

RECREATION EXPERIENCE PREFERENCE
AMONG FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE
STUDENTS

By

EMILY MCKENZIE

Bachelor of Science in Leisure Studies

Oklahoma State University

Stillwater, Oklahoma

2011

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
July, 2011

RECREATION EXPERIENCE PREFERENCE
AMONG FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE
STUDENTS

Thesis Approved:

Dr. Lowell Caneday

Thesis Adviser

Dr. Jerry Jordan

Dr. Tyler Tapps

Dr. Mark E. Payton

Dean of the Graduate College

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study	2
Definition of Terms.....	3
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	4
ASSUMPTIONS.....	5
LIMITATIONS.....	5
STATEMENT OF THE HYPOTHESES	5
CHAPTER TWO	7
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	7
Retention.....	8
Leisure.....	9
Motivation.....	12
Recreation Experience Preference Scales	14
Summary.....	15
CHAPTER THREE	16
METHODOLOGY	16
Participants.....	16

Instruments.....	17
Research Design.....	18
Procedure	19
Data Analysis	21
CHAPTER FOUR.....	23
RESULTS	23
Program.....	23
Marketing.....	23
Content and Timeline.....	23
Application of Instrument.....	24
Participants.....	25
Findings.....	27
Summary of Data	28
CHAPTER FIVE	31
CONCLUSION.....	31
Recommendations.....	33
REFERENCES	35
APPENDICES	40
APPENDIX A.....	41
IRB Approval.....	41
APPENDIX B	43
Instrument	43
APPENDIX C	49

Instrument with Frequencies of Responses.....	49
APPENDIX D.....	52
Jury of Experts	52

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Demographic Characteristics of Fall 2010 OSU Freshmen.....	17
Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants.....	26
Table 4.2 Educational Characteristics of Participants	26
Table 4.3 Mann-Whitney U Descriptive Statistics	27
Table 4.4 Mann-Whitney U Ranks	27
Table 4.5 Mann-Whitney U Test Statistics.....	27
Table 4.6 Statements with Lowest Mean Scores	29
Table 4.7 Statements with Highest Mean Score	30

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between academic achievement and physical activity or recreation has been investigated on a variety of levels. Carlson, Fulton, Lee, Maynard, Brown, Kohl III and Dietz (2008) found that girls had a small academic benefit when they were exposed to 70-300 minutes of physical education a week. Chomitz, Slining, McGowan, Mitchell, Dawson and Hacker (2009) studied fourth, sixth, seventh, and eighth graders from the Cambridge Public School Department in Massachusetts. The investigators found a significant positive relationship between fitness and academic achievement in math and English (Chomitz, Slining, McGowan, Mitchell, Dawson & Hacker, 2009). Pearson, Crissey, and Riegle-Crumb (2009) found evidence that suggested “sports involvement contributes to academic achievement across subjects for both boys and girls” (p. 530). Additionally, Peck, Roeser, Zarrett, and Eccles (2008) examined how involvement in extracurricular activity contributed to educational resilience. In this study, they found that the college enrollment rates of vulnerable youth increased dramatically if their activities included both school clubs and organized sports, both organized sports and volunteering, multiple positive activities, or (to a lesser degree) school clubs only.

Retention of students is a costly problem that universities face year after year (ACT, 2010; Tinto, 1987; Tinto, 1998). Universities are already using the benefits of leisure and recreation to help increase retention rates (Bell, 2010). What kind of student would choose to participate in a recreation-based event? How could this help universities create more programs of this nature?

Statement of the Problem

College freshmen are leaving from universities at an alarming rate. Retention is a problem faced by many universities. What can college recreation programs do to help that problem? The problem and focus of this study is to help determine the preferences of first-year college students who participate in university-facilitated recreation experiences and whether or not they are linked to demographics or the type of event in which they participated.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the link between Recreation Experience Preference scales scores and demographics or type of event, among first-year students who participated in university-facilitated recreation experiences at Oklahoma State University. The researcher obtained knowledge about preferences and perceived importance of the participants and investigated what, if any, link there was between those and simple demographics, and the type of event in which they participated. This is not a study of retention in higher education, but the freshmen-centered, recreation-based events were developed by Oklahoma State University as an attempt to increase retention rates for first-year students. By better understanding the recreation preferences of the participants, the researcher may be able to add to the body of knowledge attempting to

explain the benefits of recreation, but also understand why certain students choose to participate in freshmen-centered, recreation-based events in order for others to better program and serve first-year students. Better programming for first-year students could enable more effective social integration, often aiding in retention (Tinto, 1987; Tinto, 1998).

Definition of Terms

The following terms have been included in this study. To avoid any confusion, their definitions for the purpose of this study are below.

- **Demographic Information:** For this study, demographic information refers to the sex, age, number of semesters at Oklahoma State University, self-reported approximate GPA, self-reported race and ethnicity, and college of the participants.
- **First-Year Student:** For the purpose of this study, a first-year student is one who has completed no more than two academic semesters at Oklahoma State University. This term will be used interchangeably with the word “freshman”.
- **Freshmen-Centered Recreation-Based Event:** An event hosted by the university that is only for first-year students or focuses on first-year students by requiring that anyone attending bring a first-year student with them.
- **Gender:** Many scholars view gender as something to differentiate from the term “sex” as gender does not describe the biological and reproductive qualities of males and females. For the purpose of this study, I am investigating the “sex” of the participants. However, in the review of the literature, the term gender is used when it is appropriate in order to be consistent with the author’s word selection.

- Leisure: Based on his review of the literature, Hutson (2007) defined leisure as “The state of mind necessary for an individual to participate in recreational activities of their choice during time that is free from other obligations where meaning is derived from the experience itself” (p. 3). This definition of leisure will be used for this study.
- Outdoor Adventure: Outdoor Adventure is a branch of Campus Recreation at Oklahoma State University. They provide outdoor-based recreation opportunities to the students of OSU as well as the greater OSU community.
- Recreation: In his book *Forest Recreation*, Robert Douglass (1969) defines recreation as “any action that refreshes the mental attitude of an individual” (p. 6). He goes on to write, “Recreation is a wholesome activity that is engaged in for pleasure, therefore it is play” (p.6).
- Sex: The classification of male or female based on biological, reproductive qualities.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results of this study may help fill a gap in the literature between the benefits of leisure, the benefits of recreation-based retention programs, and factors linked to the reasons students choose to participate in those programs. Descriptors of those participants and why they participated may add direction to the expanding body of knowledge about recreation-based retention/orientation programs. Information about this sample could also guide other universities in their programming practices and/or provide evidence to support funding opportunities for recreation-based retention/orientation programs.

ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that first-year students have completed one academic semester at OSU. This researcher also assumes that college students are willing and able to remember their first-year grade point average (GPA) fairly accurately for reporting purposes.

LIMITATIONS

The main limitation of this study is that it relies on participants from a small pool of students at a specified university to choose to participate. As a result, the sample will not be highly generalizable, but the study is designed to be descriptive and investigative for a specific case. Another limitation of this study is that the results are truncated by gathering data only from students who have completed one semester of college. This study is also limited to assessment of Recreation Experience Preferences.

