



Relationship between Leisure Boredom and Quality of Life: A Case Study of Undergraduates in Southern Taiwan

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Abstract—The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between leisure boredom and quality of life for undergraduates in Taiwan. The researchers adopted the survey method. The scales of “leisure boredom (LB)” and “quality of life (QOL)” were used. A total of 403 undergraduate students from a university in southern Taiwan participated in the study. Descriptive statistics and Pearson’s product-moment correlation in SPSS 14.0 for Windows were employed to examine the collected data. According to the results, negative relationships were observed among leisure boredom and four dimensions of quality of life. Four dimensions of quality of life were revealed to be significantly related to leisure boredom, with the physical ($r = -.39$), psychological ($r = -.48$), social ($r = -.52$) and environmental ($r = -.33$) aspects being negatively related ($p < 0.01$). Finally, suggestions for future researchers are provided to make further contributions to the field.

Keywords- Leisure boredom, Quality of life, Undergraduates.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Leisure participation of Taiwanese undergraduates

Participating in leisure activities has been found to be beneficial to people. According to Driver, Brown and Peterson (1991), benefits extended from leisure can cover numerous aspects of people’s lives, such as their physical health, and their psychological, social and economic well-being. Meanwhile, leisure is also regarded as an important way for people to maintain and even improve their own health, to reduce the negative influence of stress on physical and mental situation, to help people cope with stress. However, when people have no plans for how to utilize their leisure time, or do not have the ability to fill their leisure time meaningfully, they may fail to receive benefits from their leisure time, which results in leisure boredom. Leisure boredom can cause serious problems. For example, researchers (Ganley, 1989; Ian, Shane, & Roberta, 2000; Lin, Lin, & Wu, 2009; Newberry & Duncan, 2001; McIntosh, MacDonald, & McKeganey, 2008) have indicated that various social issues and some forms of delinquency, such as Internet or alcohol addiction and drug abuse, could derive from leisure boredom.

The subject of this study is Taiwanese college students. Given that college students are assumed to be a group with

rather more free time than other groups in Taiwan. Moreover, comparing to students of other ages, college students are old enough to decide how to use their spare time (Wang, Kao, Huan & Wu, 2011). Nevertheless, it does not mean that all the college students know how to manage their free time adequately when transferring from a structured senior high school environment to an unstructured college environment. Shaikh and Deschamp (2006) found that most students reported that they did not maintain good health due to bad management of using their time to do things for improving their health or spend any time on exercise or other healthy activities. Another study by Mokhtari, Reichard, and Gardner (2009) reported that most of the time when college students are free is actually associated with screens, including either browsing the Internet or watching television. It was revealed that the amount of time college students spending on computer use and television watching were negatively correlated with exercise and physical activity (Buckworth & Nigg, 2004), and could result in unhealthy lifestyles, including Internet addiction or being excessively sedentary.

Although leisure boredom may cause some passivity and health problems in one’s life, few previous studies have focused on the negative influences of leisure boredom on quality of life. Therefore, this study investigates the relationship between leisure boredom and quality of life for undergraduates to clarify whether leisure boredom negatively affects any aspects of life quality.

B. Leisure boredom

According to Iso-Ahola and Weissinger, (1990) leisure boredom could be defined as, “A negative mood or state of mind that reflects a mismatch between optimal experiences that are perceptually available to an individual” (p. 4). People may experience the feeling of leisure boredom because what they do in leisure time is just for time-killing, namely, meaningless. Leisure boredom sometimes may also be created by multiple constraints. It is more likely to be experienced by people who cannot manage their leisure time or who are unaware of the psychological rewards of leisure (Iso-Ahola & Weissinger, 1990). Numerous young students who do not know how to use

their leisure time effectively or who experience leisure boredom tend to use alcohol or smoking to alleviate boredom rather than participating in positive leisure activities. Therefore, leisure boredom emerges as an important issue, particularly for college students. To measure leisure boredom, the most widely utilized measurement tool is the Leisure Boredom Scale (or called LBS) from Iso-Ahola and Weissinger (1987). The two scholars (1990) then also re-examined the scale on three studies of U.S. college students to investigate the concept of leisure boredom, and a high internal consistency was found based on the study.

