LEISURE, AGING AND A PARTICIPATION MODEL FOR WOMEN BELONGING TO AN ACADIAN THIRD AGE UNIVERSITY

Pierre Ouellette
Université de Moncton

September 1995
This paper reviews research findings on recreation patterns in older adults and proposes a model explaining the leisure behavior of women belonging to a voluntary association. It assumes that life satisfaction, leisure motivation and education cause leisure participation, conceptualized as a latent variable with three indicators: 1) tourism, 2) television viewing, and 3) civic activities.

While leisure models exist in literature, almost none focus only on women as members of associations. Yet, they comprise most of the aging population. McPherson (1991) reminds us of their unenviable personal characteristics in terms of living arrangement, social status, health, etc. In addition, he emphasizes the importance for researchers and policy makers to remember, “... the current generation of elderly women had little experience with formal leisure experiences throughout the early and middle years of their life” (p. 424). Voluntary associations like senior clubs and third age universities are the domain of senior women and consequently a suitable setting for exploring their leisure behavior.

Leisure of older adults

The first part of this paper examines the leisure of older adults in two sections: 1) general patterns of leisure behavior and 2) psychological constructs and leisure participation. The first section presents some global research findings and a brief survey of physical activities, tourism, television viewing and voluntary associations. The second section reviews concepts such as life satisfaction, leisure motivation and leisure satisfaction.

Leisure participation patterns

Older adults have large blocks of free time at their disposal. Canadian seniors have, on average, eight hours a day (Jones, 1990). Does this necessarily translate into more leisure activities? Do only a few individuals adopt new activities after retirement? Is there continuity
in leisure profiles before and after retirement? For the past thirty years, researchers have studied whether the number of activities as well their frequency increase as one grows older (Kelly & Ross, 1989).

Despite some conflicting results and methodological issues, they developed a certain consensus on leisure behavior. McPherson’s review (1990) summarizes this well by pointing out that leisure patterns are heterogeneous and that activities, as well as their practice, decline in later years. Factors such as health, transportation or income can significantly influence leisure patterns. Thus, age as a sole predictor of leisure behavior is a poor one. What is more, passive and indoor activities characterize most leisure endeavors. Socializing, television viewing, reading the newspaper and gardening constitute examples of popular activities.

Beyond this broad profile, one must consider other viewpoints to understand the complexities involved in determining leisure patterns. Primarily, there is the developmental perspective as well as the notions of age and cohort effect. To illustrate that aging is a lifelong process and a conceivable occurrence of changes across the life cycle, McPherson (1991) postulated six shape curves depicting possible patterns. In younger and later years, a curvilinear and a bimodal curve describe, for example, television viewing and golf playing. Evidence tends to support these hypothetical patterns. Kelly, Steinkamp and Kelly (1987) examined not only the overall activity level of men and women whose age ranged from 40 to over 75 years as well as eight types of activities. Physical and outdoor activities are inversely proportional to age. With some variations, many practice family, social, cultural and home-based activities over a long period. Frequency and number of activities decline with aging. The overall activity level is consistent with the literature. These results confirm Kelly’s earlier hypothesis (1983) that, across a life cycle, older adults are more involved in core (accessible
and informal) activities and less in peripheral activities that require investment in skill acquisition but that are nonetheless intrinsically rewarding.

After examining official data from three age groups, Delisle (1992) likewise notes declining activities in the older group, but the overall decline is more gradual and less abrupt than expected. The number of activities seems to increase three years following retirement, an indication than older adults adopt active lifestyles. In another study, Delisle (1993) concludes that physical, cultural, educational and tourist activities have increased in the eighties, probably because of a cohort effect. To put it briefly, this new age cohort has different values concerning leisure, more education and income.

As previously mentioned, leisure patterns are heterogeneous. Certain confounding factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, health, disabilities and especially education (Burris-Bammel & Bammel, 1985; Iso-Ahola, 1980; Kando, 1980; McPherson, 1993; Mobily, 1992; Nilson, 1991; Teaf, 1985) influence participation. Education is a good predictor of participation, particularly as it relates to types of activities, for example arts, traveling and television viewing (Kando, 1980; Zuzaneck, 1978).