STATEMENT OF THE HYPOTHESES

A review of the literature reveals that retention is a problem troubling higher education institutions across the board. The literature breaks down the problem into two realms: attachment to the academic system and attachment to the social system (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Stage, 1989). Universities are exploring new options to reduce attrition rates, especially for first-year students. Specifically, some universities are implementing recreation-based activities and looking to the social benefits of leisure to provide a unique opportunity for students. Research has suggested there are benefits of leisure, but that it is important to understand why people are choosing to participate in particular activities. As stated earlier, there are two research questions driving this investigation. First, is there a difference in Recreation Experience Preference Scales

scores based on demographics? Second, is there a difference in Recreation Experience Preference Scales scores based on the type of event the participant chose to attend?

The alpha selected for this study is $P < (.05)$. My hypotheses are:

- Hypothesis 1

H_0 - There is no difference in Recreation Experience Preference scales scores based on demographics (sex, age, number of semesters at the university, self-reported approximate GPA, self-reported race and ethnicity, and college).

H_1 – There is a difference in Recreation Experience Preference scales scores based on demographics (sex, age, number of semesters at the university, self-reported approximate GPA, self-reported race and ethnicity, and college).

- Hypothesis 2

H_0 - There is no difference in Recreation Experience Preference scales scores based on type of event (indoor climbing experience, challenge course experience, and overnight camping experience).

H_1 – There is a difference in Recreation Experience Preference scales scores based on type of event (indoor climbing experience, challenge course experience, and overnight camping experience)

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to investigate the recreation experience preferences of first-year students at Oklahoma State University. Furthermore, this study investigates whether those preferences are linked to demographics or the type of event attended by the first-year student. The purpose of this literature review is to examine previous studies related to retention, leisure, and Recreation Experience Preference scales in order to understand better where this proposed study begins and how it could add to the existing body of knowledge. The review begins with a discussion of the problem of retention in higher education. A problem facing many universities, this issue has been thoroughly examined, providing both an opportunity to learn and to develop new research ideas. The next section addresses the benefits of leisure. Leisure is another concept that has been well studied, but as culture and preferences change, researchers constantly have a novel avenue for new research in this area. At this point, there is a review of the ways leisure is already being used to increase retention at universities. Next, there is an examination of the literature on leisure motivation and the literature related to Recreation Experience Preference Scales. Finally, the review of the literature concludes with a brief summary of topics discussed and how they relate to the problem and focus of the study.

Retention

Tinto (1987) reported that in 1986, of the nearly 2.8 million who were entering higher education for the first time, 1.6 million would “leave their first institution without receiving a degree” (p. 1). Little has changed in 24 years. Retention of students is a problem that still plagues universities. In 2010, ACT (2010) reported first- to second-year retention rates for four-year institutions were 68.7% for private schools and 67.6% for public schools. Therefore, on average, four-year universities are losing over 30% of their students between their first and second years. Low retention rates do not only reflect poorly on the welfare of students, but also negatively effect campus image, institutional budgets, and low rankings in college guidebooks (Reisburg, 1999).

Tinto (1987) explains that while events and dispositions prior to a higher education experience may influence whether students depart before earning their degree, the experience a student has at an institution is, in most cases, more important. Specifically, he describes that experience as contingent on “the quality of individual interactions with other members of the institution following entry and on the individual’s perception of the degree to which those experiences meet his/her needs and interests” (p.47). Tinto further specifies four situations or events that stand out as leading to departure: adjustment, difficulty, incongruence, and isolation. Tinto separates universities into two systems. The academic system is concerned with the formal education of the students, and the social system is focused on the “daily life and personal needs” of students (p.106). Ultimately, Tinto suggests that in order for continued persistence to occur, some degree of integration into both systems must occur (Tinto, 1987; Tinto 1998). In the development of Tinto’s (1987) model, research has continued to support the

concept that students are more likely to persist if they are integrated either academically or socially (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980) and may be even more successful if they are integrated in both forms (Stage, 1989).

In addition to integration, some studies have found that there are demographics related to attrition rates. Freeman, Hall, and Bresciani (2007) investigated why students have thoughts, talk to someone about, or take steps to leave a university. They found that in their sample, females were more likely to think about, talk to someone about, or take steps to leave a university. Lang (2001/2002) investigated “student retention in higher education from conceptual and programmatic perspectives” (p. 218). He paid special attention to retention of minority students, considering them to be at significant risk for attrition.

Tinto (1998) reported that nearly half of all students who are not retained leave after their first-year, so involvement or integration (academic and social) is most important during the first-year. This information suggests that universities have a difficult task of integrating students in a short period of time. However, the knowledge of the importance of integration in the first-year empowers universities to focus their academic and social communities toward experiences that encourage involvement of their freshmen.

Leisure

For the purpose of this study, leisure will be defined as “The state of mind necessary for an individual to participate in recreational activities of their choice during time that is free from other obligations where meaning is derived from the experience itself” (Hutson, 2007, p. 3). In his essay “Management of Public Outdoor Recreation and

Related Amenity Resources for the Benefits they Provide,” Driver (1999) began his section on the benefits of leisure by stating, “While it would be desirable to focus only on the benefits of outdoor recreation, that is impossible. Such an attempt would be subjective, speculative, and overly qualitative because there are few benefits of leisure that, when taken singly, can be attributed to a particular recreational setting” (p. 4). As the first-year students participate in these outdoor oriented experiences, they are participating in outdoor recreation. For that reason, the benefits of leisure must be discussed.

The benefits of leisure have been studied for decades. Coleman and Iso-Ahola (1993) concluded that leisure contributes to health by helping manage stressful life events. They propose two mediating factors: “(1) companionships and friendships and perceived social support associated with leisure participation, and (2) leisure generated self-determination dispositions” (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993, p. 121). Tinsley and Eldredge (1995) found additional psychological benefits of leisure concluding, “leisure activities have been shown to be an important source of need gratification” (p. 131). The findings of Tinsley and Eldredge (1995) support earlier findings that leisure affects not only the mental health, but also the physical health of individuals. Driver (1999) outlined three types of leisure benefits defined by the developers of the BBM system:

- A change in the condition of individuals, groups of individuals that is viewed as more desirable than the previously existing condition.
- The maintenance of a desired condition and therefore the prevention of an unwanted condition.
- The realization of a satisfying psychological recreation experience (p.4).

The literature about leisure is vast and varied, but it is important to have a general understanding of some of the basic benefits of leisure as a way to better investigate the problem and focus of this study. An additional aspect of leisure research relevant to this study is that of sex. Henderson (1994) reported, “aspects of values/entitlement, benefits/outcomes, containers/opportunities, negotiated constraints and life situations as dimensions for interpreting meaning for both women and men are necessary for understanding leisure within a gendered society” (p. 6).

