.59 | 5.32 | 1.31 | .271 |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 3.06 | 4.50 | | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 2.03 | 2.57 | | |
| Gardening | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 4.38 | 6.78 | 2.81 | .063* |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 8.08 | 11.92 | | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 8.17 | 8.20 | | |
| Outdoor activities/camping | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 3.00 | 3.39 | .287 | .751 |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 3.08 | 4.64 | | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 3.66 | 4.65 | | |
| Motorized outdoor activity | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 0.55 | 1.51 | .623 | .537 |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 0.63 | 2.60 | | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 0.17 | 0.71 | | |
| Outdoor activities (category) | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 2.88 | 2.76 | 1.22 | .298 |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 3.71 | 3.82 | | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 3.51 | 2.27 | | |

Note: * indicates notable result

times per month) (overall MEAN=3.37; SD=2.95) (see Table 24). The outdoor activity of gardening had much higher rates of participation in both the adult mid-life group (MEAN=8.08; SD=11.92) and the older adult group (MEAN=8.17; SD=8.20) than in the young adult group (MEAN=4.38; SD=6.78), though these differences were not significant and just outside the confidence limit ($p=.063$). Participation in motorized outdoor activity was also characterized by low average monthly participation (e.g., between once a month and every two months, or less) (see Table 24).

Table 25

Differences in *importance of outdoor leisure* activity to lifestyle by age group (n=206).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|------|------|-------|
| | n | Mean | SD | F | p |
| Going on day outings/picnics | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 61 | 4.36 | 1.62 | 2.59 | .077 |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 111 | 4.17 | 1.73 | | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 34 | 3.56 | 1.58 | | |
| Gardening | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 3.26 ^a | 1.85 | 7.97 | <.001 |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 4.46 ^b | 2.05 | | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 4.56 ^b | 2.12 | | |
| Outdoor activities/camping | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 4.59 | 1.70 | 2.22 | .112 |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 4.12 | 1.80 | | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 3.85 | 1.89 | | |
| Motorized outdoor activity | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 2.26 ^a | 1.70 | 7.23 | .001 |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 1.54 ^b | 1.14 | | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 1.41 ^b | 0.92 | | |
| Outdoor activities (category) | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 3.62 | 1.23 | .685 | .505 |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 3.57 | 1.13 | | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 3.35 | 0.96 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p<.05$).

In comparison to outdoor leisure participation rates, age group differences were also revealed in the level of importance attached to outdoor activities (see Table 25). The older two age groups placed significantly higher value or importance on gardening in their leisure lifestyle compared to young adults (MEAN=3.26; SD=1.85) ($t_{2,203}=7.97$; $p<.001$) supporting the participation result. In contrast, the young adults (MEAN=2.26; SD=1.70) placed significantly higher importance on motorized outdoor leisure activity than either the mid-life adults (MEAN=1.54) or the older adults (MEAN=1.41). This is not unexpected because motorized outdoor leisure activity is typically shown as popular amongst this age group (see Table 25).

In contrast, although participation rates in cultural activities are low on an average monthly basis, attending concerts or live theatre falls more in the domain of older adults, those 55 years of age and older (see Table 26), perhaps because they have more discretionary income and free time available. Although not significantly different, all three groups enjoy spectating at sporting events between one to two times per month. This could involve watching children's sporting activities or larger professional sporting events, but it is not clear how the activity may have been interpreted by respondents (see Table 26).

Older adults placed significantly higher importance or value on attending concerts or going to the theatre (MEAN=4.17; SD=1.85) than the young adult group (MEAN=2.84; SD=1.77) ($t_{2,209}=6.24$; $p=.002$) (see Table 27). This is supported by the fact older adults also participate in this activity over twice as much as young adults, likely because they have more free time and discretionary income for such activities (see Table 26). Although the group differences are not significant, it may be seen from Table 27 that the importance or value attached to cultural activity overall increases with age. This category could be explored more

Table 26

Differences in average monthly *cultural* leisure participation by age group (n=211).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|------|-------------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | F | p |
| Spectating at sports events | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 1.79 | 4.69 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 1.69 | 4.71 | .575 | .563 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 0.86 | 2.30 | | |
| Attending concerts/theatre | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 0.52 ^a | 0.90 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 0.73 ^{a, b} | 1.32 | 3.64 | .028 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 1.23 ^b | 1.42 | | |
| Cultural activities (category) | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 58 | 1.12 | 2.43 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 118 | 1.21 | 2.54 | .067 | .935 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 1.04 | 1.35 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

Table 27

Differences in *importance of cultural leisure* activity to lifestyle by age group (n=212).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|------|-------------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | F | p |
| Spectating at sports events | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 63 | 2.32 | 1.81 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 114 | 2.48 | 1.70 | .441 | .644 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 2.20 | 1.49 | | |
| Attending concerts/theatre | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 63 | 2.84 ^a | 1.77 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 114 | 3.39 ^{a, b} | 1.79 | 6.24 | .002 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 4.17 ^b | 1.85 | | |
| Cultural activities (category) | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 63 | 2.58 | 1.36 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 114 | 2.94 | 1.36 | 2.63 | .075 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 35 | 3.19 | 1.21 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

fully because cultural leisure activity is rather narrowly defined, for example, attending concerts potentially means quite different things to young adults (e.g., rock concert) and to older adults (e.g., symphony concert).

Similarly, all three age groups enjoy participation in personal growth activities on about a weekly basis in an average month (overall MEAN=4.25; SD=1.66), although no group differences were reported. Older adults appear to have marginally higher rates of participation in personal growth activity, likely due to more emphasis on spiritual activity (MEAN=10.29; SD=13.24) in comparison to the younger age groups (Overall older adult MEAN=6.34; SD=6.94). In addition, all three age groups placed a reasonably equal medium to high level importance on personal growth activities (overall MEAN=4.25; SD=1.66), but again no group differences were shown.

All age groups participate in travel and tourism activities (visiting friends and family or taking short trips) on a regular basis, and no distinguishing differences are shown. Travelling to visit friends or family occurs almost once a week for all three age groups (overall MEAN=3.90; SD=4.43), whereas taking short holidays or getaways occurs on average slightly more than once a month, regardless of age (overall MEAN=1.21; SD=1.58). No significant group differences emerged in the level of importance age groups placed on travel and tourism activity although, relatively speaking, this category was valued slightly higher than personal growth activities (overall MEAN=5.03; SD=1.37).

Not unexpectedly, average monthly participation in team sports (overall MEAN=1.30; SD=3.81) and individual sports (overall MEAN=1.96; SD=4.34) was similarly low and age group differences were not statistically significant, indicating that playing sports is reasonably consistent over the life span. On the whole, the younger age group participates

more often than both the older groups, particularly the older adults. Levels of participation in individual physical activity (e.g., personal fitness) are reasonably regular for all three age groups (overall MEAN=12.88; SD=10.69) at about once every three days [not quite the promoted ideal three times a week! (ParticipACTION, 1979)], and similarly, all three groups involve themselves in creative hobbies at least once a week or more (overall MEAN=5.78; SD=7.86).

Table 28

Differences in *importance of leisure* activity to lifestyle by age group (remainder) (n=204).

| Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | | |
|--|----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Leisure activity / Groups | n | Mean | SD | F | p |
| Playing team sports | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 62 | 2.71 ^a | 2.06 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 110 | 2.50 ^a | 1.91 | 3.78 | .024 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 32 | 1.63 ^b | 1.10 | | |
| Doing individual sport | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 62 | 3.16 | 2.09 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 110 | 3.10 | 1.92 | .768 | .465 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 32 | 2.66 | 1.93 | | |
| Doing personal fitness | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 62 | 5.10 | 1.92 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 110 | 5.33 | 1.65 | .321 | .726 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 32 | 5.22 | 2.14 | | |
| Creative hobbies and crafts | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 62 | 4.32 | 2.07 | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 110 | 4.30 | 2.06 | .674 | .511 |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 32 | 3.84 | 2.19 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

When age groups were examined for differences in the level of importance or value placed on these and other activities, it was shown that young adults (MEAN=2.71; SD=2.06) and mid-life adults (MEAN=2.50; SD=1.91) placed significantly higher importance on playing team sports than older adults (MEAN=1.63; SD=1.10) ($t_{2,201}=3.78$; $p=.024$) (see

Table 28). This is understandable and reflects the increased physical activity levels of younger people as well as their physical capabilities. On the other hand personal fitness activity was valued equally highly by all three age groups and matches the levels of participation discussed in the preceding paragraph.

Differences in leisure participation and value of leisure activity by marital status.

When examining the separate categories within marital status (single, married, and separated, widowed or divorced (SWD)) significant differences in participation were yielded in only six of the 25 leisure activities. This was not unusual and the differences are in areas where one might expect them. Also, as with the previous variable (age group) there were far more similarities between the marital status groups than differences, and differences between marital status and importance or value placed on certain leisure activity were again significant for only a small number of leisure activities.

For example, those who were married, read more books, magazines and newspapers than the other two groups (MEAN=27.17; SD=14.02), ($F_{2,210}=7.05$; $p=.001$). The primary difference in average monthly levels of reading existed between the single and the married groups (see Table 29).

Though not significant, the SWD and the married group had similarly high levels in reading books, magazines and newspapers, almost every day. Going to the movies, although an activity with low average monthly participation from all three groups, showed a significant difference between those who were single (MEAN=1.48; SD=1.65) and those who were married (MEAN=0.60; SD=0.78) ($F_{2,210}=11.6$; $p<.001$), more than twice the level in an average month.

Also, the married and SWD group went to the movies slightly less than once per month, while the single group, likely because it represents a typical social opportunity, went to movies between once and twice in an average month. In general, average monthly participation in mass media activities (average MEAN=17.78) was reasonably high for all three of the marital status groups (see Table 29).

Table 29

Differences in average monthly *mass media* leisure participation by marital status (n=213).

| | | Average monthly participation | | | | |
|---|----------|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------|--|
| Leisure activity / Groups | n | Mean | SD | F | p | |
| Watching TV/Videos | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 22.85 | 9.98 | | | |
| Married | 143 | 24.38 | 12.33 | .361 | .698 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 23.18 | 9.25 | | | |
| Reading books, magazines, etc. | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 18.92 ^a | 10.47 | | | |
| Married | 143 | 27.17 ^b | 14.02 | 7.05 | .001 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 25.95 ^{a, b} | 13.26 | | | |
| Going to movies | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 1.48 ^a | 1.65 | | | |
| Married | 143 | 0.60 ^b | 0.78 | 11.60 | <.001 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 0.86 ^{a, b} | 1.32 | | | |
| Using the internet/computer | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 14.83 | 18.16 | | | |
| Married | 143 | 14.69 | 17.35 | .078 | .925 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 16.23 | 11.32 | | | |
| Listening to music | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 24.29 | 16.31 | | | |
| Married | 143 | 24.05 | 15.68 | .392 | .676 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 27.23 | 14.63 | | | |
| Mass media activities (category) | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 16.48 | 6.91 | | | |
| Married | 143 | 18.18 | 6.55 | 1.42 | .245 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 18.69 | 5.69 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

When compared to how much the marital status groups valued certain mass media leisure activity, it was the single respondents (MEAN=4.19; SD=1.70) placed a significantly higher level of importance on watching TV or videos than the SWD group (MEAN=3.22; SD=1.48) ($t_{2,220}=3.29$; $p=.039$) (see Table 30). Although the singles were reasonably

Table 30

Differences in *importance of mass media leisure* activity to lifestyle by marital status (n=222).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------|------|-------------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | F | p |
| Watching TV/Videos | | | | | |
| Single | 53 | 4.19 ^a | 1.70 | | |
| Married | 147 | 3.73 ^{a, b} | 1.56 | 3.29 | .039 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 23 | 3.22 ^b | 1.48 | | |
| Reading books, magazines, etc. | | | | | |
| Single | 53 | 5.38 | 1.48 | | |
| Married | 147 | 5.77 | 1.29 | 1.73 | .180 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 23 | 5.52 | 1.50 | | |
| Going to movies | | | | | |
| Single | 53 | 2.85 ^a | 1.56 | | |
| Married | 147 | 2.23 ^b | 1.46 | 3.41 | .035 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 23 | 2.48 ^{a, b} | 1.47 | | |
| Using the internet/computer | | | | | |
| Single | 53 | 3.34 | 1.88 | | |
| Married | 147 | 3.59 | 1.94 | .319 | .727 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 23 | 3.52 | 1.83 | | |
| Listening to music | | | | | |
| Single | 53 | 5.36 | 1.67 | | |
| Married | 147 | 5.27 | 1.32 | .174 | .086 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 23 | 5.35 | 1.43 | | |
| Mass media activities (category) | | | | | |
| Single | 53 | 4.22 | 0.98 | | |
| Married | 147 | 4.12 | 0.82 | .509 | .602 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 23 | 4.02 | 0.93 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p<.05$).

consistent in their participation levels compared to the other two groups, they obviously put more value in this activity as part of their overall leisure. Going to the movies received the

lowest overall level of importance from all three groups (average MEAN=2.40) in comparison to the other mass media leisure activities, for example, like reading books (average MEAN=5.65). Here too, the singles group (MEAN=2.85; SD=1.56) were significantly different, placing a higher level of importance on going to the movies than the married group (MEAN=2.23; SD=1.46), ($t_{2,220}=3.41$; $p=.035$). This is supported by the fact that singles also participated significantly more in this activity than the other two groups, and indicates the importance of this mass media leisure activity to their social lives (see Table 30).

Not unexpectedly, in comparison to the married and SWD groups, the single group stood apart significantly in two social activities (see Table 31). The results show significant differences between the single respondents and married or SWD respondents in both the activities of visiting and entertaining friends ($F_{2,210}=6.61$; $p=.002$), and going to parties or dancing ($F_{2,210}=4.31$; $p=.015$). Those who are single are also typically in the young adult age category, and are more involved in these social activities perhaps because they have the free time and are in the process of establishing potential life-long relationships (e.g., dating). Both activities of visiting and entertaining friends and going to parties or dancing provide these opportunities. Although not a statistically significant difference, married respondents volunteered in their communities almost twice as much as those who were single and more than those who were SWD. About half the families reported children in their households (48.1%) so this might reflect the influence of children in the family and being involved in community activities that reflect this (see Table 31). In general, the three marital status groups (single, married and SWD) had very similar average monthly levels of social activity

participation (on average more than once a week) when viewed from an overall category perspective.

The social leisure activity category revealed some significant differences between the marital status groups in comparison to how much they valued various social activities in their

Table 31

Differences in average monthly *social* leisure participation by marital status (n=212).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | F | p |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Visiting or entertaining friends | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 10.69 ^a | 8.91 | | | |
| Married | 142 | 6.73 ^b | 5.85 | 6.61 | .002 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 9.50 ^{a, b} | 7.93 | | | |
| Phoning friends | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 14.42 | 9.64 | | | |
| Married | 142 | 14.30 | 15.35 | .293 | .747 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 16.77 | 15.00 | | | |
| Going to parties/dancing | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 3.15 ^a | 3.28 | | | |
| Married | 142 | 1.67 ^b | 3.12 | 4.31 | .015 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 1.55 ^{a, b} | 2.54 | | | |
| Playing cards or boardgames | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 2.44 | 4.36 | | | |
| Married | 142 | 2.26 | 4.14 | .155 | .856 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 1.82 | 5.30 | | | |
| Volunteering | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 1.88 | 4.71 | | | |
| Married | 142 | 4.39 | 11.37 | 1.41 | .247 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 2.41 | 3.10 | | | |
| Active in service clubs | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 1.13 | 4.67 | | | |
| Married | 142 | 1.33 | 5.83 | .453 | .636 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 0.18 | 0.85 | | | |
| Social activities (category) | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 5.62 | 3.58 | | | |
| Married | 142 | 5.11 | 5.30 | .202 | .817 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 5.37 | 3.77 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

leisure (see Table 32). While singles, married, and SWD respondents were reasonably similar in the level of importance they placed on visiting or entertaining friends (average

Table 32

Differences in *importance of social leisure* activity to lifestyle by marital status (n=210).

| Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| Leisure activity / Groups | n | Mean | SD | F | p |
| Visiting or entertaining friends | | | | | |
| Single | 50 | 5.58 | 1.36 | | |
| Married | 137 | 5.27 | 1.36 | 1.01 | .366 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 23 | 5.22 | 1.59 | | |
| Phoning friends | | | | | |
| Single | 50 | 5.02 | 1.42 | | |
| Married | 137 | 4.87 | 1.57 | .245 | .783 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 23 | 4.78 | 1.62 | | |
| Going to parties/dancing | | | | | |
| Single | 50 | 3.64 | 1.71 | | |
| Married | 137 | 3.07 | 1.89 | 2.15 | .119 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 23 | 2.87 | 1.84 | | |
| Playing cards or boardgames | | | | | |
| Single | 50 | 2.52 ^{a, b} | 1.59 | | |
| Married | 137 | 3.14 ^a | 1.71 | 5.23 | .006 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 23 | 2.13 ^b | 1.39 | | |
| Volunteering | | | | | |
| Single | 50 | 3.50 | 1.81 | | |
| Married | 137 | 4.17 | 1.82 | 3.33 | .038* |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 23 | 3.48 | 1.68 | | |
| Active in service clubs | | | | | |
| Single | 50 | 2.32 ^{a, b} | 1.68 | | |
| Married | 137 | 2.55 ^a | 1.79 | 4.25 | .016 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 23 | 1.43 ^b | 0.99 | | |
| Social activities (category) | | | | | |
| Single | 50 | 3.76 ^{a, b} | 0.88 | | |
| Married | 137 | 3.84 ^a | 0.98 | 3.00 | .052 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 23 | 3.32 ^b | 0.87 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05). * indicates notable result based on Tukey HSD post hoc test.

MEAN=5.34), telephoning friends (average MEAN=4.90), and going to parties or dancing (average MEAN=3.18), they differed significantly in the other social activities. For example,

the married group (MEAN=3.14; SD=1.71) placed significantly more importance on playing cards or board games than the SWD group (MEAN=2.13; SD=1.39) ($t_{2,207}=5.23$; $p=.006$). It was the married group that also placed a significantly higher level of importance on volunteering than the single group, and placed more importance on being active in service clubs than the SWD group. The level of importance placed on these social activities by the married group is likely a reflection of having children in the household, and the activities and community volunteering that often is associated as a result. Overall the married group (overall MEAN=3.84; SD=0.98) valued social activity on a significantly higher basis than the SWD group (overall MEAN=3.32; SD=0.87), while the single group valued social activities at almost the same level as the married group (overall MEAN=3.76; SD=0.88) ($t_{2,207}=3.00$; $p=.052$) (see Table 32).

Of interest is that while significant differences occurred between the marital status groups for activities like visiting or entertaining friends and going to parties or dancing, these groups valued the activities quite similarly. In fact, more value or importance was placed by married, than by single or SWD respondents, on those activities that were lower in participation on an average monthly basis (playing cards or board games, volunteering, and being active in service clubs) indicating a strong inherent leisure value to respondents lifestyles, even though participation is infrequent (see Table 32).

The results in outdoor leisure activity participation revealed a highly significant difference in the activity of gardening between those who were married and those who were single ($F_{2,209}=8.16$; $p<.001$) (see Table 33). It was the married group that had the highest average monthly rate of participation (MEAN=9.04; SD=11.50), almost three times that compared with singles (MEAN=3.25; SD=5.70) or the SWD group (MEAN=3.05; SD=4.25)

who were quite similar in their levels of gardening. Gardening may be viewed as part of the role of “keeping a house” and appears to be a norm for most of those that are married. It is also a highly therapeutic activity and may offer those much-needed breaks to parents dealing with raising children. The garden or backyard typically serves as the outdoor play area for children in a family, especially at a young age, and it is reasonable to think that married respondents with children would spend effort in creating an attractive and safe play space. For those without children (51.9 % of households), gardening may just involve being

Table 33

Differences in average monthly *outdoor* leisure participation by marital status (n=212).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | F | p |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------|------|-------|---|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Going on day outings/picnics | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 3.90 | 5.49 | | | |
| Married | 142 | 3.00 | 4.41 | 1.79 | .170 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 1.73 | 2.25 | | | |
| Gardening | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 3.25 ^a | 5.70 | | | |
| Married | 142 | 9.04 ^b | 11.50 | 8.16 | <.001 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 3.05 ^a | 4.25 | | | |
| Outdoor activities/camping | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 3.13 | 3.51 | | | |
| Married | 142 | 2.89 | 4.33 | 1.07 | .345 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 4.32 | 5.35 | | | |
| Motorized outdoor activity | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 0.46 | 0.90 | | | |
| Married | 142 | 0.61 | 2.53 | .513 | .599 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 0.14 | 0.35 | | | |
| Outdoor activities (category) | | | | | | |
| Single | 48 | 2.68 | 2.52 | | | |
| Married | 142 | 3.88 | 3.61 | 3.88 | .022 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 22 | 2.31 | 2.38 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

outdoors and creating an attractive space to relax in or for entertaining one's friends (see Table 33).

While not statistically significant, another interesting result is that the SWD respondents were considerably lower in their average monthly participation in going on day outings or picnics than either the singles or married group (MEAN=1.73; SD=2.25). Yet, when it came to outdoor activities/camping, they were slightly higher than the single or married respondents (MEAN=4.32; SD=5.35) (see Table 33). It may be that camping offers a higher or preferable challenge to going on picnics for those who are SWD, and this may be examined later.

In comparing the value or importance placed on outdoor leisure activities to participation, a couple of activities were distinguished by differences between the marital status groups (see Table 34). The married group (MEAN 4.83; SD=1.84) placed a substantially higher value on gardening than either the singles (MEAN=2.84; SD=1.86) or the SWD group (MEAN=2.53; SD=1.87) ($t_{2,203}=29.34$; $p<.001$). This significant difference is supported by the rates of participation displayed by the married group, which were significantly higher than either of the other groups (see Table 33). Those results show the married group participating in gardening about 9 times per month on average, or about three times more than the other two groups.

On the other hand, the single group (MEAN=2.20; SD=1.65) placed a significantly higher value or importance on motorized outdoor activity compared to the married group (MEAN=1.61; SD=1.23) ($t_{2,203}=4.28$; $p=.015$). This was not supported by earlier participation results (see Table 33) which showed the married group actually having slightly higher average monthly participation. This could be because the married group may have

more discretionary income, or that motorized outdoor activity, although low in participation rate, might be an opportunity for children's activity. The single group obviously places a higher value on this type of activity, but may be constrained by costs, etc., and is not able to participate as much as they would like. Overall the married group valued outdoor activity significantly more than the SWD group ($t_{2,203}=5.03$; $p=.007$), and placed slightly higher importance on this type of activity than the singles (see Table 34).

Table 34

Differences in *importance of outdoor leisure* activity to lifestyle by marital status (n=205).

| Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | | |
|--|----------|---------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------|
| Leisure activity / Groups | n | Mean | SD | F | p |
| Going on day outings/picnics | | | | | |
| Single | 50 | 4.14 | 1.74 | | |
| Married | 137 | 4.23 | 1.64 | 1.68 | .189 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 19 | 3.47 | 1.95 | | |
| Gardening | | | | | |
| Single | 50 | 2.84 ^a | 1.86 | | |
| Married | 137 | 4.83 ^b | 1.84 | 29.34 | <.001 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 19 | 2.53 ^a | 1.87 | | |
| Outdoor activities/camping | | | | | |
| Single | 50 | 4.24 | 1.86 | | |
| Married | 137 | 4.19 | 1.76 | .086 | .917 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 19 | 4.37 | 2.01 | | |
| Motorized outdoor activity | | | | | |
| Single | 50 | 2.20 ^a | 1.65 | | |
| Married | 137 | 1.61 ^b | 1.23 | 4.23 | .015 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 19 | 1.42 ^{a,b} | 0.90 | | |
| Outdoor activities (category) | | | | | |
| Single | 50 | 3.36 ^{a,b} | 1.23 | | |
| Married | 137 | 3.72 ^b | 1.06 | 5.03 | .007 |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 19 | 2.95 ^a | 1.19 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p<.05$).

In essence, for those who are single, going to the movies, visiting and entertaining friends, going to parties and dancing, and outdoor activities were valued and important activities in their leisure lifestyles. For respondents who are married, reading, gardening and outdoor activities were important and popular leisure choices, and for the SWD group, reading, visiting and entertaining friends, and outdoor activities in general were more valued and popular choices.

Leisure participation in cultural, personal growth, travel and tourism, etc., leisure activities was of similar levels and reasonably consistent, and produced no statistically significant differences between either single, married or SWD respondents. Of interest, it was shown that single respondents (MEAN=2.23; SD=5.00) were spectators at sports events three times more than those SWD (MEAN=0.59; SD=1.33), and considerably higher than those who were married (MEAN=1.63; SD=4.71). Also, on an average monthly basis, singles (MEAN=1.53; SD=2.56) were involved in cultural activities almost twice as much as the SWD group (MEAN=0.77; SD=1.09).

Again, though not statistically significant, SWD respondents had higher average monthly levels of spiritual activity (MEAN=9.41; SD=12.72) when compared to those who were married (MEAN=7.37; SD=11.05) or single (MEAN=6.65; SD=9.67). This may be a reflection of the personal trauma and stresses endured as a result of specific life events (marital break-up or the death of a spouse). Overall, the three marital status groups took part in personal growth activities slightly more than once a week in an average month.

Much like their leisure participation rates, all three marital status groups (single, married, or SWD) were reasonably consistent and similar in the value or importance they placed on activities in the cultural category (overall MEAN=2.89; SD=1.37), personal

growth activities (overall MEAN=4.32; SD=1.60), travel and tourism activity (overall MEAN=5.06; SD=1.40), and in activities like playing team sports (average MEAN=2.45), doing individual sports (average MEAN=3.04), doing personal fitness (average MEAN=5.25), and doing creative hobbies and crafts (average MEAN=4.23).

In summary, it appears as if some mass media, social and outdoor oriented leisure activities showed significant differences between the marital status groups. For example, the activity of gardening produced the strongest result ($F_{2,203}=29.34$; $p<.001$), with the married group placing a significantly higher value on this activity compared to the other two groups. As noted earlier, this value or importance may be due to factors such as owning a home and feeling responsible for external appearances, or for creating a safe play environment for children, or just for personal therapeutic value as a fulfilling leisure activity.

Differences in leisure participation and value of leisure activity by household income.

The varying levels of combined household income were not associated with many significant differences in leisure participation. Again, from a list of 25 activities, only four produced significant results and out of those four only gardening represented reasonably high levels of participation (over 9 times per month on average). Generally speaking, the majority of significant differences in leisure activity appeared between the lowest income group, and the other income groups. In examining this variable, the levels of income were split into four categories as follows: lowest household income (from 0\$ to \$39,999); lower middle (from \$40,000 to \$69,999); upper middle (from \$70,000 to \$99,999); and highest (\$100,000 and over). It is difficult to attach other descriptors to these levels because several factors are involved. We do not know whether one or both spouses, or other family members are

working to produce this income, and are only able to assume this is the case based on the census data previously reported. Also, as shown with the “Financial Circumstances” variable, the level of household income is not necessarily an indicator of financial security nor of well-being, and some individuals with low income may actually report a high level of satisfaction, and vice versa.

When the four household income groups were examined to see if they differed on the level of importance placed on leisure activity some significant results were found. The results indicated a definite unity amongst the highest three income groups versus the lowest income group (\$0 to \$39,999) in terms of the value or importance placed on certain leisure activities in their lives. As with leisure participation by these groups, a limited number (only four) of the 25 activities contained in the study showed significant differences.

Though none of the leisure activities in the mass media leisure category yielded significant differences between the income groups, all four groups were involved in mass media leisure activity on average per month slightly more than every other day (overall MEAN=17.89; SD=6.69). Some activities, like watching TV or videos and computer use, are virtually a daily activity, regardless of the level of combined household income.

Similarly, the four income groups were reasonably consistent in the value or level of importance placed on mass media activities in their leisure. While not statistically significant, going to the movies (overall MEAN=2.42), using the Internet or computers (overall MEAN=3.52), and watching TV or videos (overall MEAN=3.80) were all valued considerably lower than reading books, magazines or newspapers (overall MEAN=5.64), and listening to music (overall MEAN=5.31) by all four income groups. Of interest, is that even though average monthly participation in such activities as watching TV or videos, and

computer use is high, the value or importance people place on these activities is considerably less in comparison to reading or listening to music. In contrast, while going to movies is valued slightly lower in comparison to other mass media activities, average monthly participation in going to movies is also low compared to participation levels in the same category. This may not be unusual, as for most people, unless one was a film enthusiast, going to the movies once a month might be considered regular participation.

The social activity category, on the other hand, revealed some significant differences between the household income groups in average monthly participation (see Table 35). For example, the lowest income group had the highest average monthly rate of participation for going to parties or dancing, (MEAN=3.37; SD=5.21) and differed significantly from the upper middle income group (MEAN=1.22; SD=1.72) and the highest income group (MEAN=1.51; SD=1.65) ($F_{3,187}=4.48$; $p=.005$). This result supports the notion that this income group is also young and single. These respondents often do not have much income, yet take part in such social activities as parties and dancing frequently. The notable result reported with playing cards or board games indicated a difference between the lowest income group (MEAN=3.78; SD=6.21) and the highest income group (MEAN=1.57; SD=2.50) ($F_{3,187}=2.65$; $p=.050$). This result might indicate that those families which have the highest household income may not have the time nor energy to spend playing cards or board games, perhaps because both spouses are working long, stressful hours to earn this income (see Table 35). While not statistically significant, the overall social leisure category results shows that the two lower income groups take part in more socially-oriented leisure than the higher two income groups. Even in the activity of visiting or entertaining friends, where the group differences are not statistically significant, one can see a distinct pattern with highest

Table 35

Differences in average monthly *social* leisure participation by household income (n=190).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | <u>F</u> | <u>p</u> |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------|------|----------|----------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Visiting or entertaining friends | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 46 | 9.11 | 7.16 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 45 | 8.73 | 7.44 | 2.32 | .077 | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 50 | 7.80 | 7.48 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 49 | 5.78 | 4.68 | | | |
| Phoning friends | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 46 | 17.46 | 16.10 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 45 | 16.80 | 13.69 | 1.77 | .150 | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 50 | 12.34 | 13.84 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 49 | 12.18 | 14.34 | | | |
| Going to parties/dancing | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 46 | 3.37 ^a | 5.21 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 45 | 2.00 ^{a, b} | 2.52 | 4.48 | .005 | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 50 | 1.22 ^b | 1.74 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 49 | 1.51 ^b | 1.65 | | | |
| Playing cards or boardgames | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 46 | 1.93 ^{a, b} | 4.32 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 45 | 3.78 ^a | 6.21 | 2.65 | .050* | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 50 | 1.88 ^{a, b} | 2.91 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 49 | 1.57 ^b | 2.50 | | | |
| Volunteering | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 46 | 3.39 | 11.92 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 45 | 4.71 | 13.57 | .563 | .640 | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 50 | 2.58 | 5.86 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 49 | 4.88 | 8.08 | | | |
| Active in service clubs | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 46 | 1.50 | 7.41 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 45 | 0.36 | 1.32 | .667 | .573 | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 50 | 1.30 | 5.88 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 49 | 1.94 | 5.62 | | | |
| Social activities (category) | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 46 | 6.13 | 6.12 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 45 | 6.06 | 4.61 | 1.48 | .221 | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 50 | 4.52 | 5.08 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 49 | 4.64 | 3.78 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05). * indicates notable result.

participation occurring in the lowest income group to lowest participation in the highest income group (see Table 35).

All four income groups place a similarly consistent level of importance or value on social activities and, like their participation, no significant differences between the groups was shown. It may be stated, however, that some activities like being active in service clubs (overall MEAN=2.40) and playing cards or board games (overall MEAN=2.92) were valued considerably less than social activities like visiting or entertaining friends (average MEAN=5.33) or telephoning friends (average MEAN=4.92). These levels of importance are reflected by the higher participation rates in these activities (see Table 31), so this result is understandable.

In the outdoor leisure activity category, the differences between the income groups was not remarkable but showed consistent participation. Although just outside the acceptable confidence limits, a notable difference between income groups was shown in the activity of gardening ($F_{3,187}=2.54$; $p=.058$) (see Table 36). The lower middle income group (incomes of \$40 - \$69K; MEAN=8.18; SD=7.63), the upper middle income group (incomes of \$70 - \$99K; MEAN=9.26; SD=15.32), and the highest income group with incomes over \$100K (MEAN=7.47; SD=8.18) all had significantly higher average monthly levels of gardening activity than the lowest household income group (incomes of \$0 - \$39K; MEAN=3.72; SD=7.74). These higher income groups worked in their gardens on average about twice a week. It is plausible that until one (or a couple) becomes established and owns property with a suitable yard, gardening is not a viable leisure activity. Certainly higher levels of combined household income are associated with this.

Also, varying levels of household income appear to make a difference in the level of importance or value placed on outdoor leisure activities (see Table 37). Here, similar to some

of the previous analyses, the value or importance placed on gardening was significantly different between the lowest household income group (MEAN=2.56; SD=1.82) and the lower

Table 36

Differences in average monthly *outdoor* leisure participation by household income (n=190).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | F | p |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------|------|---|-------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Going on day outings/picnics | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 46 | 2.80 | 4.87 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 45 | 3.04 | 2.97 | | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 50 | 2.84 | 4.08 | .114 | | .952 |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 49 | 3.29 | 5.76 | | | |
| Gardening | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 46 | 3.72 ^a | 7.74 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 45 | 8.18 ^{a, b} | 7.63 | | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 50 | 9.26 ^b | 15.32 | 2.54 | | .058* |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 49 | 7.47 ^{a, b} | 8.18 | | | |
| Outdoor activities/camping | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 46 | 4.04 | 6.23 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 45 | 3.76 | 4.33 | | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 50 | 2.32 | 3.16 | 1.60 | | .191 |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 49 | 2.78 | 3.51 | | | |
| Motorized outdoor activity | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 46 | 0.96 | 3.29 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 45 | 0.44 | 1.39 | | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 50 | 0.04 | 0.28 | 1.78 | | .152 |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 49 | 0.88 | 2.65 | | | |
| Outdoor activities (category) | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 46 | 2.88 | 3.71 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 45 | 3.86 | 2.60 | | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 50 | 3.62 | 4.23 | .701 | | .552 |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 49 | 3.60 | 2.78 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

middle income group (MEAN=4.66; SD=1.90); the upper middle income group

(MEAN=4.80; SD=2.06); and the highest income group (MEAN=4.26; SD=1.55)

($t_{3,184}=14.37$; $p<.001$), suggesting that income is a significant factor in pursuing this activity.

Overall, the lowest income group (overall MEAN=3.01; SD=1.18) differed significantly in the value or importance they attached to outdoor leisure activities as a category ($t_{3,184}=4.55$; $p=.004$) compared to the higher income groups (see Table 37). Other

Table 37
Differences in *importance of outdoor leisure* activity to lifestyle by household income (n=188).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | <u>F</u> | <u>p</u> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|------|-------|----------|----------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Going on day outings/picnics | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 45 | 3.71 | 1.87 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 47 | 4.15 | 1.77 | 1.31 | .271 | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 49 | 4.33 | 1.60 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 47 | 4.32 | 1.59 | | | |
| Gardening | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 45 | 2.56 ^a | 1.82 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 47 | 4.66 ^b | 1.90 | 14.37 | <.001 | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 49 | 4.80 ^b | 2.06 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 47 | 4.66 ^b | 1.88 | | | |
| Outdoor activities/camping | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 45 | 4.18 | 2.08 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 47 | 4.17 | 1.91 | .046 | .987 | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 49 | 4.29 | 1.80 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 47 | 4.26 | 1.55 | | | |
| Motorized outdoor activity | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 45 | 1.67 | 1.30 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 47 | 2.00 | 1.52 | 2.37 | .072 | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 49 | 1.33 | 0.80 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 47 | 1.85 | 1.50 | | | |
| Outdoor activities (category) | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 45 | 3.03 ^a | 1.18 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 47 | 3.74 ^b | 1.26 | 4.55 | .004 | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 49 | 3.68 ^b | 1.02 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 47 | 3.77 ^b | 1.02 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p<.05$).

than gardening, the other outdoor activities listed involve special effort to go to a park or in the case of urban dwellers, a trip to a rural or wilderness area where such activities may take place. Obviously for those with reduced income this becomes a constraint. Even an activity

like gardening is likely not possible if one is renting an apartment or home and is not the owner of the property.