Besides personal characteristics, leisure constraints or barriers play an important role in explaining diversified patterns. Among those identified in the literature are societal expectations, cost of activities, means of transportation and lack of physical abilities (Eliopoulos, 1986; McAvoy, 1979; Searle, 1987; Zborowski, 1962). Other factors include time pressure, bad weather, fear of crime, need of money and companions (McGuire, 1980, 1982, 1984). The driving force behind this area of research has been McGuire who in 1984 identified about 30 specific constraints; for instance, external resources (e.g. lack of money, information about activities), time constraints, approval (e.g. fear of non-acceptance by
others), ability/social (for example, lack of skills and companions), physical well-being (fear of getting hurt, lack of energy).

Buchanen and Allen’s reflections (1985) on lack of time led them to reconsider the meaning of time and leisure. Could it be that non-participation stems more from negative leisure attitudes than expressed constraints?

Many deplored the lack of studies on the meaning of time use and activities among older adults (see for example, Kelly & Ross, 1989; McPherson, 1990). Delisle (1992) identified biological, psychological and social factors as broad determinants of meanings. Health, mobility, developmental tasks and social values of an age cohort can influence the meanings attributed to leisure. For instance, it would appear that elderly people equate leisure more with pleasure than freedom (Nystrom, 1974; Roadburg, 1981). For Kelly and Ross (1989), meaning creates an ideal context for the development of relationships. While there is some interest in leisure meanings, the bulk of the literature is mostly on the relationships between participation and measures of well-being.

**Some types of participation**

**Physical activity**

Stephens, Jacobs, and White (1985) reviewed eight Canadian and American national surveys. As expected, they concluded that physical activity declines with age. Based on a national sample of 17 000 adults, Stephens, Craig, and Ferris (1986) estimated that men are more active than women; surprisingly, older people are more active than middle-aged individuals.

Penning and Chappell’s analysis (Penning & Chappell, 1993) of the Canada’s Health Promotion Survey 1990 shows that 50% of older adults exercise, 22% every day;
approximately 26% never engage in physical activity at all. Using the same survey, Stephens (1993) analyzed other aspects of physical activity. Among his conclusions, men are more active than women. For both sexes and all age groups, physical activity relates to higher levels of education and socioeconomic status. Considering the rigorous winters in Canada, it is pertinent to mention that there are important seasonal variations in physical activity rates (Mobily, Nilson, Ostiguy, MacNeil, & Wallace, 1995).

Already, McPherson and Kolzik (1987) had observed increased rates of physical activity participation among older adults. However, given that most surveys are not longitudinal, they cautioned against definite conclusions. Nevertheless, it seems evident that more seniors are indeed active. One of their possible explanations is that many seniors were physically active in their youth. Consequently, they continue to value this activity in their later years and act accordingly. Increased rates may also be due to the intense promotion of federal and provincial governments [e.g. see Fitness Canada (1991) for a description of the Active Living program].

Tourism

In recent years, researchers have taken an active interest in the travel patterns of seniors. The reason may stem from the fact that older adults’ travels are considered to have known the most important growth in the last decades (Shoemaker, 1989) Some typical findings emerging from the tourism literature show that short trips of one day are popular (Blazey, 1986, October); friends and family play a major role in the seniors’ choice of a vacation (Capella & Greco, 1987). Only 28 percent of those aged 50 and over consult a travel agency (Anderson & Langmeyer, 1982). Many even ignore free services offered by such
agencies (Tongren, 1980). As a rule, seniors’ departures occur during the same season as other age groups (Weiss, 1974).

In the Canadian province of New Brunswick, Leblanc (1986) examined ten travel activities among members of senior clubs. Notably liked are visiting friends or relatives as well as shopping in nearby towns or cities. Men prefer car trips while women enjoy organized bus trips. French seniors travel more to warmer climates like Florida.

Still in New Brunswick, Leblanc (1992) undertook another study on aging and tourism that was not limited to members of senior clubs. Considering the existing literature and official statistics, he concluded that the number of seniors traveling has not significantly increased, but that those who do travel do it more often. Furthermore, they travel in the province. The few who travel outside the province often choose Western Canada, Europe and principally the South of the United States, their trip duration, often longer than other age groups. The favorite mode of transportation is still the automobile, particularly for short trips. A recent trend reveals that seniors are opting more and more to stay in hotels and to eat in restaurants as opposed to living with friends and relatives. Another tendency is that the main reason for traveling has shifted from visiting friends or relatives to one of genuine enjoyment. Money spent and activities practiced while traveling follow the same patterns as those of other age groups. Leblanc remarks that this profile is, with some minor variations, the same in all other Canadian provinces.