Research has shown that there are significant benefits of leisure. More recently, leisure and its associated benefits are being used to aid in orientation and retention. According to Bell, Holmes and Williams (2010) a number of institutions are using outdoor orientation programs (OOPs) that include adventure experiences and sometimes participation in one or more overnight event in a wilderness setting. These programs are most commonly seen at four-year universities in the United States. Bell (2006) used Tinto’s concept of social integration as a basis to conclude, “One of the key tasks of transitioning to college life is recreating or developing healthy and productive social support systems in a new environment” (p.147). It seems that many of these programs strive to use leisure and recreation to do just that. Bell (2006) studied outdoor orientation programs at Harvard and Princeton and found that the participants of these programs were connected with the development of social support on campus. While Bell’s research cannot yet conclude a causal relationship between these outdoor orientation programs and social support development, they suggest that it could be an explanation for the connection. However, Austin, Martin, Mittelstaedt, Schanning, and Ogle (2009) found

that not only did participants from an outdoor orientation program perceive an increase in social benefits, but also in sense of place.

Generally, the literature acknowledges the social benefits of leisure or recreation-oriented programming. For example, Gass, Garvey, and Sugerman (2003) investigated a group of wilderness orientation participants 17 years after they were in the program. The student orientation objectives were: “foster positive peer-group development; develop positive interaction with faculty members; focus attention on career and/or major course of study plans; heighten interest in academics; develop a sense of urgency in being prepared for a positive start to school; and insure that students understood how to match their interests and expectations to university offerings” (p. 39). Their research found that the participants’ reports of how they were affected by the program fell into three themes: “how participants were led to challenge their assumptions of themselves and others”, “how the development of close peer friendships helped with their initial transition to college, as well as how these connections often became the foundation for life-long friendships” and “how the orientation program positively effected their undergraduate education as well as their lives after graduation” (p. 38). Gass, Garvey, and Sugerman (2003) believe that these positive effects were not due just to the participants recreating together before the start of school, but “the interaction of challenging yet supportive outdoor learning experiences with the six student orientation objectives” (p. 39).

Motivation

Motivation is often studied in leisure research because information in this area helps “determine why people engage in leisure behavior in the manner they do, and it assists in understanding the consequences of leisure engagements” (Manfredo, Driver, &

Tarrant, 1996, p. 188). Additionally, research on leisure motivation can assist programmers in determining which program will provide the fewest conflicts and the most benefits for their participants (Manfredo, Driver, & Tarrant, 1996).

Over the years several researchers have studied motivation, with varying interests and results. In a study of adolescents from nine middle schools in Appalachia, Sharp, Caldwell, Graham, and Ridenour (2006) used the *Free Time Motivation Scale for Adolescents* (Baldwin & Caldwell, 2003) and discovered that adolescents become “less motivated, engaged, and interested in their free time activities” as they get older (Sharp, Caldwell, Graham, & Ridenour, 2006, p. 368). Fawcett, Garton, and Dandy (2009) used a modified version of the *Free Time Motivation Scale for Adolescents* (Baldwin & Caldwell, 2003) in another study of adolescents in Perth, Australia. Fawcett, Garton, and Dandy (2009) found that adolescents “most commonly attributed their involvement in structured leisure activities to intrinsic motivation” (p. 179). They also found sex differences in the adolescent’s interest during free time with males reporting greater interest than females. Bergin (1992) looked at the reciprocal relationship between high school students’ school activities and their leisure activities and motivations, in an attempt to explain the link between leisure activities and academic achievement. He found that leisure activities variables weakly predicted school achievement. The study suggested that there was a modest relationship between academic achievement and leisure activities, but “may not reflect the full strength of the underlying relationship” (p. 237). Bergin (1992) suggested further research in the area.

Recreation Experience Preference Scales

This study will utilize the Recreation Experience Preference (REP) Scales (Driver, 1983). Driver (1983) explained that these scales were developed to “measure the degree of satisfaction realized from the psychological experiences” and “perceived importance of the experiences” in first-time users who are measured after participation in the experience (p. 9). Manfreda, Driver, and Tarrant (1996) explained further that the REP scales are “linked, theoretically to the experiential approach and are intended to measure the types of psychological goal states desired by recreationists” (p.204). Manfreda et al. (1996) explained the process through which the REP Scales were developed, considering content validity and reliability. With regard to content validity they reported that to “ensure a basis in psychological theory and to achieve content validity, items were identified by reviewing the personality trait and motivation literature to determine the types of needs and motivations that might influence recreation” (p. 191). Driver, Tinsley, and Manfreda (1991) detailed that the “rule used in scale construction was to ensure that the average inter-item correlation was .4 or greater and that Cronbach’s alpha, a reliability measure that is theoretically equivalent to all possible split half measures, be .60 or greater” (as cited in Manfreda, Driver, &Tarrant, 1996).

Skar, Odden, and Vistad (2008) used the REP Scales to investigate the motivation for mountain biking in Norway. They modified the scales to incorporate only those that were relevant to their activity as well as changed some of the language to make it specific to mountain biking and found that the internal reliability of the factors was still satisfactory (p. 40).

Summary

Research has shown that retention is a common and enduring issue for universities in the United States. As universities continue to try to find solutions to this issue, researchers examine and explain why and how attrition occurs. One way that universities are combating early departure is through outdoor orientation programs. Since there are known mental and physical benefits to leisure, there is a reasonable expectation that these programs will help students become more socially integrated into the university. Research completed on at least two university programs of this nature suggests that this may be true. However, students self-select to participate in these programs. Who is choosing to participate in these kinds of events and what is encouraging them come? The REP scales will be especially useful in this research as we investigate the mindset and goals of first-year students who participate in recreation-based activities. Literature on retention and leisure both show differences based on demographics. This study's investigation into how demographics may be linked to the REP scales will add to the body of knowledge on leisure, retention, and REP scales.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This section is divided into four subsections covering the following topics: the subjects for this study and a discussion of the population from which they were drawn and how, the instrument that will be used for this study, the research design, and, finally, the procedure.

Participants

The participants in this study will be a sample of first-year students enrolled at Oklahoma State University (OSU). The university from which the sample will be selected has roughly 20,000 undergraduate students and 8,000 graduate students. OSU is historically an agricultural college and is located in a relatively small city in central Oklahoma. The U.S. Census Bureau (2011) found in 2010 that the population of this home city was about 45,688 people. The university is the largest employer in the community, but the town could still be described as having a “rural” feel.

According to Oklahoma State University Institutional Research Information Management (2010) there were 3,554 freshmen at OSU for the fall 2010 semester. Table 2.1 shows the demographic break down of males and females that were new freshmen in the fall 2010 semester. This researcher notes the discrepancy between the number of total

students. This researcher also acknowledges that this data is not consistent with the way the U.S. Census Bureau differentiates between race and ethnicity. This is the data as OSU reported it.

Table 2.1 Demographic Characteristics of Fall 2010 OSU Freshmen

	Female	Male
White	1,399	1,302
African American	100	100
Native American	213	166
Hispanic	49	43
Asian	45	40
International	23	39
Total	1,829	1,690

The sample is a convenient, purposive sample. The criteria for individuals to be included in this sample are:

- Participants must be first-year students at Oklahoma State University
- Participants must have chosen to participate in freshman-centered, recreation based programs offered by OSU Outdoor Adventure.