C. *Quality of life*

We can trace the concept of "quality of life" back to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle's belief. Aristotle interpreted quality of life with the concept of happiness which he described the state where everything was going smoothly and the soul was satisfied. Since "life" is what we all lead, pursue and are concerned about, numerous studies have examined the concept of "quality of life". Generally, quality of life is regarded as a multi-polar and comprehensive concept because it includes multiple aspects. Among them, health-related quality of life has gained attention in recent years, but according to Fayers and Machin (2000), even this concept is defined only loosely. There is general agreement that the relevant quality of life could be concluded into general health, physical and emotional functions, as well as social interactions, psychological dimension, life satisfaction, and so on, since aspects may vary from different point of view. Because of the diverse definition and measurement of the concept of "Quality of life", the World Health Organization has designed a scale to measure the concept. The scale is based on the idea of "the cultural context and value system in which they live, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns. Quality of life is a complex and broad-ranging concept, incorporating physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relations, personal beliefs, and relationship to salient features of the environment." (Szabo, 1996; the WHOQOL Group, 1994, 1995, 1998a, 1998b). According to this definition, the quality of life of individuals is stressed from a multi-dimensional view.

D. *Relationship between leisure boredom and quality of life*

According to Robinson and Godbey (1999), free time could represent the eagerness for people to achieve their best chance of happiness and the pursuit of happiness and self-expression. They thus perceived leisure participation as an effective way to create meaning and promote quality of life. Iwasaki (2006) suggested that leisure experience could provide a source of positive emotions and well-being, positive identity and self-esteem, as well as social and cultural connections, and moreover could improve quality of life. Han and Ian (2007) also indicated that leisure participation generates pleasant mood states and contributes to quality of life.

Nevertheless, leisure time might not always positively influence an individual. The delivery of the above benefits of

leisure to an individual cannot be guaranteed, particularly when leisure boredom appears. The negative influence of leisure boredom on the lives of individuals is even worse. Some deviant behaviors can result from the presence of leisure boredom. For example, Gabriel (1988) observed that if boredom becomes a constraint or problem during the establishing periods of leisure behaviour, individuals may appear with various deviant or negative behaviours as a relief. Another example is from Ian et al. (2000), who suggested that many young people who report high levels of boredom also tend to exhibit high levels of alcohol and drug abuse. McIntosh et al. (2008) also found that boredom was one motivator of teenage alcohol use. Furthermore, Iso-Ahola and Weissinger (1990) reported the negative linkage between leisure boredom and physical and mental health. Weissinger (1995) postulated that college-aged students who feel more bored in their leisure time reported that they were less mentally and physically healthy than those who reported lower levels of boredom. On the other hand, Coleman and Iso-Ahola (1993) found that social support and self-determination disposition generated and created from leisure could be a healthy buffer against stress. When leisure boredom occurs, it might reduce opportunities for involvement in leisure activities with friends or family, and may then reduce social interaction or social support from others. Pierceall and Keim (2007) also suggested that it is important for college students to cope with stress from their academic work and daily routine through leisure activities that include talking to family or gathering with friends, and exercising.

II. METHOD

A. *Sampling*

The initial sample comprised 500 undergraduates from one southern university in Taiwan. We selected these students purposively from ten courses with enrollments of more than 80 students from different department to represent the variety of the sample. Questionnaires were administered anonymously in the classroom. Finally, we collected 403 valid questionnaires overall, which appears as an 81% response rate.