It was thought that combined household income would affect participation in cultural activities. Since an activity like going to the theatre or concerts involves greater expense, it was felt that those with higher income would take part more. This was not supported by the results which showed no group differences and very consistent participation, suggesting income level (or level of affluence) does not affect participation in cultural activities like spectating at sports events or going to concerts or the theatre.

Likewise, the four income groups did not differ significantly in the value or importance they placed on cultural activity, and showed very similar comparisons for these cultural leisure activities. The results support the notion that income is not a determining factor in cultural leisure participation nor the value placed on it in one's leisure lifestyle.

There was reasonably consistent average monthly participation between the four household income groups in personal growth leisure activity, and in leisure activities like playing team sports, doing individual sports, doing personal fitness, and doing creative hobbies and crafts, but no significant or noteworthy differences were shown.

On the other hand, the value or importance placed on taking interest courses was significantly different for the lowest income group (MEAN=3.78; SD=2.12) in comparison to the lower middle income group (MEAN=4.72; SD=1.58), the upper middle income group (MEAN=4.81; SD=1.51) and the highest income group (MEAN=4.73; SD=1.40) ($t_{3,191}=4.01$; $p=.009$) (see Table 38). These results reveal that even though funds may be short, the interest, desire or value placed in this activity (e.g., of wanting to improve oneself by taking courses) is still present in the lowest income group, but those in the higher incomes groups

Table 38

Differences in *importance of personal growth leisure* activity to lifestyle by household income (n=195).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------|------|------|------|
| | n | Mean | SD | F | p |
| Spiritual activity | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 45 | 4.47 | 2.20 | .702 | .552 |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 50 | 4.16 | 2.41 | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 52 | 3.85 | 2.23 | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 48 | 3.96 | 2.09 | | |
| Taking interest courses | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 45 | 3.78 ^a | 2.12 | 4.01 | .009 |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 50 | 4.72 ^b | 1.58 | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 52 | 4.81 ^b | 1.51 | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 48 | 4.73 ^b | 1.40 | | |
| Personal growth activities (cat.) | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 45 | 4.12 | 1.72 | .330 | .804 |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 50 | 4.44 | 1.54 | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 52 | 4.33 | 1.57 | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 48 | 4.34 | 1.54 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p < .05$).

obviously value such activity more, perhaps as a tool to assist them in “getting ahead” in their work environment. All four groups placed a reasonably equal level of importance on spiritual activity (overall MEAN=4.10), and likewise the personal growth activity category overall, showed no group differences (see Table 38).

Finally, although the frequency for having short holidays or weekend getaways is generally low in a given month, a significant difference was reported between those earning \$40 to \$69K per year and those earning \$70 to \$99K per year ($F_{3,187}=3.84$; $p=.011$) (see Table 39). The latter group reported the lowest rate of taking short holidays/weekend getaways (MEAN=0.76; SD=1.13).

Here again, it looks like the respondents in this income group may be at the busiest point in their lives, and may not have the time nor energy to take part in this activity as much

as they would like to. This is supported further in the discussion on levels of importance placed on this type of leisure activity where this income group actually places a higher level of importance on taking short holidays yet fails, or is unable to act on this.

Activities in the travel and tourism category of leisure activity were valued reasonably highly by all four income groups, although significant differences were shown in both travelling to visit friends or family, and in having short holidays or getaways (see Table 40). The lowest income group figured prominently again in both activities, differing significantly from the other

Table 39

Differences in average monthly *travel and tourism* leisure participation by household income (n=190).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | F | p |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Travelling to visit friends/family | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 46 | 4.11 | 5.12 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 45 | 4.09 | 4.30 | | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 50 | 3.22 | 3.27 | .433 | | .730 |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 49 | 3.94 | 4.95 | | | |
| Having short holidays/getaways | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 46 | 1.09 ^{a, b} | 1.53 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 45 | 1.80 ^a | 2.10 | | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 50 | 0.76 ^b | 1.13 | 3.84 | | .011 |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 49 | 1.51 ^{a, b} | 1.60 | | | |
| Travel and tourism (category) | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 46 | 2.60 | 2.73 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 45 | 2.94 | 2.79 | | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 50 | 1.99 | 1.71 | 1.34 | | .262 |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 49 | 2.72 | 2.50 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

groups. For example, the upper middle income group (MEAN=5.57; SD=1.51) placed a much higher level of importance on travelling to visit friends or family than the lowest income group (MEAN=4.63; SD=2.04) ($t_{3,198}=3.50$; $p=.017$). The lower middle income group and the highest income group were very similar in their value rating but still slightly higher than the lowest income group. The activity of taking short holidays or weekend getaways shows a steady increase in importance from lowest income group (MEAN=4.10; SD=2.19) to the highest (MEAN=5.25; SD=1.14). The lowest income group was significantly different from both the upper middle income group (MEAN=5.06; SD=1.62) and the highest group ($t_{3,198}=4.12$; $p=.007$), suggesting, perhaps, as work pressures increase, the value these income earners put on this activity increases (see Table 40).

Table 40

Differences in *importance of travel and tourism leisure* activity to lifestyle by household income (n=202).

| Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Leisure activity / Groups | n | Mean | SD | F | p |
| Travelling to visit friends/family | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 48 | 4.63 ^a | 2.04 | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 52 | 5.37 ^{a, b} | 1.39 | 3.50 | .017 |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 54 | 5.57 ^a | 1.51 | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 48 | 5.35 ^{a, b} | 1.21 | | |
| Having short holidays/getaways | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 48 | 4.10 ^a | 2.19 | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 52 | 4.83 ^{a, b} | 1.73 | 4.12 | .007 |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 54 | 5.06 ^b | 1.62 | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 48 | 5.25 ^b | 1.14 | | |
| Travel and tourism (category) | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 48 | 4.36 ^a | 1.83 | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 52 | 5.10 ^b | 1.32 | 5.04 | .002 |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 54 | 5.32 ^b | 1.40 | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 48 | 5.30 ^b | 0.87 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p<.05$).

Overall the activities in the travel and tourism leisure category were valued significantly higher by all three higher income groups in comparison to the lowest income group ($t_{3,198}=5.04$; $p=.002$), but interestingly this is not supported by the earlier participation results.

Differences in leisure participation and value of leisure activity by perceived financial circumstance.

The relative meaning of household income is enhanced by respondent perceptions of their level personal/household finances. When asked to describe how they felt about their level of combined household income (i.e., their perceived financial circumstance), only a small number ($n=17$; 7.4%) felt their income represented “barely enough to get by.” Also, a similarly small number ($n=26$; 11.3%) felt they had “enough to get by.” The majority of the respondents fell within the next two categories, where 30.9% ($n=71$) felt their level of income represented “a little left over,” and 41.3% ($n=95$) of the respondents reported they felt “quite comfortable” about their household income. On the top end of the scale, 9.1% ($n=21$) reported feeling they had “all that I need and more” about their level of household income. These five categories of financial circumstance were reclassified/reorganized into three categories. The first two categories of respondents were combined to create a category called “surviving financially” ($n=43$; 18.7%). The middle category of respondents, those describing their financial circumstance as “a little left over,” was left on its own and called “some discretionary” ($n=71$; 30.9%) while the last two categories of respondents were combined to create a category called “comfortable plus” ($n=116$; 50.4%). The perceptions of the sample indicate that just over 50% of respondents feel financially well off and comfortable with their level of affluence.

With the exception of a notable result in the social activities category, the following analysis did not find any significant differences between these respondent groups and their average monthly levels of leisure activity participation. The three financial circumstance groups were highly consistent in their average monthly participation levels, and showed very similar patterns. If one were to equate increasing levels of household income with increased positive feeling about personal financial circumstance (e.g., those in the lowest income category equate their financial circumstance as ‘surviving financially,’ and those in the highest income category equate their financial circumstance as ‘comfortable plus’), these results virtually mirror the results of the combined household income leisure participation rates found earlier.

A contingency table analysis (Pearson Chi Square) was completed to examine if this relationship existed and was valid (see Table 41). Indeed, the results were significant and support the assertion that as reported household income increases, respondents also perceived their financial circumstance as increasing from surviving financially to reaching comfortable plus ($\chi^2=34.08$, $df=6$, $p<.001$). While it could be that those in the high income group might report feeling they were only surviving financially, regardless of the fact they might have income over \$100K, the results showed that this was not the case, and a positive correlation between these two variables exists (see Table 41).

Outside of only a few, the analysis did not find any statistically significant differences between these respondent groups in the value or importance they placed on leisure activities in the variety of categories in this study. The relationship between financial circumstance and the importance or value respondents place on certain leisure activities is practically identical to the level of importance or value the combined household income groups place on these.

Table 41

Difference in perceived financial circumstances
by combined household income (n=209).

| Household income category | Perceived financial circumstances | | | Total |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------|
| | Surviving financially | Some discretionary | Comfortable plus | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39K | 19 (38.0) ^a | 18 (36.0) | 13 (26.0) | 50 (100) |
| Lower middle income - \$40K to \$69K | 14 (25.9) | 20 (37.0) | 20 (37.0) | 54 (100) |
| Upper middle income - \$70K to \$99K | 8 (14.8) | 17 (31.5) | 29 (53.7) | 54 (100) |
| Highest income - \$100K + | 1 (2.0) | 12 (23.5) | 38 (74.5) | 51 (100) |
| Total | 42 (20.1) | 67 (32.1) | 100 (47.8) | 209 (100) |

^a percentages shown in parentheses

$$\chi^2 = 34.08, df=6, p < .001$$

One small difference may be seen in the social leisure activity of being active in service clubs (Table 42), where those respondents feeling their level of income reflected “some discretionary” income (MEAN=2.48; SD=8.92), were significantly different from those who felt they were surviving financially (MEAN=0.38; SD=1.10), or felt themselves in the comfortable plus category (MEAN=0.64; SD=1.93) ($F_{2,206}=3.06$; $p=.049$). Based on the contingency table results mentioned previously (see Table 41), respondents in the lower middle income or the upper middle income groups are those that report “some discretionary” income, and are significantly different from either the lowest income group or the highest income group. Also, for comparison, Table 35 shows average monthly participation for household income groups in this same category.

While not statistically significant, those reporting some discretionary income (MEAN=8.57; SD=13.80) took part in gardening almost 50% more on an average monthly basis than those in the lowest income category (MEAN=5.80; SD=7.73). This is consistent

Table 42

Differences in *social leisure* activity to lifestyle by perceived financial circumstance (n=209).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | F | p |
|---|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------|---|--------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Visiting or entertaining friends | | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 40 | 7.35 | 7.01 | | | |
| Some discretionary income | 67 | 8.99 | 7.74 | .998 | | .370 |
| Comfortable plus | 102 | 7.58 | 6.64 | | | |
| Phoning friends | | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 40 | 14.95 | 14.30 | | | |
| Some discretionary income | 67 | 17.37 | 18.62 | 2.41 | | .092 |
| Comfortable plus | 102 | 12.53 | 9.93 | | | |
| Going to parties/dancing | | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 40 | 1.78 | 2.97 | | | |
| Some discretionary income | 67 | 2.48 | 4.20 | 1.05 | | .350 |
| Comfortable plus | 102 | 1.80 | 2.35 | | | |
| Playing cards or boardgames | | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 40 | 1.95 | 3.90 | | | |
| Some discretionary income | 67 | 1.96 | 3.89 | .631 | | .533 |
| Comfortable plus | 102 | 2.63 | 4.76 | | | |
| Volunteering | | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 40 | 3.90 | 14.14 | | | |
| Some discretionary income | 67 | 4.45 | 11.78 | .399 | | .671 |
| Comfortable plus | 102 | 3.10 | 5.12 | | | |
| Active in service clubs | | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 40 | 0.38 | 1.10 | | | |
| Some discretionary income | 67 | 2.48 | 8.92 | 3.06 | | .049* |
| Comfortable plus | 102 | 0.64 | 1.93 | | | |
| Social activities (category) | | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 40 | 5.05 | 4.79 | | | |
| Some discretionary income | 67 | 6.29 | 6.56 | 2.23 | | .110 |
| Comfortable plus | 102 | 4.71 | 3.16 | | | |

* indicates notable result.

No significant differences based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

with other results and suggests that gardening requires some financial investment as well as physical property (land) to do, which those in the lowest income category typically lack.

In travel and tourism leisure activity both the “some discretionary” income group (MEAN=4.04; SD=4.56) and the “comfortable plus” income group (MEAN=4.02; SD=4.34) traveled to visit friends and family about 50% more in an average month than the “surviving financially” group (MEAN=2.63; SD=3.77), although this was not a statistically significant difference. Again, this may be indicative of the funds and other physical resources (e.g., vehicles) required to do this regularly.

On the other hand, when the three financial circumstance groups were compared for differences in the level of importance or value they placed on travel and tourism within their

Table 43

Differences in *importance of travel and tourism leisure* activity to lifestyle by perceived financial circumstance (n=216).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | F | p |
|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------|------|-------------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | |
| Travelling to visit friends/family | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 43 | 4.74 ^a | 1.93 | 3.10 | .047 |
| Some discretionary income | 67 | 5.34 ^{a, b} | 1.45 | | |
| Comfortable plus | 106 | 5.42 ^b | 1.42 | | |
| Having short holidays/getaways | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 43 | 4.84 | 1.79 | .237 | .789 |
| Some discretionary income | 67 | 4.73 | 1.84 | | |
| Comfortable plus | 106 | 4.92 | 1.59 | | |
| Travel and tourism (category) | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 43 | 4.79 | 1.61 | 1.13 | .325 |
| Some discretionary income | 67 | 5.04 | 1.35 | | |
| Comfortable plus | 106 | 5.17 | 1.34 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

leisure, the “comfortable plus” group (MEAN=5.42; SD=1.42) placed significantly higher value on the activity of travelling to visit friends or family than the “surviving financially” group (MEAN=4.74; SD=1.93) ($F_{2,213}=3.10$; $p=.047$) (see Table 43).

This higher value on travelling and tourism may be indicative of increased work pressures felt by those earning higher incomes, and as a result, perhaps an increased a desire or need to get away. Generally all three groups valued visiting friends or family slightly higher than just getting away for short holidays or weekend getaways (average MEAN=4.84) (see Table 43).

In summary, with the exception of travelling to visit friends or family, the value or level of importance placed on leisure activity does not seem to be affected by perceptions of financial circumstance within the respondent’s lives. The value given these leisure activities overall was virtually the same as that given by the combined household income groups reported earlier.

Differences in leisure participation and value of leisure activity by employment status.

When respondents in the categories of employed, full-time homemaker, and retired, were examined on a range of leisure activities provided in the study, only six activities produced significant differences between the three groups. From the results it may be seen that many of the differences were between the retired group and those who were either employed or full-time homemakers. In most cases, with the exceptions being telephoning friends and going on day outings or picnics, the retired group had higher average levels of monthly participation. In general, while monthly participation rates in many of the described activities appear low, they are reasonable given the activity they represent.

As with previous analyses, there appeared to be more similarities and consistency between the employment status groups in the value or importance they placed on leisure activity than difference, and few significant or noteworthy relationships were revealed.

For example, in the mass media category of leisure activity it may be seen that those who were retired (MEAN=30.60; SD=15.09) or full-time homemakers (MEAN=29.78; SD=15.79) read almost every day, considerably more on average during the month in comparison to those who were employed (MEAN=23.57; SD=11.20) ($F_{2,186}=4.10$; $p=.018$) (see Table 44). Although this result is significant, Tukey HSD post hoc analysis showed no significant difference between these groups. While participation in other mass media-type leisure activity was reasonably consistent for the three employment status groups, a notable difference is shown between the groups in going to movies, where employed respondents have slightly higher participation than the other two groups. Although not statistically significant, a distinct pattern is shown in the average monthly level of using the Internet/computers between the retired group (MEAN=7.80; SD=10.47), the employed group (MEAN=15.97; SD=18.58), and the full-time homemakers (MEAN=12.59; SD=12.20). Those who are employed use the Internet/computers almost twice as much on an average monthly basis compared to the retired group. This may indicate that those who are employed bring work home with them and perhaps use their computers/Internet at home on work tasks. In the case of the retired respondents or full-time homemakers, it may be safe to assume that their use is at home and related more to personal use than professional. As can be seen, the retired group is shown to have much lower desire to use the Internet/computers, or as is the case with many people in that age category, their experience and confidence in using this medium is much lower than those who are younger and have grown up using the

Table 44

Differences in average monthly *mass media* leisure participation by employment status (n=190).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | F | p |
|---|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------|-------------------------|---|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Watching TV/Videos | | | | | | |
| Employed | 143 | 23.03 | 10.67 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 25.67 | 11.75 | .720 | .488 | |
| Retired | 20 | 22.70 | 10.28 | | | |
| Reading books, magazines, etc. | | | | | | |
| Employed | 143 | 23.57 | 11.20 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 29.78 | 15.79 | 4.10 | .018* | |
| Retired | 20 | 30.60 | 15.09 | | | |
| Going to movies | | | | | | |
| Employed | 143 | 0.96 | 1.28 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 0.41 | 0.57 | 2.82 | .062^a | |
| Retired | 20 | 0.65 | 0.88 | | | |
| Using the internet/computer | | | | | | |
| Employed | 143 | 15.97 | 18.58 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 12.59 | 12.20 | 2.20 | .113 | |
| Retired | 20 | 7.80 | 10.47 | | | |
| Listening to music | | | | | | |
| Employed | 143 | 25.42 | 17.02 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 21.59 | 13.08 | .653 | .522 | |
| Retired | 20 | 25.55 | 13.43 | | | |
| Mass media activities (category) | | | | | | |
| Employed | 143 | 17.89 | 7.02 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 18.01 | 5.74 | .038 | .963 | |
| Retired | 20 | 17.46 | 6.12 | | | |

* No group differences exist based on Tukey HSD post hoc analysis (p<.05). ^a indicates notable result.

Internet/computers virtually every day (see Table 44).

As far as valuing mass media leisure activity, the employment status groups rated reading books, magazines, and newspapers (average MEAN=5.63), listening to music (overall MEAN=5.30), visiting and entertaining friends (overall MEAN=5.33), doing personal fitness (overall MEAN=5.27), and travelling to visit friends and relatives (overall MEAN=5.28) equally highly in value or importance to their lifestyles (see Table 45).

Table 45

Differences in *importance of mass media leisure* activity to lifestyle by employment status (n=198).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | F | p |
|---|-------------------------------------|------|------|-------------|--------------|---|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Watching TV/Videos | | | | | | |
| Employed | 143 | 3.70 | 1.57 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 4.22 | 1.76 | 2.23 | .111 | |
| Retired | 20 | 3.27 | 1.49 | | | |
| Reading books, magazines, etc. | | | | | | |
| Employed | 143 | 5.53 | 1.38 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 5.96 | 1.29 | 1.52 | .222 | |
| Retired | 20 | 5.86 | 1.39 | | | |
| Going to movies | | | | | | |
| Employed | 143 | 2.56 | 1.47 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 1.93 | 1.41 | 3.21 | .043* | |
| Retired | 20 | 2.00 | 1.23 | | | |
| Using the internet/computer | | | | | | |
| Employed | 143 | 3.60 | 1.84 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 3.41 | 2.21 | 2.05 | .131 | |
| Retired | 20 | 2.73 | 1.83 | | | |
| Listening to music | | | | | | |
| Employed | 143 | 5.30 | 1.38 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 5.22 | 1.45 | .175 | .840 | |
| Retired | 20 | 5.45 | 1.50 | | | |
| Mass media activities (category) | | | | | | |
| Employed | 143 | 4.14 | 0.83 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 4.15 | 0.88 | 1.01 | .365 | |
| Retired | 20 | 3.86 | 0.99 | | | |

* No group differences based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p < .05$).

While reading and listening to music were two mass media leisure activities that were more highly valued by the employment status groups, going to the movies was valued considerably less in comparison than either of these activities (overall MEAN=2.41; SD=1.45). In fact, a statistically significant difference was shown between the employment groups in terms of how they valued going to the movies, although Tukey post hoc analysis did not reveal specific group differences. Employed respondents (MEAN=2.56; SD=1.47) valued going to the movies slightly higher than full-time homemakers (MEAN=1.93;

SD=1.41) and those who were retired (MEAN=2.00; SD=1.23) ($F_{2,195}=3.21$; $p=.043$).

Perhaps those who are employed are seeking leisure opportunities that allow them to escape from their work more than either homemakers or those who are retired, but the reported difference between the groups appears minimal overall. Going to the movies is still not that highly valued in comparison to other mass media activities (see Table 45).

In the social leisure activity category two significant differences between the employment status groups and a notable result were revealed (see Table 46). In the activity of telephoning friends both the full-time homemakers (MEAN=20.04; SD=18.74) and the retired group (MEAN=19.35; SD=17.69) had higher levels of participation (around 20 times per month), than the employed group (MEAN=12.65; SD=12.45) ($F_{2,186}=4.48$; $p=.013$). This difference makes sense since those who are employed have little reason to pick up the phone and call their friends. It is also likely their friends are work associates and often business and pleasure are part of daily conversations at work. In contrast, it is likely that full-time homemakers, while employed at home, often telephone their friends for pleasure, or as part of the ritual and routine of running a home (see Table 46). The employment status groups also differed in the leisure activity of playing cards or board games ($F_{2,186}=3.54$; $p=.031$). Not unexpectedly, the retired group (MEAN=4.75; SD=8.20) differed significantly in the average monthly level of participation in this activity compared to the employed group (MEAN=1.99; SD=3.39). Also, full-time homemakers (MEAN=2.85; SD=5.49) had a higher average level of playing cards or board games than the employed group. This makes sense when retired people have the most discretionary free time available for such activities. Full-time homemakers are likely involved in playing these games with children in the household or as family activities, while the employed group may be too exhausted after a days work to enjoy

them, or due to less available free time, concentrate on other leisure that may be more important to them.

Table 46

Differences in average monthly *social* leisure participation by employment status (n=189).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|-------------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | F | p |
| Visiting or entertaining friends | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 8.08 | 7.36 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 6.56 | 6.48 | .637 | .530 |
| Retired | 20 | 8.70 | 7.06 | | |
| Phoning friends | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 12.65 ^a | 12.45 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 20.04 ^b | 18.78 | 4.48 | .013 |
| Retired | 20 | 19.35 ^{a, b} | 17.69 | | |
| Going to parties/dancing | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 2.13 | 3.13 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 0.81 | 1.30 | 2.69 | 0.70 |
| Retired | 20 | 2.90 | 5.25 | | |
| Playing cards or boardgames | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 1.99 ^a | 3.39 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 2.85 ^{a, b} | 5.49 | 3.54 | .031 |
| Retired | 20 | 4.75 ^b | 8.20 | | |
| Volunteering | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 3.18 | 8.84 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 6.85 | 17.29 | 1.50 | .225 |
| Retired | 20 | 4.10 | 3.86 | | |
| Active in service clubs | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 1.25 | 6.04 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 1.33 | 4.45 | .053 | .949 |
| Retired | 20 | 0.85 | 2.03 | | |
| Social activities (category) | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 4.88 | 4.91 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 6.41 | 5.55 | 2.07 | .129 |
| Retired | 20 | 6.78 | 4.37 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05). * indicates notable result.

Although not statistically significant, full-time homemakers (MEAN=0.81; SD=1.30) differed substantially in going to parties or dancing on an average monthly basis compared to the employed group (MEAN=2.13; SD=3.13) and the retired group (MEAN=2.90; SD=5.25).

In this instance, it may be the full-time homemakers that are too exhausted after a day's work to think about going to parties or dancing. The employed group may have more opportunity to do this through work associations, while the retired group has more freedom to participate. Overall both full-time homemakers and retired respondents take part in social leisure slightly more in an average month than the employed group (see Table 46).

Employment status did not appear to be a differentiating factor in the value or importance given to social leisure activities. The three employment status groups valued the various social leisure activities consistently and reasonably equally and no group differences were revealed. The value or importance given social activities is very similar in comparison to other socio-demographic variables already reported, and mirrors participation in these activities.

Differences between the employment status groups in average monthly outdoor leisure activity was not as marked as the previous categories, but yielded a strong difference ($F_{2,186}=7.46$; $p=.001$), in the activity of going on day outings or picnics. The full-time homemakers (MEAN=6.19; SD=7.84) have significantly higher average monthly participation in this activity than either the employed group (MEAN=2.59; SD=3.75) or the retired group (MEAN=2.45; SD=3.12). This may have to do with getting out of the house with younger children to enjoy an outdoor setting conducive to relaxation (for the adults) and play (for the children) (see Table 47).

With respect to the level of importance the employment status groups place on outdoor leisure activity, employment status was not revealed as a distinguishing factor (see Table 48). Motorized outdoor activity (overall MEAN=1.68) appeared to be valued

Table 47

Differences in average monthly *outdoor* leisure participation by employment status (n=189).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------|------|------|
| | n | Mean | SD | F | p |
| Going on day outings/picnics | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 2.59 ^a | 3.75 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 6.19 ^b | 7.84 | 7.46 | .001 |
| Retired | 20 | 2.45 ^a | 3.12 | | |
| Gardening | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 7.06 | 11.12 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 9.26 | 8.29 | .611 | .544 |
| Retired | 20 | 6.25 | 7.66 | | |
| Outdoor activities/camping | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 2.99 | 4.15 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 3.70 | 5.11 | 1.03 | .358 |
| Retired | 20 | 4.40 | 5.77 | | |
| Motorized outdoor activity | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 0.63 | 2.42 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 0.48 | 1.95 | .518 | .596 |
| Retired | 20 | 0.10 | 0.31 | | |
| Outdoor activities (category) | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 3.32 | 3.33 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 4.91 | 4.15 | 2.57 | .080 |
| Retired | 20 | 3.30 | 2.38 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p < .05$).

considerably less by all three groups than either going on day outings (overall MEAN=4.15), gardening (overall MEAN=4.24), or going camping (overall MEAN=4.22). The overall category difference between the three groups and how they value outdoor activity is worthy of mention, with the result just outside the acceptable confidence limits ($p=.060$). Full-time homemakers (overall MEAN=3.81; SD=1.25) place a higher level of importance on outdoor activity than those who are employed (overall MEAN=3.61; SD=1.11) and those who are retired (overall MEAN=3.05; 0.92), indicating a need or desire for homemakers to get out of the home themselves, or to take the children out of the home to areas where they may more

Table 48

Differences in *importance of outdoor leisure* activity to lifestyle by employment status (n=184).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------|------|-------------|--------------------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | F | p |
| Going on day outings/picnics | | | | | |
| Employed | 138 | 4.20 | 1.64 | 2.19 | .115 |
| Full-time homemaker | 26 | 4.42 | 1.84 | | |
| Retired | 20 | 3.45 | 1.57 | | |
| Gardening | | | | | |
| Employed | 138 | 4.14 | 2.06 | 1.69 | .188 |
| Full-time homemaker | 26 | 4.92 | 1.87 | | |
| Retired | 20 | 4.00 | 2.38 | | |
| Outdoor activities/camping | | | | | |
| Employed | 138 | 4.33 | 1.75 | 2.39 | .094 |
| Full-time homemaker | 26 | 4.27 | 2.07 | | |
| Retired | 20 | 3.40 | 1.67 | | |
| Motorized outdoor activity | | | | | |
| Employed | 138 | 1.75 | 1.38 | .847 | .430 |
| Full-time homemaker | 26 | 1.62 | 1.20 | | |
| Retired | 20 | 1.35 | 0.75 | | |
| Outdoor activities (category) | | | | | |
| Employed | 138 | 3.61 | 1.11 | 2.86 | .060^{a*} |
| Full-time homemaker | 26 | 3.81 | 1.25 | | |
| Retired | 20 | 3.05 | 0.92 | | |

^a Notable result * No group differences based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

freely play (see Table 48).

In the cultural leisure activity category, the retired group (MEAN=1.55; SD=1.73) was significantly different from both the employed group (MEAN=0.65; SD=1.16) and the full-time homemakers (MEAN=0.52; SD=1.05) when it came to attending concerts or live theatre ($F_{2,186}=5.21$; $p=.006$) (see Table 49). This is a reasonable expectation because this group is often viewed as having more discretionary income as well as more free time, and is able to take part in this experience more. It was shown earlier, however, that household income (level of affluence) was not a determining factor. In support of this, and as can be

Table 49

Differences in average monthly *cultural* leisure participation by employment status (n=189).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Average monthly participation | | | | F | p |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|------|------|---|------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Spectating at sports events | | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 1.82 | 4.59 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 2.52 | 7.02 | .930 | | .396 |
| Retired | 20 | 0.60 | 1.39 | | | |
| Attending concerts/theatre | | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 0.65 ^a | 1.16 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 0.52 ^a | 1.05 | 5.21 | | .006 |
| Retired | 20 | 1.55 ^b | 1.73 | | | |
| Cultural activities (category) | | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 1.24 | 2.44 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 1.51 | 3.67 | .195 | | .823 |
| Retired | 20 | 1.08 | 1.16 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p < .05$).

seen in Table 26, older adults took part in this activity over twice as much as young adults, and one-and-a-half times as much as the middle-aged adults. In addition, this may be partly due to a “cohort effect,” as this activity is generally more valued and engaged in by older adults (see Table 49).

In support of the foregoing, the three employment status groups differed significantly in terms of the value or importance they placed on both cultural activities in their leisure (see Table 50). Employed respondents (MEAN=2.55; SD=1.73) valued or placed significantly more importance on spectating at sports than those who were retired (MEAN=1.43; SD=0.87), but only slightly higher than the full-time homemakers (MEAN=2.19; SD=1.90) ($F_{2,186}=4.24$; $p=.016$). In contrast, the retired group (MEAN=4.33; SD=1.93) valued going to concerts or the theatre significantly more than the full-time homemakers (MEAN=3.04;

Table 50

Differences in *importance of cultural leisure* activity to lifestyle by employment status (n=189).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|------|-------------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | F | p |
| Spectating at sports events | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 2.55 ^a | 1.73 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 26 | 2.19 ^{a, b} | 1.90 | 4.24 | .016 |
| Retired | 21 | 1.43 ^b | 0.87 | | |
| Attending concerts/theatre | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 3.20 ^a | 1.84 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 26 | 3.04 ^a | 1.68 | 3.80 | .024 |
| Retired | 21 | 4.33 ^b | 1.93 | | |
| Cultural activities (category) | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 2.88 | 1.41 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 26 | 2.62 | 1.41 | .402 | .670 |
| Retired | 21 | 2.88 | 1.15 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p < .05$).

SD=1.68) or the employed group (MEAN=3.20; SD=1.84) ($F_{2,186}=3.80$; $p=.024$). The latter result speculates those who are retired may be more aware or have more free time to take part in this activity, thus value it more (see Table 50).

The employment status groups differed significantly in personal growth leisure activities, especially in the area of spiritual activity (see Table 51). The retired group (MEAN=15.80; SD=13.41) had significantly higher average levels of monthly spiritual activity participation than both the full-time homemakers (MEAN=8.48; SD=12.34) and the employed respondents (MEAN=5.87; SD=9.63) ($F_{2,186}=8.05$; $p < .001$). In fact, the retired group took part in spiritual activity two to three times more on average than the employed group. This may be an indication of the life stage of retired respondents. At this later stage in life they begin to reflect back upon their families,

Table 51

Differences in average monthly *personal growth* leisure participation by employment status (n=189).

| | | Average monthly participation | | | | |
|--|-----|-------------------------------|-------|-------------|-----------------|--|
| Leisure activity / Groups | n | Mean | SD | F | p | |
| Spiritual activity | | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 5.87 ^a | 9.63 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 8.48 ^a | 12.34 | 8.05 | <.001 | |
| Retired | 20 | 15.80 ^b | 13.41 | | | |
| Taking interest courses | | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 2.58 | 2.90 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 2.93 | 5.77 | .246 | .782 | |
| Retired | 20 | 3.05 | 2.93 | | | |
| Personal growth activities (cat.) | | | | | | |
| Employed | 142 | 4.23 ^a | 4.96 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 27 | 5.70 ^{a, b} | 6.89 | 8.20 | <.001 | |
| Retired | 20 | 9.43 ^b | 6.73 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p < .05$).

career, and experiences. As well, it is a time when they may experience more personal trauma (e.g., death of a spouse, friends, etc.) and look toward spiritual activity as a coping mechanism (see Table 51). The results likely reflected the significance of the overall personal growth category score, because participation is consistent for the activity of taking interest courses.

Retired respondents (MEAN=5.24; SD=1.76) also placed higher importance on spiritual activity in their leisure lives when compared to full-time homemakers (MEAN=4.18; SD=2.47) and those who were employed (MEAN=3.93; SD=2.26) ($F_{2,184}=3.13$; $p=.046$) (see Table 52). This could be for the same reasons mentioned earlier when discussing participation in spiritual activity.

Table 52

Differences in *importance of personal growth leisure* activity to lifestyle by employment status (n=187).

| Leisure activity / Groups | | Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | F | p | |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|------|-------------|-------------|---|--|
| | | n | Mean | SD | | | | |
| Spiritual activity | | | | | | | | |
| | Employed | 138 | 3.93 ^a | 2.26 | | | | |
| | Full-time homemaker | 28 | 4.18 ^{a, b} | 2.47 | 3.13 | .046 | | |
| | Retired | 21 | 5.24 ^b | 1.76 | | | | |
| Taking interest courses | | | | | | | | |
| | Employed | 138 | 4.41 | 1.71 | .180 | .835 | | |
| | Full-time homemaker | 28 | 4.57 | 1.53 | | | | |
| | Retired | 21 | 4.29 | 1.90 | | | | |
| Personal growth activities (cat.) | | | | | | | | |
| | Employed | 138 | 4.17 | 1.54 | 1.40 | .250 | | |
| | Full-time homemaker | 28 | 4.38 | 1.73 | | | | |
| | Retired | 21 | 4.76 | 1.50 | | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p < .05$).

Participation in travel and tourism leisure activity and for the activities like playing team sports, doing individual sport, doing personal fitness, and doing creative hobbies and crafts was reasonably consistent for all three employment status and no significant or noteworthy group differences were shown.

In contrast, and of note, however, it was found those respondents who are employed (MEAN=5.10; SD=1.57) place a significantly higher value or importance on having short holidays or weekend getaways than those who are retired (MEAN=4.14; SD=1.80), and slightly more than full-time homemakers (MEAN=4.39; SD=2.01) ($F_{2,184}=4.58$; $p=.011$) (see Table 53).

Table 53

Differences in *importance of travel and tourism leisure* activity to lifestyle by employment status (n=194).

| Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Leisure activity / Groups | n | Mean | SD | F | p |
| Travelling to visit friends/family | | | | | |
| Employed | 145 | 5.33 | 1.50 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 28 | 5.14 | 1.82 | .270 | .763 |
| Retired | 21 | 5.14 | 1.49 | | |
| Having short holidays/getaways | | | | | |
| Employed | 145 | 5.10 ^a | 1.57 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 28 | 4.39 ^{a, b} | 2.01 | 4.58 | .011 |
| Retired | 21 | 4.14 ^b | 1.80 | | |
| Travel and tourism (category) | | | | | |
| Employed | 145 | 5.22 | 1.33 | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 28 | 4.77 | 1.52 | 2.55 | .081 |
| Retired | 21 | 4.64 | 1.32 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p < .05$).

This points to the notion that for those who are employed, having short holidays or getaways might be an important activity for recovery from the stresses of work, although the other two groups, relatively speaking, also value this activity reasonably highly in comparison to other leisure activities. For example, travelling to visit friends and family (overall MEAN=5.28) is also valued highly by all three employment status groups, although only slightly higher than having short holidays or getaways (average MEAN=4.90) (see Table 53).

For the other remaining leisure activities mentioned earlier, a couple of significant differences between the employment status groups were revealed. Employed respondents (MEAN=2.67; SD=1.95) place significantly more importance on playing team sports in their leisure than those who are retired (MEAN=1.37; SD=0.68), and slightly higher than those who are full-time homemakers (MEAN=2.31; SD=1.85) ($F_{2,180}=4.27$; $p=.015$) (see Table 54).