After completion of the event, the participants will be asked to participate in the study. There will be a census of all participants, but participation will be voluntary.

Instruments

The focus of this study is to examine the perceived importance of experiences according to college freshmen that participated in first-year-student centered recreation-based programming at OSU. As previously stated in this proposal, the REP Scales (Driver 1983) will be used because of their well-established efficacy in determining perceived importance. Based on their review of other uses of the REP scales, Skar,

Odden, and Vistad (2008) report that the REP Scales offer “reasonable validity and reliability” (p.19). However, the scales have not been used yet to investigate the perceived importance of freshman-centered recreation experiences. This study’s focus on these new kinds of freshman-centered experiences will add to the body of knowledge in retention and leisure.

The REP Scales provided by Driver (1983) are made up of 21 domains, which are a combination of scales (some domains include one scale; some domains include as many as seven scales). For this study, some scales have been eliminated based on their irrelevant nature to the activities being studied. The researcher consulted with a jury of three experts to decide that making changes was appropriate without harming the validity or reliability of the scales. From the scales that were selected, the two core items were used resulting in 16 domains and 33 scales with two core items each. The items had a response scale ranging from 1 (not at all important to me) to 5 (very important to me).

In addition to the scales, the questionnaire will include a request for basic demographic information (i.e. sex, age, number of semesters at the university, approximate GPA, ethnicity, college, and whether or not they are planning to continue to attend the university in the fall). Names were not included on the questionnaires as they are not necessary to the design of the study.

Research Design

The design of this study is descriptive in nature as it describes REP scales scores based on demographics or event type of first-year college students who participate in freshman-centered recreation experiences. First-year students who participate in freshman-centered recreation events will be asked to complete a questionnaire after the

conclusion of the event. The questionnaire will include the REP scales and questions about basic demographic information. By completing the questionnaire, the participants will give their assent to be included in the research. Names will not be included with the data at any time.

- Independent Variables:

Demographics - sex, age, number of semesters at the university, approximate GPA, ethnicity, and college.

Event Type - indoor climbing experience, challenge course experience, and overnight camping experience.

- Dependent Variable:

Recreation Experience Preference Scales scores

Procedure

Since this study involves human subjects, the required first step was to get IRB approval through Oklahoma State University. There were three different freshmen-centered, recreation-based events hosted by Outdoor Adventure (a division of Campus Recreation). First-year students who participated in any of these three events were invited to complete the survey.

- April 8, 2011: This was an overnight camping event held on university property off campus and about eight miles outside of town. This event was free and offered only to freshmen. Outdoor Adventure did not provide transportation to the property. The event began with “ice-breakers” and getting-to-know-you games, and then moved forward by giving the participants an opportunity to climb the outdoor climbing wall up to the zipline deck and then zip down. The participants worked as a group or in

pairs during this portion of the event. After every participant that opted to experience the zipline completed that task, the participants collected their gear, loaded into the trailer and took a slow and scenic ride down to the edge of the lake. This was their campsite for the evening. They ate dinner there (cooked by their facilitators) then took canoes out onto the lake in the moonlight. After canoeing, they wrapped up the evening by cooking s'mores and talking around a campfire, then sleeping in tents for the evening. The next morning, they began bright and early with breakfast and packing up camp. They were driven back up to their cars. The investigator met them at the parking lot and invited them to take the survey before they leave. This event was highly accessible to students with time or monetary inhibitors.

- April 20, 2011: This event was called “Bring a Freshman Night” at the indoor climbing wall. Anyone was invited to come and climb for free during a 3-hour period in the evening, but they had to be a freshman or bring a freshman with them. This event was less structured. An OA employee was scheduled to meet participants, help them fill out paperwork and get them the necessary gear. If one member of the pair was certified to belay at the Outdoor Adventure (OA) climbing gym, they were able to work independently, but encouraged to help belay others. If neither one was certified, they were either belayed by an OA employee or encouraged to join a group which had a certified belayer. As participants were taking off harnesses and preparing to leave, the investigator and another OA employee, who was trained by the investigator, invited them to fill out the questionnaire. Participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire after they completed the event.

- April 30, 2011: The final event was similar to the climbing wall event, except it occurred at the challenge course. Anyone was invited to attend, but they were required to sign-up as pairs and at least one of the pair must be a freshman. This was the only event that cost money; however, it was a highly reduced rate (\$25/pair). This event began with “ice-breakers” and get-to-know-you games, and then moved into games that involved more problem solving and critical thinking. The difficulty of the tasks increased as the participants worked through low ropes elements. They culminated their day with an experience on the high ropes course, working in pairs to complete elements in the air and then ziplining down. At the end of the day, they debriefed with their facilitators. After debriefing the activity with the facilitators, the investigator met the participants and invited them to participate in the study before they left.

All of the events were accessible for participants with disabilities. If there were any blind participants who wished to complete the questionnaire, the researcher planned to read the questions to the participant. Any questionnaires filled out by non-first-year students were discarded. Data was stored in the locked office of the thesis advisor. After the completion of the research, the raw data will be destroyed.

Data Analysis

This study used a variety of data analyses. For the demographic data, descriptive statistics were calculated as well as frequencies. A rank order table was computed for the REP scale scores. Additionally, this study used non-parametric statistic analysis conducted on PASW statistic software. Data were analyzed as non-parametric because it does not meet the parameters for parametric data. The predetermined alpha for this study

was set at $P < (.05)$. The specific data analysis that was used is the Mann-Whitney U. The Mann-Whitney U is similar to parametrically comparing two independent samples. Missing or incomplete data will be replaced with the group average to minimize any variance.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Program

This study investigated the recreation preferences among participants of freshmen-centered, recreation-based programs facilitated by Oklahoma State University Outdoor Adventure. The program occurred in late spring 2011 and was designed for students at or near the end of their first-year of collegiate enrollment.

Marketing

Outdoor Adventure employees marketed the programs in the same way they market their other programs. This included flyers on campus, Outdoor Adventure's webpage on Oklahoma State University's site, Outdoor Adventure's Facebook page, chalkboards at the Colvin Recreation Center on campus, and oral advertisement.

Content and Timeline

- April 8, 2011: Freshman only free overnight camping trip

This event was held on university lake property off campus. It began at 6:00 pm and lasted until 9:30 am the next morning. The participants first played games to get to know each other and the leaders, then had an opportunity to go off a zipline on the challenge course. They moved from the challenge course to the lakeside camping area by

loading all their equipment onto a trailer pulled by a tractor and took a ride down to the lake. They ate dinner at their campsite, and then had an opportunity to go canoeing out on the lake in the moonlight. They camped out in tents by the lake. Breakfast was also cooked at the campsite the next morning. After breakfast was over, they rode the trailer back up to the parking lot.