As previously noted, trips outside Canada are not widespread. Nevertheless, it is estimated that 1.5 to 2 million Canadians travel to Florida each year, an American state known for its warm climate. Often called Snowbirds, these older adults represent up to 25%. Tucker, Marshall, Longino and Mullin (1988) examined the situation of those Canadian
seasonal residents who may stay for up to six months in Florida. They conducted an extensive survey in collaboration with the Canadian News, a Florida-based newspaper. The characteristics of those sampled reveal that 60% are males, 90% are married and 20% had visited Florida before, on more than ten occasions. Their mean age was 69.2 years and, as expected, the main reason for visiting this American state was its warm climate.

**Television viewing**

In our modern societies, television viewing is one of the most common activities, and older adults are relying more on television for information and entertainment (Kubey, 1980; Rubin, 1986). In 1986, 85% of Canadian older adults watched television each day compared to 73% for those in the 15-64 age group; daily mean hours, 3.9 for older adults; 3.0 hours for the younger group (Jones, 1990). Among members of senior clubs in New Brunswick, television news is the third best leisure activity; 44% watched soap operas (Ouellette, 1994). Due to methodological limitations, some authors suggested that television ratings remain grossly overestimated (see for example, Burrus-Bammel & Bammel, 1985; Delisle, 1992; McPherson, 1990). Too often, the television set is on, but not watched; its main function would be only to serve as an electronic companion. Pronovost’s view (1993) on television use by the elderly is enlightening. Even though television viewing has increased among older adults, it has also increased in other age groups as well. He maintains that this does not necessarily mean that it is their favorite activity. On the contrary, the preference for television has decreased by 50%, probably because of ongoing physical activities.

According to the Canadian Radio and Television Commission, older adults living alone surprisingly do not watch more television (study cited in Roadburg, 1985). Interestingly,
Kando (1980) considered education the best predictor of television viewing among all age
groups.

**Voluntary associations/civic activities**

Stone (1988) embarked on a comprehensive analysis of the 1985 General Social
Survey. Six months before the survey, for those 55 and over, 15.6% did some volunteer work
for an organization. Concerning education, it does have an impact on volunteers. In the 65-69
age group, about 32% of those having any post-secondary education or having completed a
degree volunteered their services to organizations (Stone, 1988).

Pronovost (1993) speculated that increased volunteerism in the province of Quebec
may be due to the influence of seniors’ clubs or associations. In New Brunswick, about 47%
of members belonging to a senior citizen’s club have offered their services to a volunteer
center (Ouellette, 1985).

Approximately 20% of Canadians, 55 and over, belong to a senior club or center
(Delisle, 1992; McPherson, 1990). The number of senior organizations is wide in scope and
ever growing (for a description, see Brault, 1987; Delisle, 1992). They range from local third-
age universities to national or international federations.

Most of these organizations could fall under the heading of voluntary associations¹. Briefly, what is known about them could be synthesized as follows. In spite of contrary or
weak results, a general sense of well-being seems to emerge from participation in a voluntary
association (e.g. Bull & Aucoin, 1975; Okum, Stock, Haring, & Witter, 1984; Ward,
1979). The most preferred are church and fraternal associations (Cutler, 1976a, 1976b).

Personal characteristics such as gender, age, social class and ethnic group influence the

---

¹ There is no standard definition of the term, see (Bull, 1982).
number of associations to which older adults belong as well as the frequency with which they attend association activities (Babchuck, Peters, Hoyt, & Kaiser, 1979; Clemente, Rexroad, & Hirsch, 1975; Cutler, 1976a, 1976b). Half of those belonging to one association are likely to belong to a second one if not more (Babchuck, et al., 1979) Finally, Cutler (1974) indicates that means of personal transportation are an important factor in the participation of older adults in voluntary associations.

**Psychological constructs and leisure participation**

Among the psychological constructs that correlate with participation are life satisfaction and leisure satisfaction, the former being the most important. Others have been motivation, preference and interest toward an activity.

**Life satisfaction and leisure satisfaction**

Three major theoretical orientations of aging have influenced the research in aging and leisure; they are the theories of disengagement, activity and continuity\(^2\). Each of these theories attempts to predict successful aging, often operationalized as measure of life satisfaction. The essential difference among those theories lies in the means to achieve this goal. Briefly, the activity theory claims that life satisfaction is the result of high levels of physical, social and intellectual activities. On the other hand, the disengagement theory holds that a voluntary reduction of activity levels and of social roles causes life satisfaction. Finally, the continuity theory states that life satisfaction and adaptation to retirement are consequences of the prolongation of favorite activities in the retirement phase.