The difference between those that are employed and retired is understandable, since playing team sports is also associated with those who are younger and more active. For those who are employed, playing team sports during one's leisure may also reflect working in a team environment because many of the same cooperative and organizational principles are involved in both realms.

Table 54

Differences in *importance of leisure* activity to lifestyle by employment status (remainder) (n=183).

| | | Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|--|-----------|-------------|--------------|--|
| Leisure activity / Groups | n | Mean | SD | F | p | |
| Playing team sports | | | | | | |
| Employed | 138 | 2.67 ^a | 1.95 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 26 | 2.31 ^{a,b} | 1.85 | 4.27 | .015 | |
| Retired | 19 | 1.37 ^b | 0.68 | | | |
| Doing individual sport | | | | | | |
| Employed | 138 | 3.19 | 1.92 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 26 | 2.38 | 1.83 | 3.73 | .026* | |
| Retired | 19 | 2.21 | 1.62 | | | |
| Doing personal fitness | | | | | | |
| Employed | 138 | 5.40 | 1.75 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 26 | 4.81 | 1.79 | 1.52 | .222 | |
| Retired | 19 | 4.95 | 2.15 | | | |
| Creative hobbies and crafts | | | | | | |
| Employed | 138 | 4.21 | 2.07 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 26 | 4.35 | 2.10 | .755 | .471 | |
| Retired | 19 | 3.63 | 2.11 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05). * Not significant based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

Also, it was the employed group that put significantly higher value on doing individual sport (MEAN=3.19; SD=1.92) than either the homemakers (MEAN=2.38; SD=1.83) or the retired groups (MEAN=2.21; SD=1.62) ($F_{2,180}=3.73$; $p=.026$), perhaps because this group is younger and more active in comparison to those who are retired, or because they need the physical workout as a stress reliever and to stay fit (see Table 54). All

three groups valued doing personal fitness and doing creative hobbies and crafts reasonably important to their leisure.

In summary, there were not a lot of group differences with respect to the level of importance or value employment status groups place on certain leisure activities in their leisure lifestyles. Each group was highlighted in one or two activities as valuing an activity more than the other two, but no specific pattern emerged. In general there was more consistency in the value employed, full-time homemakers, or retired respondents placed on various leisure activities than there was difference.

Differences in average monthly leisure participation between households with or without children.

The number of participants in the study that lived in households with children is about half (48.1%). Again, of the 25 leisure activities given in the questionnaire, only six activities produced results displaying significant differences between households with children and those without (51.9%). In addition, there were some interesting comparisons between homes with children and those without in terms of the value or importance they placed on certain leisure activity which differed from the way they participated in these activities.

For example, in the mass media leisure activity category, households without children (MEAN=1.00; SD=1.39) went to movies significantly more on an average monthly basis, than did those households with children (MEAN=0.68; Sd=0.85) ($t_{2,211}=2.05$; $p=.042$). This indicates it may be easier to stay home and watch rented videos than go through the effort and expense of driving to the cinema and paying for the whole family to watch a movie on the big screen. In fact, homes with children watched a fair amount of TV or videos, 24 times on average per month, or almost every day (see Table 55).

Table 55

Differences in *mass media* leisure participation by households with or without children (n=235).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Monthly participation | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-------|-------|--------|------|
| | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Watching TV/Videos | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 23.70 | 9.51 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 24.05 | 13.33 | -0.222 | .825 |
| Reading books, magazines, etc. | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 23.92 | 11.89 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 26.41 | 15.10 | -1.34 | .180 |
| Going to movies | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 1.00 | 1.39 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 0.68 | 0.85 | 2.05 | .042 |
| Using the internet/computer | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 13.96 | 16.44 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 15.84 | 17.44 | -0.810 | .419 |
| Listening to music | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 23.28 | 15.30 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 25.68 | 15.98 | -1.12 | .265 |
| Mass media activities (category) | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 17.17 | 5.92 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 18.53 | 7.11 | -1.52 | .130 |

The difference between homes with or without children and how much value or importance they each placed on mass media leisure activity was not significant, and with either group reasonably similar value was placed on these activities. Going to the movies (overall MEAN=2.41), watching TV or videos (overall MEAN=3.78), and using the Internet or computers (overall MEAN=3.54) were all valued slightly less than such activities as reading books, magazines and newspapers (overall MEAN=5.65) and listening to music (overall MEAN=5.31).

Also, when examining the social leisure activity category, leisure participation between the two household groups was reasonably similar. There was only one significant

difference between homes with children and those without, and this was in the activity of volunteering ($t_{2,211}=-2.43$; $p=.016$). Households with children (MEAN=5.15; SD=13.14) volunteered on average two and half times more per month than those households without children (MEAN=2.06; SD=3.60). This is an interesting result because initially one would think that parents in households with children might not have as much time to volunteer as those without children, but the opposite appears true. It is highly likely that these families are involved more in volunteer opportunities like coaching minor sport teams or assisting in gymnastic or dance programs, as a result of their children's involvement in these community activities (see Table 56).

While not statistically significant, households with children (MEAN=1.71; SD=7.00) were also more involved and active in service clubs, than those households without children (MEAN=0.63; SD=2.62). Here too, this monthly average level of participation in service club activity, almost three times as high as homes without children, is possibly reflective of being involved in these organizations (e.g., Optimist Club, Kinsmen Club) as a result of an interest in children's program development (see Table 56).

On the other hand, when social leisure activity was examined there were some distinct differences between homes with children and those without in the value or importance they placed on certain leisure activities, somewhat different from their participation patterns. Homes with children (MEAN=3.17; SD=1.64) valued the playing cards or board games more than homes without (MEAN=2.61; SD=1.69) ($t_{2,207}=-2.45$; $p=.015$). Although the following results are just outside the acceptable confidence limits they are noteworthy. Homes with children also valued the activities of volunteering and being

Table 56

Differences in *social* leisure participation
by households with or without children (n=235).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Monthly participation | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-------|-------|--------------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Visiting or entertaining friends | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 7.93 | 6.59 | .063 | .950 |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 7.87 | 7.52 | | |
| Phoning friends | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 13.28 | 11.47 | -1.36 | .176 |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 15.91 | 16.45 | | |
| Going to parties/dancing | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 2.30 | 3.41 | 1.51 | .133 |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 1.65 | 2.83 | | |
| Playing cards or boardgames | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 2.22 | 4.37 | -.083 | .934 |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 2.27 | 4.24 | | |
| Volunteering | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 2.06 | 3.60 | -2.44 | .016 |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 5.25 | 13.14 | | |
| Active in service clubs | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 0.63 | 2.62 | -1.50 | .135 |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 1.71 | 7.00 | | |
| Social activities (category) | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 4.74 | 3.15 | -1.59 | .114 |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 5.78 | 6.03 | | |

active in service clubs significantly more than households without children (see Table 57).

The results in all three activities are quite understandable, and the fact that children are in the home may determine a variety of leisure activity, from playing table games with them to actively volunteering in the community to support children's activity, perhaps through leading or coaching, or general organizational support. Also, the importance placed on social activity by homes with children is considerably higher than for homes without, although this result too, is just outside the acceptable statistical confidence limits. It does point to the

general importance of and participation in social activities when families have children in the home.

Table 57

Differences in *importance of social leisure* activity to lifestyle by households with or without children (n=211).

| Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | | |
|--|----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| Leisure activity / Groups | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Visiting or entertaining friends | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 113 | 5.35 | 1.37 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 98 | 5.34 | 1.41 | .044 | .965 |
| Phoning friends | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 113 | 4.79 | 1.49 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 98 | 5.03 | 1.58 | -1.15 | .252 |
| Going to parties/dancing | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 113 | 3.31 | 1.90 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 98 | 3.04 | 1.79 | 1.05 | .293 |
| Playing cards or boardgames | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 113 | 2.61 | 1.69 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 98 | 3.17 | 1.64 | -2.45 | .015 |
| Volunteering | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 113 | 3.71 | 1.75 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 98 | 4.19 | 1.88 | -1.95 | .053* |
| Active in service clubs | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 113 | 2.15 | 1.64 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 98 | 2.61 | 1.79 | -1.95 | .052* |
| Social activities (category) | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 113 | 3.65 | 0.91 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 98 | 3.90 | 1.00 | -1.88 | .062* |

* Indicates notable result ($p \leq .05$)

Not unexpectedly, in the outdoor leisure activity category, those households with children were also more active in going on day outings or picnics (MEAN=3.81; SD=5.74) than homes without children (MEAN=2.36; SD=2.80) ($t_{2,211}=-2.36$; $p=.019$) (see Table 58). This reflects the popularity of, for example, taking children outdoors for picnics in the park where they are allowed to be physically active in a safe setting. In addition, households with children (MEAN=8.75; SD=12.09) were involved significantly more on an average monthly

basis in gardening, than homes without children (MEAN=5.50; SD=7.78) ($t_{2,211}=-2.34$; $p=.020$).

Table 58

Differences in *outdoor* leisure participation by households with or without children (n=235).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Monthly participation | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------|-------|--------------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Going on day outings/picnics | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 2.36 | 2.80 | -2.36 | .019 |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 3.81 | 5.74 | | |
| Gardening | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 5.50 | 7.78 | -2.34 | .020 |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 8.75 | 12.09 | | |
| Outdoor activities/camping | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 3.12 | 4.02 | -.042 | .966 |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 3.14 | 4.61 | | |
| Motorized outdoor activity | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 0.37 | 1.33 | -1.12 | .262 |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 0.69 | 2.70 | | |
| Outdoor activities (category) | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 2.84 | 2.46 | -2.81 | .005 |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 4.10 | 3.95 | | |

Here too, the activity of gardening reflects activity in the backyard where children may easily be observed, and possibly involves time spent by parents creating and maintaining a space which is safe for child's play but that doesn't involve the effort of a trip out of the home (see Table 58). Overall, outdoor activities were taken part in more by those households with children than those without ($t_{2,211}=-2.81$; $p=.005$).

The foregoing results are supported in part by a significant difference in the value or importance these two groups place on gardening activity ($t_{2,205}=-3.53$; $p=.001$). Those households with children placed a significantly higher value or importance on gardening (MEAN=4.64; SD=1.84) than those homes without children (MEAN=3.65; SD=2.18). For

similar reasons mentioned earlier, this may be due to the notion that gardening is conducive to creating a safe and aesthetic play environment in ones backyard, and it is an activity that is

Table 59

Differences in *importance of outdoor leisure* activity to lifestyle by households with or without children (n=207).

| Importance of activity to lifestyle | | | | | |
|--|----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| Leisure activity / Groups | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Going on day outings/picnics | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 106 | 4.08 | 1.61 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 101 | 4.20 | 1.78 | -.479 | .632 |
| Gardening | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 106 | 3.65 | 2.18 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 101 | 4.64 | 1.84 | -3.53 | .001 |
| Outdoor activities/camping | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 106 | 4.15 | 1.89 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 101 | 4.30 | 1.70 | -.584 | .560 |
| Motorized outdoor activity | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 106 | 1.78 | 1.32 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 101 | 1.67 | 1.37 | .587 | .558 |
| Outdoor activities (category) | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 106 | 3.42 | 1.11 | | |
| Homes with one or more children | 101 | 3.70 | 1.15 | -1.82 | .071* |

* Indicates notable result ($p \leq .05$)

close to home where the children may easily be observed. In addition, one cannot forget the therapeutic value of gardening as a stress-reliever for parents of busy youngsters (see Table 59). Both homes with and without children valued going on day outings or picnics (average MEAN=4.14) and camping (average MEAN=4.23) considerably higher than doing outdoor motorized activity (average MEAN=1.73) (see Table 59). Although not statistically significant, outdoor activities were valued slightly higher in homes with children than in homes without, and this compares positively with the participation in this type of activity.

Similar to previous interpretations, it appears that households with children involve parents in various leisure activities they might not necessarily do themselves if they had the choice. For example, in the cultural leisure activity category it was revealed that households with children (MEAN=2.29; SD=1.06) spent time spectating at sports about twice as much on an average monthly basis as did households without children (MEAN=1.06; SD=2.72) ($t=-1.99$; $p=.048$). This result might reflect family or parent attendance at children’s sports or cultural events, as opposed to watching large-scale professional sporting events (see Table 60).

Table 60

Differences in *cultural* leisure participation by households with or without children (n=235).

| Leisure activity / Groups | Monthly participation | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|------|------|--------------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Spectating at sports events | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 1.06 | 2.72 | -1.99 | .048 |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 2.29 | 5.84 | | |
| Attending concerts/theatre | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 1.02 | 1.57 | 3.26 | .001 |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 0.47 | 0.70 | | |
| Cultural activities (category) | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 109 | 1.04 | 1.67 | -1.03 | .302 |
| Homes with one or more children | 105 | 1.38 | 3.01 | | |

In contrast, households without children (MEAN=1.02; SD=1.57) attended concerts or went to the theatre about twice as much on an average monthly basis compared to homes with children (MEAN=0.47; SD=0.70) ($t=3.26$; $p=.001$). Again, this result may be reflective of the increased ease and freedom to participate households without children may have (see Table 60).

In examining personal growth leisure activities (spiritual activity or taking interest courses) no significant differences were revealed between the two household groups. Participation in these two activities is very consistent for either households with children (MEAN=5.02; SD=5.86) or those homes without children (MEAN=5.11; SD=5.71), suggesting that the presence of children does not affect average monthly participation in either of these leisure pursuits. Similarly, participation in travel and tourism leisure activity (travelling to visit friends or family, and having short holidays or getaways), is quite consistent for both household groups (those with children and those without) and no significant group differences are shown.

Both homes with and without children placed reasonably positive value and importance on cultural (overall MEAN=2.89; SD=1.36), personal growth (overall MEAN=4.32; SD=1.61), and travel and tourism leisure activities (overall MEAN=5.06; SD=1.40), although, in comparison, the overall difference in level of value is quite noticeable. While the difference was not statistically significant, both homes with or without children valued doing personal fitness (overall MEAN=5.25; SD=1.81) and doing creative hobbies or crafts (overall MEAN= 4.24; SD=2.08) slightly more than doing individual sports (overall MEAN=3.05; SD=1.98) and playing team sports (overall MEAN=2.44; SD=1.89).

In summary, it may be said that certain social activities are more highly valued in households with children (e.g., playing cards and board games, volunteering, and being active in service clubs), because the motivation for taking part may be partially due to the presence of children in the home. Having children increases parental concern about a child's welfare and growth through leisure participation. The outdoor activity of gardening, as

previously reported with several of the other socio-demographic variables, is a highly valued leisure activity in homes where children are prominent.

The relationship between various socio-demographic variables and the experience of leisure.

Leisure experience in this study was measured using the Leisure Experience Battery (Caldwell, Smith & Weissinger, 1992) an instrument composed of 24 items within four dimensions of leisure experience: boredom, challenge, awareness and anxiety. As reported earlier, respondents in this sample reported low levels of boredom in leisure, a general high awareness of leisure opportunity, were challenged by their leisure choices, and generally had a low level of anxiety about their leisure. They did report being anxious from feeling rushed and not having enough time to do the things they would like to do, possibly a symptom of the current fast pace of life reported by many in the literature.

When the effects of various socio-demographic variables were assessed against the experience of leisure in respondent's lives, the results were not overly remarkable, nor totally unexpected. For example, there does not appear to be any significant difference between the genders in the experience of leisure. Men and women experience a similar level of awareness (average MEAN=4.96; SD=0.89) and challenge (average MEAN=4.66; SD=0.71) in their leisure, and both genders report a low level of anxiety (average MEAN=3.37; SD=1.00) (see Table 61). Although boredom levels were considerably lower than the other leisure experience dimensions, a significant difference was shown between men (MEAN=2.40; SD=0.91) who reported having a slightly higher level of boredom than women (MEAN=2.11; SD=0.83) regarding their leisure experience, but this falls just outside the confidence limits ($t_{2,230}=2.01$; $p=.046$) (see Table 61). Although not statistically significant,

women had a slightly higher level of leisure awareness than men did, and perhaps this contributes to the slightly higher level of boredom men may feel.

Table 61
Differences in the experience of leisure
by gender (n=230).

| Leisure experience dimensions | Leisure experience | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|------|------|----------|-------------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> | |
| Awareness | Male | 42 | 4.89 | 0.85 | -.905 | .366 |
| | Female | 190 | 5.03 | 0.92 | | |
| Challenge | Male | 42 | 4.71 | 0.64 | .751 | .453 |
| | Female | 190 | 4.61 | 0.78 | | |
| Anxiety | Male | 42 | 3.26 | 1.05 | -1.28 | .201 |
| | Female | 190 | 3.47 | 0.95 | | |
| Boredom | Male | 42 | 2.40 | 0.91 | 2.01 | .046 |
| | Female | 190 | 2.11 | 0.83 | | |

Differences in the experience of leisure by age group.

Not unexpectedly, when age groups were compared against the experience of leisure, it was the young adult age group (18 to 34 years) that revealed the most significant differences from either the mid-aged adults (35 to 54 years) and the older adults (54 to 82 years) (see Table 62). When examining if the three age groups experienced the same level of awareness of leisure opportunity, the young adults reported a level of awareness (MEAN=4.62; SD=0.88) significantly lower than either the mid-life adults (MEAN=5.07; SD=0.85) or the older adults (MEAN=5.40; SD=0.89) ($F_{2,226}=10.62$; $p<.001$), indicating that as respondents aged, their level of awareness about leisure opportunity increased.

When it came to choosing or seeking challenge in leisure all three age groups were reasonably consistent in the level of challenge they reported (average MEAN=4.65). It appears that regardless of age, challenge in leisure is an experiential quality all respondents value and seek equally (see Table 62).

Table 62
Differences in leisure experience by age group (n=229).

| Leisure experience dimensions | Leisure experience | | | F | p |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | |
| Awareness | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 65 | 4.62 ^a | 0.88 | 10.62 | <.001 |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 125 | 5.07 ^b | 0.85 | | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 39 | 5.40 ^b | 0.89 | | |
| Challenge | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 65 | 4.61 | 0.83 | .400 | .671 |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 125 | 4.63 | 0.68 | | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 39 | 4.74 | 0.80 | | |
| Anxiety | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 65 | 3.88 ^a | 0.89 | 11.95 | <.001 |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 125 | 3.34 ^b | 0.93 | | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 39 | 3.02 ^b | 0.99 | | |
| Boredom | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 65 | 2.53 ^a | 0.98 | 10.05 | <.001 |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 125 | 2.06 ^b | 0.75 | | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 39 | 1.86 ^b | 0.70 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

Among other factors, like positive anxiety associated with challenge or making leisure choices, the anxiety dimension of leisure experience may also reflect negative factors like uncertainty or nervousness felt due to lower awareness of leisure choices, or uncertainty about skill or ability to take part in a leisure opportunity. All three age groups reported a reasonably low level of anxiety concerning their leisure (average MEAN=3.44). The young

adult group reported feeling the most anxious (MEAN=3.88; SD=0.89) in comparison to both older groups, and appear to experience a degree of anxiousness when making leisure choices, perhaps due to a reduced awareness level, or perhaps just because they lead active, busy lives and suffer from time pressure ($F_{2,226}=11.95, p<.001$).

Although the level of boredom reported by all groups in their leisure was low (average MEAN=2.16), the young adults perceived level of boredom (MEAN=2.53; SD=0.98) was significantly higher than both the mid-life adults (MEAN=2.06; SD=0.75) and the older adults (MEAN=1.86; SD=0.70) ($F_{2,226}=10.05; p<.001$). This also may be an indication of not being as aware about leisure opportunity as the older age groups, and is reflected by a low awareness score (see Table 62).

Differences in the experience of leisure by marital status.

It is commonly stated, usually in a humorous way, that it is much more fun to be single, or that single life presents one with carefree attitudes and the freedom to do just about as one pleases. On the 'flip-side,' those who are married are quick to retort that married life is more enjoyable and presents more options to those who have a ready and willing partner with whom to share innumerable experiences. The analysis in this instance revealed that there are some significant differences in the way those who are single, married, or separated, widowed, or divorced (SWD) experience their leisure, and fuels the ongoing argument (see Table 63).

Although the general level of awareness about leisure was reasonably high in comparison to the other leisure experience dimensions, a significant difference in awareness level was shown between single respondents (MEAN=4.62; SD=0.84) and those who were

married (MEAN=5.16; SD=0.93), but only slightly less than those who were SWD (MEAN=4.86; SD=0.67) ($F_{2,228}=8.10$; $p<.001$). Perhaps the influence of children in the household affects this result, since those who are married often have children in the home and are aware of a multitude of leisure opportunity available for not only themselves, but also their children (see Table 63).

Table 63

Differences in the experience of leisure by marital status (n=231).

| Leisure experience dimensions | Leisure experience | | | | <u>F</u> | <u>p</u> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------|-------------|-----------------|----------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Awareness | | | | | | |
| Single | 55 | 4.62 ^a | 0.84 | | | |
| Married | 151 | 5.16 ^b | 0.93 | 8.10 | <.001 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 25 | 4.86 ^{a, b} | 0.67 | | | |
| Challenge | | | | | | |
| Single | 55 | 4.44 | 0.70 | | | |
| Married | 151 | 4.67 | 0.76 | 2.56 | .080 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 25 | 4.80 | 0.82 | | | |
| Anxiety | | | | | | |
| Single | 55 | 3.75 ^a | 0.82 | | | |
| Married | 151 | 3.33 ^b | 0.99 | 3.87 | .022 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 25 | 3.39 ^{a, b} | 1.09 | | | |
| Boredom | | | | | | |
| Single | 55 | 2.58 ^a | 1.02 | | | |
| Married | 151 | 2.06 ^b | 0.77 | 9.80 | <.001 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 25 | 1.89 ^b | 0.60 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p<.05$).

In the challenge dimension of leisure experience, all three marital status groups expressed an equivalent level of challenge to the kinds of experiences they sought to do in their free time (average MEAN=4.63). On the other hand, although general levels of anxiety were moderate amongst all respondents, again it was the single respondents (MEAN=3.75; SD=0.82) that expressed a higher degree of anxiety about leisure choices or abilities in

comparison to the married group (MEAN=3.33; SD=0.99) ($F_{2,228}=3.87$; $p=.022$). This higher level of anxiety about leisure in the singles group might be due to lower awareness of opportunity as discussed earlier, and/or a higher level of boredom as described following.

Although overall levels of boredom are low, it was the single respondents in this study who had significantly elevated levels of boredom (MEAN=2.58; SD=1.02) in comparison to those who were married (MEAN=2.06; SD=0.77) or SWD (MEAN=1.89; SD=0.60) ($F_{2,228}=9.80$; $p<.001$) (see Table 63).

In summary then, (and in response to the question “Do single people have more fun?”) it may be said that those who are married or SWD are less bored and anxious, and more aware when experiencing their leisure than those who are single, but all three groups equally seek challenging leisure opportunities as part of their lifestyles (so, no...at least when it comes to leisure, single people do not have more fun!).

Differences in the experience of leisure by level of combined household income and perceived level of financial circumstance.

When the level of combined household income was examined with how respondents experienced their leisure, the results were not overly unexpected. The level of awareness and challenge in leisure was high, the level of boredom was low, and the level of anxiety was moderate (see Table 64). For example, awareness levels were typically reasonably high for all respondents in comparison to the other leisure experience dimensions. Within this dimension however, the lowest income group (MEAN=4.65; SD=0.84) reported a significantly lower level of awareness than either the lower middle income group

(MEAN=5.11; SD=0.87) and the upper middle income group (MEAN=5.17; SD=1.04), but not in relation to the highest income group (MEAN=5.04; SD=0.87) ($F_{3,204}=3.44$; $p=.018$).

On both the challenge and anxiety dimensions of leisure experience, the income groups reported equally positive levels of challenge (average MEAN=4.65) in their leisure choices and slightly lower levels of anxiety about what to do in their free time or leisure (average MEAN=3.46) (see Table 64).

Although overall levels of boredom have been shown to be low for all respondents and groupings, the results revealed that the lowest income group (\$0 to \$39,999) had

Table 64

Differences in leisure experience by household income (n=208).

| Leisure experience dimensions | Leisure experience | | | | <u>F</u> | <u>p</u> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Awareness | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 50 | 4.65 ^a | 0.84 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 53 | 5.11 ^b | 0.97 | 3.44 | .018 | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 53 | 5.17 ^b | 1.04 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 52 | 5.04 ^{a,b} | 0.87 | | | |
| Challenge | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 50 | 4.67 | 0.76 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 53 | 4.63 | 0.90 | .094 | .963 | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 53 | 4.67 | 0.77 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 52 | 4.61 | 0.60 | | | |
| Anxiety | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 50 | 3.75 | 1.03 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 53 | 3.46 | 0.99 | 2.40 | .069 | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 53 | 3.34 | 0.97 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 52 | 3.28 | 0.87 | | | |
| Boredom | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 50 | 2.41 ^a | 0.97 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 53 | 2.18 ^{a,b} | 0.83 | 3.82 | .001 | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 53 | 1.88 ^b | 0.63 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 52 | 2.10 ^{a,b} | 0.79 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p<.05$).

significantly elevated levels of boredom compared to the upper middle income group (MEAN=1.88; SD=0.63), and slightly higher levels than either the lower middle income group and the highest income group ($F_{3,204}=3.82$; $p=.001$). The higher level of boredom for the lowest income group is likely related to their lower level of awareness in comparison to the other groups.

When the relationship between perceived financial circumstance and the experience of leisure was examined, only one significant relationship was revealed (see Table 65). Not unexpectedly, based on previous results, the overall levels of leisure experience (all four dimensions) are very similar to those reported by the combined household income group. In

Table 65

Differences in leisure experience by perceived financial circumstance (n=228).

| Leisure experience dimensions | n | Leisure experience | | <u>F</u> | <u>p</u> |
|-------------------------------|-----|--------------------|------|----------|----------|
| | | Mean | SD | | |
| Awareness | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 42 | 4.82 | 0.89 | | |
| Some discretionary income | 70 | 4.97 | 1.01 | 1.73 | .180 |
| Comfortable plus | 116 | 5.11 | 0.84 | | |
| Challenge | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 42 | 4.81 | 0.88 | | |
| Some discretionary income | 70 | 4.52 | 0.65 | 2.30 | .102 |
| Comfortable plus | 116 | 4.62 | 0.76 | | |
| Anxiety | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 42 | 3.93 ^a | 0.96 | | |
| Some discretionary income | 70 | 3.45 ^b | 1.02 | 7.59 | .001 |
| Comfortable plus | 116 | 3.27 ^b | 0.88 | | |
| Boredom | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 42 | 2.28 | 0.83 | | |
| Some discretionary income | 70 | 2.17 | 0.84 | .617 | .540 |
| Comfortable plus | 116 | 2.11 | 0.87 | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p<.05$).

this instance, however, those respondents perceiving themselves as “surviving financially” (MEAN=3.93; SD=0.96) experienced somewhat higher levels of anxiety about their leisure choices or abilities than either those with some discretionary income (MEAN=3.45; SD=1.02) or those who felt “comfortable plus” (MEAN=3.27; SD=0.88) ($F_{2,225}=7.59$; $p=.001$) (see Table 65).

Differences in the experience of leisure by employment status.

In the examination of whether employment status affected the experience of leisure amongst the respondents in the study, again, few significant results were revealed (see Table 66). Not unexpectedly, out of the three employment status groups (employed, full-time

Table 66

Differences in leisure experience by employment status (n=183).

| Leisure experience dimensions | Leisure experience | | | F | p |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|------|----------------------|------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | |
| Awareness | | | | | |
| | Employed | 155 | 2.67 ^a | 1.95 | |
| | Full-time homemaker | 29 | 2.31 ^{a, b} | 1.85 | 4.94 |
| | Retired | 22 | 1.37 ^b | 0.68 | .008 |
| Challenge | | | | | |
| | Employed | 155 | 3.19 | 1.92 | |
| | Full-time homemaker | 29 | 2.38 | 1.83 | 2.00 |
| | Retired | 22 | 2.21 | 1.62 | .138 |
| Anxiety | | | | | |
| | Employed | 155 | 5.40 | 1.75 | |
| | Full-time homemaker | 29 | 4.81 | 1.79 | 1.39 |
| | Retired | 22 | 4.95 | 2.15 | .252 |
| Boredom | | | | | |
| | Employed | 155 | 4.21 | 2.07 | |
| | Full-time homemaker | 29 | 4.35 | 2.10 | 2.26 |
| | Retired | 22 | 3.63 | 2.11 | .107 |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p<.05$).

homemakers, and retired) only those respondents that are retired (MEAN=5.52; SD=0.77) reported a significantly higher level of awareness about their leisure experience than those who were employed (MEAN=4.92; SD=0.93), and only slightly higher than those who were full-time homemakers (MEAN=5.22; SD=0.89) ($F_{2,203}=4.94$; $p=.008$). It is likely that the employed group is highly focussed on their work environment and may not have the time nor need to seek out or expand their leisure opportunities. Those who are retired have more life experience and time available to account for their higher level of leisure awareness (see Table 66).

Differences in leisure experience by households with or without children.

When the four leisure experience dimensions were examined for differences in how

Table 67

Differences in leisure experience by households with or without children (n=232).

| Leisure experience dimensions | Leisure experience | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|------|------|-------|------|
| | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Awareness | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 122 | 4.97 | 0.94 | -.537 | .592 |
| Homes with one or more children | 110 | 5.03 | 0.88 | | |
| Challenge | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 122 | 4.59 | 0.76 | -.754 | .452 |
| Homes with one or more children | 110 | 4.67 | 0.76 | | |
| Anxiety | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 122 | 3.33 | 0.95 | -1.71 | .089 |
| Homes with one or more children | 110 | 3.55 | 0.99 | | |
| Boredom | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 122 | 2.22 | 0.91 | 1.13 | .260 |
| Homes with one or more children | 110 | 2.09 | 0.78 | | |

households with or without children experienced leisure, no statistically significant results were shown. Relatively speaking, as with several previous analyses in this section, the groups experienced similar levels of leisure experience with little variation (see Table 67).

In this instance, whether there are children in the home or not makes no difference to the experience of leisure, although in the anxiety dimension the results were approaching significance (e.g., $p=.089$), suggesting that in homes where there are children, families might be a bit more anxious, but this would require further testing (see Table 67).

Summary of the relationships between leisure participation, importance of leisure to lifestyle, and leisure experience, with socio-demographic variables.

The following represents a summary of the salient activities and differences in how they were valued by respondents. There was an attempt to view all the relationships together to see if certain patterns of participation or value placed on activity were revealed. What follows represents as clear a picture as could be obtained without prolonging discussion over the importance of odd significant results.

Leisure activity and levels of participation

For the respondents in the study, participation in leisure activity could be characterized as fairly normal. As Table 3 showed, the highest participation occurred in the mass media/passive activities like reading books/magazines/newspapers, listening to music, watching TV/videos which occur almost daily or several times a day for most (overall MEAN=24.5; SD=13.57). It must be noted however that the standard of deviation for many of the activities was quite high indicating a fair bit of variability in participation. For

example, with an activity like using the Internet/computers, participation was about every second day (MEAN=14.86) but the variation in this rate was extremely high (SD=16.89), indicating that some people are likely on the Internet several times a day while others might not be “connected” at all. As will be noted later, respondents also do not value mass media/passive leisure activity very highly.

As speculated in earlier discussion, some of the reading that occurs in the mass media/passive category may well be done for personal growth reasons, and this activity could be defined more clearly. For example, reading a good book takes time, and if a person invests time and effort to read they are typically seeking a deeper leisure reward than if they were to just read a short magazine or newspaper article.

Of interest is the mass media leisure activity of going to movies, in which the participation rate appears low, about once a month. Again, although it isn't quite clear, it appears that respondents choose to watch TV or videos at home more than going to the movies, because the latter activity is typically costly and involves greater effort outside the home. Cost may not be a factor however, because, as was shown earlier, respondent's affluence level is above average. Regardless, they still go to the movies about once a month, which may also be considered a reasonable level of participation for this activity.

Other higher rates of leisure participation occurred in the social activity of phoning friends, in doing personal fitness activity, visiting or entertaining friends, pursuing spiritual activity, in the outdoor activity of gardening, and doing creative hobbies and crafts. As can be seen, these activities represent a mix of social, personal growth, creative and outdoor leisure opportunities.

The aim of the study was not to perform detailed research into leisure participation. All of the leisure activity categories presented could be expanded to provide deeper and broader understanding. The main purpose was to provide a general backdrop to the types of leisure activities respondents favoured as regular pursuits. Given the general nature of the respondents previously described, the participation rates in the various activities are by no means unusual and probably represent those of a broader population. The discussion following highlights some of these.

The interaction of various socio-demographic variables with leisure participation.

Although none of the results are remarkable or very strong, there appears to be a reporting of similar activities that thread their way through the various socio-demographic variables, and aid in the understanding of leisure participation patterns amongst respondents in this study. For example, outdoor activities like going on day outings/picnics and gardening, or activities like going to parties/dancing, and attending concerts or live theatre, seem to be revealed as popular pursuits on a recurring basis.

In terms of leisure participation, the differences between the genders is minimal, and reflects expected patterns. For example, women participated in social activities like phoning their friends far more than men did. Men were found to spend more time using their computers/Internet and doing individual sports than women were. Women were also more frequent participants in such activities as creative hobbies or crafts, in doing personal fitness, in going on day outings or picnics, and in activities in the outdoor category in general than their male counterparts were.

When comparing age grouping to leisure activity the older adults (55 and over) had the highest propensity for reading books (32 times per month) compared to the other two categories, young adults (18 to 34) or mid-life adults (35 to 54). All three groups read a considerable amount, but those over 55 years of age, likely because of their heightened awareness and available discretionary time, produced the most significant differences.

An activity like visiting or entertaining friends is more young-adult oriented, and only a mid-range activity for the other age groups. In contrast, although participation rates are low (but likely normal) in comparison to other leisure activities, attending concerts or live theatre falls more in the domain of the older adult, those 55 years of age and older. Also, adults in mid-life tend to participate in parties or go dancing less than either the young adults or older adults do, perhaps because of the time pressures of their current work responsibilities, dealing with older children, or their work/leisure balance in general. The adult mid-life group tends to be at the life stage where people are at their maximum productivity, so work is a prime personal focus.

When comparing marital status against leisure participation, for those who are single, socially-oriented activities like going to the movies, visiting and entertaining friends, going to parties/dancing, and outdoor activities in general were important in their leisure. For respondents who are married, reading, gardening and outdoor activities were popular leisure choices, and for the single/widowed/divorced (SWD) group, reading, visiting and entertaining friends, and outdoor activities in general were more popular choices. The foregoing points to similarities in activities, with typical and expected variations according to a respondent's life stage, with participation in outdoor activities common to all three groups.

Leisure participation varied somewhat according to level of household income. As expected, the majority of the significant differences appeared between the lowest income group (less than \$39,000), the lower middle income (\$40,000 - \$69,000), the upper middle income (\$70,000 - \$99,000), and highest income group (\$100,000 plus). For example, with the leisure activity of going to parties or dancing, the lowest income group had the highest rate of participation and differed significantly from the lower middle and upper middle income group in monthly participation. This group also represented a significant portion of the young adults in the study, so this result is not unexpected. The activity of gardening was also treated differently by the four income groups, with those in three higher income groups having higher rates of participation than the lowest income group. As the results indicate, the lowest income group is largely represented by young adults whose leisure focus and energy may be directed to more social activities, or perhaps the “building” phase of their lives, so this difference is also understandable. Even though there may be a latent interest in gardening, they may not be thinking of gardening yet, or be in a position (e.g., financially) to focus on this activity.

Although the frequency for having short holidays or weekend getaways is generally low for all respondents, a significant difference was reported between lower middle income respondents with household incomes of between \$40,000 - \$69,000 and those with upper middle income (\$70,000 to \$99,000). The latter group had the lowest rate of taking short holidays/weekend getaways in comparison to the other three groups which may indicate they are at the busiest point in their lives, and may not have the time nor energy to take part in this activity as much as they would like to. This is supported later in the discussion on levels of importance placed on certain leisure activities where this income group actually places a high

level of importance on taking short holidays yet they do not, or feel they cannot participate.

Also, it may be seen from the results that many differences in leisure participation occur between those who are retired and those who are employed or are full-time homemakers. In most cases the retired group had higher levels of leisure participation, the exceptions being in the activities of telephoning friends and going on day outings or picnics. As was shown earlier, the retired group also has the highest level of leisure awareness so this likely accounts for, or enhances their higher rate of participation.