- April 20, 2011: “Bring a Freshman Night” at the indoor climbing wall

This event was held from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm at the Outdoor Adventure climbing wall at the Colvin Center. Anyone was invited to come and climb for free if they brought an OSU freshman with them. Outdoor Adventure provided belayers.

- April 30, 2011: “Bring a Freshman Day” at the challenge course

This event was a full day event from 9:00 am to about 3:00 pm. Anyone was invited to attend and go through the challenge course if they brought a freshman with them. The price was \$25 per pair. The day began with games and initiatives to give everyone a chance to get to know each other. Then, they moved forward to low ropes elements that require a little more problem solving and critical thinking. After breaking for lunch, the participants had an opportunity to get up onto the high ropes elements and zipline down.

Application of Instrument

The instrument was comprised of a modified version of the Recreation Experience Preference Scales provided in Driver (1983) and questions about the participants’ demographic information. The instrument was given to participants upon completion of the event if they chose to participate in the study. Completion of the questionnaire was entirely on a volunteer basis and took only about 10 minutes.

Participants were instructed to answer the questions in reference to the event in which they had just participated.

Participants

There were a total of 13 participants in the three programs and 11 participants filled out the questionnaire. Seven participants attended the first event (the overnight camping trip) and six of them completed the questionnaire. The participant who did not complete the questionnaire left early and did not have the opportunity to participate in the study. No one attended the second event, which was the free climbing event. Six participants attended the day on the challenge course (the third event) and all of them filled out the questionnaire. However, since that event was open to anyone, there were two questionnaires filled out by non-first-year students, so their questionnaires were not included in the study. There were a few questions left unanswered, those answers were replaced with averages generated by PAWS in order to minimize variance.

All of the participants were females, with ages ranging from 18 to 21. The majority of the participants reported that they are white and two reported that they are of Hispanic origin. Full detail on the demographics of the respondents is shown in Table 4.1. Two participants had attended another college or university prior to their current attendance at OSU. The self-reported, estimated GPAs of the participants ranged from 2.5 to 4.0 and the students came from a variety of colleges within the university. Complete detail on the educational characteristics of the respondents is shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Factor	Detail	Event One (n = 6)	Event Three (n = 4)
Sex	Male	0	0
	Female	6	4
Race	Mixed Race	1	0
	Some other race	0	1
	White	5	3
Ethnicity	Hispanic Origin	1	1
Age	18 years	1	1
	19 years	4	2
	20 years	1	0
	21 years	0	1

Table 4.2 Educational Characteristics of Participants

Factor	Detail	Event One (n = 6)	Event Three (n = 4)
Completed Semesters at OSU	1	5	3
	2	1	1
Attended Another College or University	Yes	1	1
	No	5	3
GPA	3.5 to 4.0	4	3
	3.0 to 3.5	1	1
	2.5 to 3.0	1	0
College	Arts and Sciences	1	0
	Education	1	1
	Engineering, Architecture, and Technology	2	0
	Human Environmental Sciences	1	1
	Spears School of Business	1	2

Findings

Data were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U. The Mann-Whitney U is a non-parametric test that is similar to parametrically comparing two independent samples. Due to limited sample size and lack of variance on the individual factors, I did not calculate the Mann-Whitney U for demographic information.

Table 4.3 Mann-Whitney U Descriptive Statistics

	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Sum	10	232.49	29.463	174	275

Table 4.4 Mann-Whitney U Ranks

	Event	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Sum	1	6	5.75	34.50
	3	4	5.13	20.50
Total		10		

Table 4.5 Mann-Whitney U Test Statistics

	Sum
Mann-Whitney U	10.500
Significance	.748

The alpha selected for this study is $P < (.05)$

Two hypotheses were addressed in this study, for which the Recreation Experience Preference Scales were an appropriate instrument to determine possible differences among first-year students following participation in the program described earlier.

The alpha selected for this study was $P < (.05)$. With an actual P Value equal to .748, statistical significance was not found. A standard deviation of 29.463 for a minimum summed score of 174 and a maximum summed score of 275 is relatively small.

- Hypothesis 1: There was no statistically significant difference in Recreation Experience Preference Scales scores based on demographics (sex, age, number of semesters at the university, self-reported approximate GPA, self-reported race and ethnicity, and college); therefore the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.
- Hypothesis 2: There was no statistically significant difference in Recreation Experience Preference Scales based on type of event (indoor climbing experience, challenge course experience, and overnight camping experience); therefore the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

While neither null hypothesis could be rejected, the data showed several interesting and meaningful patterns that were not statistically significant. These patterns had been investigated in prior studies reported in related literature. As a result, I chose to further investigate these patterns.

Summary of Data

Skar, Odden, and Vistad (2008) used the REP Scales to investigate mountain bikers in Norway. They calculated the mean score given for each statement and ranked them. Using this same pattern rational, the mean score for each statement in this study was calculated. The mean is based on scores given on a one to five scale. Participants were instructed that a score of one indicates not at all important and five indicates very important. Below each statement is the domain to which the statement belongs.

Table 4.6 presents the eleven statements with the lowest mean scores. This is an indication that these statements represent the less important preferences in recreation experience among the respondents.

Table 4.6 Statements with Lowest Mean Scores

	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
8. To be alone Domain: Escape Physical Pressure	1.8	.79
29. To avoid the unexpected Domain: Risk Reduction	2.0	1.05
54. To feel isolated Domain: Escape Physical Pressure	2.0	.82
27. To rest physically Domain: Physical Rest	2.1	1.60
52. To control things Domain: Autonomy/Leadership	2.2	1.03
45. To be your own boss Domain: Autonomy/Leadership	2.5	.85
53. To have others think highly of you for doing it Domain: Achievement/Stimulation	2.5	1.65
66. To know others are near by Domain: Risk Reduction	2.5	.97
12. To be sure of what will happen to you Domain: Risk Reduction	2.6	.96
9. To observe other people in the area Domain: New People	2.6	1.17
61. To relax physically Domain: Physical Rest	2.6	1.26

Among these less important preferences, several of the statements represent particular domains as defined by Driver. Three statements are associated with the “Risk Reduction” domain. Two of the statements are from the “Escape Physical Pressure” domain. Two additional statements are from the “Autonomy/Leadership” domain.

In the same manner, Table 4.7 presents the ten statements with the highest mean scores. This is an indication that these statements represent the most important preferences in recreation experiences among these respondents.

Table 4.7 Statements with Highest Mean Score

	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
31. To become better at it Domain: Achievement/Stimulation	4.4	.52
32. To have thrills Domain: Achievement/Stimulation	4.4	.70
43. To get away from the usual demands of life Domain: Escape Personal-Social Pressures	4.4.	.70
22. To talk to new and varied people Domain: New People	4.5	.71
25. To experience excitement Domain: Achievement/Stimulation	4.5	.53
13. To develop your knowledge of things here Domain: Learning	4.6	.52
28. To discover something new Domain: Learning	4.6	.52
42. To learn what you are capable of Domain: Achievement/Stimulation	4.6	.70
16. To have a change from everyday life Domain: Escape Personal-Social Pressures	4.7	.48
65. To experience new and different things Domain: Learning	4.8	.42

As with the preference items showing low means, these preferences showing higher importance all represent particular domains as described by Driver. Four of the statements represent the “Achievement/Stimulation” domain, while three other statements represent the “Learning” domain.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The scope and purpose of this study were the recreation preferences of first-year students at Oklahoma State University. The alpha value for this study was set at $P < (.05)$. The significance for the Mann-Whitney U was .748, which is much higher than what could be considered statistically significant.