Naturally, the relation between leisure participation and life satisfaction was one of the most researched topics of leisure studies. Despite some conflicting results, a general

\(^2\) For a discussion of those theories, see (Howe, 1988).
agreement exists about participation positively contributing to life satisfaction (Kelly & Ross, 1989).

Given the number of studies in social gerontology pertaining to life satisfaction and its relationship with other constructs, there exist quite a number of reviews and analyses. In particular, there is Okum, Stock, Haring and Witter’s (1984) meta-analysis of 556 sources that concluded that the relationship between social activity and psychological well-being measures explains one to eight percent of the variance. Regarding this particular finding, Kozma, Stones and McNeil (1991) remarked in their own review that other variables such as socioeconomic status often suppress the effect of social activity. They added that this specific relationship is better in the case of healthy and financially secured seniors. Finally, they also mention that both formal and informal social contacts as well as physical activities contribute to psychological well-being. Beyond this global view are some specific research results.

Some studies have focused on social involvement and its relation to this particular type of satisfaction. For example, Mishra (1992) found, among retired government employees, a significant relation between life satisfaction and social involvement with friends or members of voluntary associations. Kelly, Steinkamp and Kelly (1987) showed, after conducting a telephone survey, that life satisfaction is correlated with social and travel activities for those in the 65-74 age group, and with family and home leisure activities for those over 75 years old. A high sense of perceived control in leisure activities is associated with life satisfaction in a sample of senior members of a volunteer association (Kurtz & Propst, 1991). In 1986, Sneegas examined the different components of life satisfaction and found that perceptions of social competence, mediated by both leisure participation and leisure satisfaction, have an effect on life satisfaction. Graney (1975) established, after
conducting a four-year longitudinal study, the relationship between social activity and life satisfaction. With data drawn from a national sample, Dupuis and Smale (1995) found that hobbies, crafts and visiting friends relate positively to life satisfaction and negatively to depression symptoms. After a systematic correlation analysis, Rousseau, Denis, Dubé and Beauchesne (1995) also concluded that social activity contributes to life satisfaction with psychological autonomy and leisure motivation.

Research results obtained by Steinkamp and Kelly (1987) showed that leisure activities contribute significantly to life satisfaction even when controlling other variables such as demographic characteristics. In a path analysis model using a national sample, leisure participation best predicted life satisfaction (Riddick, 1985). Ragheb and Griffith (1982) explored the associations of life satisfaction with other types of satisfactions such as satisfaction with living arrangements; they found that leisure satisfaction had the most important contribution in a multiple regression analysis.

On the conceptual level, the study of Kelly and Ross (1989) is interesting. These authors go beyond the traditional relation participation-satisfaction. Their study examined the contribution to life satisfaction of five resource indices (e.g. education), types of activity, motivational orientations, and leisure context for the development of social identities. Results show that the index resource relates to activities and activities contributed to life satisfaction. Travel, community organization (e.g. clubs) and physical activities correlated with life satisfaction in the entire sample; when the sample is divided into age groups, the correlation participation-satisfaction varies from one age group to another. In the 65-74 age group, community organization, culture/arts and travel contribute the most to life satisfaction.
However, other measures such as motivational orientations were found to be poor predictors of life satisfaction.

Ragheb & Griffith (1982) considered a related construct, leisure satisfaction, as part of life satisfaction. These researchers found that leisure satisfaction is associated to leisure participation and life satisfaction, leisure satisfaction being a more important predictor. In a canonical analysis, recreation satisfaction relates to life satisfaction (Russell, 1987). Using an analytic model approach, Russell (1990) and Sneegas (1986) both found a significant and direct path between leisure satisfaction and psychological well-being. With a sample comprised of wide age ranges, Ragheb (Ragheb, 1989) found that well-being is predicted by leisure motivation, leisure satisfaction and leisure attitudes, with motivation being the best predictor. Ouellette, Nowlan and Ulmer (1987) analyzed two sets of variables: one having eight categories of leisure activities, and the other, six demographic variables along with leisure satisfaction. The canonical correlation analysis showed that leisure satisfaction with gender correlates to some leisure categories including voluntary associations.