The retired group, which corresponds with those who are 55 years of age or older, was significantly different from both the employed group and the full-time homemakers in attending concerts or live theatre. This is a reasonable finding and expectation because the retired group is often viewed as having more discretionary income and free time, and is able to take part in this experience. In addition, they are also the most aware, in comparison to the two younger age groups, when it comes to leisure choices and opportunities. Further, other studies have shown that for this age group (or cohort) this is a common or expected activity.

On an average monthly basis, those who were retired also participated in spiritual activity more than homemakers or those who were employed, again indicating they likely have more time, or experience more reason for personal reflection and to focus on their spirituality. In contrast, the full-time homemakers took part in day outings or picnics three times more often in a month than either of the employed or retired groups. It is likely that homemakers organize this type of event because they are at home with children, or it provides the much-needed escape from their “workplace,” and an opportunity to plan an outdoor activity with their children.

Leisure participation for households with children versus those without children, revealed that those households without children went to the movies or attended concerts or live theatre at least once a month, which was about double that of the households with children. Households with children likely find it easier, less stressful, and less costly to stay at home and watch TV or videos.

In contrast, for the activity of volunteering, those homes with children were much more active volunteers than were those without children. This is an interesting result because one would think that households with children might not have as much time to volunteer as those without children. These families are typically involved in more volunteering activity as a result of their children's involvement in community activities and events, for example, as coaches of sports teams or assisting in organizations that plan for or promote these activities directly. Not surprisingly, those households with children are also more active in gardening, going on day outings or picnics, and watching sporting events, than households with no children.

The foregoing highlights some of the relationships that emerged between socio-demographic variables and leisure participation. It is difficult to summarize these into a neat package, or identify one group or type of respondent as standing out strongly. As a rough summary it might be stated that leisure participation is more varied for those who are older or retired based on increased awareness levels, discretionary income and available free time. Some activities like reading books/magazines/newspapers, listening to music, entertaining, or visiting friends and family, are common to all throughout the life span. Outdoor activities are enjoyed by all, but more of a focus is given to an activity like gardening in the older age groups likely because until one is married, has children, and real estate, it really is not a

possible or viable activity. Having necessary discretionary income makes a difference too, and until one is financially established in life certain activities do not reveal themselves.

The value or importance of certain leisure activities to leisure lifestyle.

In comparison to leisure participation, this section of the analysis produced interesting results that revealed that some leisure activity, even though it forms much of daily life, is really not that important for respondents. Some activities were highly valued in addition to being highly participated in, and included reading books/magazines/newspapers, listening to music, doing personal fitness activity and phoning friends. Similarly valued, but not as high in participation were activities like gardening, pursuing spiritual activity, and visiting or entertaining friends. This is similar to the pattern identified in the previous section on leisure participation. Most of these leisure activities are easy to pursue and do not necessarily have to involve a lot of effort. Many can in fact be done without leaving ones' home or back yard.

In contrast, some of the activities that appear highly valued, but were low in participation include travelling to visit friends and relatives, and having short holidays/getaways, taking interest courses, doing creative hobbies and crafts, and the outdoor activities of camping or going on day outings/picnics. It may be reasonable to speculate that cost and personal effort are reasons behind the lower participation rates, or that these lower rates represent normal or typical participation, but the value of doing these activities as part of one's leisure lifestyle stands out.

Interestingly, highly participated in activities like watching TV/videos or using the Internet/computers, are considerably lower in value or importance. This indicates the

“casual” nature of these activities and the low leisure value, in terms of interest or challenge they possess.

Cultural activities (being a spectator at sports events, and attending concerts/live theatre) will be mentioned separately because they were taken part in on such a limited basis and the analysis raises some interesting thoughts. It may be that once a month participation in cultural activities is quite reasonable or normal, but this could be explored further. Also, in addition to low monthly participation rates for cultural activities, respondents do not appear to value this type of activity as being all that important in their leisure lives.

The low importance rating may be because cultural activity is so narrowly defined (being a spectator at sporting events, or attending theatre/concerts), typically has a higher cost associated with it, or in the case of attending theatre or concerts, may have the stigma of and are viewed as high culture. The initial thought was that these activities are highly rewarding and might be sought after because of the inherent values of such leisure experience, but respondents also may see these activities as being too “commercial” or costly. Therefore, they might be choosing other cultural activities like going to art galleries, museums, or attending local performing or visual arts opportunities not mentioned here to fill this void. If cultural activities were defined more broadly to include even those activities at the local level, other results might be obtained.

To summarize, it is speculated that the value or importance placed on leisure activity may be reflective of the benefits derived from or of the inherent quality of the leisure experience. Those pursuits that offer higher challenge or personal reward in terms of the function that the activity performs (e.g., family togetherness, being outdoors in nature, coping with life events, pleasure, tension relief, social fun) may be the ones that are given a

higher degree of value by respondents. For example, activities like travelling to visit friends or family, gardening, taking general interest courses, doing personal fitness, or taking a short holiday, all offer more depth and challenge as leisure activities than casual activities like watching TV or using the computer/Internet.

The differences between various socio-demographic variables and the value or importance placed on leisure activities in lifestyle.

On the whole men and women tend to view most leisure activities in the questionnaire as equally important or valuable and only in the following few were differences notable. For example, women placed more value or importance on visiting and entertaining friends; phoning friends; creative hobbies and crafts; spiritual activity; and travelling to visit friends and relatives in their leisure lifestyles than men. In contrast, the only activity on which men placed more value than women, is in doing individual sports. This mirrors the participation rates in these activities for the genders.

When comparing age groups (young adult, adult mid-life, and older adults), the older adult group and the adult mid-life group both placed much higher value or importance on gardening, compared to the young adult group. The mature adults/seniors also placed more importance on attending concerts or live theatre in their lifestyles than the young adult group. Again, this supports previous results on leisure participation which suggest older adults as a cohort typically participate and have the time to enjoy this activity more. Also, because many are nearing retirement or are retired, they are generally more aware of the value of quality leisure in their lifestyles than the younger age groups.

On the whole there were more similarities between the age groups (young adults, adult mid-life, older adults), marital status groups (single, married, SWD), and employment

status groups (employed, full-time homemakers, retired) in the value or level of importance they placed on leisure activities, than there were differences. To briefly summarize, age group does not play a significant role in distinguishing the level of importance or value placed on certain leisure activity within one's leisure lifestyle. All age groups feel that reading books/magazines/newspapers, listening to music, visiting or entertaining friends, doing personal fitness, and travelling are important, valuable and meaningful to their leisure lifestyles.

However, a couple of relationships between demographic variables and level of value on leisure activity are worthy of note. Individuals who are adults at the mid-life stage (over 35 years of age), or older adults (over 55), married and with children at home, are more likely to place a higher importance on gardening. As noted earlier, this value or importance of gardening may be due to factors such as owning a home and feeling responsible for external appearances, or just for personal therapeutic value as a fulfilling leisure activity. The value placed on gardening may be because it is conducive to creating a safe and aesthetic play environment for children in one's backyard, and is an activity that is close to home where the children may easily be observed.

In contrast, the lowest household income group (\$0 to \$39,999) did not place as much value in the activities of gardening, taking interest courses, travelling to visit friends and relatives and taking short holidays or weekend getaways. It may be that having sufficient funds to participate in these activities also makes them a valuable part of one's lifestyle. The lowest income group, who have also been identified as being the young adult group, are also at a different life stage where there is much less focus on these types of activity, and more of a focus on lower-cost socially-oriented leisure activity.

How we feel about our free time: the experience of leisure

Not unexpectedly, the respondents in this study were generally well aware of the value of leisure in their lives and of quality leisure opportunities available to them.

Correspondingly, what the results reflect are low scores on the “boredom” and “anxiety” dimensions of leisure, and high scores on the “challenge” and “awareness” dimensions. It is reasonable to assume that if one is aware of the value of leisure and of quality opportunities available, it would remove the anxiety or stress associated with trying to decide what to do, or if one is capable of doing it. Additionally, these respondents would rarely be bored, because being aware and feeling capable of participation also reduces feelings of boredom.

Respondents reported being anxious from feeling rushed and not having enough time to do the things they would like to do. As discussed earlier in the analysis, the high anxiety scores were reflected by the statements “I often feel I don’t have enough time to do all the things I have to do,” and “Much of the time I feel rushed.” These results indicate agreement towards the notion of “time pressure,” “time constraint,” and experiencing a fast pace of life during their free time/leisure, or lives in general. If the two items regarding “time pressure” (being rushed, not having enough time) were used alone to measure anxiety, a different picture might be obtained than if the remaining four items were measured separately.

Certainly, trying to “fit it all into” a day’s activity can produce time stress, something typically viewed as a negative condition. In general though, it appears the respondents experienced less negative anxiety (that associated with lack of awareness or ability), and more positive anxiety (maybe something akin to challenge), in their daily choice of leisure activity. Upon reflection, respondents tended to report their lives moving too quickly, and due to time constraints having difficulty doing everything they wished to do.

The relationship of various socio-demographic variables to the experience of leisure.

When the effects of various socio-demographic variables were measured against the experience of leisure in respondent's lives, the results were not totally unexpected. For example, other than an indication men were slightly more bored than women in their experience of leisure, there does not appear to be any significant difference between the genders in how they experienced their leisure. Although it was not clearly shown, perhaps women, due to their higher levels of social activity, are also more aware of leisure opportunity than men, and thus less apt to face boredom.

Seeking challenge as part of leisure experience appears to be common to all respondents in the study, and comparisons by various socio-demographic variables did not produce any differences. All respondents reported seeking a high level of challenge in their leisure experience.

If respondents were single, aged 18 to 34 years, and had combined household income below \$39,999, they were more likely to have elevated levels of boredom in comparison to other groupings of socio-demographic variables. This is tied to the awareness dimension of leisure experience. Those who fell into the higher age groups (35 and over), were employed, married or retired, and had higher levels of combined household income are also those who had a higher level of awareness about leisure and leisure opportunity in general.

Lastly, when examined for feelings of anxiety in leisure experience, which in part reflects the uncertainty or nervousness felt if one is unaware of leisure choices, or is unsure of their ability to take part, it was those who were young adults, perceived themselves as "surviving financially," and were single who had elevated levels of anxiety in comparison to the rest of the sample.

The Voluntary Simplicity Lifestyle Value Orientation.

Lifestyle is the main variable under examination in this study, and the essence of the main research question - “Is the experience of leisure and psychological well-being for those who have voluntarily embraced a more simplistic lifestyle value orientation significantly different from those that do not share these values?” Lifestyle has been operationalized and conceptualized using a voluntary simplicity value orientation, a lifestyle mode that was identified as having four main value dimensions: material simplicity, self-determination, ecological awareness, and personal growth (c.f., Elgin & Mitchell, 1977; Burch, 1997).

Earlier in the analysis, all four value dimensions within the voluntary simplicity (VS) lifestyle scale were examined together as a composite indicator of VS [MEAN=5.06, SD=0.57 (See Table 9)]. The composite MEAN value suggests that overall, respondents in the sample generally supported the values inherent in the VS value orientation, and agreed with what could be called VS behaviour, represented by the various items in the scale.

When the individual dimensions (value orientations) of VS and then the composite measure of VS overall were examined in relation to socio-demographic variables, leisure participation, importance placed on leisure activity, leisure experience, and finally, psychological well-being (BABS), some interesting and noteworthy results were revealed.

The effect of socio-demographic variables on voluntary simplicity in lifestyle.

The relationship of gender to voluntary simplicity in lifestyle.

The question of gender effect is typically of interest in much leisure research, although gender differences in lifestyle are not widely reported, and discussions of lifestyle

tend to be more general in nature (Veal, 1993). In examining the voluntary simplicity lifestyle, one would think there would be a difference between the way men and women approach this type of lifestyle. The results were not overwhelming, and while not statistically significant, on the composite VS measure it may be noted that women (MEAN=5.09; SD=0.55) were slightly higher in their support for VS than men (MEAN=4.91; SD=0.62) were. In addition, the only solid difference between the genders arose in the personal growth dimension of VS where women (MEAN=5.51; SD=0.61) were significantly higher in their support of personal growth values than the men (MEAN=5.14; SD=0.70) ($t_{2,232}=-3.48$; $p=.001$). What this suggests is that the women in this study have a stronger focus in their lives on creativity, personal development, mindfulness, and spirituality than men do (see Table 68).

Table 68

Differences in voluntary simplicity lifestyle value orientation by gender (n=232).

| VS dimensions / gender | Voluntary simplicity | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|------|------|--------------|--------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Material simplicity | | | | | |
| Male | 42 | 4.23 | 0.83 | | |
| Female | 190 | 4.23 | 0.74 | -.034 | .973 |
| Self determination | | | | | |
| Male | 42 | 5.31 | 0.75 | | |
| Female | 190 | 5.48 | 0.97 | -1.08 | .281 |
| Ecological awareness | | | | | |
| Male | 42 | 4.96 | 0.86 | | |
| Female | 190 | 5.12 | 0.71 | -1.34 | .180 |
| Personal growth | | | | | |
| Male | 42 | 5.14 | 0.70 | | |
| Female | 190 | 5.51 | 0.61 | -3.48 | .001 |
| Voluntary simplicity (overall) | | | | | |
| Male | 42 | 4.91 | 0.62 | | |
| Female | 190 | 5.09 | 0.55 | -1.88 | .061* |

* indicates notable result

These results however, suggest that men approach the personal growth dimension of the voluntary simplicity lifestyle differently than women, and possibly choose different means of exploring this component or developing themselves personally (see Table 68). For example, men may like to go fishing in order to be by themselves in nature, while women may like to quietly read a book in the back yard, for probably the same reasons and benefits. This may be a reasonable result as the differences between men and women on numerous factors have been well-documented, especially in popular literature (e.g., Gray, 1994).

The relationship of age group to voluntary simplicity in lifestyle.

One might think that as a person ages and life becomes more patterned, lifestyle becomes more stable and set. Some researchers as early as the 1920s theorized that lifestyle was largely determined by age four or five (Adler, 1929, as cited in Veal, 1993, p.236), but more recently others argue many factors influence the development of, or change a lifestyle over the life course (c.f., Veal, 1993).

The results of this study show mild to moderately positive relationships towards several of the dimensions of the VS lifestyle, and to the VS composite measure (see Table 69). For example, in the material simplicity dimension there is a distinct, significant difference between the young adult age group (MEAN=3.87; SD=0.76) and both the mid-life adults (MEAN=4.34; SD=0.73) and the older adults (MEAN=4.47; SD=0.67). Both the adult mid-life group and the mature adult/senior group show significantly more support for material simplicity in lifestyle than the younger group ($F_{2,227}=11.36$; $p<.001$), possibly indicating that as respondents age they tend to place less emphasis on material possessions and consumerism.

In the self determination dimension of VS, all three age groupings were very uniform in their adherence to this value dimension, thus no significant differences between the groups was reported (see Table 69). The self-determination dimension, as previously discussed, represents values of personal authenticity, integrity, healthy autonomy, self-reliance, and to having control over personal decisions. The mean scores for all three age groups (young adults=5.37; mid-life adults=5.45; older adults=5.56) indicate solid agreement for this value dimension.

When comparing age groups to the ecological awareness dimension of VS, three significantly distinct groups emerged. The young adult group (MEAN=4.80; SD=0.62) was significantly lower in its adherence to ecological awareness values and activities compared to the mid-life adults (MEAN=5.13; SD=0.71), and both these groups were significantly lower than the older adult group (MEAN=5.47; SD=0.85) ($F_{2,227}=11.25$; $p<.001$) (see Table 69). The older adult group held the strongest degree of support for ecological awareness or items surrounding human interconnectedness with the environment, recycling, etc.

In the personal growth dimension, the young adult age group (MEAN=5.29; SD=0.58) was significantly lower in their support of these values than the older adults group (MEAN=5.63; SD=0.66). The mid-life adults (MEAN=5.47; SD=0.65) were slightly higher than the young adults and slightly lower than the older adults in their support for personal growth values, but this group difference was not significant. On the whole, respondents agreed with the values presented by this VS dimension, reflected in the average mean score for the age groups (MEAN=5.44). The importance placed on personal growth in lifestyle, and such activities and behaviour (e.g., developing oneself, learning, etc.) is much stronger for older adults than young adults, and seems to increase with age.

Table 69

Differences in voluntary simplicity lifestyle value orientation
by age group (n=230).

| VS dimensions / age groups | Voluntary simplicity | | | | <u>F</u> | <u>p</u> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------|--------------|-----------------|----------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Material simplicity | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 65 | 3.87 ^a | 0.76 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 126 | 4.34 ^b | 0.73 | 11.36 | <.001 | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 39 | 4.47 ^b | 0.67 | | | |
| Self determination | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 65 | 5.37 | 0.99 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 126 | 5.45 | 0.89 | .451 | .638 | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 39 | 5.56 | 1.03 | | | |
| Ecological awareness | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 65 | 4.80 ^a | 0.62 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 126 | 5.13 ^b | 0.71 | 11.25 | <.001 | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 39 | 5.47 ^c | 0.85 | | | |
| Personal growth | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 65 | 5.29 ^a | 0.58 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 126 | 5.47 ^{a, b} | 0.65 | 3.69 | .026 | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 39 | 5.63 ^b | 0.66 | | | |
| Voluntary simplicity - overall | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 65 | 4.83 ^a | 0.52 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 126 | 5.10 ^b | 0.53 | 8.93 | <.001 | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 39 | 5.28 ^b | 0.66 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

When the voluntary simplicity (VS) composite measure was examined, both the mid-life adults (MEAN=5.10; SD=0.53) and the older adults (MEAN=5.28; SD=0.66) had significantly higher support for the overall VS value orientation than did the young adults (MEAN=4.83; SD=0.52) ($F_{2,227}=8.93$; $p<.001$) (see Table 69). What these results suggest is that support or adherence to the value orientation presented by VS is much stronger as a person ages. In this study it appears that respondents aged 35 years of age or older support VS values of material simplicity (e.g., less emphasis on material possessions and consumerism), ecological awareness (e.g., understanding the interconnectedness of all

things), and personal growth (e.g., developing one's inner self) significantly more than those younger adults between 18 and 35 years of age. In addition, all three age groups support self-determination values (e.g., personal authenticity, integrity, healthy autonomy, self-reliance) reasonably equally.

The relationship of marital status to voluntary simplicity in lifestyle.

It is easy to speculate that there might be differences in the approach to voluntary simplicity (VS) based on whether or not someone was married or living alone due to being separated, divorced or widowed. It might be reasonable to expect the way one thought or behaved might be influenced by one's spouse, or by living together, more than it would if living alone. Humans are social creatures and tend to be influenced, often significantly, by those around them. For example, for those who are single, influences largely come from their friends, peers or family, and for most single people social activities are highly valued and important.

Overall, significant differences appeared between the single group and either the married or SWD group across all of the dimensions of VS (see Table 70). When examining the material simplicity dimension ($F_{2,228}=5.59, p=.004$), respondents who were single (MEAN=3.93; SD=0.79) were significantly lower in their support for material simplicity from those who were married (MEAN=4.32; SD=0.75). In addition, the SWD respondents (MEAN=4.23; SD=0.52) were somewhat higher than the singles but similar in their level of support towards material simplicity compared to those who were married, but this difference was not statistically significant. It appears as if those who are single place less value on or are "undecided" about material simplicity issues or attempting to reduce the "stuff" in their lives

and emphasize consumerism more than the married or SWD groups. Having fewer social commitments such as a permanent relationship or family, the singles are freer to spend more on material goods that fulfill personal needs or wishes (see Table 70).

The self-determination dimension ($F_{2,228}=3.13$, $p=.046$) revealed more of a difference between the married group (MEAN=5.40; SD=0.92) and the SWD respondents (MEAN=5.90; SD=1.01) in terms of their level of support for self determination, than with the single group (MEAN=5.37; SD=0.93). In general, all three groups expressed reasonably strong agreement and support for self-determination, indicating the importance of self-reliance and control over personal decision making in their lives. Those who were SWD, possibly because they have had to cope with living by themselves and relying on their personal skills again after a life with a partner, showed significantly stronger support for self-determination than those who were married and single (see Table 70).

Analysis of the ecological awareness dimension of VS ($F_{2,228}=5.82$, $p=.046$) also revealed a significant difference between the single respondents (MEAN=4.80; SD=0.67) and those who were married (MEAN=5.19; SD=0.75). The single group is significantly lower in their agreement with issues like the environmental impact of their activity, recycling, etc., than the married and SWD groups that expressed much stronger support for ecological awareness.

The personal growth dimension ($F_{2,228}=3.62$, $p=.028$), much like the self-determination dimension also revealed a reasonably solid expression of understanding and support from all three groups of respondents – singles (MEAN=5.24; SD=0.60), married (MEAN=5.51; SD=0.63), and SWD (MEAN=5.49; SD=0.70). However, the singles reported

a significantly lower level of support for personal growth than the married group. Those who were SWD also reported a higher level of agreement for personal growth values, but this was

Table 70
Differences in voluntary simplicity lifestyle value orientation by marital status (n=231).

| VS dimensions / groups | Voluntary simplicity | | | | <u>F</u> | <u>p</u> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Material simplicity | | | | | | |
| Single | 55 | 3.93 ^a | 0.79 | | | |
| Married | 152 | 4.32 ^b | 0.75 | 5.59 | .004 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 24 | 4.23 ^{a,b} | 0.52 | | | |
| Self determination | | | | | | |
| Single | 55 | 5.37 ^{a,b} | 0.93 | | | |
| Married | 152 | 5.40 ^a | 0.92 | 3.13 | .046 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 24 | 5.90 ^b | 1.01 | | | |
| Ecological awareness | | | | | | |
| Single | 55 | 4.80 ^a | 0.67 | | | |
| Married | 152 | 5.19 ^b | 0.75 | 5.82 | .003 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 24 | 5.16 ^{a,b} | 0.69 | | | |
| Personal growth | | | | | | |
| Single | 55 | 5.24 ^a | 0.60 | | | |
| Married | 152 | 5.51 ^b | 0.63 | 3.62 | .028 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 24 | 5.49 ^{a,b} | 0.70 | | | |
| Voluntary simplicity - overall | | | | | | |
| Single | 55 | 4.84 ^a | 0.56 | | | |
| Married | 152 | 5.11 ^b | 0.55 | 5.69 | .004 | |
| Separated, widowed or divorced | 24 | 5.21 ^b | 0.61 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

not statistically significant in comparison to the other two groups. Similar to comparisons with the other VS dimensions, the married and SWD groups believe in and support personal growth values and activities (like spiritual, or further learning opportunities) in their lifestyles, much more than those who are single do.

When voluntary simplicity (VS) as a composite measure was analyzed, distinct differences between all three groups of respondents were revealed ($F_{2,228}=5.69$, $p=.004$) (see Table 70). Support for or agreement with the overall VS values represented by the four dimensions was highest for the SWD respondents (MEAN=5.21; SD=0.61) and the married group (MEAN=5.10; SD=0.55), and significantly less so for those who were single (MEAN=4.84; SD=0.56). What this demonstrates is that those respondents who are married or were once married (SWD) have a much stronger support for a voluntary simplicity value orientation in lifestyle. The single respondents consistently scored lower on all dimensions, reflected by their composite measure score. It may be that during the single stage, one's focus is more on relationships and social aspects of life and not much thought is yet given to examining aspects of one's lifestyle or the way one fully experiences life. The single stage of life often corresponds with the young adult age group, although SWD respondents may be of any age. Single people may be more concerned with personal gratification, and on belonging with or identifying with others, rather than on larger society or community issues. Depending on the social relationships formed, one's lifestyle could yet take a number of turns or shifts, which demonstrates the dynamic nature of lifestyle over the life course.

The relationship of level of household income and perceived financial circumstance with voluntary simplicity in lifestyle.

The results revealed only a significant difference among income groups with the ecological awareness dimension of VS. Within this dimension the upper middle income group (MEAN=5.31; SD=0.68) displayed the highest degree of support for ecological awareness values, and differed significantly from the highest income group, which reported the lowest level of support (MEAN=4.89; 0.83). Possible reasons for this difference are

difficult to interpret. Also, both the lowest income group (MEAN=4.95; SD=0.75) and the lower middle income group (MEAN=5.23; SD=0.67) were slightly higher than the highest income group in their level of ecological awareness ($F_{3,205}=4.18, p=.007$). The mean average for all four income groups in this dimension indicates general positive support for ecological awareness (MEAN=5.10), an understanding of the interconnectedness of all things, and a belief in environmental issues like recycling, etc., (see Table 71).

In general, there was similarity between the household income groups in the level of support for activities and behaviours listed as part of each of the other VS value dimensions (material simplicity, self-determination, and personal growth) and with the VS composite measure overall. For example, in the material simplicity dimension the four income groups (overall MEAN=4.21) reflected similar support for reducing emphasis on materialism or consumerism in one's life. This result was slightly lower than that of the other three dimensions – self-determination (overall MEAN=5.46), ecological awareness (overall MEAN=5.10), and the personal growth dimension (overall MEAN=5.45). Respondents from all levels of income reflected a higher level of support for the behaviours and values/attitudes reflected in the latter three dimensions of VS, than for those represented by the material simplicity dimension.

Finally, the four income groups also were very consistent on the composite VS measure (overall MEAN=5.06), indicating general positive support for VS regardless of income level. One might interpret this to mean that household income has no effect on whether an individual supports a VS lifestyle or VS behaviour. This is interesting because

Table 71

Differences in voluntary simplicity lifestyle value orientation
by combined household income (n=209).

| VS dimensions / groups | Voluntary simplicity | | | | <u>F</u> | <u>p</u> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------|------|----------|----------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Material simplicity | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 49 | 4.14 | 0.79 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 54 | 4.21 | 0.78 | | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 54 | 4.39 | 0.80 | 1.51 | | .213 |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 52 | 4.09 | 0.71 | | | |
| Self determination | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 49 | 5.50 | 1.28 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 54 | 5.35 | 0.90 | | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 54 | 5.58 | 0.94 | .536 | | .658 |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 52 | 5.43 | 0.64 | | | |
| Ecological awareness | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 49 | 4.95 ^{a, b} | 0.75 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 54 | 5.23 ^{a, b} | 0.67 | | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 54 | 5.31 ^a | 0.68 | 4.18 | | .007 |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 52 | 4.89 ^b | 0.83 | | | |
| Personal growth | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 49 | 5.36 | 0.62 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 54 | 5.49 | 0.70 | | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 54 | 5.50 | 0.65 | .508 | | .678 |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 52 | 5.42 | 0.63 | | | |
| Voluntary simplicity - overall | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 49 | 4.99 | 0.70 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 54 | 5.07 | 0.57 | | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 54 | 5.19 | 0.53 | 1.79 | | .150 |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 52 | 4.96 | 0.49 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

household income is typically used to indicate level of affluence, and the census figures mentioned earlier point to an affluent sample. However, level of household income may not necessarily be a good indicator of affluence. Also, as was reported earlier, even though respondents in this sample had above-average household income and are considered affluent, they perceived their financial circumstances quite differently. For example, some

families with a high level of household income might report barely being able to make ends meet, which contradicts what one initially might think. It is possible that people may only begin to think about voluntary simplicity once their basic needs have been met. A certain level of discretionary income or affluence may be necessary, and as these results show this is the case for the majority of respondents.

When the respondent's financial circumstances were examined with respect to lifestyle (VS), the results revealed no significant relationships to any of the dimensions of the VS lifestyle or to the concept of VS by itself. As with previous statements regarding household income, similar things may be said about the three financial circumstance groups, those who were "surviving financially," those who felt they had "some discretionary income," and those who felt they were "comfortable plus" (e.g., were comfortable with their level of income, or had more than they needed).

As in the examination of household income, all three groups of respondents had very similar support for the four VS dimensions, shown by the results of the overall VS composite measure (MEAN=5.06), regardless of perceived financial circumstance. With all three groups, there was slightly less support for the material simplicity dimension (overall MEAN=4.23) in comparison to the other three VS dimensions – self-determination (overall MEAN=5.44), ecological awareness (overall MEAN=5.10), and the personal growth dimension (overall MEAN=5.45). One could interpret this to mean that perceived financial circumstance has no effect on whether an individual supports a VS lifestyle or VS behaviour.

The relationship of employment status to voluntary simplicity in lifestyle.

Similar to the results presented when household income or perceived financial circumstance were compared to VS, there were no significant differences amongst the employment status groups (employed, full-time homemakers, and retired respondents) when compared to the voluntary simplicity value orientation (VS), or its dimensions (see Table 72).

The three categories of employment status were very consistent in their scores on each of the separate dimensions of VS, with the exception of the material simplicity dimension to which respondents in each of the three groups expressed somewhat less support (overall MEAN=4.25), there was greater support on the other three dimensions and in the VS composite measure overall, i.e., on the self-determination dimension (overall MEAN=5.45), on the ecological awareness dimension (overall MEAN=5.10), and on the personal growth dimension (overall MEAN=5.44). The employed, full-time homemakers, and retired respondents were also very consistent on the VS composite measure (overall MEAN=5.06) indicating a reasonably high support for the values of voluntary simplicity. Support for VS does not appear to have been differentiated by whether one was employed or retired. Although it was not considered statistically significant, the retired group supported three of the VS value dimensions (material simplicity excluded) and the VS composite measure more strongly than either the full-time homemakers or the retired groups (see Table 72).

Interestingly, post hoc analysis revealed a significant difference between the retired group (MEAN=5.75; SD=0.59) and both the employed and full-time homemaker groups (MEAN=5.40), although the ANOVA result was just outside the confidence limits ($F_{2,202}=2.88$; $p=.058$) (see Table 72). This group appears to value personal growth

Table 72

Differences in voluntary simplicity lifestyle value orientation by employment status (n=205).

| VS dimensions / groups | Voluntary simplicity | | | | F | p |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------|------|----------|----------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Material simplicity | | | | | | |
| Employed | 154 | 4.20 | 0.75 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 29 | 4.54 | 0.80 | 2.65 | .073 | |
| Retired | 22 | 4.29 | 0.52 | | | |
| Self determination | | | | | | |
| Employed | 154 | 5.49 | 0.89 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 29 | 5.17 | 1.20 | 1.54 | .217 | |
| Retired | 22 | 5.58 | 1.01 | | | |
| Ecological awareness | | | | | | |
| Employed | 154 | 5.07 | 0.71 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 29 | 5.06 | 0.93 | 1.49 | .229 | |
| Retired | 22 | 5.36 | 0.74 | | | |
| Personal growth | | | | | | |
| Employed | 154 | 5.40 ^a | 0.64 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 29 | 5.40 ^a | 0.69 | 2.88 | .058* | |
| Retired | 22 | 5.75 ^b | 0.59 | | | |
| Voluntary simplicity - overall | | | | | | |
| Employed | 154 | 5.04 | 0.58 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 29 | 5.04 | 0.55 | 1.24 | .293 | |
| Retired | 22 | 5.24 | 0.58 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p < .05$). * indicates notable result.

activity (e.g., being creative, focussing on spirituality, and developing their inner life) more than either of the other two groups, perhaps because of their life stage which provides more time for such activities like reflection on the past, or focussing on family relationships.

In this study only four respondents indicated being unemployed. It might be reasonable to expect that if a large number of unemployed people were included here, their responses and feelings regarding dimensions of the VS value orientation in lifestyle might be significantly different. It might also be argued that unemployed people experience a form of

involuntary simplicity, and the current state of unemployment they face is only temporary. In essence they would sooner be working than not.

The relationship of households with or without children to voluntary simplicity in lifestyle.

Finally, when comparing households with or without children to the way they agreed with the VS value orientation, some significant differences can be reported. Respondents in households with children (MEAN=4.40; SD=0.76) were significantly more favourable towards material simplicity than those without children (MEAN=4.07; SD=0.72) ($t_{2,230}=-3.41$; $p=.001$) (see Table 73). This might be due to the extra financial burden raising children brings with it, and the need to control spending on and purchase of material goods and services as part of this process. Both homes with and without children were consistently similar in their support for VS behaviours and values in the self-determination and ecological awareness dimensions.

A significant difference was revealed between homes with children (MEAN=5.55; SD=0.62) and those without (MEAN=5.35; SD=0.64) on the personal growth dimension of VS ($t_{2,230}=-2.52$; $p=.012$), indicating a significantly stronger interest and belief in personal growth activities (e.g., creative, spiritual, educational) in homes where children were present. When the voluntary simplicity (VS) composite measure was considered, there was also a significant statistical difference between the two groups ($t_{2,230}=-2.24$; $p=.018$) indicating that those homes with children generally had a higher degree of support or agreement for the values and behaviours of VS. It appears as if having children present in the home creates an environment where voluntary simplicity makes sense. Interpersonal relationships are highly important, and parents are constantly in the role of teaching their children about the world,

and transferring their values and beliefs to their children, as can be seen by the level of support given to the various value dimensions.

Table 73

Differences in voluntary simplicity lifestyle by households with or without children (n=232).

| VS dimensions / gender | Voluntary simplicity | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|------|------|--------------|-------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Material simplicity | | | | | |
| Homes without children | 120 | 4.07 | 0.72 | -3.41 | .001 |
| Homes with one or more children | 112 | 4.40 | 0.76 | | |
| Self determination | | | | | |
| Homes without children | 120 | 5.44 | 0.93 | -.122 | .903 |
| Homes with one or more children | 112 | 5.46 | 0.95 | | |
| Ecological awareness | | | | | |
| Homes without children | 120 | 5.02 | 0.73 | -1.51 | .132 |
| Homes with one or more children | 112 | 5.17 | 0.75 | | |
| Personal growth | | | | | |
| Homes without children | 120 | 5.35 | 0.64 | -2.52 | .012 |
| Homes with one or more children | 112 | 5.55 | 0.62 | | |
| Voluntary simplicity (overall) | | | | | |
| Homes without children | 120 | 4.97 | 0.58 | -2.38 | .018 |
| Homes with one or more children | 112 | 5.15 | 0.54 | | |

Summary of the relationship of socio-demographic variables to the VS lifestyle value orientation.

In examining the voluntary simplicity value orientation in lifestyle, one might think there would be a difference between the way men and women approach this. The results however, did not point to any such differences, with the *exception* of the personal growth dimension of VS. Here, the results show men approach personal growth in a voluntary simplicity lifestyle differently than women, and possibly choose different means of exploring

this component or developing themselves personally. The results indicated women had a significantly higher level of support for personal growth values and activities than men.

In the material simplicity dimension of the VS value orientation, where the focus is on sufficiency, minimalism, a deliberate reduction of consumption, etc., those respondents who were over 35 years in age, married, and were in households with children tended to give higher support for these values. Those who were young and single were the most ambivalent about material simplicity.

For the self-determination dimension of the VS value orientation (personal authenticity, integrity, healthy autonomy, and self-reliance) the majority of respondents were uniformly in support of the values represented, and no differences on the socio-demographic variables were reported.

Those who were aged 35 years and over and married were also most in support for values in the ecological awareness dimension (appreciating the interconnection and interdependence of all natural systems and active cooperation with them), while the single, young-adult group was also in support of these values, they were not as strongly supportive as those who were older and married.

As stated earlier, there is a difference between men and women in their support of the values surrounding personal growth in the VS lifestyle (a focus in one's life on creativity, personal development, mindfulness, and spirituality), but this could be explored in greater depth. Those in households with children were also more in support of personal growth values than those who were not, perhaps because these respondents (most likely women) are typically in the role of nurturing young children and dealing with their emotional health.

While all respondents reported a general agreement and support for the voluntary simplicity value orientation, when the four value dimensions of the VS lifestyle were examined together as a composite measure, it was those who were aged 35 years or older and married or SWD (single/widowed/divorced), that showed higher levels of support than single young adults.

The relationship of various socio-demographic variables to psychological well-being (PWB).

In understanding psychological well-being (PWB) it is realistic to think that certain of the socio-demographic variables like age, gender and income would affect the personal sense of well-being or level of happiness. For example, it is quite reasonable to assume that when one marries, their general life satisfaction increases. Not all marriages end up being positive, but on the whole this is probably accurate. Likewise, people associate having more money with happiness. This idea is equally debatable and examples of happiness can be found at both ends of the spectrum (e.g., those having very little money, as well as those having a lot of money may be equally happy). In this study, both questions about level of household income and a description of financial circumstance (i.e., how people felt about their finances) were asked. An answer to how much income a family has does not, in a strict socio-demographic fashion, tell us about their level of PWB or happiness. For example, asking respondents to report their household income level may only reveal a family earns over \$100,000 in combined income. It does not tell us if they have large debt or cash-flow problems, possibly creating stress and tension within the family unit. In this case, a more subjective evaluation like individual perception of financial circumstances may be more closely related to level of PWB.

