
A Study of Leisure During Adulthood

Introduction

The intent of this document is to provide general information about *A Study of Leisure During Adulthood (ASOLDA)* for researchers who have an interest in accessing this longitudinal data for their own research purposes. *ASOLDA* was initiated to enable researchers to examine change and continuity of leisure, life perceptions, and values in the lives of middle aged adults over time. Data collection for *ASOLDA* began in 1987 and continued through 1996. Key variables under investigation included leisure attitude, valuing leisure, perceived freedom in leisure, life experiences, individual life structure, values, and wants out of life. The quantitative data that was generated from this study is unique in that it offers researchers the potential to examine adult leisure perceptions within the context of their lives and personally held values.

This is the only leisure study of its kind to use frequent and consistent means in data collection from study participants year after year. In the majority of longitudinal studies, data are collected less frequently and consistently. Deemed useful when exploring human behavior, the methodology used in *ASOLDA* has been described as providing researchers with a photo album of human perceptions, rather than mere snapshots taken of individual's lives on occasion. As a result, researchers using *ASOLDA* data to examine change and continuity in leisure and life perceptions have the advantage of being able to examine mid-life perceptions without interruption for a ten year period of time.

Study Participants

1987 profile. In the initial data collection (1987), 84 middle aged adults, primarily of Euro-American descent, responded to the invitation to participate in the ten year longitudinal study. At that time, respondents were between the ages of 31 and 63. Forty-nine (58%) were women and 33 (39%) were men. Marital status, education, occupation, and income were first collected in 1988. At that time responses indicated that 18 (21%) were single, 44 (52%) were married, one was widowed, four were divorced, and three were cohabiting. Thirty-eight (45%) held university graduate degrees and 27 (32%) had college degrees or had done post-graduate studies. Most (63%) held professional positions. Thirty-nine (47%) earned mid-range salaries (\$20,000-49,000), 14 (17%) earned less than \$10,000, 10 (12%) earned \$50,000 to \$69,999, and 10 (12%) earned over \$70,000 per year.

1996 profile. Drawing upon data obtained in the tenth year of the study provided the following descriptive profile of respondents still participating in the study. Sixty-nine (85%) responded in 1996. Of these, 23 were men (27%) and 46 were women (55%). The average age for all respondents was 52.6 years; 54 years for men and 51.9 years for women. Income ranged from less than \$10,000 per year (n=2) to more than \$100,000 (n=9). Three study participants earned between \$10,000-19,000; 25 earned between \$20,000-49,999; 23 earned between \$50,000-79,000; and seven earned between \$80,000-99,999. Of those who indicated marital status, 38 were married (45%) and three (4%) were cohabiting. Fifteen (18%) were single, five (6%) were divorced, and one person was widowed.

As a group, study participants were well educated. Sixty-one (73%) held college degrees, of which over half of these (n=36) had post-graduate degrees. Most study participants, 41 (49%) worked in jobs which they characterized as professional positions; three (4%) indicated they owned or co-owned a business; two (2%) indicated they were in sales positions; and 20

(24%) designated "other". Position titles given by respondents were quite varied and included homemaker, secretary, childcare worker, student, custodial, and retired. The number of study participants who indicated "other" may suggest that many middle aged adults no longer identify with what has been considered traditional employment categories.

Attrition. One woman and one man died during data collection (1987-1996), and one man asked to be eliminated from continuing his participation in the study. Of the remaining 81 participants in the study, 55 (68%) completed their questionnaire every year. Fourteen percent (n=11) of the respondents completed the 13-page questionnaire for nine of the ten years of data collection. Another five participants responded five years or more and only thirteen responded four or fewer times over the ten years of data collection.

As a result of these participation patterns showing consistent and fairly consistent responses over time (55 participating for 10 years; 11 participating for 9 years), researchers have continuous data for over 80% of the adults who originally began the study in 1987. This enables researchers to examine variables longitudinally with few, if any interruptions.

Instruments Used in ASOLDA

Leisure Ethic Scale

Crandall, R. & Slivken, K. (1980). Leisure attitudes and their measurement. In S. E. Iso-Ahola (Ed.), *Social psychological perspectives on leisure and recreation* (pp. 261-284). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Perceived Freedom in Leisure Scale

Witt, P.A. & Ellis, G.D. (1985). Development of a short form to assess perceived freedom in leisure. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 17, 225-233.

Life Experiences Survey

Sarason, I., Johnson, J., & Siegel, J. (1978). Assessing the impact of life changes: Development of the life experiences survey. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 46, pp. 932-946.

Life Structure Assessment

Carpenter, G. (1988). The relationship between valuing leisure and change during middle adulthood. In D. Gill (Ed.), *Abstracts of Research Papers*, Reston, VA: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, p. 192.