B. *Instrument*

1) *Measures of Leisure Boredom*

The translated and modified Chinese Leisure Boredom Scale (LBS) (Chung, 2002, originally from Iso-Ahola & Weissinger, 1987, 1990) was used to measure individual differences in perceptions of boredom during leisure time (Iso-Ahola & Crowley, 1991). The LBS comprises 16 items to which subjects responded on a 1-5 Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The sample items included: "For me, leisure time just drags on and on," "Leisure time is boring," "Leisure time activities do not excite me," "I do not have many leisure skills," and "In my leisure time, I usually don't like what I'm doing, but I don't know what else to do." Among the 16 items, 10 were reverse coding (Wang, Wu, Wu, & Huan, 2012). The overall Cronbach's alpha for leisure boredom was .86 (TABLE 1).

TABLE 1. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF LEISURE BOREDOM

Measurement items	Mean	Standard Deviations
For me, leisure time just drags on and on	2.51	.76
During my leisure time, I become highly involved in what I do ^a	2.31	.83
Leisure time is boring	1.72	.75
If I could leave school now and have enough money, I would have plenty of exciting things to do for the rest of my life ^a	2.63	.89
During my leisure time, I feel like I'm just bored and hanging around	2.14	.77
In my leisure time, I usually don't like what I'm doing, but I don't know what else to do	2.40	.83
Leisure time gets me aroused and going ^a	2.52	.76
Leisure experiences are an important part of my quality of life ^a	2.20	.76
I am excited about leisure time ^a	2.36	.71
In my leisure time, I want to do something, but I don't know what to do	2.89	.96
I waste too much of my leisure time sleeping	2.64	.92
I like to try new leisure activities that I have never tried before ^a	2.43	.86
I am very active during my leisure time ^a	2.54	.78
Leisure time activities do not excite me ^a	2.47	.85
I do not have many leisure activities available to me ^a	2.86	.84
During my leisure time, I almost always have something to do ^a	2.62	.82

^a=items were reverse coded

2) Measures of Quality of Life

We adapted the Quality of Life scale designed by the World Health Organization (WHOQOL-BREF) as the measurement. WHOQOL-BREF comprises the physical, psychological, social as well as the environmental four dimensions. Overall, there are 22 items in this scale. We conducted principle component factor analysis with varimax rotation in the pre-test. Based on the results of the analysis, five items were deleted because of low factor loadings (below .30). As for the reliability test, the coefficients of Cronbach's alpha were all above 0.67, for all the subscales in each construct, and ranged from 0.67 to 0.73 (see TABLE 2).

C. Analysis

SPSS14.0 for Windows is used in this study to analyze the data. We conducted descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis to explore the relationship between leisure boredom and the four aspects of quality of life.

Measurement items	Mean	Standard Deviations
Physical (Cronbach's alpha=.67)		
I feel pain and discomfort ^a	2.45	1.10
I have to depend on medication and treatment in my daily life ^a	4.06	.86
I have enough energy for life	3.24	.73
I have enough mobility	4.20	.77
I am satisfied with the sleep I get	3.16	.88
I am satisfied with my ability to perform routine daily activities	3.60	.71
I am satisfied with my working ability	3.43	.74
Psychological (Cronbach's alpha=.70)		
My life has meaning	3.64	.75
I have ability to concentrate	3.17	.77
I can accept my appearance	3.62	.76
I am satisfied with myself	3.42	.75
I have negative feelings ^a	3.12	.94
Social (Cronbach's alpha=.70)		
I have opportunity to take leisure	3.84	.77
I am satisfied with my interpersonal relationships	3.47	.74
I am satisfied with my sexual activity	3.52	.73
I am satisfied with the support from my friends	3.85	.67
Environment (Cronbach's alpha=.73)		
I am satisfied with the physical safety and protection of my life	3.49	.76
I have opportunities to gain new information and skills	3.62	.77
I have opportunities for recreation and leisure	3.68	.69
I am satisfied with the physical environment	3.52	.77
I am satisfied with the convenience of medical services	3.27	.82
I am satisfied with the transportation	3.54	.83

TABLE2 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF QUALITY OF LIFE

^a=items were reverse coded

III. RESULTS

A. Respondent profile

The 403 respondents included 228 females (56%) and 175 males (44%). Moreover, the sample comprised 44% freshmen, 12% sophomores, 22% juniors, and 22% seniors. Among all the respondents, the mean age was 20 years old (SD = 2.72). The average free time of the respondents on weekdays and weekends was 7 and 13 hours per day, respectively. Meanwhile, average time spent sleeping was 7 (SD = 1.19) hours a day. The above measurements were obtained via open-ended questions which are reported by the respondents themselves. The mean score of respondent self-reported general quality of life was 3.41(SD = 0.73), indicating a fair satisfaction for quality of life for the respondents.