For a broader understanding of the data, both levels of positive and negative affect are examined in the relationship between various socio-demographic variables and PWB. In addition, the Bradburn Affect Balance Scale (BABS) is better understood if it is recognized that both positive and negative affect scores can range between “5” and “15,” and when the two scales are combined and reported as an overall BABS score (the positive affect score is subtracted from the negative affect score), with a range between “-10” and “+10,” and an average, or “balanced” score theoretically being “0.”

Differences in psychological well-being (PWB) by gender.

The expectation was there might be a difference between men and women in PWB because other studies have shown women typically report higher levels of negative affect (e.g., Argyle, 1987, p.174). However, the overall relationship or difference between gender and levels of psychological well-being (BABS) was not significant ($t_{2, 232} = -.161, p = .872$), and for both genders the combined BABS result was slightly negative (average MEAN = -1.28), indicating a reasonably balanced level of well-being (see Table 74).

Table 74

Differences in psychological well-being by gender (n=234).

| BABS dimensions / Groups | Psychological well-being | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------|------|-------|------|
| | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Positive Affect | | | | | |
| Male | 42 | 11.40 | 1.67 | .968 | .334 |
| Female | 192 | 11.09 | 1.97 | | |
| Negative Affect | | | | | |
| Male | 42 | 12.71 | 2.05 | 1.06 | .292 |
| Female | 192 | 12.33 | 2.17 | | |
| BABS affect balance | | | | | |
| Male | 42 | -1.31 | 2.65 | -.161 | .872 |
| Female | 192 | -1.24 | 2.53 | | |

Differences in psychological well-being (PWB) by age group.

In the comparison of age groups on levels of psychological well-being (PWB), some interesting results were revealed (see Table 75). Generally speaking, the affect balance (BABS) measure showed significant differences between the young adult age group (18 to 34) and both of the two older groups ($F_{2,228}=7.35$; $p=.001$).

What this suggests is that higher levels of PWB are experienced in the younger age group. This is somewhat counterintuitive because one might think that as a person grows older life becomes richer and more rewarding, consequently leading to a higher sense of happiness or well-being. These results suggest the opposite to be true (see Table 75).

Table 75

Differences in psychological well-being (PWB) by age group (n=231).

| BABS dimensions / Groups | Psychological well-being | | | | F | p |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------|----------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Positive affect | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 65 | 11.34 | 1.99 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 127 | 11.00 | 1.97 | .793 | .454 | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 39 | 11.28 | 1.59 | | | |
| Negative affect | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 65 | 11.68 ^a | 1.96 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 127 | 12.44 ^b | 2.17 | 8.68 | <.001 | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 39 | 13.44 ^c | 2.04 | | | |
| BABS affect balance | | | | | | |
| Young adult – 18 to 34 | 65 | -0.34 ^a | 2.52 | | | |
| Adult mid-life – 35 to 54 | 127 | -1.44 ^b | 2.64 | 7.35 | .001 | |
| Mature adult & Senior – 55 plus | 39 | -2.15 ^b | 1.76 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p<.05$).

Part of an explanation may be provided when both positive and negative affect is examined separately. In viewing positive affect, the results indicated no significant

differences between the age groupings, and all three groups appear to enjoy similar levels of positive well-being (overall MEAN=11.14). In contrast, for negative affect, significant differences were found between all three age groups, in increasing degree from young to old ($F_{2,228}=8.68$; $p<.001$). The young adults (MEAN=11.68; SD=1.96) experienced a significantly lower level of negative affect than both the mid-life adults (MEAN=12.44; SD=2.17), and the older adults (MEAN=13.44; SD=2.04). Consequently, the difference in overall well-being is a result of differences in negative affect and not positive affect, possibly due to the effect of an increasing number of negative life events experienced by older respondents (e.g., illness or death of a close friend or family member) (see Table 75).

Differences in psychological well-being (PWB) by marital status.

The levels of positive affect for the three marital status groups were reasonably consistent indicating positive well-being (overall MEAN=11.13; SD=1.91). On the other hand, the differences in levels of negative affect between these groups produced significant results ($F_{2,230}=5.94$; $p=.003$) (see Table 76). The primary difference was found between those respondents who were single (MEAN=11.56; SD=2.06) and those who were married (MEAN=12.71; SD=2.10), but not between either of the other groupings. Interestingly, the lowest level of negative affect was in the married group which might indicate that married life brings with it stresses and challenges not faced by either those who are single or separated, widowed or divorced.

When the marital status groups were compared for overall affect balance, it was again the married group that stood out ($F_{2,230}=4.32$; $p=.014$). The overall well-being of the married group was the lowest of the three groups (MEAN=-1.59; SD=2.39) and was significantly

different from both the single group (MEAN=-0.44; SD=2.59) and the SWD group (MEAN=-1.12; SD=3.02). This overall BABS result is contrary to the common belief that

Table 76

Differences in psychological well-being (PWB) by marital status (n=233).

| BABS dimensions / Groups | Psychological well-being | | | | F | p |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Positive affect | | | | | | |
| Single | 55 | 11.13 | 1.93 | | | |
| Married | 153 | 11.12 | 1.92 | .044 | .957 | |
| Separated/Widowed/Divorced | 25 | 11.24 | 1.90 | | | |
| Negative affect | | | | | | |
| Single | 55 | 11.56 ^a | 2.06 | | | |
| Married | 153 | 12.71 ^b | 2.10 | 5.94 | .003 | |
| Separated/Widowed/Divorced | 25 | 12.36 ^{a, b} | 2.29 | | | |
| BABS affect balance | | | | | | |
| Single | 55 | -0.44 ^a | 2.59 | | | |
| Married | 153 | -1.59 ^b | 2.39 | 4.32 | .014 | |
| Separated/Widowed/Divorced | 25 | -1.12 ^{a, b} | 3.02 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

one is happier being married. For example, this study found that married respondents experienced “better” leisure than singles, and being married or SWD shows one is less bored and anxious, and more aware when experiencing leisure than those who are single, but all three groups equally seek challenging leisure opportunities as part of their lifestyles (see Table 63).

Literature is abundant that indicates leisure plays an important role in fostering interpersonal relationships and those who are married often tend to be happier than either those who are single, separated, widowed or divorced (e.g., Kelly, 1983, 1993; Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). These results go against the grain, adding fuel to the debate, and suggest that

even though positive affect levels are almost identical with those who are single or SWD, being married leads to higher levels of negative well-being (see Table 76).

Differences in psychological well-being (PWB) by household income and perceived financial circumstance.

The relative level of positive affect across the four household income categories was reasonably consistent and differences between the groups were not significant (see Table 77). Level of household income does not appear to affect respondent's general level of positive well-being. Significant differences arose in relation to the negative affect variable however,

Table 77

Differences in psychological well-being (PWB) by household income (n=209).

| BABS dimensions / Groups | Psychological well-being | | | | F | p |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|------|----------|----------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Positive Affect | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 50 | 10.82 | 1.93 | | | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 54 | 11.65 | 2.04 | 1.86 | .138 | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 54 | 11.28 | 2.07 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 51 | 10.98 | 1.66 | | | |
| Negative Affect | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 50 | 11.90 ^a | 2.35 | 4.14 | .007 | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 54 | 11.80 ^a | 2.41 | | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 54 | 12.70 ^{a, b} | 1.90 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 51 | 13.04 ^b | 1.92 | | | |
| BABS – affect balance | | | | | | |
| Lowest income - \$0 to \$39,999 | 50 | -1.08 ^{a, b} | 2.64 | 5.28 | .002 | |
| Lower middle - \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 54 | -0.15 ^a | 2.94 | | | |
| Upper middle - \$70,000 to \$99,999 | 54 | -1.43 ^b | 2.12 | | | |
| Highest - \$100,000 and over | 51 | -2.06 ^b | 2.31 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test (p<.05).

and both the lowest income group (MEAN=11.90; SD=2.35) and the lower middle income group (MEAN=11.80; SD=2.41) reported a significantly lower level of negative well-being (more positive) than those in the highest combined household income group (MEAN=13.04; SD=1.92) ($F_{2,205}=4.14$; $p=.007$). These results indicate that well-being decreases as household income increases, although the differences do not start to appear until combined household income is at least over the \$70,000 mark, and are significant with family income over \$100,000.

When overall affect balance (BABS) was examined, it was shown that the highest level of well-being was in the lower middle income group, or those with \$40,000 to \$69,999 in household income (MEAN=-0.15; SD=2.94). This group showed a significantly higher level of affect balance than both the upper middle income group and the highest income group (see Table 77). The lower middle income group's level of affect balance was also considerably higher than the lowest income group (MEAN=-1.08; SD=2.64) although the difference was not statistically significant.

These results support the idea that as household income increases, psychological well-being is reduced. Although no group differences are reported for positive affect, a similar pattern can be seen. It must be noted too, that the lowest income category (\$0 to \$39,999) also experienced decreased well-being in comparison to the lower middle income group (\$40,000 to \$69,999), suggesting that low or very low income is also detrimental to one's well-being. A certain basic level of combined household income is necessary to achieve and maintain an overall PWB balance, but it appears PWB decreases as income increases after this basic level is achieved (see Table 77).

Because respondents were also asked to report their perception of their personal financial circumstances regardless of how much income the family earned, the results from this comparison might point to a more meaningful relationship with PWB or happiness than just a reported level of household income would (see Table 78).

Similar to the above analysis regarding household income, when only positive affect was examined, the differences between the three financial circumstance groups was not significant and all three perceptions of financial circumstance yielded a similar level of positive well-being (see Table 78). In contrast, the negative affect component of the BABS yielded three distinct groups with significant differences between each ($F_{2,226}=12.65$; $p<.001$). The “comfortable plus” group (MEAN=13.00; SD=1.82) reported a significantly

Table 78

Differences in psychological well-being (PWB)
by perceived financial circumstance (n=210).

| BABS dimensions / Groups | Psychological well-being | | | | <u>F</u> | <u>p</u> |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------|-------|----------|----------|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Positive affect | | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 43 | 10.77 | 2.17 | | | |
| Some discretionary income | 70 | 10.89 | 1.82 | 2.57 | .079 | |
| Comfortable plus | 116 | 11.41 | 1.85 | | | |
| Negative affect | | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 43 | 11.26 ^a | 2.62 | | | |
| Some discretionary income | 70 | 12.04 ^a | 2.03 | 12.65 | <.001 | |
| Comfortable plus | 116 | 13.00 ^b | 1.82 | | | |
| BABS – affect balance | | | | | | |
| Surviving financially | 43 | -0.49 ^a | 2.66 | | | |
| Some discretionary income | 70 | -1.16 ^{a, b} | 2.42 | 3.05 | .049 | |
| Comfortable plus | 116 | -1.60 ^b | 2.56 | | | |

Note: superscripts indicate groups significantly different from one another based on Tukey HSD post hoc test ($p<.05$).

lower level of negative affect than either the “some discretionary” income group (MEAN=12.04; SD=2.03) and the “surviving financially” group (MEAN=11.26; SD=2.62).

With the affect balance measure (BABS), because positive affect is subtracted from negative affect, the differences were noticeable but less strongly significant ($F_{2,226}=3.049$; $p=.049$). The “surviving financially” group (MEAN=-.049; SD=2.66) reported a significantly higher (more positive) level of affect balance than the “comfortable plus” group (MEAN=-1.60; SD=2.56), but only slightly higher than the “some discretionary” income group. As perception of financial circumstance grew “rosier,” the level of well-being appeared to decrease, suggesting that, similar to the analysis of household income, even though respondents perceived their financial circumstances to be positive this did not equate with increased affect balance or overall psychological well-being.

It may be plausible that when families face “tight money” times (e.g., cash flow or high debt situations) they may resort to frugality and control their spending habits more, and possibly as a result, be more aware or closely connected to what the family is doing, and what activities they are involved in, especially where expenditure of funds are involved. This may be more rewarding or satisfying in the sense it provides personal control over family life, and thus may lead to heightened well-being. Families might in fact begin to do things together that do not involve financial expenditure.

Differences in psychological well-being (PWB) by employment status.

The relationship between employment and well-being was not statistically significant, indicating relatively equal positive and negative affect, and overall affect balance (PWB) for the three employment status groups (see Table 79). Those who are employed (MEAN=-1.36;

Table 79

Differences in psychological well-being (PWB) by employment status (n=206).

| BABS dimensions / groups | Psychological well-being | | | | F | p |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|------|------|------|---|
| | n | Mean | SD | | | |
| Positive affect | | | | | | |
| Employed | 155 | 10.99 | 1.86 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 29 | 11.07 | 2.19 | 1.46 | .234 | |
| Retired | 22 | 11.73 | 1.78 | | | |
| Negative affect | | | | | | |
| Employed | 155 | 12.32 | 2.13 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 29 | 12.24 | 2.39 | 1.76 | .174 | |
| Retired | 22 | 13.23 | 2.18 | | | |
| BABS – affect balance | | | | | | |
| Employed | 155 | -1.36 | 2.55 | | | |
| Full-time homemaker | 29 | -1.17 | 2.66 | .105 | .901 | |
| Retired | 22 | -1.50 | 2.37 | | | |

SD=2.55) or are full-time homemakers (MEAN=-1.17; SD=2.66) seem to experience a general level of well-being in either of these vocations, or in the case of those being retired (MEAN=-1.50; SD=2.37), are reasonably comfortable with their life stage, even though their affect balance (BABS) result is marginally negative. Although not statistically significant, the results show that retired respondents had slightly higher levels of both positive and negative affect compared to the other two groups. This may reflect the full, rich lives they may be leading, high in well-being and satisfaction yet experiencing personal or family trauma that often attends a long life.

Differences in psychological well-being (PWB) by households with or without children.

One might think that there would be a difference in level of psychological well-being between households that have children and those that have none, but the results of the analysis did not bear this out ($t_{2,232}=.244$; $p=.807$) (see Table 80). In fact, both those homes

with children and those without were reasonably consistent in the level of PWB reported. For example, both groups were reasonably similar for positive affect (average MEAN=11.15), for negative affect (average MEAN=12.40), and for overall affect balance (average MEAN=-1.25) (see Table 80).

Table 80

Differences in psychological well-being (PWB) by households with or without children (n=234).

| BABS dimensions / groups | Psychological well-being | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|------|-------|------|
| | n | Mean | SD | t | p |
| Positive affect | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 122 | 11.18 | 1.85 | .291 | .771 |
| Homes with one or more children | 112 | 11.11 | 2.00 | | |
| Negative affect | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 122 | 12.39 | 2.11 | -.030 | .976 |
| Homes with one or more children | 112 | 12.40 | 2.20 | | |
| BABS – affect balance | | | | | |
| Homes with no children | 122 | -1.21 | 2.62 | .244 | .807 |
| Homes with one or more children | 112 | -1.29 | 2.47 | | |

In this study, it appears that whether or not there are children in one's home makes no difference to one's level of psychological well-being.

Summary of the relationship between socio-demographic variables and psychological well-being (PWB).

When the various socio-demographic variables in the study were compared to psychological well-being (PWB) some interesting results were revealed. Generally speaking, higher levels of PWB or happiness are experienced by the younger age group. This is a bit counterintuitive since one might think that as people age, life becomes richer and more

rewarding, consequently leading to a higher sense of happiness or PWB. This study suggests the opposite to be true. Perhaps over time as awareness levels increase, and a person recognizes larger world issues, or even their own mortality looming ever nearer, cynicism about aspects of life increases and the unrestrained happiness felt in earlier years flags as they realize their shortcomings. It could also be a result of the heavy emphasis in our culture put on youth and youthfulness by the mass media. The promotion of consumerism by mass media in our culture is to a large extent focussed directly on youth, portraying them as positive, happy, and exuberant because they are easily swayed and influenced. Their heightened PWB, and the corresponding decreased PWB for the older age groups, might be a direct reflection of this.

The overall BABS result that shows married respondents experiencing the lowest level of overall PWB is contrary to the common belief that one is happier being married. For example, earlier results show that married respondents experienced somewhat “better” leisure than singles, and being married or SWD shows one is less bored and anxious, and more aware when experiencing leisure than those who are single. However, all marital status groups equally seek challenging leisure opportunities as part of their lifestyles (see Table 63).

In contrast, literature is abundant that indicates leisure plays an important role in fostering interpersonal relationships and those who are married often tend to be happier than either those who are single, separated, widowed or divorced (e.g., Kelly, 1983, 1993; Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). These results go against the grain, adding fuel to the debate, and suggest that even though positive affect levels are almost identical with those who are single or SWD, being married leads to higher levels of negative affect and lower levels of overall PWB (see Table 76).

When combined household income and affect balance was examined, the highest level of well-being was with those earning \$40,000 to \$69,999. It was shown that as household income increases, PWB decreases. Also, it must be noted that the lowest income category (\$0 to \$39,999) experienced decreased PWB in comparison to this group, suggesting that low or very low income is also detrimental to ones PWB. Involuntary simplicity as a result of poverty situations is not a happy state either. A certain level of financial security must be achieved before one feels “happy,” but increasing levels of income do not appear to make one happier, in fact they appear to make one feel less happy or decrease overall PWB.

An interesting and unexpected finding when viewing the affect balance measure against *perception* of financial circumstance, was that those in the “surviving financially” group had higher levels of PWB. As perception of financial circumstance grew rosier, the level of well-being appeared to decrease, suggesting that, similar to household income, even though respondents perceived their financial circumstances to be positive, this did not equate with increased PWB. It may be plausible that when families perceive “tight money” times (e.g., cash flow or high debt situations), regardless of their real income, they may resort to frugality and control their spending habits more. As a result they may be more aware or closely connected to what the family is doing, what activities they are involved in, especially where expenditure of funds is involved. This may be more rewarding or satisfying in the sense it provides personal control over family life, and thus leads to heightened PWB. Families might in fact be more cohesive or begin to do more things together that do not involve financial expenditure.

SECTION THREE: RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE KEY CONCEPTS IN THE STUDY: LEISURE, LIFESTYLE, WELL-BEING.

The relationship between leisure (participation, value, and experience) and lifestyle (VS).

When general leisure participation was examined to see if certain types of leisure activity were more often associated with a voluntary simplicity value orientation in lifestyle, some notable results were revealed. As in the earlier analysis, leisure activities were grouped into ten categories of activity: mass media activities, social activities, cultural activities, outdoor activities, personal development activities, travel and tourism activities, creative hobby activity, individual physical activity, individual sport pursuit, and finally, taking part in team sport. These categories of activity were examined to see if any were significantly related to the four main value dimensions of VS and to VS overall.

The relationship between values and attitudes and behaviour has historically been an interesting one, and leisure research indicates that the link between attitudes and behaviour is far from automatic (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997, p. 338). On the other hand, “researchers [(c.f., Ajzen, 1991)] have identified conditions under which attitudes are linked to behaviour. [...] Attitudes affect behaviour only when attitude measures closely match the behaviour in question” (p. 339). It makes intuitive sense to think that one’s values and beliefs are played out consistently over the long term with certain behavioural patterns, and that one would choose activities that are reflective of or consistent with one’s values or attitudes. The following results provide some interesting insights into this debate.

The analysis begins by first reporting which activity groupings were not related to the VS value orientation and sub-dimensions (see Table 81). The results indicated that mass media activities, although highly participated in, were not related to any of the dimensions of

VS, nor to the concept of VS overall. Respondents obviously feel this type of activity, even though from a behaviour standpoint it makes up a large part of daily living, has little to do with the values of a VS lifestyle.

In this study, cultural activities, perhaps because they are so narrowly defined (being a spectator at sporting events, or attending theatre/concerts), typically have a high cost associated with them, or in the case of theatre/concerts may have the stigma of being “high culture,” were taken part in by few respondents. The initial thought might be that these activities are highly rewarding and might be sought after and reflective of values in a VS lifestyle dimension like “personal growth,” but respondents may see cultural activities as being too “commercial” or costly and therefore choose other cultural activity not mentioned here that fill this void. If this variable were defined differently, other results might be obtained. The results indicate that cultural activities were not related to the VS lifestyle or any of its dimensions.

The leisure category of creative hobbies also produced no significant relationships with the VS value orientation (see Table 81) even though monthly participation rates were reasonably regular and respondents rated the importance of hobbies to their lifestyle moderately highly. Leisure literature suggests personal hobbies, on the whole, provide positive benefits in ones lifestyle (Stebbins, 1992, 1998), so this result is somewhat intriguing. At a minimum, personal hobbies might be viewed as being consistent with the personal growth dimension of the VS lifestyle, but perhaps they pursued regardless of one’s value orientation.

Both individual sport and team sport leisure activity was not related with either the value dimensions of VS or VS overall. This is not surprising as both these categories had low

levels of participation and were rated low by respondents in terms of importance to lifestyle. There are solid leisure benefits to both of these types of activity (e.g., physical fitness, personal growth, and social) and participation rates were shown to be similarly low for all age groups, but the younger age group placed slightly more importance on these and likely seek physical activity more than those who are older (see Table 28). If people choose activities on the basis of consistency with their values, this makes sense. Older age groups tend to support VS values more than younger people (see Table 69), and this may help to explain why these activities are unrelated to VS values (see Table 81).

Having reported on non-significant results, what activities, then, did those respondents who supported a voluntary simplicity value orientation in lifestyle choose that were consistent with VS. With this in mind, the following results are of interest.

Social activities (visiting or entertaining friends; phoning friends; volunteering; going to parties/dancing; playing cards or board games; active in service clubs) were only significantly related in the personal growth dimension ($r=.217$, $p=.001$). Social activities are seen as being positively related to personal growth when experienced as part of the VS lifestyle.

Participation in outdoor activities produced significant relationships with all four of the VS lifestyle value dimensions. Outdoor activities were positively related to the material simplicity dimension ($r=.172$, $p=.012$), the self-determination dimension ($r=.164$, $p=.018$), the ecological awareness dimension ($r=.282$, $p<.001$), and the personal growth dimension of VS ($r=.229$, $p=.001$). In addition, outdoor activities were positively related to the overall VS construct ($r=.286$, $p<.001$), indicating that respondents felt being involved in activity

outdoors, being in touch with nature, or just working in their gardens was consistent with their sense of voluntary simplicity.

The outdoor activity results are also interesting because, on the whole, of the activities composing this category, “gardening” was the most participated in (at least twice a week), whereas “going on picnics” or “going camping” were taken part in less than once a week. Additionally, the importance respondents placed on this type of activity to their lifestyle, in comparison to other activities was only moderate. To see such consistent results in respect to a VS lifestyle is encouraging. There seems to be an underlying need for people in the urban setting to get out of doors in their leisure, perhaps as a way to make their lives less complex or to “connect” with their environment or community.

When examining the personal growth activity category (involvement in spiritual activity; taking interest courses) one would immediately think there would be a strong relationship with the personal growth value dimension of VS. This was indeed borne out by the results ($r=.397$, $p<.001$). Personal growth activities were also shown to be positively related to VS overall ($r=.152$, $p=.027$).

The “travel and tourism” leisure category was also related to several of the value dimensions of VS. Of note is that the relationship between travel and tourism leisure activity and the material simplicity dimension of VS is a negative one ($r= -.163$, $p<.05$), indicating that respondents possibly worry less about spending money or buying things when it comes to this type of activity. Essentially, the prime focus or value is to connect with family or friends or just to get away, without much thought to being materially simplistic. For example, travelling might involve buying goods or services on a needs basis or just on impulse to make the trip easier. Perhaps respondents have been acculturated to the point where travel and

tourism is meant to involve significant consumption, but the answer to this may also be beyond the scope of the study. The travel and tourism category was also related to the self-determination dimension ($r=.173$, $p=.009$) and to the personal growth dimension of VS ($r=.141$, $p=.041$), but not to VS overall. Deciding to take a short holiday or to make a trip to see friends or family involves making conscious decisions and choices, so respondents would have to be capable of planning such events. In addition, taking short holidays and visiting friends and relatives are important within one's personal leisure, and appear to play an important role in personal growth (see Table 81).

The "individual physical activity" category also had a number of significant relationships with the VS lifestyle and its core dimensions. Earlier, respondents had indicated high levels of participation in this type of activity (13 to 24 times per month) and also placed a high rating of importance on physical activity. This points to the strong centrality of individual physical activity to the respondents' leisure lifestyles. Respondents in the study appear to be self-determined when they choose to do individual physical activity ($r=.176$, $p=.010$), which makes sense because it is individualized activity, and a certain level of motivation needs to be present for one to follow through on their fitness activity.

Individual physical activity was significantly related to the ecological awareness dimension ($r=.204$, $p=.003$), as well as to the personal growth dimension of VS ($r=.353$, $p<.001$). Voluntary simplicity may give respondents a stronger understanding of their relationship and interconnectedness with the environment, their communities, their friends and family, and all living things in general. In addition, this VS value dimension focuses on environmental items such as recycling, conserving energy and activities like cycling instead of using one's car.

Table 81

Relationship^a between general participation in leisure activity and voluntary simplicity (VS) value orientation in lifestyle (n=235).

| Leisure activity categories | Voluntary simplicity dimensions | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | MS | SD | EA | PG | VS ^b |
| Mass media activity | -.035 (.616) | .013 (.848) | .030 (.664) | .071 (.301) | .024 (.728) |
| Social activity | -.032 (.641) | .059 (.396) | .068 (.325) | .217 (.001) | .098 (.155) |
| Cultural activity | -.052 (.452) | -.016 (.819) | -.005 (.945) | .028 (.685) | -.018 (.795) |
| Outdoor activity | .172 (.012) | .164 (.018) | .282 (<.001) | .229 (.001) | .286 (<.001) |
| Personal growth activity | -.054 (.434) | -.009 (.896) | .074 (.283) | .398 (<.001) | .152 (.027) |
| Travel and tourism activity | -.163 (.018) | .173 (.009) | -.090 (.192) | .141 (.041) | .031 (.654) |
| Creative hobby activity | -.052 (.455) | .010 (.886) | .044 (.523) | .035 (.613) | .011 (.872) |
| Individual physical activity | -.018 (.793) | .176 (.010) | .204 (.003) | .353 (<.001) | .237 (.001) |
| Individual sport activity | -.127 (.066) | .029 (.680) | -.014 (.837) | -.014 (.838) | -.040 (.568) |
| Team sport activity | -.033 (.633) | .060 (.383) | .030 (.666) | .016 (.816) | .029 (.678) |

^a Pearson correlations ^b VS = voluntary simplicity MS = material simplicity SD = self determination
EA = ecological awareness PG = personal growth dimension Note: Parentheses indicate probabilities

Perhaps those who support ecological and environmental values in VS also hold the same reverence for their bodies. Individual physical activity was also significantly related to VS overall ($r=.237$; $p=.001$), indicating that this type of activity is consistent with the values, attitudes, and behaviours of a VS lifestyle (see Table 81).

The relationship of a voluntary simplicity lifestyle value orientation to the importance or value placed on certain types of leisure activity.

Even though many participants recorded no participation for various leisure activities in a given month, they still rated these activities as being important (or of value) to them in varying degrees (see Table 4). Perhaps they once did take part in these activities, or hoped to in the future. It may be plausible that respondents choose to participate in certain activities at optimum times when a number of factors coincide to make it a “complete” and rich experience. For example, the chance to go canoeing with friends who only are able to visit once a year, during the available “holiday window” supplied by an employer, and with favourable weather conditions all combine to create a leisure experience that is rich and rewarding. The importance a person places on this activity might be quite high, even though the activity is not currently part of their regular leisure repertoire.

With respect to examining such importance or value on leisure activity in the context of a VS lifestyle, one might think the values inherent in certain leisure activities, or the value (importance) placed on the activity would be positively related to VS or its four sub-dimensions, because in both cases values or attitudes are being examined.

The analysis between these two variables produced some interesting and notable results (see Table 82), different in many ways from the relationships found between general leisure participation and lifestyle (VS), which compared behaviour with a value orientation (VS). For one, there were considerably more positive or significant relationships between “importance of activity” and VS, than between “participation in activity” and VS. Taking, for example, cultural activities, when general leisure participation was compared to VS, no significant relationships were found. In contrast, when importance of cultural leisure activity was compared to VS, four of five possible significant relationships were revealed, suggesting

support for voluntary simplicity is accompanied by positive support for this type of activity on all dimensions but material simplicity (see Table 82).

The importance of mass media leisure was not related to lifestyle (VS) in a significant way. Similar to the interpretation provided when discussing general leisure participation, the results indicated that the value of mass media leisure activities, although highly participated in, was not related to any of the value dimensions of VS, nor to the concept of VS overall. Respondents obviously feel this type of activity, even though it makes up a large part of daily living, is unrelated to the values of voluntary simplicity.

The importance of social activities revealed significant relationships to lifestyle (VS), in particular with the ecological awareness dimension ($r=.162$, $p=.016$), and the personal growth dimension ($r=.317$, $p<.001$). The value of social activities, like being together with friends and talking with them obviously plays an important role in the personal growth aspect of one's lifestyle. Social activities were also related to VS as a composite measure ($r=.174$, $p=.010$), indicating that socially oriented activities were reflective of overall VS lifestyle values.

When the importance of cultural leisure activities was compared to voluntary simplicity lifestyle values, several positive relationships were revealed, however this type of leisure activity was not related to material simplicity values, suggesting people are more consumption oriented when attending theatre or concerts, or spectating at sporting events. The value of cultural activity in respondent's leisure was significantly related to the self-determination dimension ($r=.139$, $p=.037$), to the ecological awareness dimension ($r=.261$, $p<.001$), to the personal growth dimension ($r=.195$, $p=.003$), and also to VS overall ($r=.174$, $p=.009$). What is interesting about these relationships is that while no relationships were

reported between cultural leisure activity participation and VS, the expressed importance or value of this type of activity shows a completely different picture. Voluntary simplicity

Table 82

Relationship^a between the importance placed on leisure activity and voluntary simplicity (VS) value orientation in lifestyle (n=232).

| Importance of...to lifestyle | Voluntary simplicity dimensions | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | MS | SD | EA | PG | VS ^b |
| Mass media activity | -.058 (.381) | .049 (.466) | -.031 (.638) | .050 (.455) | .004 (.947) |
| Social activity | .007 (.913) | .075 (.268) | .162 (.016) | .317 (<.001) | .174 (.010) |
| Cultural activity | -.023 (.729) | .139 (.037) | .217 (.001) | .195 (.003) | .174 (.009) |
| Outdoor activity | .041 (.547) | .146 (.031) | .261 (<.001) | .244 (<.001) | .226 (.001) |
| Personal growth activity | .060 (.370) | .113 (.092) | .200 (.003) | .449 (<.001) | .257 (<.001) |
| Travel and tourism activity | -.144 (.030) | .096 (.149) | .057 (.388) | .205 (.002) | .068 (.305) |
| Creative hobby activity | .071 (.295) | .048 (.475) | .170 (.012) | .141 (.036) | .137 (.042) |
| Individual physical activity | -.027 (.683) | .073 (.275) | .184 (.006) | .281 (<.001) | .161 (.016) |
| Individual sport activity | -.071 (.304) | .049 (.475) | .006 (.927) | .049 (.482) | .012 (.857) |
| Team sport activity | -.067 (.330) | .029 (.675) | -.005 (.947) | .021 (.757) | -.006 (.932) |

^a Pearson correlations ^b VS = voluntary simplicity (composite measure)
MS = material simplicity SD = self determination EA = ecological awareness PG = personal growth
Note: Parentheses indicate probabilities.

lifestyle values are shown as having a positive relationship to the value of cultural leisure activity in respondent's leisure lifestyles (see Table 82). Those who support VS are likely to choose cultural activities as part of their leisure repertoire.

The importance placed on outdoor leisure activity, regardless of participation rates, also revealed significant relationships with the values of a VS lifestyle. Specifically, higher scores on self-determination ($r=.146$, $p=.031$), ecological awareness ($r=.261$, $p<.001$), personal growth ($r=.244$, $p<.001$), and overall lifestyle (VS) as a whole ($r=.226$, $p=.001$) were related to higher levels of importance placed on outdoor leisure activity. With outdoor leisure activity as well, it may be seen that its value or importance is positively related to those values inherent in a VS lifestyle.

The importance respondents placed on personal growth activity in their leisure was related to ecological awareness values ($r=.200$, $p=.003$) and even more to the personal growth dimension of VS ($r=.449$, $p<.001$). The value of personal growth leisure activities (e.g., taking an interest course, or involvement in spiritual activity) appears to coincide, at least in part, with the values expressed in the ecological dimension of VS. The value or importance of creativity, learning, or reflection in one's leisure life is positively linked with VS values of understanding the relationship and interconnectedness with the environment, and values surrounding recycling, conserving energy, and cycling instead of using one's car. Not unexpectedly, the importance placed on personal growth activities was highly related to personal growth values within the VS lifestyle. Personal growth appears to be a strong factor within the VS lifestyle, or viewed another way, those who support voluntary simplicity values also tend to favour developing their inner, creative lives in their leisure.

The importance placed on taking short holidays and visiting friends and relatives was the only variable within the "importance of leisure activity" categories to produce a significant, albeit negative relationship with the material simplicity dimension of VS ($r= -.144$, $p=.030$). This suggests that respondents typically incur consumption of goods or

services as part of these activities. The value or importance placed on this activity is such that consumption may be seen as secondary to the experience. The importance of travel and tourism leisure activity was also significantly related with the personal growth dimension of lifestyle (VS) ($r=.205$, $p=.002$). Even though the value given to taking short holidays and visiting friends and relatives was not related to overall PWB (see Table 85), it appears the value of these activities is significantly important and central to a VS lifestyle.

The importance respondents placed on pursuing creative hobbies within their lifestyles was related to the ecological awareness dimension of VS ($r=.170$, $p=.012$), and to the personal growth dimension of VS ($r=.141$, $p=.036$). It makes intuitive sense that hobbies would be consistent with the personal growth value dimension of VS, because many hobbies like gardening, producing crafts, or woodworking are rich and rewarding on a personal level and are activities that allow a person to learn and explore freely. With a lifestyle value dimension like ecological awareness it is a bit more difficult to understand. Perhaps those who support ecological values also value creative hobbies that are in concert with these on a holistic level. For example, they might be concerned about the environmental impacts of hobbies they choose, or about the value of a creative hobby in fostering togetherness or “connectedness” with friends or family. The importance of pursuing creative hobbies was also significantly related to the overall VS value orientation ($r=.137$, $p=.042$) indicating that those who support VS also place importance on creative pursuits in their leisure.

Finally, in the last category of individual physical activity, respondents placed a moderately high level of importance or value on this in terms of their leisure lifestyles (see Table 4), and this is supported by the relationships revealed (see Table 82). The importance of physical activity was significantly related to ecological awareness values of VS ($r=.184$,

$p=.006$), and to the personal growth values ($r=.281$, $p<.001$). In addition, the value of this type of activity was also related to overall VS values ($r=.161$, $p=.016$). Someone who embraces VS values likely chooses activities that contribute to their personal growth (physically or otherwise), as well as those that are consistent with their feelings that their “person” or body is to be cared for in much the same way they would care for the environment. This makes sense, as those who are committed to being active or to a personal fitness program most often believe that healthy bodies foster healthy minds and vice versa. Also, those who are more physically active tend to be out of doors more often and thus may experience their interrelationship with environment and community more directly than those who are not. Those respondents who valued or placed importance on individual physical activity also valued being connected to their communities and the environment, and to developing themselves personally. In essence, those who support voluntary simplicity values also tend to value individual physical activity within their leisure lifestyle (see Table 82).

The relationship of a VS lifestyle value orientation to leisure experience.

When the leisure experience dimensions were related to the VS lifestyle value orientation, the results indicated significantly positive relationships with the challenge and awareness dimensions of leisure experience, and negative relationships with the boredom and anxiety dimensions (see Table 83).