**Leisure motivation and leisure interest**

Considered a key concept in leisure studies, motivation has been the object of rigorous research programs in leisure studies (Iso-Ahola, 1980; Tinsley & Tinsley, 1986). It even plays an important role in the motivation-participation-satisfaction sequence (Crandall, 1980; Ragheb & Tate, 1993). In particular, intrinsic motivation has often been used in studies on leisure behavior (Weissinger & Iso-Ahola, 1984).

According to Tinsley (1986), research on leisure motivation has been dominated by two broad topics, namely, the measurement of psychological benefits deriving from participation and the search for “... the existence of an identifiable psychological experience
which occurs as a result of participating in leisure activities” (p. 10). Crandall (1980) grouped most leisure motivation research in four areas: 1) reasons for participating, 2) satisfaction derived from participation, 3) fulfillment of needs and 4) interest or preference toward activities.

There is, however, a problem with the literature! Motivation often refers to needs, meanings, benefits, values and reasons for participation. At times, social motivations denote values (Pronovost, 1993). Osgood and Howe (1984) have deplored the confusing terminology employed to describe motivation and meanings derived from participation. However, Tinsley and Tinsley (1986) have made a real contribution toward clarification by elaborating a comprehensive theory that distinguishes between motivation, benefits and attributes.

In the specific literature on leisure and aging, motivation as a theme appears less frequently than leisure satisfaction or life satisfaction. It may stem from the fact that many of the existing motivation scales are not specifically adapted to older adults (Kelly & Ross, 1989). Following are some results of studies pertaining to the leisure motivation of seniors.

McAvoy (1979) identified leisure needs as socialization, self-fulfillment, closeness with nature and learning. Among some of the benefits derived from leisure participation are companionship, recognition and a sense of power (Tinsley, Colbs, Teaff, & Kaufman, 1987). Ouellette, Vienneau and Thibault (1990) found in seniors living in segregated apartment buildings that gender, linguistic group and motivation were good predictors of physical activities; motivation and gender correlated more to participation in popular media activities. The main motives for participating in the well-known Eldershostel’s educational programs were the quest for new knowledge, traveling and living new experiences (Romaniuk & Romaniuk, 1982).
In a path analysis, Losier, Bourque and Vallerand (1993) found a significant path from motivation to leisure participation; this path, however, was mediated by leisure satisfaction. This result is interesting because most studies use participation as a predictor of leisure satisfaction. According to the theory of the self-determination, Vallerand and O’Connor (1991) developed the motivation scale used.

Tourism marketers frequently analyze travel motivations. One typical result emerging from these studies: visiting friends and families motivates many older adult trips (Anderson & Langmeyer, 1982; Roma & Blenman, 1989; Shoemaker, 1989).

In a study done in New Brunswick, seniors’ motives to participate in a physical fitness program were physical well-being, not staying slim or losing weight as might be expected (Gionet, Couturier, & Vienneau, 1990). For all age groups, the prospect of fun and enjoyment motivates participation in sports and physical activities (Wankel and Berger, 1991 in Driver, Brown, & Peterson, 1991). Socializing as a motive to participate in physical activities has long been recognized (e.g. Kenyon, 1968). In their literature review on values, motivations, meanings, satisfactions and patterns, Osgood and Howe (1984) have also pointed out the necessity of fulfilling needs of affiliation and social integration in older adults.

Stephens and Craig’s study (1990) also showed that meeting people was an important objective for older men but more so for older women. However, this survey ranked feelings of psychological and physical well-being in first and second place respectively as objectives pursued by seniors aged 65 and over.

Interest in, preference for, or importance given to activities have received some attention in literature. Given a strong interest-participation relationship, the use of interest checklists or inventories could then be more justified in the planning and delivery of
recreational services. Barriers often prevent interests from actualizing into concrete participation. On different age groups than older adults, various factor analyses support the notion of corresponding underlying structures between interest and participation (Allen & Buchanan, 1982; Gudykunst, Morra, Kantor & Parker, 1981). Studies with samples of older adults have confirmed the relation interest-participation (see for example, MacNeil & Teague, 1987, p. 222; McAvoy, 1979).

A leisure participation model

This second part of our paper proposes a model in which three factors cause leisure participation in women belonging to an Acadian voluntary association. The association in question is the Third Age University of the South-East (TAUSE), located in Moncton, New Brunswick.