B. Leisure boredom and quality of life

Negative relationships were observed among leisure boredom and the four dimensions of quality of life. All dimensions of quality of life were found to be significantly related to leisure boredom, with the physical ($r = -.39, p < 0.01$), psychological ($r = -.48, p < 0.01$), social ($r = -.52, p < 0.05$) and environmental ($r = -.33, p < 0.05$) aspects being negatively related to leisure boredom. The results indicated that when individuals experience boredom during their leisure time, they are likely to have worse quality of life (see TABLE 3).

TABLE 3. LEISURE BOREDOM AND QUALITY OF LIFE

	LB	Phy	Psy	Soc	Env
LB	1.00				
Phy	-.39(**)	1.00			
Psy	-.48(**)	.56(**)	1.00		
Soc	-.52(**)	.54(**)	.55(**)	1.00	
Env	-.33(**)	.51(**)	.45(**)	.55(**)	1.00

ps: 1. ** $p < 0.01$

2. LB=Leisure Boredom, Phy=Physical, Psy=Psychological, Soc= Social, Env= Environmental

IV. CONCLUSION

This study explores the relationship between leisure boredom and quality of life among college students. The results revealed that leisure boredom is negatively and significantly related to all the aspects of quality of life, namely the physical, psychological, social and environmental dimensions. As Iso-Ahola and Weissinger (1990) found that leisure boredom was negatively related to both mental and physical health. Among the four dimensions comprising quality of life, the psychological and social dimensions are more closely correlated with leisure boredom. Since leisure-generated social support is an important source of positive emotions and well-being, social and cultural connections help people to cope with stress and enhance their quality of life (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993; Iwasaki, 2006), as the results of this study also reported. The results indicated that when facing leisure boredom, individuals are more likely to have fewer opportunities for leisure, less social support from friends, worse interpersonal relationships and feel more negative and dissatisfied about life. Meanwhile, when negative situations occur, the results might be leisure boredom, and vice versa. On the other hand, leisure boredom is also negatively related to physical and environmental quality of life. The results suggested that when leisure boredom occurs, individuals may be dissatisfied with the physical environment, the provision of leisure opportunities, transportation and information. The results regarding physical quality of life agree with previous works which mentioned that participating in leisure activities and exercising helps individuals maintain their physical health (Weissinger, 1995; Pierceall & Keim, 2007). However, the results of environmental quality of life differ from the findings

of previous studies. While Lloyd and Friendship (2002) reported that the person-oriented leisure property, leisure satisfaction, is the best predictor of quality of life and the place-center for the property does not affect the quality of life, the results showed small between casual but significant relationship between boredom and environmental quality of life. This relationship suggested that although place-centered attributes have only a minimal influence on quality of life, the opportunities for individuals to obtain new information and skills, recreation and leisure and improvements in the quality of their physical environment and even transportation services may help individuals become more involved in leisure activities and thus avoid leisure boredom. Based on the research results, it was suggested that a specific leisure program could be held for college students to help them deal with their leisure time well. Moreover, leisure and recreation facilities and services need to be enhanced on campus so that more opportunities for active leisure patterns could be created.

Although significant results were found between leisure boredom and quality of life, certain limitations were also needed to be stated. First, this study is only based on the samples from a single university, although it attempted to sample students from different departments and years. Future studies could use a wider sample. Furthermore, since this study observed that leisure boredom might motivate some kind of delinquency or passive leisure activities such as internet addiction or alcohol use, future studies can further explore the relationships among leisure patterns and quality of life.

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