The four leisure experience dimensions found in the leisure experience scale (Caldwell, Smith & Weissinger, 1992) appear similar to Csikszentmihalyi’s (1975) dimensions considered in examining “flow” and conditions for optimum leisure experience. The idea of positive or optimum leisure experience is such that when dimensions like

challenge in activity and awareness of opportunity are high, and dimensions such as general boredom with one's state in life, and anxiety about leisure motivation are low, one can experience positive, rewarding and satisfying leisure, or an optimum leisure experience. The results of this study indicate that respondents on the whole were experiencing positive leisure. In addition, this positive sense or feeling about ones' leisure was significantly related to the values represented by the four main dimensions of VS, and to VS overall.

Table 83

Relationship^a between voluntary simplicity (VS) value dimensions in lifestyle and leisure experience (n=235).

| Voluntary simplicity dimensions | Dimension of leisure experience | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Awareness | Challenge | Anxiety | Boredom |
| Material simplicity | <i>.226</i> (.001) | .039 (.551) | <i>-.143</i> (.030) | <i>-.170</i> (.010) |
| Self-determination | .098 (.137) | <i>.339</i> (<i><.001</i>) | <i>-.125</i> (.057) | <i>-.212</i> (.001) |
| Ecological awareness | <i>.339</i> (<i><.001</i>) | <i>.199</i> (.002) | <i>-.208</i> (.001) | <i>-.330</i> (<i><.001</i>) |
| Personal growth | <i>.338</i> (<i><.001</i>) | <i>.285</i> (<i><.001</i>) | <i>-.165</i> (.012) | <i>-.361</i> (<i><.001</i>) |
| Voluntary simplicity | <i>.326</i> (<i><.001</i>) | <i>.296</i> (<i><.001</i>) | <i>-.215</i> (.001) | <i>-.356</i> (<i><.001</i>) |

^a Pearson correlations Note: ***Bold and italics*** in indicate significance at p<.05. Probabilities in parentheses.

As can be seen in Table 83, the challenge dimension of leisure was not related to the material simplicity dimension of VS, but was positively related to all of the other dimensions of VS, and significantly to the VS measure overall (r=.296, p<.001). The “awareness” dimension of leisure showed generally stronger relationships with dimensions of VS, and to VS as a whole (r=.326, p<.001).

Both the “awareness” and “challenge” component in leisure appear to be significant factors in relation to the VS value orientation. Respondents in this study appear reasonably aware of the notions/values of material simplicity, ecological awareness, and personal growth when they pursue specific leisure choices. In addition, within the context of their VS value orientation, they seek leisure opportunities that challenge them, indicating they have the necessary skills to take part, or know how to learn them, or to overcome obstacles to participation.

In contrast, the general levels of boredom in respondents lives had earlier been reported as low (Table 5). With the exception of feeling rushed and not having enough time to do everything, the reported “anxiety” about their free time or leisure choices also was generally low. When these two dimensions of leisure experience were compared with the VS lifestyle, the results supported previous analyses. With respect to the boredom dimension, the relationship with material simplicity, self-determination, ecological awareness and personal growth value dimensions of VS were all negative, indicating that as support for these VS dimensions increased, there was a corresponding decrease in levels of boredom. The relationship between boredom and lifestyle (VS) as a whole was significantly negative. Respondents who favoured or supported the VS value orientation clearly experienced a much lower level of boredom, leading one to think that they typically had a purposeful direction in their leisure activities and lives in general.

As previously reported in discussing the relationship between leisure experience and well-being, interpretation of the “anxiety” dimension of leisure is a bit more complicated. However, the results here were consistently negative. A non-significant, but notable result was reported between anxiety in leisure and VS values of self-determination. Anxiety in

leisure was negatively related with VS overall ($r=-.215$, $p=.001$), indicating that those who support this value orientation generally experience significantly lower levels of anxiety about their free time or surrounding their leisure choices (see Table 83).

Summary of the relationship of leisure (participation, value, and experience) to the VS lifestyle value orientation.

To summarize, when the voluntary simplicity value orientation was examined to see if those respondents that more strongly supported VS, favoured or chose certain types of leisure activity more than others, some interesting and notable results were revealed. The relationship between values and attitudes and behaviour has historically been much debated. While it was stated earlier that research has shown that attitude affects behaviour if the attitude more closely matches behaviour (c.f., Ajzen, 1991; Mannell & Kleiber, 1997), it also makes intuitive sense to think that one's values and beliefs are played out consistently over the long term with certain behaviour patterns.

On the whole there were not many activities that stood out strongly as being directly indicative or representative of the voluntary simplicity lifestyle. Not surprisingly, mass media activities were *not* related to the VS lifestyle or any of the four sub-dimensions. Respondents who support the values of a VS lifestyle obviously feel this type of leisure activity (reading books, magazines, and/or newspapers, listening to music, watching TV/videos, using the Internet/computers, or going to movies), even though it makes up a large part of daily living, is done quite casually and without much thought.

Only social activities (visiting or entertaining friends; phoning friends; volunteering; going to parties/dancing; playing cards or board games; active in service clubs) appeared to be significantly related to the values represented by the personal growth dimension of VS.

Socially oriented leisure is seen as contributing to personal growth when experienced as part of the VS lifestyle.

Participation in outdoor activities was the most strongly related with the VS lifestyle value orientation. Outdoor activities were related to all four value dimensions of VS. Respondents feel being involved in activity outdoors, being in touch with nature, or just working in their gardens contributes significantly to their sense of “voluntary simplicity,” or, vice-versa, those who support these VS values choose outdoor activity more often. Also, this result is interesting because on the whole, of the outdoor activities, “gardening” was the most participated in (at least twice a week), whereas “going on picnics” or “going camping” were taken part in less than once a week. Additionally, the importance respondents placed on this type of activity to their lifestyle in comparison to other activities was significant. To see that a VS value orientation promotes outdoor activity is encouraging. There seems to be an underlying need for people in an urban setting to be out of doors in their leisure as a way to make their lives less complex, to develop their self-reliance or enhance personal growth, or perhaps to allow for a needed re-connection to nature.

Of note is a negative relationship between travel and tourism-type leisure activity and the material simplicity dimension of VS. Essentially, the prime focus is to connect with family or friends or just to get away, without much thought to reducing consumption or being materially simplistic. If equipment, meals, special clothing, gifts, etcetera, need to be purchased as part of a trip, there is often no hesitation or deep thought about doing so. Perhaps respondents have been acculturated to the point where going on holidays or travelling is meant to involve significant consumption.

In addition, personal growth and self-determination values are important within respondent's leisure and appear play a role in choosing to go on short holidays or visiting friends and relatives. Deciding to take a trip to see friends or family involves making conscious decisions and choices, so a person may develop their skills and confidence to plan such events.

The individual physical activity category also had a number of significant relationships with the VS lifestyle and its core dimensions. Earlier, respondents had indicated high levels of participation in this type of activity (13 to 24 times per month) and also placed a high rating of importance on physical activity. Physical activity is also related to heightened levels of PWB. This points to the strong centrality of individual physical activity to the respondents' leisure lifestyle. Respondents in the study appear to be self-determined when they choose to do individual physical activity, which makes sense because it is individualized activity and a certain level of motivation needs to be present for one to follow through on a fitness plan. Interestingly, the VS values of ecological awareness or understanding the relationship and interconnectedness with the environment and all living things, is related to the level of support given to taking part in personal fitness activity. Perhaps doing physical activity falls in line with honoring one's body as one might the environment. The ecological awareness values may put one in touch with one's body and to thoughts like "perhaps today I'll walk, instead of driving my car." Individual physical activity also falls in line with the values, attitudes, and behaviours consistent with the overall VS lifestyle.

The importance or value of certain leisure activities within the VS lifestyle.

The results of the analyses between the value or importance respondents place on their leisure and the values of the VS lifestyle, produced some interesting and notable results, different in many ways from the relationships between general leisure participation and lifestyle (VS), which compared behaviour with the VS value orientation.

The importance or value respondents placed on social activities revealed significant relationships to lifestyle (VS), in particular with the ecological awareness dimension and the personal growth dimension. The value of social activities, like being together with friends and talking to them, is shown to play an important role in the personal growth aspect of one's lifestyle. Social activities were also related to VS as a composite measure, indicating that socially-oriented activities are an integral part of the VS lifestyle.

When the importance of cultural leisure activities was compared to a voluntary simplicity lifestyle, several positive relationships were reported. What is interesting about this relationship is that while no relationships were reported between cultural leisure activity participation and VS, the expressed importance or value of this type of activity shows a completely different picture. This indicates that respondents who support the VS value orientation also place significant importance on cultural leisure activity, even though their average monthly participation is relatively normal, although it appears low.

The importance placed on outdoor leisure activity, irregardless of participation rates, is also strongly related to the VS value orientation. It is, nonetheless, also corroborated by regular participation, and the value or importance of this type of activity is reasonably consistent and central to those expressed by a VS lifestyle.

The importance placed on leisure activities of a personal growth nature (e.g., taking an interest course, or involvement in spiritual activity, etc.) appears to coincide with the values expressed in the ecological awareness and personal growth dimension of the VS lifestyle. Respondents who support the VS lifestyle also favour personal growth values, and seek leisure activities that correspond with these.

The importance placed on taking short holidays and visiting friends and relatives was the only item within the “importance of leisure activity” categories to produce a negative relationship with the material simplicity dimension of VS. As mentioned earlier in the discussion around general leisure participation, when choosing to travel or take short holidays, respondents typically incur consumption of goods or services as part of these activities. Even though the importance placed on taking short holidays and visiting friends and relatives was not related to psychological well-being, it appears that maintaining personal relationships is valued and central to a VS lifestyle.

Finally, the moderately high value or importance placed on personal physical activity in terms of one’s leisure lifestyle appears to be consistent with the general values expressed by the VS lifestyle. This is also supported by the previous discussion on participation in personal fitness activities.

Leisure experience within the VS lifestyle.

When leisure experience dimensions were compared to the VS value orientation, the results were significant on the challenge and awareness dimensions of leisure experience, and negatively related on the boredom and anxiety dimensions. Both the awareness and challenge component in leisure appear to be significant factors in the VS lifestyle. Respondents in this

study appear reasonably aware of the importance of leisure in their lives, and of opportunities available to them. This awareness is developed within the context of the values of material simplicity, self-determination, ecological awareness, and personal growth when they pursue specific leisure choices. In addition, in much the same way, they seek leisure opportunities that challenge them, indicating they have the necessary skills to take part, or know how to learn them, or to overcome obstacles to participation.

In contrast, respondents who support the VS lifestyle orientation are rarely bored, leading one to think they typically have a purposeful direction in their activities and lives in general. Also, with the exception of feeling rushed and not having enough time to do everything, the reported “anxiety” about their free time or leisure choices was generally low. These two dimensions of leisure/free time experience were both negatively related to the VS lifestyle.

In summary, it appears that within a voluntary simplicity lifestyle, respondents can experience positive, challenging leisure. While still struggling with “not being able to fit it all in a day,” as with most of us, respondents in general did not suffer from boredom or negative aspects of anxiety, and with heightened awareness are able to experience meaningful, rewarding and quality leisure.

The relationship of leisure (participation, value, and experience) to psychological well-being (PWB).

When general participation in specific leisure activities and groups of activity was examined for its relationship to psychological well-being (PWB), the results were interesting, but not remarkable (see Table 84). The leisure activities reported were grouped into several

categories containing similar items, and examined for a relationship to both positive and negative affect and overall affect balance or PWB.

For example, those activities with higher rates of participation in the Mass Media/Passive category like “reading books, magazines and newspapers,” “watching TV or videos,” and “going to movies,” were not significantly related to respondents overall PWB, but reading books, magazines and newspapers contributed significantly to negative affect ($r=.190$; $p=.005$). Perhaps respondents do find little satisfying reading in much of the popular printed material. One often hears that people refuse to read newspapers because of the negative news, or because of the overwhelming abundance of advertising. This is interesting because these activities have high participation rates, and one would think people would not take part in such activities if they were not in some way satisfying or made them feel better. On the other hand, two of the mass media/passive activities, “Listening to music” ($r=.214$, $p=.002$), and “Using the Internet and computers” ($r=.154$, $p=.025$) had positive relationships to overall affect balance (PWB). Both these activities tend to be individual in nature and appear to have some value in PWB. That listening to music is linked to well-being seems understandable, but one might immediately think using the computer or searching the Internet might not hold much appeal, satisfaction, or lead to heightened PWB. Many people use this medium primarily for communicating with friends and family, so it may produce the same level of excitement and satisfaction (and PWB benefit) as going to the post office to drop off or pick up one's mail from friends or family. In fact, using the Internet or computers also contributed significantly to positive affect ($r=.136$; $p=.047$).

Participating in individual physical activity or maintaining one's fitness level through activity also contributed significantly to positive affect, and to PWB overall ($r=.141$, $p=.041$)

(see Table 84). Respondents feel strongly about being physically active and how it makes them feel, and do personal physical activity on a regular basis throughout a typical month, from about every other day to almost every day on average (see Table 3).

The leisure activity category of social activities (six items) contributed significantly to positive affect ($r=.188$; $p=.006$) as well as producing a positive relationship with PWB overall ($r=.209$; $p=.002$). What is of interest here, is that most of the activities within this category were significantly related to PWB on their own, with the exception of volunteering and being active in service clubs. While these latter two activities are valued and important to families with children, they do not add to PWB and might indicate that perhaps given the choice, parents might wish to do other activity.

Personal growth leisure activity is also positive related to overall PWB ($r=.151$, $p=.028$). Not unexpectedly, respondents reported that taking interest courses added to their overall PWB ($r=.202$, $p=.003$), and decreased negative affect ($r=-.265$, $p<.001$). This was not surprising because the majority of respondents in the sample were participants in such courses, and unless they were having a poor experience in a course, positive comments or general feelings of satisfaction or happiness would be expected (see Table 84). Interestingly, there was not a significant relationship with positive affect for this activity.

In addition, cultural activities contributed significantly to positive affect and consequently to overall PWB ($r=.167$, $p=.015$). In the outdoor leisure category, it is interesting to note that a highly popular and oft-mentioned activity like gardening is not significantly related to PWB, but camping ($r=.147$; $p=.032$) and outdoor activities in general heightened PWB ($r=.147$, $p=.032$).

In the travel and tourism category of leisure activity, both the category ($r=.190$, $p=.006$) and the activity of travelling to visit friends and family ($r=.162$, $p=.018$) contributed

Table 84

Relationship of leisure activity participation
with psychological well-being (PWB) (n=234)

| Leisure activity | Psychological well-being ^a | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| | PA | | NA | | BABS | |
| | <i>r</i> ^b | <i>p</i> | <i>r</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>r</i> | <i>p</i> |
| Mass Media/Passive category | .123 | .072 | -.003 | .966 | .095 | .169 |
| Watching TV/Videos | -.099 | .151 | .043 | .531 | -.110 | .110 |
| Reading books/magazines/newspapers | .047 | .497 | .190 | .005 | -.125 | .070 |
| Going to movies | .116 | .092 | .009 | .896 | .079 | .252 |
| Using the Internet/computers | .136 | .047 | -.062 | .364 | .154 | .025 |
| Listening to music | .134 | * .051 | -.136 | .047 | .214 | .002 |
| Individual Physical act. fitness | .207 | .002 | .016 | .819 | .141 | .041 |
| Hobbies Creative hobbies and crafts | .026 | .703 | -.104 | .130 | .107 | .121 |
| Social Activities - category | .188 | .006 | -.082 | .232 | .209 | .002 |
| Visiting or entertaining friends | .173 | .012 | -.136 | .047 | .243 | <.001 |
| Phoning friends | .131 | * .057 | -.074 | .282 | .160 | .020 |
| Going to parties/dancing | .077 | .264 | -.111 | .107 | .150 | .029 |
| Playing cards or board games | .221 | .001 | -.040 | .567 | .198 | .004 |
| Volunteering | .090 | .192 | .047 | .496 | .028 | .689 |
| Active in service clubs | .055 | .427 | -.056 | .418 | .088 | .204 |
| Personal Development - category | .066 | .337 | -.121 | .079 | .151 | .028 |
| Spiritual activity | .079 | .255 | -.046 | .508 | .097 | .160 |
| Taking interest courses | -.027 | .699 | -.265 | <.001 | .202 | .003 |
| Outdoor Activities - category | .062 | .367 | -.120 | .081 | .147 | .032 |
| Going on day outings/picnics | .051 | .464 | .011 | .872 | .028 | .682 |
| Gardening | .020 | .771 | -.109 | .113 | .106 | .122 |
| Outdoor activities/camping | .156 | .023 | -.037 | .592 | .147 | .032 |
| Motorized outdoor activity | -.127 | .065 | -.178 | .009 | .055 | .429 |
| Travel and Tourism - category | .190 | .006 | .031 | .653 | .115 | .094 |
| Travelling to visit friends or family | .162 | .018 | .088 | .202 | .047 | .499 |
| Having short holidays/getaways | .130 | * .059 | -.140 | .041 | .214 | .002 |
| Cultural Activities - category | .194 | .005 | -.027 | .698 | .167 | .015 |
| Being a spectator at sports events | .160 | .019 | -.055 | .427 | .165 | .016 |
| Attending concerts/live theatre | .166 | .016 | .096 | .165 | .043 | .533 |
| Individual Sports | .178 | .010 | .050 | .469 | .090 | .191 |
| Team Sports | .126 | .069 | -.027 | .694 | .116 | .092 |

^a PA = positive affect NA = negative affect BABS = affect balance (Bradburn Affect Balance Scale)

^b Pearson correlational coefficient Note: **Bold and italics** indicate significance at $p<.05$.

* indicates notable result

significantly to positive affect. On the other hand, having short holidays and getaways decreased negative affect ($r=-.140$; $p=.041$) and contributed significantly to overall affect balance (PWB) ($r=.214$, $p=.002$) (see Table 84).

Although significant, none of the aforementioned relationships are very strong. However, and not unexpectedly, over half the leisure activities raised positive affect and heightened overall PWB. Even though these leisure activities were examined in relation to both positive and negative affect, no distinct patterns or trends emerged. Interestingly, the significant negative relationships shown with respect to negative affect indicate the activity actually helps to ameliorate negative affect. One would expect that leisure activity is done for the positive benefits and satisfaction received. These results show that participation alone is not a strong indicator in producing an increase in psychological well-being, and other factors may be moderating the relationship with leisure participation.

The relationship between the value or importance placed on leisure in one's lifestyle and psychological well-being.

When the importance or value various leisure activities had to respondent's leisure lifestyles was examined for its relationship to psychological well-being, the results were interesting, but not overwhelming, when compared to the participation results in Table 84. Only the importance or value placed on social activities ($r=.142$; $p=.040$), personal growth activities ($r=.168$; $p=.014$), and outdoor leisure activities ($r=.163$; $p=.019$), was significantly related to and produced a corresponding increase in affect balance or overall PWB (see Table 85).

Participation in these same categories of leisure activity is also shown to be positively related to PWB (see Table 84), so for these types of leisure activity it might be said that their importance or value to lifestyle is also matched by corresponding behaviour, and both value and behaviour indicate a positive effect on personal well-being.

Outside of these three categories, only the importance or value placed on the activity of listening to music ($r=.189$, $p=.005$) and taking interest courses ($r=.141$; $p=.041$) was significantly related to overall affect balance or PWB (see Table 85). Similar to leisure participation, it is interesting to note that the importance or value respondents place on certain leisure activities is significantly related more to corresponding increases in positive affect than to negative affect. In particular, the outdoor leisure category and the outdoor activities of going on day outings or picnics, gardening, and camping stood out from other leisure activities, and indicate the importance or value respondents place on these. While not strongly related, participation in outdoor leisure activity was also significantly related to overall affect balance (PWB). For example, even though individuals only participate in an outdoor activity like gardening on average seven times per month, they still place a high level of importance or value on it, and make a conscious determined effort to garden when the conditions and timing within the family is optimal. Gardening as a leisure pursuit means a lot to them and when participated in produces a significant degree of satisfaction and PWB, reinforced by the importance they place on it.

Even though an example like gardening demonstrates the relationship between value or importance and PWB, it is difficult to generalize to a broader range of leisure activity. In summary then, although the results are not strong and significant relationships were shown for only a few leisure activities, regardless of levels of participation in leisure activity or the

importance attributed to it, higher levels of psychological well-being were not necessarily generated. Other factors may be playing a more important role in enhancing PWB than either leisure participation or the importance or value placed on it (see Table 85).

Table 85

Relationship of the importance placed on leisure activity
with psychological well-being (PWB) (n=223)

| | Psychological well-being ^a | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| | PA | | NA | | BABS | |
| How important is... to my leisure? | r ^b | p | r | p | r | p |
| Mass Media/Passive category | .047 | .489 | -.073 | .277 | .098 | .146 |
| Watching TV/Videos | -.096 | .155 | -.020 | .771 | -.056 | .406 |
| Reading books/magazines/newspapers | .047 | .489 | .039 | .567 | .003 | .969 |
| Going to movies | -.008 | .905 | -.101 | .132 | .080 | .234 |
| Using the Internet/computers | .050 | .458 | -.030 | .660 | .063 | .348 |
| Listening to music | .146 | .029 | -.091 | .175 | .189 | .005 |
| Individual Physical act. fitness | .112 | .110 | .010 | .892 | .078 | .269 |
| Hobbies Creative hobbies and crafts | -.039 | .583 | -.102 | .145 | .058 | .408 |
| Social Activities - category | .097 | .161 | -.081 | .244 | .142 | .040 |
| Visiting or entertaining friends | .173 | .012 | .084 | .223 | .060 | .388 |
| Phoning friends | .065 | .347 | -.016 | .815 | .063 | .361 |
| Going to parties/dancing | -.049 | .483 | -.169 | .014 | .106 | .125 |
| Playing cards or board games | .039 | .578 | -.093 | .181 | .108 | .120 |
| Volunteering | .077 | .268 | .023 | .744 | .039 | .572 |
| Active in service clubs | .059 | .398 | -.074 | .288 | .107 | .123 |
| Personal Development - category | .087 | .210 | -.120 | .082 | .168 | .014 |
| Spiritual activity | .095 | .167 | -.066 | .340 | .129 | .061 |
| Taking interest courses | .035 | .609 | -.134 | * .052 | .141 | .041 |
| Outdoor Activities - category | .158 | .024 | -.048 | .493 | .163 | .019 |
| Going on day outings/picnics | .139 | .046 | -.025 | .723 | .129 | .065 |
| Gardening | .140 | .044 | .024 | .729 | .087 | .214 |
| Outdoor activities/camping | .139 | .046 | -.012 | .861 | .118 | .092 |
| Motorized outdoor activity | -.044 | .533 | -.153 | .028 | .099 | .156 |
| Travel and Tourism - category | .111 | .102 | -.103 | .852 | .095 | .161 |
| Travelling to visit friends or family | .150 | .027 | .060 | .379 | .063 | .353 |
| Having short holidays/getaways | .045 | .504 | -.075 | .268 | .098 | .146 |
| Cultural Activities - category | .128 | .063 | -.023 | .739 | .116 | .092 |
| Being a spectator at sports events | .054 | .436 | -.105 | .129 | .128 | .062 |
| Attending concerts/live theatre | .138 | .044 | .063 | .362 | .052 | .453 |
| Individual Sports | .156 | .026 | -.001 | .986 | .121 | .086 |
| Team Sports | .036 | .609 | -.112 | .110 | .124 | .077 |

^a PA = positive affect NA = negative affect BABS = affect balance (Bradburn Affect Balance Scale)

^b Pearson correlational coefficient Note: **Bold and italics** indicate significance at p<.05.

* indicates a notable result

The relationship between leisure experience and psychological well-being.

When the leisure experience dimensions were correlated to overall affect balance or psychological well-being (PWB), the results showed significantly positive relationships to both the challenge dimension ($r=.205$, $p=.002$) and the anxiety dimension of leisure ($r=.296$, $p<.001$), but not with either the boredom or awareness dimensions (see Table 86) . This may indicate that choosing leisure activity with a high challenge component (e.g., for some this may be riding a bicycle, knitting a sweater, or hiking for 16 KM) is personally rewarding to those who take part, and consequently, is positively linked to an increase in their psychological well-being or happiness. It may also reflect what has been said with respect to serious leisure. While most leisure falls within the casual category, perhaps when challenge is sought in the experience of leisure, we approach or enter the realm of serious leisure (Stebbins, 1992, 1998, 2001).

Analysis of the anxiety dimension of leisure experience is complicated by the fact that although a positive correlation to well-being was reported ($r=.296$, $p<.001$), it may be interpreted several ways. As reported in Table 5, two of the six items in this dimension sub-scale caused a higher level of anxiety for respondents, namely “I often feel I don’t have enough time to do all the things I have to do” and “much of the time I feel rushed.” The remaining items all had low mean scores indicating respondents generally disagreed with the items. The higher levels of anxiety reported on the two items mentioned may be a symptom of current society, reflecting the time pressures and “time crunch” many families are experiencing. Also, the result should not necessarily be interpreted negatively. Some anxiety could be considered positive or what might be called “eustress” (Selye, 1974) or could even be considered an aspect of the challenge dimension in leisure. Eustress or challenge is normal

and may very much be a part of the leisure choice and participation process, contributing to the overall sense of well-being one experiences. Some of the anxiety being reported by respondents in this study might be of this nature and may be contributing to the strength of the relationship reported. Also, as previously mentioned, the anxiety dimension may consist of at least two sub-dimensions. One of these sub-dimensions might be of a negative nature containing items causing negative anxiety or distress for individuals when they cannot decide or do not know how to take advantage of their leisure time. The other would be of a positive nature that represents positive stress (eustress or challenge) involved in conscious, voluntary choosing of activity, and challenging participation.

Worthy of note, and not unexpected, was that the anxiety dimension of leisure

Table 86

Relationship of Leisure Experience with Psychological Well-Being

| Leisure experience dimensions | Psychological well-being ^a | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | PA | NA | BABS |
| Awareness..... | <i>.164</i> (.013) | <i>.228</i> (<i><.001</i>) | -.068 (.301) |
| Challenge..... | <i>.279</i> (<i><.001</i>) | .008 (.904) | <i>.205</i> (.002) |
| Anxiety..... | -.096 (.146) | <i>-.437</i> (<i><.001</i>) | <i>.296</i> (.001) |
| Boredom..... | <i>-.162</i> (.014) | <i>-.275</i> (<i><.001</i>) | .110 (.096) |

^a PA=positive affect NA=negative affect BABS=Bradburn Affect Balance Scale
Note: Probabilities are in parentheses.

experience was also significantly related with the boredom dimension ($r=.405$, $p<.001$), and negatively correlated to the awareness dimension of leisure ($r= -.348$, $p<.001$) (*not* shown in Table 86).

When individuals are bored, they are also more likely to be anxious trying to decide what to do next, or even if they did choose an activity their anxiety might arise from lack of ability, not knowing how to go about participating, or not having the means to do so. A higher awareness level of leisure opportunities in one's community, or awareness of how to participate would help to reduce these anxiety levels. It goes without saying that awareness of the benefits of leisure, and of leisure opportunities themselves, is a critical and important factor to reducing personal levels of boredom in leisure (see Table 86).

Summary of the relationships between leisure (participation, importance, and experience) with psychological well-being (PWB).

When the relationship of leisure participation to overall psychological well-being (BABS) was examined, it was found those activities with higher rates of participation in the mass media/passive category like "reading books, magazines and newspapers," "watching TV or videos," and "going to movies," were not significantly related to respondent's overall PWB. This is interesting because these activities are highly participated in and one would think that respondents would not involve themselves in such activity if they were not in some way satisfying or made them feel better. On the other hand, two of the mass media/passive activities, "listening to music," and "using the Internet and computers" had positive relationships to overall PWB. Both these activities tend to be individual in nature and appear to have some value in heightening PWB.

Participating in individual physical activity or maintaining one's fitness level through activity is shown to heighten overall PWB. This is a positive note and suggests that respondents are generally aware of the value of personal fitness. Given the current struggle that municipal recreation and leisure departments, and provincial and federal governments are having trying to convince Canadians to adopt healthier, more physically active lifestyles (i.e., to get them away from their TV sets), these results support the notion that physical activity, or getting fit, is fun and produces good, happy feelings, or in other words increases overall PWB.

In addition, positive relationships between participation and PWB were also reported for social, personal growth, cultural, and outdoor activities, and for having short holidays and getaways.

When PWB was examined from the perspective of either positive or negative affect, the sub-dimensions of BABS, not unexpectedly more leisure activities (over half) were related to increases in positive affect than negative affect. With the exception of reading books, magazines and newspapers, those significant relationships shown in the negative affect dimension of BABS are all negative, indicating participation in these leisure activities actually helps to ameliorate any negative well-being in a person's life.

Even though the aforementioned relationships are not highly significant, these results show that participation alone is not a strong indicator in producing an increase in overall psychological well-being, and that other factors such as the value/importance placed on certain activity, or the context of lifestyle (in this case voluntary simplicity) may have a role to play.

The importance or value placed on leisure activity in lifestyle and psychological well-being (PWB).

Only the value or importance given to social and personal growth activities in one's leisure lifestyle showed a positive effect on overall PWB. It was also shown participation in these two areas of activity tended to produce higher levels of positive affect as well. Outside of these two general categories, only the importance or value placed on the activity of listening to music was related to elevated levels of PWB.

In summary then, regardless of how much one participates, the importance, or value attributed to certain leisure activity has an effect on overall PWB. For example, valuing social and personal growth leisure activity produced heightened levels of PWB.

Leisure experience and psychological well-being (PWB).

When the leisure experience dimensions (awareness, challenge, anxiety, and boredom) were examined for how they related to PWB (as the composite affect balance measure), the results showed a positive relationship to both the challenge and anxiety dimension of leisure, but not to the boredom or awareness dimensions. What this indicates is that choosing leisure activity that has a high challenge component (e.g., for some this may be riding a bicycle, knitting a sweater, or hiking for 16 KM) is personally rewarding to those who take part, and is positively linked to an increase in their PWB. It may also reflect what has been said with respect to serious leisure. While a lot of daily leisure activity falls within the casual category (e.g., mass media/passive leisure activity), perhaps when people seek challenge in their experience of leisure they are entering the realm of serious leisure (Stebbins, 1998, 1992), or those activities which are more highly rewarding and satisfying.

The reason anxiety is significantly related to well-being may have to do with the fact that anxiety is strongly related to the negative affect component of BABS, and thus shows as a strong positive relationship in the overall affect balance measure. It does not reflect that anxiety is related to positive well-being, although an argument is being made that some anxiety may indeed be of a positive, challenge-oriented nature, and thus could contribute to overall PWB.

The relationship between a VS lifestyle value orientation and psychological well-being (PWB).

This final section examines the relationship between psychological well-being or happiness and the four main value dimensions of the voluntary simplicity lifestyle. Initially, one would think that because there have generally been some positive results between various factors and lifestyle (VS), that there would be an overall sense of PWB expressed by respondents who concurred with the VS value orientation in lifestyle. However, when examined directly as composite measures, the results between voluntary simplicity and well-being were not significant ($r = -.003$, $p = .967$) and more indicative of a non-relationship. It is more revealing, and makes more sense, to examine the relationship among the constituent dimensions of both VS and PWB.

When the BABS and VS composite measures were compared based on their sub-dimensions, three significant relationships between the composite measures and dimensions of BABS or VS emerged (see Table 87). In fact the only significant result, when analyzing affect balance (BABS) or well-being as a composite measure was a mildly negative correlation between PWB and the material simplicity value dimension of VS ($r = -.139$,

p=.034). What this suggests is respondents actually feel better or happier if there is less emphasis on material simplicity (or rather, continued emphasis on consumerism!) in their lifestyles. Naturally, this result is counterintuitive and contrary to the values of the VS lifestyle in which a focus is on reducing material clutter in one's life. However, it probably represents the current reality of our consumer society, and possibly gives credence to the commodification argument put forth by Kelly (1992) and others. It may take more effort not to buy things than it does to buy them as needed/wanted.

It also was revealed that when the voluntary simplicity (VS) composite measure was compared to negative affect, a positive relationship was revealed ($r=.148$; $p=.025$). This

Table 87

Relationship^a between a voluntary simplicity (VS) value orientation and psychological well-being (PWB) (n=235).

| Voluntary simplicity dimensions | Psychological well-being (PWB) ^b | | |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------|------------------------|
| | PA | NA | BABS |
| Material simplicity | -.009 (.893) | .156 (.018) | -.139 (.034) |
| Self-determination | .149 (.023) | .118 (.073) | .012 (.853) |
| Ecological awareness | .122 *(.064) | .099 (.135) | .008 (.902) |
| Personal growth | .228 (<.001) | .052 (.434) | .128 *(.052) |
| Voluntary simplicity (overall) | .163 (.013) | .148 (.025) | -.003 (.967) |

^aPearson correlations ^bPA= positive affect NA=negative affect
 BABS=affect balance (Bradburn Affect Balance Scale)
 Note: Probabilities (p<.05) in parentheses. * indicates notable result

supports the ideas of the previous paragraph, and suggests that “doing” voluntary simplicity may be harder than believing in it. As previously reported in Table 9, respondents agreed with the behaviours, ideas and values of voluntary simplicity (overall MEAN=5.06), but it appears they also do not feel that good about material simplicity especially, expressing some negative well-being in this regard (see Table 87).

There was also a notable, albeit not statistically significant, relationship between personal growth values of the VS lifestyle, and the overall BABS measure of well-being ($r=.128$, $p=.052$). This positive relationship suggests that personal growth activities within a voluntary simplicity lifestyle tend to produce higher levels of psychological well-being. This dimension could be examined more closely because it was composed of only two items after the reliability analysis was completed, and might reveal stronger or different results if it was more clearly defined. Nonetheless, pursuing activities that are spiritually oriented and taking interest courses for personal development figure highly in this result. It also was argued previously that some of the reading (books, for example) or listening to music that occurs as part of mass media/passive leisure activity is in fact done for personal development or growth reasons.

The four value dimensions of VS also were analyzed from the perspective of the BABS dimensions of positive and negative affect separately. When viewing positive affect, it is interesting to see three of four possible relationships revealed. Respondents reported behaviours and values in the self-determination dimension of VS as producing a positive increase in well-being ($r=.149$; $p=.023$). Likewise, respondents noted that activities or values within the personal growth dimension also produced a positive sense of well-being ($r=.228$; $p<.001$). The comparison of VS value dimensions showed ecological awareness values

positively, although not significantly, related to heightened PWB ($r=.122$; $p=.064$), suggesting that respondents who believed in the interconnectedness of all things, environmental protection, conserving energy or recycling, also felt good about this and displayed corresponding positive levels of PWB.

Also, it was very interesting to find that only the material simplicity dimension produced a significant relationship with the negative affect dimension of BABS (see Table 87). With the material simplicity dimension, respondents reported that by focussing on material simplicity (e.g., less emphasis on consumerism) they experienced corresponding negative affect ($r=.156$; $p=.018$). This could be for the same reasons mentioned earlier.

Summary of the relationship between lifestyle (VS) and psychological well-being (PWB).

When the VS and BABS composite measures were compared against each other, some interesting significant relationships emerged. In fact, when analyzing affect balance or well-being (BABS) as a composite measure, a mildly negative relationship between well-being and the material simplicity dimension of VS was shown. What this suggests is that respondents actually feel better or happier if there is less emphasis on material simplicity (or continued emphasis on consumerism!) in their lifestyles. Naturally this result is counterintuitive and contrary to a VS lifestyle in which a focus is on reducing material clutter in one's life. However, it probably represents the current reality of our consumer society, and possibly gives credence to the commodification argument put forth by Kelly (1992), Wearing and Wearing (1992), et al. It may take more effort to simplify and, for example, not buy things than it does to buy them as needed/wanted.

A noteworthy relationship between the personal growth dimension and the overall BABS measure (PWB) was also shown, indicating these values and participation in associated activities lead to increased PWB.

It makes more sense to view the relationships between voluntary simplicity values and psychological well-being from their various sub-dimensions. In doing this, it may be seen that all but the material simplicity value dimensions are significantly related to increases in positive affect (PWB). Material simplicity values actually heightened negative affect or negative well-being. As was earlier reported, respondents generally agreed with the behaviours, ideas and values of voluntary simplicity, and in the direct comparison with PWB it is shown that the VS value orientation (other than in the material simplicity dimension) is significantly associated with heightened positive affect, substantially more so than to negative affect. In this case, it can be seen that the overall BABS results do not fully reveal the relationship between these two variables.