While there was no statistical significance to support the hypothesis that there were differences in REP Scales scores based on event or demographic information, there were interesting results. By ranking the mean scores of each item, one can gather insight as to which items may be more or less important to this sample of students. There was not a lot of consistency between participants on which items were not important; however, there were three domains that were repeated: Escape Physical Pressure, Risk Reduction, and Autonomy/Leadership. An example of an item from the Escape Physical Pressure domain is “to be alone”. Since these events were advertised as an opportunity to meet other freshmen, it makes sense that those who attended did not place importance on being alone. Tinto (1987) reported that isolation was an event or situation that leads to departure from the institution. An example of an item from the Risk Reduction domain is “to be sure of what will happen to you”. In general, outdoor recreation activities such as canoeing, camping, and ziplining have high levels of perceived risk. Again, it makes

sense that students who chose to attend these programs did not place importance on reducing risk, and perhaps considered themselves adventurous. The domain that was surprising to find has two items on the lower end of the rank is Autonomy/Leadership. An example of an item from this domain is, “To control things”. The way this statement is written, it seems similar to statements from the Risk Reduction domain. It is a surprise to find this domain is unimportant to a sample of students who are becoming quite autonomous, as many of them have left home for the first time. However, this could also be the exact reason it is unimportant to them. These students are “their own boss” most of the time. Since this could be a new role for them, perhaps they look for opportunities to take a break and not be in charge. Knowing this is important for programming for first-year students. The implications are that they do not want programming that requires them to be in charge or on the spot. They want to be a part of a group of participants.

There were noteworthy themes among the items with the highest mean scores. There were four items with high mean scores that came from the Achievement/Stimulation domain, three items from the Learning domain, and two items from Escape Personal-Social Pressures. An example of an item from the Escape Personal-Social Pressures domain is “to have a change from everyday life”. This seems to support the idea that this sample was adventurous and interested in something new, which is similar to their placing low importance on Risk Reduction. An example of an item from the Learning domain is “to discover something new”, which continues to support that idea. Simply the fact that these students signed up for this activity shows that they may be socially integrating into the university, or looking for opportunities to socially integrate. Additionally, the fact that they placed importance on learning may speak to

how they are integrating academically into the university. Finally, an example of an item from the Achievement/Stimulation domain is “to experience excitement”, which continues to describe this sample as one who seeks out these experiences as something fun and new.

Recommendations

This study was an excellent start into investigating the recreation preferences of first-year students. In the future, when replicating this study, the researcher should consider the timing of the events and how it coincides with the academic calendar. Additionally, multiple schools should be included in order to increase the size and diversity of the sample.

Marketing for these programs was a unique challenge. While the low participation may be a result of poor timing, it also may indicate that the marketing did not work. The marketing methods that work for other OA programs (usually all spring programs are full) simply may not work for the freshman population. Perhaps more work with freshmen housing and freshmen organizations would be more effective. Ultimately, getting the students at risk for attrition to participate in these events might prove to be the biggest challenge for program directors.

The REP Scales were a great instrument for application in this research setting. It was easy to administer and there were very few questions about how to fill it out.

To expand on this study, I recommend a longitudinal study that follows students who participate in these programs. These students could be followed in their next semester of enrollment, upon graduation, or if they leave the university before graduating. Information about whether or not they continue to participate in similar

programs, their cumulative GPA, and if they graduate from the university could be very helpful in finding how freshmen-based, outdoor oriented programming could increase retention rates. Additionally, studies of multiple years or multiple generations may help researchers begin to identify trends or a lack thereof within this population.

Finally, since this study indicates that this population perceives learning and achievement/stimulation to be important, programming and marketing should focus on the learning and achievement/stimulating opportunities available through these programs.

REFERENCES

References marked with an asterisk indicate studies included in the meta-analysis.

ACT, Inc. (2010). *National collegiate retention and persistence to degree rates*.

Retrieved from http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/retain_2010.pdf

Austin, M.L., Martin, B., Mittelstaedt, R., Schanning, K., & Ogle, D. (2009). Outdoor orientation program effects: Sense of place and social benefits. *The Journal of Experiential Education* 31(3), 435-439.

Bell, B.J. (2006). Wilderness orientation: Exploring the relationship between college preorientation programs and social support. *Journal of Experiential Education* 29(2), 145-167.

Bell, B.J., Holmes, M.R., & Williams, B.G. (2010). A census of outdoor orientation programs at four-year colleges in the United States. *Journal of Experiential Education* 33(1), 1-18.

Bergin, D.A. (1992). Leisure activity, motivation, and academic achievement in high school students. *Journal of Leisure Research* 24(3), 225-239.

Carlson, S. A., Fulton, J. E., Lee, S. M., Maynard, L. M., Brown, D. R., Kohl III, H. W., & Dietz, W. H. (2008). Physical education and academic achievement in elementary school: Data from the early childhood longitudinal study. *American Journal of Public Health*, 98(4), 721-727. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2007.117176

- Chomitz, V. R., Slining, M. M., McGowan, R. J., Mitchell, S. E., Dawson, G. F., & Hacker, K. A. (2009). Is there a relationship between physical fitness and academic achievement? Positive results from public school children in the northeastern United States. *Journal of School Health, 79*(1), 30-37.
doi:10.1111/j.1746-1561.2008.00371.x
- Coleman, D., & Iso-Ahola, S. (1993). Leisure and health: The role of social support and self-determination. *Journal of Leisure Research, 25*(2), 111-28. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ467954&site=ehost-live>
- Cordell, H.K. (1999). *Outdoor Recreation in American Life: A National Assessment of Demand and Supply Trends*. United States: Sagamore Publishing.
- * Driver, B.L. (1999). Management of public outdoor recreation and related amenity resources for the benefits they provide.
- Douglass, R.W. (1969). *Forest Recreation*. Oxford, England: Pergamon Press Inc.
- Driver, B.L. (1983). Master list of items for recreation experience preferences scales and domains. Unpublished document. USDA Forest Service, Fort Collins, CO: Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station.
- Henderson, K. A. (1994). Broadening an understanding of women, gender, and leisure. *Journal of Leisure Research 26*(1), 1-7.
- Hutson, G. (2007). Perceptions of outdoor recreation professionals toward place meanings in natural environments: A Q-method inquiry. (Ph.D., Oklahoma State University). , 133. Retrieved from [http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1367835531&Fmt=7&clientId=4653&RQT=309&VName=PQD.\(3274540](http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1367835531&Fmt=7&clientId=4653&RQT=309&VName=PQD.(3274540)