Third Age University of the South-East

There are approximately 150 third age universities worldwide. The first one was founded in France in 1973. Their goals, activities and administrative structures vary enormously, probably as a result of their determination to meet the needs of their respective communities (Delisle, 1992). Some have close ties with a traditional university, as is the case with TAUSE and the Université de Moncton. However, the programs offered are not necessarily composed of formal university courses. They often range from cultural activities to foreign trips. The main program of TAUSE consists of weekly fitness classes given to hundreds of seniors living in a forty-mile radius. Furthermore, TAUSE organizes many educational symposiums on such topics as violence against seniors, use and abuse of medication, healthy lifestyles, etc. A distinctive characteristic of TAUSE is that their
clientele is composed exclusively of Acadian members, a term designating those who speak French; they represent less than 40% of the population of New Brunswick. Their historical plight has been immortalized by a well-known poem\(^4\) recounting the story of Evangeline and Gabriel, two lovers separated by the deportation\(^5\) who spent their lives trying to find each other again.

**Model specification**

Considering the review literature presented above, a succinct leisure participation model has been developed\(^6\). Three observed variables relate to the leisure participation of women belonging to TAUSE; they are: life satisfaction, leisure motivation and education. Leisure participation is an unobserved latent variable with three indicators: 1) television viewing, 2) civic activities and 3) tourism. As opposed to what is found in the literature, life satisfaction is considered here as a predictor of leisure participation. Such a model is known in the literature on LISREL (linear structural relations) as a special type of model called MIMIC (multiple indicators and multiple causes).

**Methodology**

**Sample**

The sample is composed of 248 members, all Acadian women who have a mean age of 72.3 and an average mean of 8.9 years of schooling. During a designated week, a French questionnaire containing the leisure participation, leisure motivation and life satisfaction scales was given to every

---

\(^3\) Given time constraints and the nature of this presentation, the method and discussion sub-sections are more succinct than normally found in a traditional paper.

\(^4\) Longfellow, H. W. O. (1924). *Evangeline: A tale from Acadia*. Chicago: Flanagan. This poem has been translated in many languages.

\(^5\) For refusing to swear allegiance to the British crown, about 10 000 Acadians were deported to American colonies between 1755 and 1759.
member attending a physical fitness class. It is estimated that about 700 seniors attend those classes weekly. Depending on the season, the attendance varies from 80 to 85 percent. After physical fitness leaders explained the nature of the study, they asked the participants to bring back the completed questionnaires for the next scheduled class. A total of 511 useable questionnaires were returned.  

Measures  

Leisure participation. The measure of leisure participation contained 50 activities selected from scales used in other studies done in New Brunswick (Ouellette, 1985, 1986). Through a series of factor analyses, three factors emerged: television viewing (n=5), civic (n=7) and tourism (n=7). Each item had a five-point scale ranging from “Never” to “Frequently.”  

Leisure motivation. Leisure motivation is measured by 13 items that were included in a large Canadian survey on physical fitness and health promotion (Stephens & Graig, 1990). Items were preceded by the following statement: “Indicate the importance of each of those motivations during your leisure activities.” The five-point gradation scale ranged from “No importance” to “A great importance.” Following are examples of items: “To relax, forget my problems”, “To feel better mentally”, and “To feel better physically”.  

---  

6 The common approach to fit and test a covariance structure is model generating (MG). In this approach, the goal is not only to fit the data well but also arrive at a meaningful interpretation. Many models may have to be tested. See (see Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). We used this approach to develop our model.  

7 Were excluded from the initial sample, those whose ages were below 65 years old. Many third age universities as well as TAUSE strongly encourage individuals to join their association when they reach 50 years old. One of their mandates is pre-retirement education and acceptance of a 50 year old individual as one the means to fulfill this particular mandate. For the sake of eventually comparing our results with other gerontological studies, it was decided to retain the conventional 65 year old mark for defining a senior person. Since men were not the focus of this study, they were also excluded from the initial sample.  

8 Television viewing: (1) comedies, (2) news, (3) public affairs/news commentaries, (4) talk/variety shows and (5) soap operas.  

9 Civic activities: (1) church charity groups, (2) support groups, (3) aiding the sick and disabled, (4) international aid groups, (5) helping neighbors in difficulty, (6) service clubs and (7) volunteer bureau or center.  