SECTION FOUR: LIFESTYLE, LEISURE, and WELL-BEING (PWB): A HEIRARCHICAL REGRESSION MODEL.

The final stage of analysis was focussed on examining how the main concepts in the study combined to explain psychological well-being. It was speculated from the beginning of the study that the way we live our lives (i.e., lifestyle) ought to affect how we construct and experience our leisure, and consequently, the levels of happiness (psychological well-being) we experience. Immediately one would think this makes sense. It might be reasonable to expect those who live more outer-directed, highly-consumptive lifestyles based on establishing their identity through the things they possess or use, would experience leisure in

a different way than those who might be more inner-directed, and place the value of family or community ahead of material possession or consumption. Subsequently, the influence would not only be the leisure choices and outcomes they experience, but also their overall feelings of well-being.

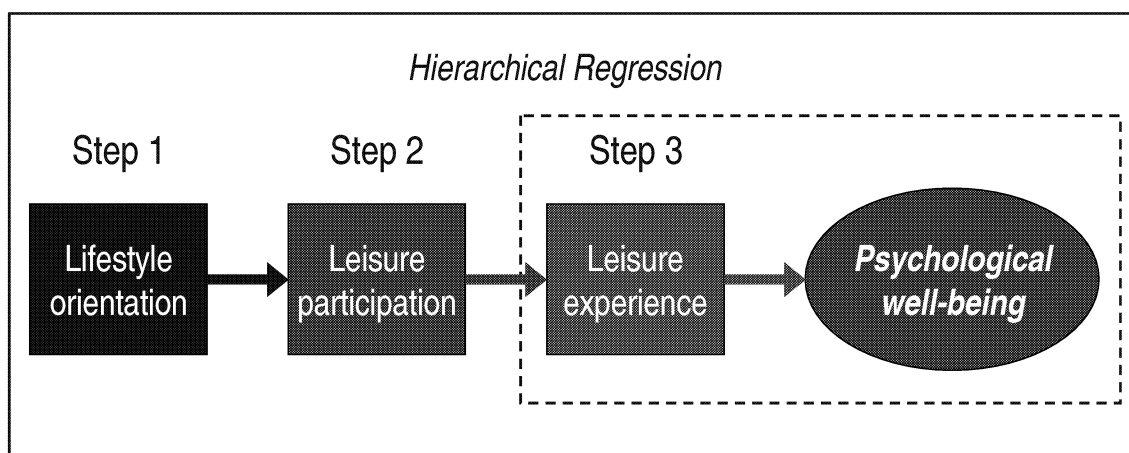
Initially, the struggle had been to conceptualize lifestyle in a way that would allow the measurement of these relationships to take place, and a voluntary simplicity lifestyle value orientation enabled this. The four VS lifestyle dimensions (material simplicity, self-determination, ecological awareness, and personal growth) provide a reasonable backdrop against which the dimensions of both leisure experience (boredom, anxiety, challenge, and awareness) and psychological well-being (positive and negative affect) could be examined.

The method used to assess the relationship among these concepts is hierarchical regression, in which the measures reflecting the selected concepts are considered in sequence. Consequently, each concept explains a certain amount of the variability in the dependent variable, in this case psychological well-being, and each subsequent concept considered in the process can be assessed independent of the influence of previously entered concepts. Since the conceptualization of the study involved determining whether a lifestyle modality affected the experience of leisure and, ultimately, psychological well-being, this is how the variables were entered into the hierarchical regression model. A graphic representation of this sequence can be seen in Figure 1.

The model in Figure 1 illustrates a three-step hierarchical regression in which the contribution of lifestyle orientation on well-being was examined first, leisure participation second, and leisure experience third. The results of the analyses may be summarized as follows.

Figure 1.

The Lifestyle – Leisure – Well-Being Relationship



Lifestyle orientation, on its own, explained a significant, albeit relatively small (5.3%), proportion of the variance in PWB ($F=2.813$, $p=.027$) (see Table 88). Consequently, the way in which people choose to lead their lives apparently does have some bearing on their well-being. When each of the individual value dimensions (material simplicity, self-determination, ecological awareness, and personal growth) are examined, only material simplicity was significantly and negatively related to well-being ($BETA= -.169$, $p=.037$). The nature of this effect is that as material simplicity increases (e.g., through less emphasis on consumerism), there is a corresponding decrease in psychological well-being. This result confirms previous analyses that also showed material simplicity being negatively related to well-being, and as discussed, evokes feelings of negative PWB if greater emphasis is placed

on reducing consumerism or materialism in one's life. Even though no significant relationships are evident with any of the other VS dimensions, it is worth noting that increases in the personal growth dimension (BETA=.165, $p=.112$) do contribute in a small way to the overall effect of lifestyle on well-being.

When the contribution of lifestyle orientation was accounted for, leisure participation was examined next for its effect on well-being (see Table 88). The results show that although overall leisure participation accounted for the same proportion of the variance in well-being as lifestyle orientation ($R^2=.053$, $p=.333$), it was not significant ($F=1.143$, $p=.333$). Indeed, participation did not contribute to psychological well-being in any way, in any of the individual categories. Leisure participation on its own, therefore, is not meaningful enough to produce changes in well-being, suggesting that other factors like the quality of participation or the experiences it evokes might possibly be more important.

This is indeed the case as shown in the next stage of the analysis when the dimensions of the leisure experience (i.e., dimensions of boredom, awareness, challenge, and anxiety) are introduced to the model. A significant amount of the variation in psychological well-being ($R^2=.139$, $p<.001$) is explained by the leisure experience, with the effect most pronounced by the weights of both the challenge (BETA=.248, $p=.001$) and the anxiety dimensions (BETA=.274, $p<.001$) (see Table 88). The effect of challenge is easier to understand, because one would think this is what is sought or experienced when people choose their leisure. Also, although many typical leisure pursuits are "casual" and not overly challenging (i.e., mass media or social activity), it may be when people seek challenge in their leisure that they open themselves to a richer, deeper leisure experience, perhaps more oriented towards what Stebbins (1992, 1998) calls serious leisure.

Table 88

Contribution of Lifestyle Orientation, Leisure Participation, and Leisure Experience to *Psychological Well-Being* (Bradburn Affect Balance Scale)

| Dimension Category | R ² change | Total R ² | F change | β | p |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. Lifestyle Orientation | .053 | .053 | 2.813 | | .027 |
| Material Simplicity | | | | -.169 | .037 |
| Self-determination..... | | | | -.123 | .120 |
| Ecological Awareness..... | | | | .068 | .445 |
| Personal Growth..... | | | | .165 | .112 |
| 2. Leisure Participation | .053 | .106 | 1.143 | | .333 |
| Mass media or passive | | | | .049 | .470 |
| Social activities | | | | .016 | .851 |
| Cultural activities..... | | | | .088 | .282 |
| Outdoor activities..... | | | | .062 | .437 |
| Personal growth activities..... | | | | .043 | .581 |
| Travel and tourism activities..... | | | | -.004 | .954 |
| Creative hobbies and crafts..... | | | | .019 | .791 |
| Individual physical activities | | | | .027 | .717 |
| Individual sports activities | | | | .021 | .791 |
| Team sports..... | | | | -.025 | .763 |
| 3. Leisure Experience | .139 | .245 | 8.594 | | <.001 |
| Awareness | | | | -.054 | .499 |
| Challenge | | | | .248 | .001 |
| Anxiety..... | | | | .274 | <.001 |
| Boredom..... | | | | .087 | .304 |

The reason the anxiety dimension of leisure experience contributes significantly to variation in PWB is likely due to the fact this aspect of the leisure experience was shown to be strongly related to well-being in previous analyses. For example, anxiety was negatively related to negative affect ($r=-.437$, $p<.001$) (i.e., it has a positive influence in reducing negative affect), and positively related to overall PWB (see Table 86). Understanding the role of anxiety as part of the leisure experience is further complicated by the fact that although a positive relationship with overall PWB was also reported ($r=.296$; $p<.001$), it may be

interpreted in several ways. As reported in Table 5, two of the six items in this dimension sub-scale caused a higher level of anxiety for respondents, namely “I often feel I don’t have enough time to do all the things I have to do” (MEAN=5.21; SD=1.47), and “much of the time I feel rushed” (MEAN=4.66; SD=1.48). The remaining four items (i.e., “I feel relaxed when I don’t have any plans,” “When I know I’m going to have some free time, I generally feel anxious,” “I get uptight when I have a whole weekend with nothing to do,” and, “The worst feeling I know is when I have free time and don’t have anything planned”) all had considerably lower scores (average MEAN=2.70; SD=1.59) indicating respondents disagreed with the items to a greater degree than they agreed with them, and a generally lower level of anxiety. The higher levels of anxiety reported on the first two items mentioned may be a symptom of current society, reflecting the time pressures and “time crunch” many families are experiencing, or they may just be reflective of daily active living. The result should not necessarily be interpreted negatively, as suggested by the positive relationship to overall PWB. Some of this anxiety or time stress might be considered positive anxiety, or what might be called “eustress” (Selye, 1974), or could also be associated with, or be an aspect of the challenge dimension of leisure. Eustress or challenge is normal and may very much be a part of the leisure choice and participation process, contributing to the overall sense of well-being one experiences. Perhaps the anxiety being reported by respondents might be of this nature and may be contributing to the positive relationship with PWB reported earlier. Also, as previously postulated, the anxiety dimension of leisure might consist of at least two sub-dimensions. One of these may be of a negative nature and indicative of conditions causing negative anxiety or stress for individuals when they are not deriving optimal experiences from their leisure time (i.e., distress (Selye, 1974)). The other could be of a positive nature

representing positive stresses (eustress, or challenge) involved in conscious, voluntary choosing of activity and challenging participation as part of busy daily living.

When all the factors are taken together, a significant proportion of the variance in psychological well-being (affect balance, or overall BABS) is explained by lifestyle orientation, overall leisure participation, and the experience of leisure ($R^2=.245$, $p<.001$). The key factors are the material simplicity dimension in lifestyle orientation and, especially, challenge as part of the leisure experience. Interestingly, leisure participation, in any form, did not prove to be a significant factor in contributing to an individual's well-being.

Of particular interest is the role that the leisure experience plays in contributing to PWB. Regardless of the lifestyle orientation that people embrace and the leisure choices they make, the quality of their leisure experience appears to play the greatest role in enhancing the quality of their lives. In other words, once lifestyle orientation and frequency of participation in a variety of leisure pursuits are controlled for, the dimensions of the leisure experience, especially challenge, independently play an important and meaningful part in contributing to one's psychological well-being. So, regardless of whether individuals embrace a highly materialistic consumer lifestyle or choose to live simply, and regardless of the types of leisure activities in which they choose to participate – or how frequently – the leisure experience remains a critical contributor to their overall well-being.

In comparison, when the positive affect (PA) dimension of psychological well-being, as opposed to overall affect balance or PWB, was examined in hierarchical regression, the results showed that lifestyle orientation ($R^2=.074$, $p=.004$), leisure participation ($R^2=.072$, $p=.106$), and leisure experience ($R^2=.058$, $p=.010$) explained a significant portion of the variation in this dimension of PWB ($R^2=.204$, $F=3.392$, $p=.010$) (see Table 89). Again, it is

interesting that lifestyle orientation (7.4%) and leisure participation (7.2%) accounted for a much similar proportion of the variance in positive affect, but as before, when the composite or overall PWB was examined, the effect of leisure participation was shown to be insignificant. Leisure participation on its own does not have a statistically significant effect on the positive affect dimension of PWB. The results suggest other factors are involved. Out of the ten categories of leisure activity, however, it may be seen that cultural activities and travel and tourism activities made the largest contribution in terms of their weight in the overall leisure participation effect.

Also, in contrast to the previous hierarchical regression involving overall PWB, when only the effect on positive affect (PA) is examined, leisure experience only accounts for 5.8% of the variation in PA, compared to 13.9% of the variation in overall affect balance or PWB. Although not statistically significant, of the four VS value dimensions, personal growth was the largest contributor to producing corresponding changes in well-being. Even though none of the four value dimensions of VS separately were shown to have a statistically significant effect, the results indicate the VS lifestyle value orientation overall ($R^2=.074$; $F=4.008$; $p=.004$) plays a more significant role in producing changes in the positive affect dimension of PWB than does leisure experience, which is again characterized by the weight of the challenge dimension ($BETA=.237$; $p=.002$) (see Table 89). Here too, the results clearly support previous evidence highlighting the importance of the challenge aspect of the leisure experience. In essence, if only positive affect is used as the PWB measure, a voluntary simplicity value orientation in one's lifestyle can indeed account for heightened positive psychological well-being, more so than just the experience of challenging leisure opportunity within such a value framework.

Table 89

Contribution of Lifestyle Orientation, Leisure Participation, and Leisure Experience to *Positive Affect* in Psychological Well-Being (Bradburn Affect Balance Scale).

| Dimension Category | R ² change | Total R ² | F change | β | p |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Lifestyle Orientation | .074 | .074 | 4.008 | | .004 |
| Material Simplicity | | | | -.056 | .498 |
| Self-determination..... | | | | -.037 | .651 |
| Ecological Awareness..... | | | | .069 | .446 |
| Personal Growth..... | | | | .101 | .342 |
| 2. Leisure Participation | .072 | .146 | 1.610 | | .106 |
| Mass media or passive | | | | .094 | .177 |
| Social activities | | | | .076 | .375 |
| Cultural activities | | | | .130 | .122 |
| Outdoor activities..... | | | | -.096 | .240 |
| Personal growth activities..... | | | | -.061 | .446 |
| Travel and tourism activities..... | | | | .122 | .103 |
| Creative hobbies and crafts..... | | | | .009 | .910 |
| Individual physical activities | | | | .078 | .309 |
| Individual sports activities | | | | .024 | .766 |
| Team sports..... | | | | -.016 | .849 |
| 3. Leisure Experience | .058 | .204 | 3.392 | | .010 |
| Awareness | | | | .036 | .661 |
| Challenge | | | | .237 | .002 |
| Anxiety..... | | | | -.041 | .595 |
| Boredom..... | | | | -.053 | .542 |

The foregoing points to some positive relationships between a VS value orientation and PWB, suggesting that those who support such values, attitudes and behaviours actually experience a higher degree of PWB or happiness. However, before people run out and decide to change the way they are living to something more akin to VS, a word of caution. It has been argued by many authors (cf., Elgin, 1993; Burch, 2000, et al.) that voluntary simplicity is not something one “dives” right into, making a “black to white” shift overnight. They argue it is a longer-term comprehensive lifestyle shift, involving all facets and dimensions

that realistically may take years to adopt. In today's mass-media driven society, people are often offered the idea of changing their lifestyle, along with so many other ideas for better living. In this fast-paced world, they might choose to agree and support a particular lifestyle value orientation rather quickly so they can "hop on the bandwagon," and be like everyone else. The risk is that, as a result of a quick decision to "turn over a new leaf," so to speak, the benefits of a lifestyle shift are often short-term. Like so many of the "fad" diets promoted by the mass media, people soon return to their previous comfort level, having only made a temporary lifestyle shift.

An example of temporary lifestyle shift, for comparison, is the notion of beginning and maintaining a personal fitness program. A sedentary lifestyle is not healthy nor conducive to general well-being (both physical and psychological), and many people go to great lengths to look like they are active and living a fit life. For example, they wear the clothing, make appearances around health clubs, and try various fad diets but they have great difficulty in following through on and maintaining the necessary behaviour, or actually performing fitness activities on a regular and healthy basis. While some actually build this into their lifestyles on an intensive short-term basis and begin to experience positive results, many often sense or experience the new lifestyle shift as being negative rather than positive. They complain that it is hard work, it hurts, it is too cold outside, there are other more important things to do, etc.. The end result is a return to previous habits, illustrating a short-term lifestyle shift that ends up producing negative feelings as opposed to the positive experience it ought to be.

In support of the foregoing analyses involving overall PWB and the positive affect dimension of PWB, when the negative affect dimension of PWB was examined in

hierarchical regression, some interesting results emerged showing the effect of anxiety within the leisure experience dimensions playing a significant role in explaining the variance in psychological well-being (BETA=-.361; p<.001) (see Table 90). As reported earlier (see

Table 90

Contribution of Lifestyle Orientation, Leisure Participation, and Leisure Experience to *Negative Affect* in Psychological Well-Being.

| Dimension Category | R² change | Total R² | F change | β | p |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. Lifestyle Orientation | .031 | .031 | 1.616 | | .172 |
| Material Simplicity | | | | .150 | *.055 |
| Self-determination..... | | | | .113 | .141 |
| Ecological Awareness..... | | | | -.019 | .829 |
| Personal Growth..... | | | | -.106 | .296 |
| 2. Leisure Participation | .054 | .085 | 1.127 | | .344 |
| Mass media or passive | | | | .026 | .699 |
| Social activities | | | | .049 | .547 |
| Cultural activities | | | | .011 | .887 |
| Outdoor activities..... | | | | -.158 | .041 |
| Personal growth activities..... | | | | -.106 | .166 |
| Travel and tourism activities..... | | | | .114 | .110 |
| Creative hobbies and crafts..... | | | | -.015 | .829 |
| Individual physical activities | | | | .037 | .607 |
| Individual sports activities | | | | -.003 | .965 |
| Team sports..... | | | | .015 | .850 |
| 3. Leisure Experience | .199 | .284 | 12.970 | | <.001 |
| Awareness | | | | .095 | .218 |
| Challenge | | | | -.084 | .246 |
| Anxiety..... | | | | -.361 | <.001 |
| Boredom..... | | | | -.150 | .069 |

* indicates notable result

Table 86), anxiety is negatively related to negative affect and appears to have an ameliorating effect on negative aspects of well-being. This regression analysis shows that both lifestyle and leisure participation were not statistically significant in their effect on the variance in

negative affect (PWB), but that leisure experience ($R^2=.199$, $p<.001$) accounted for the majority of the variation. In fact, leisure experience, dominated by the weight of the anxiety dimension, accounted for a significantly high amount of variation in negative affect ($R^2=.284$, $p<.001$) when the three major variables were viewed together (see Table 90).

Though not significant, the voluntary simplicity lifestyle value orientation accounted for only three percent (3%) variation in negative affect while leisure participation was only slightly higher (5.4%).

Within lifestyle orientation, although not statistically significant, the material simplicity dimension produced a notable result ($BETA=.150$; $p=.055$), indicating that material simplicity (or attempting to reduce the level of consumerism in one's life), is at least a small or moderate factor in creating heightened negative affect. As is supported by previous results, reducing materialism and consumerism in one's life is not necessarily enjoyable – it seems to be more of an effort for people to try to simplify their lives than to carry on with their regular consumption habits.

In addition, out of the ten categories of leisure activity included in the analysis, outdoor leisure activity was shown to have a significant negative relationship with negative affect in the overall effect of leisure participation on this aspect of PWB ($BETA=-.158$; $p=.041$). Even though it is not statistically significant, and leisure participation overall accounts for only a small portion of the variation in negative affect, the value of outdoor activity in reducing negative affect or the negative feelings associated with PWB should be noted (see Table 90). Likewise, but also not significantly, personal growth activity is seen as contributing in a similar fashion.

As mentioned earlier, the anxiety dimension within leisure experience, as an overall construct, was responsible for the majority of the effect or variance in the negative affect dimension of PWB. Although not statistically significant, it can be seen that boredom (BETA=-.150; p=.069) is also noteworthy in producing change in negative affect. Interestingly, this result shows there may be more to the boredom dimension of the leisure experience than shown earlier. The indication is that some aspects of boredom actually serve to reduce negative affect as opposed to increasing it. Taken together, however, it may be seen that the effect of anxiety is over twice that of boredom in the overall variation in negative affect.

Previous discussion noted that two items in the anxiety dimension of leisure experience stood out from the others (see Table 5) to produce a reasonably moderate level of anxiety overall in this dimension (overall MEAN=3.44; SD=.097). Also, the foregoing discussions regarding anxiety or stress raise more questions than reveal answers. Most people do not relate to stress as being positive. For most people, stress carries a negative connotation and is viewed as producing negative effects in one's life, e.g., increased blood pressure, nervous tension, sleeplessness, irritability, etc., leading to a whole host of other health and psychological implications. For example, ongoing leisure research efforts continue to examine the role of leisure with respect to chronic problems of stress related to time pressure in society (c.f., Zuzanek & Mannell, 1998; Zuzanek & Veal, 1998).

On the other hand, leisure studies and psychology, among other disciplines, have identified that stress can be positive, and is in fact part of the motivation required for performing daily tasks, or to be involved in enjoyable, challenging activity in one's leisure. This study, perhaps erroneously, equates anxiety with stress, but also identifies positive

aspects to this (anxiety) dimension of the leisure experience. In all three hierarchical regression analyses leisure experience dimensions factored significantly in explaining the variation in the dependent variable, psychological well-being.

Summary of the relationship between lifestyle, leisure participation, leisure experience, and psychological well-being.

When all three hierarchical regressions are examined together, it may be seen a significant proportion of the variance in overall psychological well-being (PWB) ($R^2=.245$, $p<.001$), the positive affect dimension of PWB ($R^2=.204$, $p=.010$), and the negative affect dimension of PWB ($R^2=.284$, $p<.001$) is explained by lifestyle orientation, overall leisure participation, and the experience of leisure. With lifestyle orientation, the key factors contributing to the overall effect of lifestyle in accounting for variance in PWB, appear to be material simplicity and personal growth. Material simplicity was shown to have a negative relationship with PWB, and personal growth contributing to heightened PWB. Interestingly, lifestyle was the dominant significant concept in explaining variance in the positive affect dimension of PWB, and lends support to the discussion and results that indicate lifestyle value orientation indeed has a role to play in the overall relationship to PWB. Also, leisure participation, on the whole, did not prove to be a significant factor in contributing to an individual's well-being, but cultural and travel/tourism activity were noted as contributing to the overall effect of participation in explaining the variance in the positive affect dimension of PWB. Outdoor and personal growth activities were shown to contribute weight in explaining variation in the negative affect dimension of PWB, although their effect is one of

reducing negative elements. It appears it is not so much what you choose to do in your leisure, but the quality of that experience and the context (lifestyle) within which this occurs.

When the three hierarchical regressions are viewed together, the largest effect in the relationship with, or explanation of variance in, PWB, was by various dimensions of leisure experience. For example, in accounting for the variation in overall PWB, it was the challenge and anxiety dimensions of the leisure experience that contributed the most weight. As mentioned earlier, anxiety appears to have a positive relationship to PWB and contribute to heightened PWB. This indicates that elements of this anxiety must be positive or could even be related to aspects of challenge, perhaps akin to positive stress or motivation in leisure.

Further, the challenge dimension of leisure stood out singularly in its effect in producing change in the positive affect dimension of PWB, and this supports the overall importance of challenge in leisure as a key ingredient in increasing personal PWB. In the hierarchical regression using negative affect as the dependent variable, it was the anxiety and boredom dimensions of the leisure experience that contribute to explain the variance in this dimension of PWB. Here too, anxiety was the strongest and most significant factor in accounting for variance in PWB, but it is shown as being negatively related to negative affect, or in fact, increasing well-being. This supports the previous regression analyses that also show anxiety accounting for positive variance in PWB. Interestingly, the boredom dimension of leisure experience was also shown as decreasing negative affect, but this is somewhat confusing.

Regardless of the lifestyle orientation that people embrace and the leisure choices they make, the quality of their leisure experience appears to play the greatest role in enhancing the quality of their lives. In other words, once lifestyle orientation and frequency

of participation in a variety of leisure pursuits are controlled for, the dimensions of the leisure experience, especially challenge and anxiety, independently play an important and meaningful part in contributing to one's overall psychological well-being. On the other hand, if only the positive affect dimension of PWB were used as an indicator, lifestyle value orientation arguably does play a more significant role in explaining overall change in PWB than either leisure participation or leisure experience. So, if only the positive affect component of well-being is considered, if individuals embrace the VS lifestyle value orientation, regardless of the types of leisure activities in which they choose to participate – or how frequently, and regardless of their experience of leisure, it is the VS lifestyle that remains a critical contributor to their overall well-being.

However, life is typically a balance between positive and negative events and experiences, and it might more properly be argued that whether individuals embrace a highly materialistic consumer lifestyle or choose to live simply, and regardless of their leisure participation or frequency, it is the quality of their leisure experience that remains a critical contributor to overall psychological well-being.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH, AND IMPLICATIONS

To conclude and summarize this study it is helpful to return to the overall purpose of examining the role lifestyle plays in the relationship between leisure participation, leisure experience, and psychological well-being. Is the experience of leisure and consequent psychological well-being influenced by, or moderated by a voluntary simplicity value orientation in lifestyle?

One of the reasons for examining lifestyle as a possible factor in improving our well-being is that many researchers (Durning, 1993; Hemingway, 1996; Juniu, 2000; Kelly & Godbey, 1992; Linder, 1972; Putnam, 1992; Schor, 1991; Zuzanek & Mannell, 1998; Zuzanek & Smale, 1997) report important facets of life have changed, and PWB and quality of life of north-Americans has decreased dramatically in the last century, and continues to decrease. Other authors and researchers have suggested current high-consumption oriented and ecologically unsustainable lifestyles need to change (e.g., Elgin, 1993; Mitchell, 1983; Suzuki, 1997, et al.). In view of the massive impacts of human life on the planet, in particular those generated by intense consumerism in the developed western world during the last 50 years, the relationships and interaction between individuals, between individuals and their communities, and individuals and their environment in general must be addressed. Indeed, serious questions are being raised about north-American lifestyles and how they threaten well-being, pointing to them being highly wasteful, disconnected from the environment and communities, unhealthy and highly commodified in most aspects.

Not only are quality of life and environmental impacts from technological and economic progress issues of concern, but also personal, social, and cultural impacts like the instrumentalization or commodification of life (Hemingway, 1996; Kelly, 1992; Kleiber, 2000; et al.). These social and cultural impacts have led to a change and misunderstanding of what quality leisure represents, and a forgetting or loss of understanding how leisure can reveal a deeper knowledge of personal existence, and what the “good life” is really about. Until recently, not much regarding such an examination of leisure and well-being within a lifestyle context has appeared in the leisure literature.

Authors such as Veal, (1993, 1989), Chaney (1987), and Tokarski, (1991) note that lifestyle has not been used as a dynamic or pluralist framework to study leisure, but it *could be* used for better understanding the cultural significance of leisure. This may be, as Veal (1993) suggests, because lifestyle is an illusive concept. It has been hard to conceptualize and define, and perhaps this study takes a bit of a bold leap in its approach. Because of the many facets and dimensions to lifestyle, the analysis of lifestyle is complex and there is likely a two-way or multi-directional relationship between various life dimensions like leisure or work within lifestyle. Lifestyle may require a more “holistic” approach in its study. It has been reported that lifestyle has the potential to influence leisure experience and well-being for individuals and families. Kelly and Godbey (1992), for example, suggest leisure is more central to lifestyle than previously thought. Leisure may act to tie various aspects of our lives (lifestyle) together more than we know, and, *conversely*, lifestyle may influence how leisure is enacted within a person’s life, in fact the kinds of pursuits or activities that are chosen. To counteract the speed of life being experienced by so many, lifestyles that incorporate leisure in a

meaningful way to reduce time stress and this sense of constantly feeling rushed, can improve one's psychological well-being or happiness (Linder, 1972; Zuzanek & Mannell, 1998; Zuzanek & Smale, 1997).

So why the interest in voluntary simplicity? Proponents of VS typically are more process oriented, and derive greater satisfaction and well-being from all aspects of life activity by resisting consumer-oriented, product-driven, and outer-directed lifestyles. If it is recognized and agreed upon that many people currently report higher levels of stress, time stress, time pressure, generally live life at a very fast pace, and are being overwhelmed by consumer culture, a lifestyle mode like voluntary simplicity appears highly attractive. As stated in the earlier literature review, simplicity as a way of living is not a new idea. For example, as one of the primary dimensions of voluntary simplicity, the benefits of material simplicity have been touted for centuries, and since being defined in the early part of the last century (Gregg, 1936), it has been demonstrated that voluntary simplicity can exist in many forms. Especially now in the noise and with the incessant pressure of mass media-driven consumerism the suggestion of simplicity is welcome by many. In fact, some historians like Toynbee (1947) have suggested that in order for western civilization to advance, evolve, and transform to meet the challenges of the future, a "Law of Progressive Simplification" (p. 198) is required.

This law asserts that as evolution proceeds, a civilization will transfer increasing increments of energy and attention from the material to the nonmaterial side of life and that this will be expressed through developing culture (music, art, drama, literature) and a growing capacity for compassion, caring community, and self-governance. A progressively simpler way of living, then is not only essential for responding to the ecological crisis (maintaining ourselves), it is also a vital expression of an evolving civilization (surpassing ourselves) (as cited in Elgin, 1993, p. 195-196).

In view of the foregoing, and because of the stress, time crunch, and time pressure being reported by so many people, it was felt there was something about the VS lifestyle value orientation that appeared positive, and could provide insights into the lifestyle, leisure, well-being relationship, and possibly even offer potential solutions to future challenges. Several authors have discussed the effect of consumer society and mass media as an external controlling force in peoples lives, and note the importance of regaining personal control and self-determination in lifestyle, abilities essential to making unhindered choices in ones' life, and to heightening one's well-being. These same authors suggest voluntary simplicity offers these lifestyle elements and in order for western industrial society to survive, if not flourish, a change to more simplicity in lifestyle is necessary (cf., Elgin, 1993; Schor, 1991; Toynbee, 1947). At the root is the issue of whether an "individual enjoys real freedom as claimed by the liberal capitalist ethic, or whether such freedoms are illusions created and manipulated by capitalist forces in the interests of the few" (Veal, 1993, p. 240). Are current north-American lifestyles really as "free" as the mass media would like people to believe? Are people voluntarily able to choose the way in which they wish to live, or, are the choices manipulated by larger market forces? As Veal (1993) notes,

the debate focuses on the growing importance of consumption and style, and whether the affluent consumer society offers the opportunity for people to create a genuine freedom to fashion their own, new, lifestyles and identities, largely independent of traditional class and status constraints; or whether emerging consumption patterns and styles and the contrived 'aura of the commodity' (Tomlinson, 1990) are merely new tools of manipulation, domination, division and exploitation by capital. [...] the issue at stake is whether lifestyles are the free, creative expression of individuals or groups of individuals, or whether lifestyles are created and manipulated by capitalism and its agents (p. 240).

Using voluntary simplicity (VS) value orientation as a way of looking at or conceptualizing lifestyle made intuitive sense. Voluntary simplicity has been described by four main value dimensions of material simplicity, self-determination, ecological awareness, and personal growth (Burch, 2000; Elgin, 1993; Elgin and Mitchell, 1977; Shama and Wisenblit, 1984). Adopting a value orientation like this as an over-arching belief system for the various facets of life (work, leisure, family, community, spirituality, environment, etc.) might allow an individual to regain personal control and provide opportunity for necessary reflection that the current fast-paced, mass media-driven consumer society does not. It might allow one to access those benefits of leisure that seem to be lost or bypassed by commodification or instrumentalization, and provide a necessary boost to PWB and overall quality of life.

It was speculated early on that the way people live their lives (i.e., their lifestyle) ought to have an effect on how they experience their leisure, and consequently on the level of happiness (psychological well-being) they experience. It is reasonable to expect, for example, those who live more outer-directed (e.g., mass media or socially influenced) highly consumptive lifestyles based on establishing identity through possessions or their use, would experience leisure in a different way than those who might be more inner-directed (e.g., self reliant or creative) and place the value of family or community ahead of material possession or consumption. Since the conceptualization of the study involved determining whether a lifestyle modality affected the experience of leisure and consequently psychological well-being or happiness, this is how the major conclusions are presented.

Support for the voluntary simplicity lifestyle value orientation.

Respondents in this study generally agree with the values of voluntary simplicity like self-determination, ecological awareness, and personal growth, but find that it may take more effort to put some things into practice, especially when it comes to reducing their levels of consumption or consumer habits (or in other words “increasing” their material simplicity). Respondents were marginal and ambivalent in their agreement towards the values presented by items in the material simplicity dimension. This may lend credence to the argument for commodification (Kelly, 1991; Kelly & Godbey, 1992; Wearing & Wearing, 1992; et al.). In view of the tremendous impact television has in shaping values, attitudes and behaviours towards consumption-based lifestyles, the fact that respondents were not sure about material simplicity or perhaps misunderstood what this dimension represented, points to the possibility that they cannot think in other than material-oriented or consumeristic ways. After years of constant bombardment with the same consumption-oriented messages, people not only view everything as something that can be bought, sold, or traded, but have become products themselves, falling directly into the hands and manipulation of the Madison Avenue marketing gurus. As Shama (1981) points out, the value orientation of the typical consumer society lifestyle is one in which the following values dominate: “material growth, [humans] over nature, competitive self-interest, rugged individualism, and rationalism” (p. 125), all values that are highly promoted by the present consumption-oriented mass media.

The profiles of those having a voluntary simplicity value orientation or living a VS lifestyle are numerous and include people from many different walks of life, but also have often been described with similar backgrounds. Shama (1988) notes the socio-

demographic characteristics of voluntary simplifiers found in his study were consistent with those reported by Elgin and Mitchell (1977), Leonard-Barton (1981), Shama (1981), and Mitchell (1983). Typically, voluntary simplifiers were “college graduates, professionals and managers, relatively young, and have above average family incomes” (Shama, 1988, p. 862). In general, the results of this study support this profile. While respondents reported a general agreement and support for the voluntary simplicity value orientation, for example, it was those who were aged 35 years or older and married or SWD (single/widowed/divorced), that had higher levels of support for VS than single, young-adult respondents.

Although education levels were not determined within the study, the Kitchener/Waterloo area is home to two major universities and several colleges. Most of the respondents in the study lived in an urban setting and were of an average age of 39. The Kitchener/Waterloo area is known for its manufacturing and high-technology industry. Over two-thirds of the respondents were employed (although not specifically determined, likely in skilled, managerial or professional employment) and a smaller number were either homemakers or retired. The respondents were highly affluent and over half reported combined family household income of \$70,000 or more. Likewise, over half described their financial circumstances as being ‘quite comfortable,’ or by ‘I have all I need and more.’

As has been mentioned by several authors (e.g., Etzioni, 1988; Rudmin & Kilbourne, 1996), people adopt VS values when they achieve certain levels of comfort, affluence and are financially secure. Once basic needs in life have been taken care of, people have the freedom to make choices regarding their consumption or leisure, and

often there exists a conscious “scaling-back” of consumption. The general level of support for voluntary simplicity in this study supports these assertions.

Voluntary simplicity and leisure participation

It is difficult to summarize leisure participation within the VS lifestyle as a neat package, or identify one group or type of respondent as standing out strongly over others. It may be stated that leisure participation is more varied for those who are older or retired based on their increasing awareness levels, discretionary income and available free time. Some activities like reading books/magazines/newspapers, listening to music, entertaining, or visiting friends and family, are common to respondents throughout the life span. Outdoor activities are enjoyed by all, but more of a focus is given to an activity like gardening in the older age groups likely because until one is married, has children, and owns property it really is not a possible or viable activity. Having necessary discretionary income makes a difference too, and until one is financially established in life certain activities do not reveal themselves. In general, those who subscribe to VS take part in much the same leisure activities, and at similar frequency as a general population.

In addition, the *importance or value* placed on leisure activity did not distinguish itself significantly within the VS lifestyle value orientation. The value or importance placed on leisure activity is likely reflective of the benefits derived from or of the inherent quality of the leisure experience. Those pursuits that offer higher challenge or personal reward in terms of the function the activity performs (e.g., family togetherness, coping with life events, pleasure, tension relief, social fun) were given a higher degree of importance or value by respondents. For example, and in general, activities like travelling

to visit friends or family, gardening, taking general interest courses, doing personal fitness, or taking a short holiday, all offer more depth and challenge as leisure activities than casual activities like watching TV or using the computer/Internet.

While leisure participation on its own, nor the importance placed on leisure activity in lifestyle, did not reveal highly salient differences, it was found that people who practiced VS experienced their leisure somewhat differently than others, as described as follows.

The experience of leisure within a voluntary simplicity lifestyle.