List of Values

Kahle, L. R. (1983). (Ed.). *Social values and social change: Adaptation to life in America*. NY: Praeger.

Ranking Leisure

Carpenter, G. (1997). A longitudinal investigation of mid-life men who hold leisure in higher regard than work. *Society and Leisure*, 20(1), pp. 189-211.

Valuing Leisure Scale

Carpenter, G. (1989). Life change during middle adulthood and valuing leisure. *World Leisure and Recreation*. 31(1), pp. 29-31.

Selected ASOLDA Publications

- Stockard, J., Carpenter, G., & Kahle, L.R. (2014). Continuity and change in values in midlife: Testing the age stability hypothesis. *Experimental Aging Research*, 40, (2), pp. 224-244.
- Janke, M. C., Carpenter, G., Payne, L. L., & Stockard, J. (2011). The role of life events on perceptions of leisure during adulthood: A longitudinal analysis. *Leisure Sciences*, 33, 1-18.
- Carpenter, G. (2010). When time does not matter: Perceiving and living a mid-life not bound by linear time. *World Leisure Journal*, 52, (2), pp.116-128.
- Carpenter, G., & Stockard, J. (2010). Leisure and health in middle age. In L. Payne, B. Ainsworth, & G. Godbey (Eds.) *Leisure, health and wellness: Making the connections*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- Carpenter, Gaylene (2005). Linking research and practice: A case study in arts programming for adults. *Informed Leisure Practice*, 1, 48-64.
- Carpenter, Gaylene & Patterson, Ian (2004). The leisure perceptions and leisure meanings of a mid-life couple around the time of retirement. *World Leisure Journal*. (46), pp. 13-25.
- Carpenter, G. (2003). Leisure and life perceptions of a mid-life woman experiencing an epiphany associated with family. *World Leisure Journal*, (45), pp. 44-54.
- Patterson, Ian & Carpenter, Gaylene (2003). By the decade: An exploration of the leisure perceptions and preferences for two mid-life adults over time. *Annals of Leisure Research*. 6, (2). pp. 153-168.
- Carpenter, Gaylene (2003). The stability in leisure perceptions among mid-life adults over time. In S. Colyer & F. Lobo (Eds.), *Leisure futures, leisure cultures: Selection of papers from the 5th ANZALS and 3rd Women in Leisure International Conferences*, 2001, (pp. 11-17). Perth, Australia: Praxis Education.
- Carpenter, Gaylene and Murray, Susan (2002). Leisure behaviors and perceptions when mid-life death is imminent: A case report. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 20, pp. 12-36.
- Carpenter, Gaylene (2000). A longitudinal examination of wants-out-of-life among Mid-Life Adults: Implications for Event Managers. *Journal of Convention and Exhibition Management*, 2(2/3), 45-57.
- Carpenter, G. & Robertson, B. (2000). A call for the increased use of longitudinal methods in research on adult leisure. *Leisure/Loisur*, 24, 101-129.
- Carpenter, G. (1997). A Longitudinal investigation of mid-life men who hold leisure in higher regard than work. *Society and Leisure*, 20(1), pp. 189-211
- Carpenter, G. (1995). The appeal of fairs, festivals, and special events to adult populations. *World Leisure & Recreation*, 37(1), pp. 14-15.

- Carpenter, G. (1993). Leisure and health during middle adulthood: A case study. In D.M. Compton & S.E. Iso-Ahola (Eds.) *Leisure and Mental Health*. Park City, UT: Family Development Resources, Inc.
- Carpenter, G. (1992). Adult perceptions of leisure: Life experiences and life structure. *Society and Leisure*, 15 (2), pp. 587-606.
- Carpenter, G. & Delansky, B. (1992). The continuity of selected leisure variables during middle adulthood. *Journal of Recreation and Leisure*, 12(1), pp. 41-49.
- Carpenter, G. (1992). A longitudinal approach to understanding leisure during adulthood. In B.A. Hawkins and R. Rothschild (Eds.) *Proceedings of the Sandra A. Modisett Symposium on Aging and Leisure in the 1990's*, pp. 47-53.
- Carpenter, G. (1989). Life change during middle adulthood and valuing leisure. *World Leisure & Recreation*, 31(1), pp. 29-31.

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For Information About Accessing *ASOLDA* Data

Researchers who have an interest in accessing *ASOLDA* data or the survey for their own research purposes should contact the Principal Investigator for the study, Dr. Gaylene Carpenter at the University of Oregon, School of Planning, Public Policy and Management, Eugene, Oregon 97403-5230 U.S.A. gcarpent@uoregon.edu