- Fawcett, L.M., Garton, A.F. & Dandy, J. (2009). Role of motivation, self-efficacy and parent support in adolescent structured leisure activity participation. *Australian Journal of Psychology* 61(3), 175-182.
- Freeman, J.P., Hall, E.E., & Bresciani, M.J. (2007). What leads students to have thoughts, talk to someone about, and take steps to leave their institution?. *College Student Journal*, 41(4 Pt A), 755-770.
- Gass, G.A., Garvey, D.E., & Sugerman, D.A. (2003). The long term effects of a first-year student wilderness orientation program. *The Journal of Experiential Education* 26(1), 34-40.
- Lang, M. (2001/2002). Student retention in higher education: Some conceptual and programmatic perspectives. *Journal of College Student Retention* 3(3), 217-229.
- Manfredo, M.J., Driver, B.L., & Tarrant, M.A. (1996). Measuring leisure motivation: A meta-analysis of the recreation experience preference scales. *Journal of Leisure Research* 28(3), 188-213.
- Oklahoma State University Institutional Research Information Management (2010). Present Student Body. Retrieved from <http://vpaf.okstate.edu/irim/StudentProfile/2010/PDF/2010PresentStudentBody.pdf>
- Pascarella, E.T. & Terenzini, P.T. (1980). Predicting freshman persistence and voluntary dropout decisions from a theoretical model. *The Journal of Higher Education* 51(1), 60-75.
- Pearson, J., Crissey, S., & Riegle-Crumb, C. (2009). Gendered fields: Sports and advanced course taking in high school. *Sex Roles*, 61(7), 519-535.
- doi:10.1007/s11199-009-9647-z

- Peck, S. C., Roeser, R. W., Zarrett, N., & Eccles, J. S. (2008). Exploring the roles of extracurricular activity quantity and quality in the educational resilience of vulnerable adolescents: Variable- and pattern-centered approaches. *Journal of Social Issues, 64*(1), 135-156. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4560.2008.00552.x
- Reisburg, L. (1999). Colleges struggle to keep would-be dropouts enrolled. *The Chronicle of Higher Education 46*(7), A54-A56.
- Sharp, E.H., Caldwell, L.L., Graham, J.W., & Ridenour, T.A. (2006). Individual motivation and parental influence on adolescents' experiences of interest in free time: A longitudinal examination. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence 35*(3), 359-372.
- Skar, M., Odden, A., & Vistad, O.I. (2008). Motivation for mountain biking in Norway: Change and stability in late-modern outdoor recreation. *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift-Norwegian Journal of Geography 62*, 36-45.
- Stage, F. K. (1989). Reciprocal effects between the academic and social integration of college students. *Research in Higher Education 30*(5), 517-530.
- Tinsley, H. E. A., & Eldredge, B. D. (1995). Psychological benefits of leisure participation: A taxonomy of leisure activities based on their need-gratifying properties. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 42*(2), 123-32. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ507997&site=ehost-live>
- Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (1998). Colleges as communities: Taking research on student persistence seriously. *The Review of Higher Education* 21(2), 167-177.

U. S. Census Bureau (2011). U.S. Census Bureau delivers Oklahoma's 2010 census population totals, including first look at race and Hispanic origin data for legislative redistricting. Retrieved from <http://2010.census.gov/news/releases/operations/cb11-cn33.html>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

IRB Approval

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Friday, April 08, 2011
IRB Application No ED1193
Proposal Title: Recreation Experience Preference Among First-Year College Students
Reviewed and Exempt
Processed as:

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 4/7/2012

Principal
Investigator(s):

Emily A. McKenzie	Lowell Caneday
843 W. Moore Ave.	180 Colvin Center
Stillwater, OK 74075	Stillwater, OK 74075

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

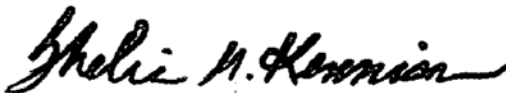
The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B

Instrument

Participant Information Sheet

First-year students are of particular importance to universities. Many universities offer special programs for first-year students. OSU Outdoor Adventure has started a Freshman Series. This survey is designed to gather information about the first-year students who choose to participate in this style of program. As a participant, your opinions and input are valuable.

The principal investigator for this survey of first-year students who participated in OSU Outdoor Adventure's Freshman Series is Emily McKenzie, a graduate student at Oklahoma State University under the guidance of Lowell Caneday, Ph.D., a Regents Professor at OSU. We request that you take approximately fifteen (15) minutes to answer a few questions about your experience in Outdoor Adventure's Freshman Series. Your responses to this questionnaire will benefit the process of future programming for first-year students, providing better and more accurate information regarding the unique experiences of first-year students who choose to participate in these recreation-based activities.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. No incentives are provided. You are free to decline to participate and may stop or withdraw from the survey at any time. It is assumed that those who agree to proceed have implied consent and will respond to a set of questions. If you choose to participate, your submitted information will remain strictly confidential. There are no known risks associated with this survey that are greater than those ordinarily encountered in every day life. Your responses to this survey will be saved in a secure office at Oklahoma State University belonging to Dr. Caneday. Your responses are no individual identifiable, but will be reported in aggregate form in the thesis of the principal investigator. The data will be stored for up to one year.

If you have questions about the research survey, you may contact Emily McKenzie (emily.mckenzie@okstate.edu, 405-744-5581) or Dr. Lowell Caneday (lowell.caneday@okstate.edu, 405-744-5503). If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, Dr. Shelia Kennison, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

We request that you indicate the level of importance of each of the following statements. These statements are designed to assess the preferences of first-year students.

Emily McKenzie
Graduate Student
Oklahoma State University

Dr. Lowell Caneday
Thesis Advisor
Oklahoma State University

Please indicate the importance of each statement from 1 'not at all important to me' to 5 'very important to me' by circling the number that best applies to you.

	Not at all important		Neutral		Very important
To be on your own	1	2	3	4	5
To be free to make your own choices	1	2	3	4	5
To be near considerate people	1	2	3	4	5
To develop personal, spiritual values	1	2	3	4	5
To be with people who enjoy the same things you do	1	2	3	4	5
To help release or reduce some built up tensions	1	2	3	4	5
To bring back pleasant memories	1	2	3	4	5
To be alone	1	2	3	4	5
To observe other people in the area	1	2	3	4	5
To be with members of your group	1	2	3	4	5
To help get rid of some clutched-up feelings	1	2	3	4	5
To be sure of what will happen to you	1	2	3	4	5
To develop your knowledge of things here	1	2	3	4	5
To be near others who could help if you need them	1	2	3	4	5
To be creative	1	2	3	4	5
To have a change from everyday life	1	2	3	4	5
To grow and develop spiritually	1	2	3	4	5
To get away from the clutter and racket back home	1	2	3	4	5
To think about your personal values	1	2	3	4	5
To think about who you are	1	2	3	4	5
To keep physically fit	1	2	3	4	5
To talk to new and varied people	1	2	3	4	5
To be in control of things that happen	1	2	3	4	5
To learn more about things here	1	2	3	4	5
To experience excitement	1	2	3	4	5
To give your mind a rest	1	2	3	4	5
To rest physically	1	2	3	4	5
To discover something new	1	2	3	4	5
To avoid the unexpected	1	2	3	4	5
To be close to nature	1	2	3	4	5
To become better at it	1	2	3	4	5
To have thrills	1	2	3	4	5
To feel your independence	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate the importance of each statement from 1 'not at all important to me' to 5 'very important to me' by circling the number that best applies to you.