Not unexpectedly, respondents in this study were generally well aware of the value of leisure in their lives and of quality leisure opportunities available to them. Correspondingly, the results reflected low scores on the “boredom” dimension of leisure, and high scores on the “challenge” and “awareness” dimensions. In general it appears respondents in the sample experienced less negative anxiety, or that associated with lack of awareness or ability, and more positive anxiety or stress, maybe something akin to challenge, in their daily choice of leisure activity. Like so many, they tend to report their lives are going quickly, and due to time constraints it is difficult to do everything they wish to do.

Lifestyles that more strongly embrace voluntary simplicity are associated with higher levels of challenge and awareness and lower levels of anxiety and boredom in the experience of leisure. People supporting a VS value orientation have a high degree of leisure awareness, especially surrounding ecological and personal growth values, and within these dimensions choose leisure activity that offers a degree of challenge to them.

Unfortunately, this study was not able to identify leisure activities specifically related to these VS value dimensions, and future research might aim at revealing this more clearly. Can the same activity be exercised from different value orientations but with subtle variations? For example, when viewed from an external perspective, the activity of “fishing” in the wilderness is basically the same for voluntary simplifiers (e.g., those who may be inner-directed) versus non-simplifiers or consumers for whom the symbolism or “show” to others is important (e.g., those that are outer-directed). The person who roars into a small lake with a huge pleasure boat and fishes off its bow appears to be basically doing the same activity as the person who has spent two days paddling by canoe to the same spot and fishes from their canoe. Although they are visibly doing the same activity, the value orientation, purpose, and approach of these two people may be much different. For example, it is plausible the person in the canoe endured more challenge, was personally trying to promote an ecologically compatible approach to the activity of fishing, and was likely trying to avoid contact with the pleasure boat whose wake, noise, and exhaust was seen as offensive and not very environmentally friendly. In contrast, the pleasure boater perhaps feels that fishing with such a powerboat complete with all conveniences is made easier, and enhances the fishing experience. With new technologies like fish-finding devices readily available, all areas with water deep enough are now accessible and available for fishing. Even from such contrasting descriptions of a leisure activity it may not be possible to determine the precise value orientation of those experiencing or pursuing the activity. Value orientations in lifestyle might be more effectively determined in research by describing activities as scenarios with more rich

(value laden) detail than just listing them as “I like to go fishing,” as an item on a rating scale in a questionnaire.

In contrast to ecological or personal growth values, respondents are not as aware or do not feel as challenged by activities that involve material simplicity values. Again, not being aware of the value or benefits of material simplicity in lifestyle may add support to the notion of a high degree of commodification of leisure and of life in general. Respondents also feel in control of their personal decisions and of their capability in making quality leisure choices, and this does not pose a significant challenge to them.

As mentioned in the literature review, there are typically two types of leisure most valued for providing a basis of satisfaction or well-being. Firstly, serious leisure (cf. Stebbins, 1992, 1998) where sustained commitment to developing skills and knowledge in an activity becomes a defining aspect of one’s identity. The second kind of leisure is that which involves communicative interaction with people most important to us. This type of leisure explores, builds and expresses community. It is a context for the development of relationships of trust, sharing and intimacy (Kelly & Godbey, 1992, p.350). It might be argued that the higher levels of awareness displayed and the challenging leisure people seek within the VS lifestyle approaches what Stebbins (1998) identifies as serious leisure and is part of an optimal leisure lifestyle or “the pursuit, during free time, of a substantial, absorbing leisure activity” (p. ix).

Stebbins (1998) suggests that most people do not know how to find the leisure or activities leading to an optimal leisure lifestyle, likely due to lower awareness levels. Judging from the tremendous number of hours spent viewing TV (cf., Putnam, 1995;

Robinson & Godbey, 1997), if most people experience their leisure vicariously in front of the TV, or make TV watching their prime leisure activity this may be true. “In everyday life people often have trouble finding leisure activities capable of generating the sort of deep satisfaction found in activities that can serve as the basis for an optimal leisure lifestyle” (Stebbins, 1998, p. 17). He further argues that “people searching for an optimal leisure lifestyle will most likely find it in the sphere of serious leisure” (Stebbins, 1998, p. 18).

Addressing the leisure dimension of lifestyle, Stebbins (1998) suggests people who follow voluntary simplicity and reduce their consumption to conscientious purchases based on serious leisure goals may find, for example, a reduced need for working that second job. In fact, “more free time becomes available for those who choose simplicity and more jobs become available for those who must work to finance goals that harmonize with voluntary simplicity” (Stebbins, 1998, p.124).

As Stebbins (1998) suggests, VS has possibilities for serious leisure. But freeing up leisure time by reducing consumption alone may only be part of the equation for enhancing serious, absorbing, consciously, and ‘intentionally’ chosen leisure. If the term “Intentional Conscious Living” (Spina, 1998) is used with comparable meaning to voluntary simplicity, and in addition to reducing consumption (material simplicity), as Stebbins (1998) suggests, if the focus is also on the elements of self-determination (personal control and self-reliance), ecological awareness (understanding the interconnectedness) and personal growth (becoming inner-directed and developing ones’ inner self), leisure within the VS value orientation may indeed be conducted as serious leisure, with a purpose that is focussed, absorbing and in harmony with ones values. In

addition, and as this study has revealed, it is highly likely that an increase in psychological well-being accompanies such lifestyle values, and overall heightened quality of life results.

In Stebbins' (1998) approach to aspects of VS from the standpoint of serious leisure, the focus is particularly on consumptive behaviour. The VS lifestyle is holistic and encompassing and offers those who support its value orientation substantial possibility for self-actualization and personal growth, becoming self-reliant, having a high degree of self-determination (personal control in decision making), and having a solid understanding of the interconnectedness of all things, including community, society, and global issues. A VS lifestyle value orientation was shown to have a positive effect on PWB. Further, a voluntary simplicity lifestyle value orientation may be beneficial to building trust, capacity, and community cohesiveness, and offers a positive solution to community development and to the future of community in general.

The VS lifestyle value orientation and psychological well-being (PWB).

In understanding the relationship between lifestyle and psychological well-being, it makes sense to view both positive and negative affect separately (cf., van Schuur & Kruijtbosch, 1995) in relation to the four value dimensions of the VS lifestyle. On the whole, the level of well-being reported by the respondents in this study was reasonably normal or "balanced," even though the affect balance score was slightly negative (MEAN=-1.25).

Most of the values or behaviours of the VS lifestyle enhanced positive well-being. When viewed separately, the three VS lifestyle value dimensions of self-determination

(control over personal decision making and self-reliance), ecological awareness (environmental awareness and a sense for the interconnectedness of things) and personal growth (a desire to develop ones' inner self) all contributed to positive affect or well-being. Material simplicity was the only lifestyle value dimension negatively correlated with affect or well-being. In fact, higher levels of material simplicity were related to decreased well-being. This was surprising because it was expected those who seek more material simplicity (less emphasis on consumerism and owning "stuff") in their lives would experience a higher degree of well-being. These results are also somewhat similar to the findings regarding combined household income.

It appears a certain level of financial security must be achieved before one feels "happy" or has positive levels of PWB, but this study showed increasing levels of income *do not* appear to make one happier, but rather reduce a sense of well-being. This notion was earlier supported by Durning (1993) who found that increased material wealth did not equate with happiness. In addition, he stated "two primary sources of human fulfillment – social relations and leisure – appear to have withered or stagnated in the rush to riches" (p.20). There appears to be some real ambivalence here. Respondents aren't any happier when they have more money, perhaps from the additional work-load or consumption pressures that having additional income brings with it. On the other hand they do not feel good about reducing their consumerism, perhaps because they have been so acculturated to earn and spend, earn and spend.

Generally speaking, those in the *younger* age group, who perceived themselves as "surviving financially," and whose combined household income was between \$40,000 to \$69,999, experienced higher levels of psychological well-being or happiness. This profile

is somewhat different from those who strongly support voluntary simplicity (over 35, employed, married or SWD, and affluent – incomes of over \$70,000). While the difference is not large, nor highly significant, it appears as if those who are younger and are just establishing themselves in life enjoy themselves the most and experience higher levels of well-being or happiness. On the other hand, the voluntary simplicity lifestyle may be more about balancing positive and negative life effects, and as people age and experience more this ability to balance and cope with life events becomes a greater factor than just having positive PWB or feeling good.

Perhaps the VS lifestyle is not all about generating well-being or being the happiest though. Maybe the personal reward or satisfaction offered by this lifestyle value orientation is less about being “happy,” constantly “elated” or “overjoyed,” and more about creating a “balance” in one’s life. Many North Americans subscribe to the notion of “If it’s not fun, why do it?,” and through mass media (especially TV) have been acculturated to expect that unless something provides immediate satisfaction it may not be worth pursuing. Aspects of voluntary simplicity, like becoming more materially simplistic may be suffering the latter fate. As Elgin (1993) pointed out, TV advertisers do not like ideas like material simplicity since these are in complete contrast to what they are trying to promote. Advertisements for living more frugally, more ecologically, or reducing consumption are virtually non-existent in the mass media. This short-term happiness/satisfaction approach might not produce long-term happiness or life satisfaction, and as Elgin (1993), Burch (1997), et al., have noted, VS is not about quick short-term gains but a gradual long-term lifestyle shift.

In summary, it may be said that although respondents are ambivalent about material simplicity in lifestyle, many aspects of the voluntary simplicity value orientation, in fact self-determination, ecological awareness, and in particular personal growth (and social activities) are linked with heightened levels of positive psychological well-being.

The lifestyle – leisure – well-being relationship

There is a fair bit of evidence in the literature that leisure experience affects well-being in positive ways. In view of the lack of research into the relationship between lifestyle and the leisure experience/well-being relationship, this study aimed at discovering how lifestyle context moderated this relationship.

A hierarchical regression analysis found that one's lifestyle orientation (in this case VS) explained about 5% of the variance or change in well-being, highlighted by the ambivalence in the material simplicity dimension. Leisure participation also explained about 5% of the variance in well-being although this result was not statistically significant. Leisure participation on its own is not a good indicator of psychological well-being. Leisure experience, as expected, showed a strong relationship to well-being, explaining about 14% of the variance in the relationship. Both the challenge and anxiety dimensions of leisure experience showed significant Beta values and contribute significantly to developing PWB through leisure activity. Overall the hierarchical regression model explained a substantial 25% of the variance in psychological well-being, and indicates that in addition to the large effect of leisure experience (through

challenge and awareness) a voluntary simplicity value orientation in lifestyle does indeed play a significant role in this relationship.

Summary of the relationship between lifestyle, leisure participation, leisure experience, and psychological well-being.

When all three hierarchical regressions are compared together, it may be seen a significant proportion of the variance in overall psychological well-being (PWB) ($R^2=.245$, $p<.001$), in the positive affect dimension of PWB ($R^2=.204$, $p=.010$), and in the negative affect dimension of PWB ($R^2=.284$, $p<.001$) is explained by lifestyle orientation, overall leisure participation, and the experience of leisure. With lifestyle orientation, the key factors contributing to the overall effect of lifestyle in explaining variance in PWB, appear to be material simplicity and personal growth. Material simplicity was shown to have a negative relationship with PWB, and personal growth contributing to heightened PWB. Interestingly, lifestyle was the dominant significant concept in explaining variance in the positive affect dimension of PWB, and lends support to the discussion and results that indicate lifestyle value orientation indeed has a role to play in the overall relationship to PWB. Also, leisure participation, on the whole, did not prove to be a significant factor in contributing to an individual's well-being, but cultural and travel/tourism activity were noted as contributing to the overall effect of participation in explaining the variance in the positive affect dimension of PWB. Outdoor and personal growth activities were shown to contribute weight in explaining variation in the negative affect dimension of PWB, although their effect is one of reducing negative elements. It appears it is not so much

what you choose to do in your leisure, but the quality of that experience and the context (lifestyle) within which this occurs.

Again, when the three hierarchical regressions are viewed together, the largest effect in the relationship with PWB was by various dimensions of leisure experience. For example, in accounting for the variation in overall PWB, it was the challenge and anxiety dimensions of the leisure experience that contributed the most weight. As mentioned earlier, anxiety appears to have a positive relationship to PWB and contribute to heightened PWB. This indicates that certain elements of anxiety must be positive or could even be related to aspects of challenge, perhaps akin to positive stress or motivation in leisure.

Further, the challenge dimension of leisure stood out singularly in its effect in producing change in the positive affect dimension of PWB, and this supports the overall importance of challenge in leisure as a key ingredient in increasing personal PWB. In the hierarchical regression using negative affect as the dependent variable, it was the anxiety and boredom dimensions of the leisure experience that contribute to explain the variance in this dimension of PWB. Here too, anxiety was the strongest and most significant factor in accounting for variance in PWB, but it is shown as being negatively related to negative affect, or in fact, increasing well-being. This supports the previous regression analyses that also show anxiety accounting for positive variance in PWB. Interestingly, the boredom dimension of leisure experience was also shown as decreasing negative affect, but this is somewhat confusing. It could be that “boredom,” like anxiety, is more complex too, and may be interpreted by some as necessary relaxation, useful for coping with negative life events. Perhaps some boredom is good and necessary.

Regardless of the lifestyle orientation that people embrace and the leisure choices they make, the quality of their leisure experience appears to play the greatest role in enhancing the quality of their lives. In other words, once lifestyle orientation and frequency of participation in a variety of leisure pursuits are controlled for, the dimensions of the leisure experience, especially challenge and anxiety, independently play an important and meaningful part in contributing to one's overall psychological well-being. On the other hand, if only the positive affect dimension of PWB were used as an indicator, lifestyle value orientation arguably does play a more significant role in explaining overall change in PWB than either leisure participation or leisure experience. So, if only the positive affect component of well-being is considered, if individuals embrace the VS lifestyle value orientation, regardless of the types of leisure activities in which they choose to participate – or how frequently, and regardless of their experience of leisure, it is the VS lifestyle that remains a critical contributor to their overall well-being.

However, the way people feel about their life (i.e., their assessment of their quality of life) is typically a balance between positive and negative events and experiences, and it might properly be argued that even though the VS lifestyle value orientation is shown to have an overall effect on PWB, and leisure participation or frequency do not, it is their level of awareness and challenging quality of their leisure experience that remain critical contributors to overall psychological well-being.

Conclusion

Leisure researchers typically have focussed on participation in activity when considering its role in enhancing well-being. For example, if a person simply chooses an activity in their free time, it is assumed (and has often been shown) they will experience positive benefits. This study showed the experiential quality of leisure plays a greater role in this relationship. In fact, those who seek out activities that offer challenge (or are more meaningful to the individual) and afford less negative anxiety in their undertaking are actually provided with a deeper experience and consequently greater psychological well-being. What the results indicate is that it is not just participation in leisure activities, but what value these activities provide to our overall well-being that is important.

Further, these choices are also based on a particular outlook or value orientation in the lifestyle of the individual. For example, “voluntary simplifiers” emphasize personal growth, self-determination, ecological awareness and material simplicity as significant components of lifestyle, and likely choose activities that reflect as many of these qualities as possible.

These results, then, suggest that regardless of the kind and intensity of involvement we have in our leisure time, if higher challenge is sought, and less anxiety experienced in leisure, especially as expressed within a voluntary simplicity lifestyle, then higher levels of psychological well-being might be achieved. Indeed, by reducing complexity and lessening the focus on consumerism, and emphasizing self-determination, our ecological interconnectedness, and a desire for personal growth, the inherent value of leisure to our well-being might well emerge to a greater degree.

Perhaps the way we live our lives, with respect to what leisure can do for us, needs re-examining. As Hemmingway (1996) suggests, unless leisure itself is freed from the “instrumental deformation” that has historically taken place through the industrialization of our economy and also through the process of commodification, we cannot freely encounter or experience the emancipation leisure has to offer us. A voluntary simplicity approach to one’s lifestyle may be one way to do this.

The pressure of current consumer society, exacerbated by the systemic structuring of our work environments, economic markets, social relationships, and political climate, has changed important elements of our lifestyles, like leisure, and is reducing quality of life.

In view of how lifestyle, and in particular a voluntary simplicity lifestyle can improve well-being, the questions Juniu (2000) raises are important.

By stepping out of this current paradigm, could we aim for healthier choices of life? Would taking a step toward simplicity be an alternative to this unhappiness and lead us toward a more satisfying way of life? Could simplifying our lives help us regain that quality lost through this modern trend of consumerism? (p. 72).

Indeed, based on the results of this study the answer to all these questions may be positive.

Juniu (2000) goes further to state that “voluntary simplicity could help us regain the essence of leisure. The focus would no longer be on the quantity of life (i.e., how much we have, or how much we own, or how much we earn) but on quality of life (i.e., how much we enjoy or how much we explore in life)” (p.72).

Also, not only does voluntary simplicity allow for heightened well-being through more challenging, meaningful, and deep leisure experience, but as authors like Elgin

(1993) and Toynbee (1947) suggest, as a lifestyle choice it may be a positive one that people can adopt as part of the transformation from an immature industrial consumer society to a mature civilization which is more caring and culturally creative.

Suggestions for further exploration and research.

Several ideas and new questions arose as this study evolved and they are listed here for the benefit of those wishing to further explore or research the concepts and relationships presented. For example, do different family circumstances affect this relationship? An individual's life stage, whether there are still children at home, what age the children are, or particular financial circumstances may also affect the relationships as discussed. Is the understanding of voluntary simplicity different for men as opposed to women, and do they think about simplicity issues in the same way? Is gender a moderating variable in voluntary simplicity and psychological well-being relationship? For example, do men experience a greater sense of psychological well-being in the way they approach simplicity in their lives and their leisure? This study has revealed a rich area of research related to lifestyle, leisure, and well-being.

What follows is a listing of ideas and questions that have arisen throughout the study process and further research possibilities suggested by these:

- 1) The results, while significant and notable, suggest that similar studies are worth repeating in different settings, other than with participants in continuing education or general interest leisure courses in an urban area like Kitchener/Waterloo.
- 2) What is really meant by lifestyle? Lifestyle is an ambiguous concept and requires better definition. This study conceptualized lifestyle a certain way that produced

- some noteworthy findings, and future redefinition and clarification may aid our understanding.
- 3) Would examining other lifestyle modes, for example, those more consumption-oriented, or those of people whose life focus is primarily in one dimension (e.g., work, sport, creativity, spirituality), produce similar results in the experience of leisure or in psychological well-being?
 - 4) The lifestyle (voluntary simplicity) scale developed for this study could be improved, reworked and refined to explore the dimensions of this interesting value orientation and approach to living in greater depth. For example, self-determination and self-reliance values might be more clearly defined.
 - 5) Does voluntary simplicity lead one to a richer, fuller understanding of leisure? Or, conversely, do we approach lifestyles of voluntary simplicity once we regain the essence of leisure as authors like Hemingway (1996), Kleiber (2000), and Juniu (2000) suggest?
 - 6) Further longitudinal research into the lifestyle values, attitudes and behaviour relationship needs to be done. One suggestion is to examine a group of young people, perhaps undergraduate students, using the parameters of a study such as this, and examining this same group at five year intervals for a period of twenty or thirty years, to see if lifestyle values or attitudes adhered to in earlier years are still valid and adhered to in later life. This study pointed out that holding specific values does not always equate into direct action or sustained behaviour.
 - 7) The personal growth, cultural, travel and tourism, and other categories of leisure activity, as they were defined and used in this study, could be explored in more

- depth and expanded to include more activities because the choices were limited and narrow in scope. There may be items within expanded categories of activity that may identify themselves more clearly with dimensions of lifestyle (VS), and reveal more aspects of the overall relationship with psychological well-being.
- 8) The anxiety and boredom dimensions of the Leisure Experience Battery (Caldwell, Smith and Weissinger, 1992) could be further explored and defined. This study found both dimensions appeared to have potential positive and negative components to them and may not have been clearly interpreted by respondents.
 - 9) The concept of sustainability in lifestyle was purposely left out of this study due to increasing complexity, but it is a concept vital to the ideas presented. Can sustainable (i.e., ecologically sound) lifestyles be created through leisure? Do the ethics of leisure need to be defined and examined? Is a voluntary simplicity value orientation in lifestyle a step towards sustainability?

Implications of this study and future research

This research provides insights into the relationship between lifestyle, leisure experience and psychological well-being. The results indicate a lifestyle based on a voluntarily simplicity value orientation has a positive relationship with leisure experience and psychological well-being. It can be said that choosing this value orientation can open one to a more deep and rich experience of leisure and to a heightened sense of psychological well-being. Because lifestyle is an ambiguous term and needs clearer definition, it must be understood that a voluntary simplicity lifestyle involves several

value dimensions and is adopted over a longer period of time with conscientious thought and planning. It has been demonstrated that positive values exist within this lifestyle orientation, and to recommend a voluntary simplicity approach to someone would be pointing them in a positive direction, especially with respect to their leisure life. It goes without saying that the notion of what leisure means needs re-examining too. As Kelly (1991, 1992) and Hemingway (1996) point out, the true essence of what leisure has to offer us is being lost through commodification and instrumentalization. The values of a voluntary simplicity lifestyle may allow for this opportunity.

The results of this research are significant to individuals and families by providing an insight into a lifestyle based on voluntary simplicity values. For example, because values, attitudes and beliefs are often learned in the home at an early age, the results of this study provide information to parents that may be valuable within the family unit, especially when dealing with or teaching children about consumerism, respect for the environment, human relationships, self-reliance, and personal growth or development.

How can one adopt voluntary simplicity in their life? Where does one begin? Perhaps with an examination of one's work – leisure balance. Is there enough time to reflect on the inner world or does one's work consume most waking hours? If children are given necessary "time outs" for personal reflection or thought (often as a disciplinary measure), so too should adults allow themselves "time out" to develop an inner discipline in their life. People can learn to say "no" more often to superficial intrusions into their lives, and establish necessary time for reflection, calm and relaxation. Examine the use of technology and how technology controls one's life. Through reflection and relaxation, personal control over the use and influence of technology and many other life issues may

be regained. Look at ways in which activities may be done more meaningfully and richly. Find out what is happening with neighbours and in one's community, and develop an awareness of national and global concerns/issues. Think, "small is beautiful," in terms of one's ecological footprint (Schumacher, 1973).

The findings of this study are also significant to recreation and leisure practitioners, and professionals in other fields (e.g., planners, psychologists, human resource professionals), by providing insights into the promotion of voluntary simplicity values within lifestyles. This study suggests that regardless of the kind and intensity of involvement we have in our leisure time, if higher challenge and lower anxiety are sought through leisure, especially as expressed within a voluntary simplicity lifestyle, then higher levels of psychological well-being can be achieved. By reducing complexity and lessening the focus on consumerism, the inherent value of leisure to our well-being might well emerge to a greater degree.

Because these professionals are often involved with community development issues, the values associated with VS may offer support. For example, the ecological awareness dimension of VS supports the interconnectedness with friends, others, one's community, and the environment. Voluntary simplicity involves a more holistic, global perspective to living, one in harmony with people and with the land, air and water. If these values were incorporated in community planning, perhaps healthier and more cohesive communities may be allowed to develop and form.

Values, attitudes, and behaviours are also learned and reinforced throughout one's formal education. This study provides useful ideas to academics, namely educators at the public, secondary, and post-secondary levels, and also to professionals such as

recreation/leisure practitioners, planners, and policy developers at all levels of government, who may be involved in values or lifestyle education and promotion. Although there is not much in the mass media about living simply yet, and voluntary simplicity struggles to make it on economically-driven political agendas, evidence is mounting that current lifestyles are not sustainable and the idea of simplicity is rising closer to the surface. In 1979, US President Carter denounced selfish, consumerist attitudes and the direction they were leading people ... “too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption” (Carter, as cited in de Graf & Boe, 1997), but was soundly defeated in the next election. During his inauguration in 1992, US President Clinton appreciated the values of simplicity, but over his ensuing terms in office proceeded to encourage American people to continue in their highly consumptive and wasteful ways of living (de Graf & Boe, 1997). The situation in Canada may be no different. The harm to the environment, our PWB, our quality of life, and the disparity between rich and poor continues to grow.

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Lifestyle, Leisure and Well-being:

An examination of the relationship
between lifestyle orientation, leisure
experiences, and well-being.

Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
University of Waterloo

(continued...)

Section A: Lifestyle and beliefs

Listed below are a number of statements that reflect the way people might live and the beliefs they may have about their lifestyles. For each of the statements listed below, please check the box that best describes how much you agree or disagree with each one.

| | Very strongly disagree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral/ undecided | Agree | Strongly agree | Very strongly agree |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ |
| Whenever possible, I walk or bike rather than drive a car.... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The activities I enjoy most are those that allow me to be creative | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am concerned about the welfare of my community..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I prefer to buy brand name products rather than cheaper equivalents..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I make a conscious effort not to litter | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I place my family before everything else..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I try to live my life simply | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I feel in control of my own life | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I make decisions without checking to see which way the crowd is going | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I place as much importance on the appearance of a product as on its function..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I get upset when I see useful articles being thrown away | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I make an effort to nurture and strengthen the relationships with my <i>friends</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I consider impacts on the environment whenever I plan my activities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Whenever a new product comes out, I like to be one of the first people to try it | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I can depend on myself to make the tough choices..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am concerned with my spiritual growth | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I would rather be healthy than wealthy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I try to purchase products that can be recycled..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I make a conscious effort to reduce the complexity in my life..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I sometimes make impulse purchases when I shop..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Whenever possible, I try to conserve electricity | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | Very strongly disagree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral/ undecided | Agree | Strongly agree | Very strongly agree |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ |
| I always separate the recyclables from my trash..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I make a purchase only after seriously considering if I really need the product | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I make an effort to nurture and strengthen the relationships with my <i>family</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I prefer products with simple functions to those with complex functions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Being healthy in mind and spirit is the most important thing | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Products designed to be convenient make people spoiled .. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I make my own decisions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Whenever possible, I try to conserve water | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I like to challenge my intellectual abilities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I make a conscious effort to reduce the number of material possessions I have..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Simply taking time to relax is essential | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I look for products that have less packaging..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I try to be as self-reliant as possible..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I take an active interest in issues involving my community..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I sometimes buy things that I do not really need | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| When something in my home breaks, I will try to fix it myself before calling a service person..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sophisticated functions on products are unnecessary | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I take an active interest in developing my inner self..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I consult with friends before making an important decision..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I look forward to opportunities to be reflective | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A measure of our happiness is the number of possessions we have..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I try to maintain a physically active lifestyle | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Section B: Participation in leisure activities

This section of the questionnaire asks you about your typical leisure participation. For each of the leisure activities below, indicate how often you participate in each of them *in a typical month*. Then, please indicate how *important to you* that activity is in your overall leisure lifestyle.

| “In a typical month, how often do you participate in each of the following activities?” | Number of times in a typical month ↓ | Regardless of how often you participate, how important to you is <i>this</i> activity to your overall leisure lifestyle? | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | Of little importance ↓ | | | | | |
| Watching television/videos | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reading books, magazines or newspapers | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Going to a movie | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Using the internet/computer games | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Listening to music | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Visiting or entertaining friends..... | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Talking to friends on the telephone | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Attending parties, going dancing..... | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Playing cards or board games..... | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Volunteering..... | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Participating in clubs (e.g., Kiwanis, Lion’s, other service groups) | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Playing team sports (e.g., soccer, volleyball, baseball, hockey) | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Spectating at sports events..... | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Playing individual sports (e.g., tennis, ski, bowling) | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Doing personal fitness (e.g., jog, cycle, exercise class) .. | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Attending concerts/live theatre..... | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Day outings (e.g., picnicking) | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gardening | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Outdoor activities (e.g., hiking, boating, camping)..... | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Motorized outdoor activities (e.g., jet-ski, snowmobile). | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Creative hobbies or crafts (e.g., drawing, woodworking, collecting, needlework)..... | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Spiritual activity (e.g., meditation, prayer, journal writing) | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Taking personal interest courses | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Travelling to visit friends or family..... | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Short holidays/weekend getaways..... | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Section C: Leisure experience

The following statements are about how you feel about your leisure; that is, the free time you have outside of work and other obligatory activities. Please read each statement below and then check the box that best describes the extent to which you agree or disagree with it.

| “Thinking about my free time...” | Very strongly disagree | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral/ undecided | Agree | Strongly agree | Very strongly agree |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ |
| For me, free time just drags on and on..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Free time is boring..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| In my free time, I usually don't like what I am doing, but I don't know what else to do..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I usually become very absorbed by what I do in my free time ... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| During my free time, I almost always have something to do..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My friends and I often talk about how bored we are | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| In the community where I live, I am aware of exciting things to do in my free time..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I know of places where there are lots of things to do | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I've never really given much thought to whether free time could be good for me..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My community lacks things for people my age to do..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I like free time activities that are a little beyond my ability..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If I think I might fail at an activity during my free time, I won't do it | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I like a challenge in my free time | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am willing to try the unknown in my free time | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Much of the time, I feel bored | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I feel good when my free time activities challenge my skills..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| When I know I'm going to have some free time, I generally feel anxious..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The worst feeling I know is when I have free time and don't have anything planned..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I get uptight when I have a whole weekend with nothing to do... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I feel relaxed about free time when I don't have any plans | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My time is filled with things to do..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I don't feel that I am “challenged” in my everyday life..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Much of the time, I feel rushed..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I often feel I don't have enough time to do all the things I have to do..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Section D: Personal well-being

Listed below are some of the ways people might feel at different times. Read each statement and then indicate below how often *you* have felt this way *in the past few weeks*.

| “During the past few weeks, I have often felt.....” | Never ↓ | Sometimes ↓ | Often ↓ |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| On top of the world | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Very lonely or remote from other people | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Particularly excited or interested in something | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Depressed or very unhappy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pleased about having accomplished something..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bored..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Proud because someone complimented me on something I had done..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| So restless I couldn't sit long in a chair..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| That things were going my way | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Upset because someone criticized me | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Section E: Please tell me a little about yourself.

The questions in this section will allow me to make comparisons between different groupings of people.

1. What is your gender? Male Female
2. What is your age? _____ years
3. What is the name of the city or town in which you live?

4. What is your marital status?
 Single, never married Separated or divorced
 Married Widowed
5. How many children do you have living at home in each of the following age categories?
Number of children under the age of 5 years of age: _____
Number of children between 5 and 12 years of age: _____
Number of children between 12 and 16 years of age: _____
Number of children 16 years of age and older: _____

6. What was your *total household income* in the past year before taxes? (check one)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 to \$69,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 to \$19,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 to \$79,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 to \$29,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000 to \$89,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 to \$39,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$90,000 to \$99,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 to \$49,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> Over \$100,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 to \$59,999 | |

7. Regardless of your actual household income, which one of the following statements do you believe best describes your current financial circumstances?

- I have barely enough to make ends meet
- I have enough to get by
- I have a little left over after all my obligations have been met
- I am quite comfortable
- I have all that I need and more

8. How would you describe your current employment status? (please check one)

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- not employed at this time
- full-time homemaker
- Student
- Retired
- other (please specify): _____

Thank-you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!

APPENDIX B

Sample letter of introduction to the Instructor

Dear (Instructor name);

I am a student in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, and am currently working on my Master's thesis doing research surrounding the relationships between lifestyle (how we choose to live), general leisure experience (how we enjoy our leisure), and personal wellbeing (how we feel about our quality of life). I am working under the supervision of Dr. _____.

As a means of sampling residents of the Kitchener/Waterloo community I would like to have your permission to survey the participants in the course you are leading. I have been working closely with _____ in the Department of Continuing Education for preliminary approval, and to ensure this process is efficient and not disruptive to programs offered by Conestoga College. I believe if I can reach a suitable number of classes I will obtain a reasonable representation of the Kitchener/Waterloo community, thereby ensuring the voices of many residents are included.

If you give me permission, and they decide to volunteer for the study, your class participants will be given a questionnaire that should take no more than 15 minutes to complete, and no more than a 20-minute period within each program class would be required. Participation in the survey is voluntary, and all data collected are completely anonymous, as no names will be attached. Participants will have the option of not answering any of the questions included in the questionnaire if they choose. You can let me know whether the beginning, middle or end of class is the more opportune time to complete this task.

I can provide you with a summary of the results of the study once available, if you desire. Participants will also be given a separate form that they can use to request a summary of results should they so wish.

If anyone has questions about the study, they can speak to me during the administration of the survey, or contact myself or Dr. _____ later at the phone numbers or email addresses listed below. This project has received clearance through the Office of Research Ethics (ORE) at the University of Waterloo. In the event you or any of the participants have questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you may also contact Dr. _____, ORE, at _____, Ext. _____.

I am quite excited about the study, and look forward to your support and successful completion of this data collection phase. I thank you in advance for your help.

You can reach me at the University of Waterloo at _____, by email at _____ or by telephone at home in _____ at _____. Dr. _____ may be reached at _____, or by email at _____.

Yours sincerely,

Masters Candidate

APPENDIX C

Sample: Study Information Letter

Dear Participant;

I am a graduate student in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo conducting research under the supervision of Professor _____. The study focuses on the relationships between lifestyle (how we choose to live), general leisure experience (how we enjoy our leisure), and personal wellbeing (how we feel about our quality of life). Because you are a typical Canadian adult, your opinions are important to this study.

I would appreciate if you would complete the attached brief survey that should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Although the statements are quite general (for example, "I sometimes buy things I do not really need"), you may omit any question you prefer not to answer. There are no known or anticipated risks to participating in this study. Participation in the survey is voluntary and anonymous, and all information you provide will be considered confidential. The data collected through this study will be kept for a period of one year in a secure location. If you desire a summary of the results, please use the Feedback form that you may fill out and return to me by mail.

If you have a question about the study, you can contact myself or Dr. _____ later at the addresses and phone numbers listed below. This project has been reviewed by and received ethics clearance from the Office of Research Ethics (ORE). Should you have questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you may also contact Dr _____, ORE, at _____, Ext. _____.

I am quite excited about the study, and look forward to your support and successful completion of this data collection phase. I thank you in advance for your participation in this project.

You can reach me at _____, or by email at _____ Dr. _____ may be reached at _____, or by email at _____.

Yours sincerely,

APPENDIX D

Sample introductory letter/script: To the Participant

Thank you for assisting with this research project. Prior to completing the questionnaire, please read the following:

- You are invited to participate in a study about the relationship between lifestyle, general leisure satisfaction and wellbeing.
- Your participation simply involves completing a short questionnaire.
- Completing the questionnaire is entirely voluntary so if you feel you do not want to answer any of the questions, you may leave them unanswered.
- Your participation is completely anonymous and no one is required to include their names on the questionnaire.
- Read each of the questions carefully and take your time when answering. Please answer each question by indicating how you honestly feel.
- Please return the questionnaire in the envelope provided to your instructor next week.
- If you would like a brief summary of results of this study, you may fill out the separate form (blue) that is included with the questionnaire.

Thank you tremendously for your help and support for my project.

APPENDIX E

Sample introductory script: To the Instructor

Thank you for assisting with this research project. Prior to handing out the questionnaires, could you please inform your class participants of the following points:

- You are invited to participate in a study about the relationship between lifestyle, general leisure satisfaction and wellbeing.
- Your participation simply involves completing a short questionnaire.
- Completing the questionnaire is entirely voluntary so if you feel you do not want to answer any of the questions, you may leave them unanswered.
- Your participation is completely anonymous and no one is required to include their names on the questionnaire.
- Read each of the questions carefully and take your time when answering. Please answer each question by indicating how you honestly feel.
- Please return the questionnaire in the envelope provided to your instructor next week.
- If you would like a brief summary of results of this study, you may fill out the separate form that is included with the questionnaire.

Thank you tremendously for your help and support for my project.

APPENDIX F

Sample: Study Feedback Form

Research Study: **“Voluntary simplicity as a value orientation in the lifestyle choice, leisure, and well-being relationship”**

Dear Participant;

Thank you for having taken the time and effort to complete the questionnaire that is part of my research study. This study examines the relationships between lifestyle (how we choose to live), general leisure experience (how we enjoy our leisure), and personal wellbeing (how we feel about our quality of life). This project was reviewed by and received ethics clearance through the Office of Research Ethics.

If you would like a copy of the summary of results when they become available later in the New Year, please write your name and address in the space provided below. Mail this form back to the University of Waterloo, Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, 200 University Avenue, Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3G1.

Once again, thank you for taking part in my study and contributing to the ongoing research in recreation and leisure studies at the University of Waterloo.

Yours sincerely,