10 Tourism: (1) foreign travel, (2) trips to conservation centers, (3) winter vacation in warmer climate, (4) trips to historical sites, (5) visit friends/relatives in nearby towns, (6) shopping in other cities and (7) visit friends/relatives in distant cities.
Life satisfaction. The Affect-Balance Scale (ABS) was utilized to measure life satisfaction. Developed by Bradburn (1969), it is often used in studies on aging (see Sauer & Warland, 1982). The ABS contains ten dichotomic items either associated with positive or negative life experiences. For example, “This week or the preceding weeks ... “Have you felt passionate or interested about something”, and “Have you felt depressed or unhappy”.

Education. A single question measures the level of education: "How many years have you studied in school?"

**Results and discussion**

Figure 1 presents maximum likelihood estimates. All t-values are significant. The overall fit is acceptable ($\chi^2 = 7.66, \text{df} = 6, \ p. 26$) and the squared multiple correlation is .27 for the model. Life satisfaction ($\gamma = .16$), leisure motivation ($\gamma = .17$) and education ($\gamma = .17$) determine leisure participation, an unobserved latent variable whose indicators are tourism ($\lambda = .89$), civic activities ($\lambda = .79$) and television viewing ($\lambda = 1.00$).
Considering previous research results, it is not surprising that education or leisure motivation is directly associated with participation. Motivation has been invariably considered a significant determinant of leisure behavior (e.g. Losier, et al., 1993; Rousseau, et al., 1995). As previously mentioned in the first part of this paper, education is also a good determinant of participation.

Our model hypothesized that life satisfaction had a direct path to participation. As previously mentioned, life satisfaction is traditionally considered as an outcome instead of a predictor. Yet, in the past, some researchers have mentioned that this particular relationship may be at least reciprocal (Dupuis & Smale, 1995). One notable exception is the path model developed by Losier, Bourque and Vallerand (Losier, et al., 1993).

Given the particular characteristics of our sample, it is likely that life satisfaction is in itself not only conducive but also leads to actual participation in specific forms of leisure. Members of TAUSE are for the most part in good health, participate in physical fitness classes regularly, and are as a whole more active than those who do not belong to a voluntary association. Thus, it is probable that a high degree of life satisfaction encourages them to participate in meaningful and specific activities.

The three indicators of participation present a diversified leisure profile for those members. Television viewing is a passive and daily activity. Civic activities are social in nature and practiced at least monthly. Tourism has social and educational components, practiced in all probabilities on an irregular basis except for the few who reside in Florida during the winter.

Normally, television viewing, considered a passive activity, negatively relates to well-being (Dupuis & Smale, 1995; Smale & Dupuis, 1993). However, many television programs
contain sufficient educational, informational and entertainment dimensions to assume that it may play a greater role than previously suspected. There is some recent evidence to suggest that passive activities such as arts and crafts influence levels of well-being (Dupuis & Smale, 1995). Seniors' travels are increasing and becoming the trademark of many voluntary associations. This being the case, many members develop an inclination for traveling. Anecdotally, many seniors who participate in trips organized by a voluntary association eventually increase their traveling.

The participation profile in civic activities and voluntary associations is high. This is consistent with the literature. Half the senior members of voluntary associations also belong to a second organization (Babchuck, et al., 1979). In our sample, well over 90% belong to a senior club in addition to TAUSE. However, further studies will need to explore one intriguing aspect of this occurrence. Yet, as McPherson (1991) pointed it out, the present cohort of older women has had little experience with formal or informal leisure activities during their life cycle. Have these women been joiners all their lives as the literature indicates or are they rather new joiners?

In conclusion, this model will have to be validated with other samples of seniors in voluntary associations. However, the results are interesting in the sense that it is a succinct model where life satisfaction is more a predictor than an outcome. The profile of activities of members derived from the model is a beginning toward the development of more sophisticated models.

Following is a brief research agenda for future studies:
Full LISREL models with more latent variables either declared as dependent (ETA) or independent (KSI) would be necessary to understand a complex phenomenon such as the leisure behavior of seniors.

Latent variables with strong indicators require valid and reliable measures. One difficulty with participation scales is that they are so diversified that comparison is difficult. Too often, an activity selection for inclusion in those scales varies according to each researcher's knowledge of his clientele and community. Rigorous statistical techniques like LISREL would accelerate the development of more reliable and standardized participation measures.

The number of women in the aging population is such that the intensification of studies on them would be more than appropriate. They present an intriguing characteristic. For most of their lives, active leisure involvement was unfeasible because of family and other responsibilities.

The history of women leisure repertoire across their life cycle would permit an understanding of the dynamic of their actual participation and may help others who are qualified as non-joiners.

References