	Not at all important		Neutral		Very important
To meet other people in the area	1	2	3	4	5
To chance dangerous situations	1	2	3	4	5
To enjoy the smells and sounds of nature	1	2	3	4	5
To develop a sense of self-pride	1	2	3	4	5
To have your mind move at a slower pace	1	2	3	4	5
To have a change from your daily routine	1	2	3	4	5
To do something creative such as sketch, paint, take photographs	1	2	3	4	5
To experience tranquility	1	2	3	4	5
To learn what you are capable of	1	2	3	4	5
To get away from the usual demands of life	1	2	3	4	5
To avoid everyday responsibilities for awhile	1	2	3	4	5
To be your own boss	1	2	3	4	5
To be with people having similar values	1	2	3	4	5
To be with and observe other people using the area	1	2	3	4	5
To test your abilities	1	2	3	4	5
To think about good times you've had in the past	1	2	3	4	5
To experience more elbow room	1	2	3	4	5
To gain a sense of self-confidence	1	2	3	4	5
To control things	1	2	3	4	5
To have others think highly of you for doing it	1	2	3	4	5
To feel isolated	1	2	3	4	5
To experience solitude	1	2	3	4	5
To get exercise	1	2	3	4	5
To show others you can do it	1	2	3	4	5
To develop your skills and abilities	1	2	3	4	5
To be with respectful people	1	2	3	4	5
To get away from noise back home	1	2	3	4	5
To relax physically	1	2	3	4	5
To be with friends	1	2	3	4	5
To take risks	1	2	3	4	5
To be away from crowds of people	1	2	3	4	5
To experience new and different things	1	2	3	4	5
To know others are nearby	1	2	3	4	5

Which Freshman Event did you attend? Place a check mark in the appropriate box on the right.

"Freshman Float" overnight camping trip	
"Bring a Freshman Night" at the climbing wall	
"Bring a Freshman Day" at the challenge course	

Are you a male or female? Place a check mark in the appropriate box on the right.

Male	
Female	

What is your race? Place a check mark in the most appropriate box on the right.

American Indian or Alaska native	
Asian American	
Black or African American	
Mixed Race	
Some other race	
White	

Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin? Place a check mark in the appropriate box on the right.

Yes	
No	

How old are you in years?

How many academic semesters have you completed at Oklahoma State University?

Have you attended another college or university? Place a check mark in the appropriate box on the right.

Yes	
No	

What is your GPA? Place a check mark in the box that best applies to you on the right.

3.5 to 4.0	
3.0 to 3.5	
2.5 to 3.0	
2.0 to 2.5	
1.5 to 2.0	
Less than 1.5	

What college are you in? Place a check mark in the box on the right.

Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources	
Arts and Sciences	
Education	
Engineering, Architecture, and Technology	
Human Environmental Sciences	
Spears School of Business	
Undeclared	

Thank you very much for your participation in this study.

APPENDIX C

Instrument with Frequencies of Responses

Please indicate the importance of each statement from 1 'not at all important to me' to 5 'very important to me' by circling the number that best applies to you.

* indicates that one or more participants chose not to answer this question	Not at all important		Neutral		Very important
To be on your own	1	2	4	3	0
To be free to make your own choices	1	0	5	4	0
To be near considerate people	0	0	0	9	1
To develop personal, spiritual values	0	2	4	3	1
To be with people who enjoy the same things you do	0	0	2	4	4
To help release or reduce some built up tensions	0	1	2	5	2
To bring back pleasant memories	0	1	1	6	2
To be alone	4	4	2	0	0
To observe other people in the area	3	0	5	2	0
To be with members of your group	0	2	2	6	0
To help get rid of some clutched-up feelings	1	4	1	4	0
To be sure of what will happen to you*	1	4	2	2	0
To develop your knowledge of things here	0	0	0	4	6
To be near others who could help if you need them	0	0	3	5	2
To be creative	0	0	3	4	3
To have a change from everyday life	0	0	0	3	7
To grow and develop spiritually	0	4	2	1	3
To get away from the clutter and racket back home	0	1	1	4	4
To think about your personal values	0	2	3	4	1
To think about who you are	0	2	2	5	1
To keep physically fit	0	0	2	4	4
To talk to new and varied people	0	0	2	2	6
To be in control of things that happen	1	2	4	3	0
To learn more about things here	0	0	0	7	3
To experience excitement	0	0	0	5	5
To give your mind a rest	0	1	1	7	1
To rest physically	5	3	0	0	2
To discover something new	0	0	1	2	7
To avoid the unexpected	4	4	2	1	0
To be close to nature	0	0	1	6	3
To become better at it	0	0	0	6	4
To have thrills	0	0	1	4	5
To feel your independence	0	1	3	3	3

Please indicate the importance of each statement from 1 'not at all important to me' to 5 'very important to me' by circling the number that best applies to you.

* indicates that one or more participants chose not to answer this question	Not at all important		Neutral		Very important
To meet other people in the area	0	1	2	4	3
To chance dangerous situations	1	1	2	4	2
To enjoy the smells and sounds of nature	0	0	1	5	4
To develop a sense of self-pride	0	1	3	3	3
To have your mind move at a slower pace	1	4	2	3	0
To have a change from your daily routine	0	0	1	5	4
To do something creative such as sketch, paint, take photographs	0	5	3	1	1
To experience tranquility	0	1	4	3	2
To learn what you are capable of	0	0	0	4	6
To get away from the usual demands of life	0	0	1	4	5
To avoid everyday responsibilities for awhile	0	1	4	1	4
To be your own boss	2	1	7	0	0
To be with people having similar values	2	1	4	1	2
To be with and observe other people using the area	1	2	4	3	0
To test your abilities	0	0	1	6	3
To think about good times you've had in the past	2	2	1	4	1
To experience more elbow room	1	1	3	5	0
To gain a sense of self-confidence	0	1	2	5	2
To control things	3	3	3	1	0
To have others think highly of you for doing it	4	2	1	1	2
To feel isolated	3	4	3	0	0
To experience solitude	2	1	4	2	0
To get exercise	0	1	2	4	3
To show others you can do it	3	1	2	3	1
To develop your skills and abilities	0	0	1	6	3
To be with respectful people	1	0	3	3	3
To get away from noise back home*	0	2	3	2	2
To relax physically	2	3	3	1	1
To be with friends*	0	0	2	6	1
To take risks	0	1	1	5	3
To be away from crowds of people	1	0	5	4	0
To experience new and different things	0	0	0	2	8
To know others are nearby	1	5	2	4	0

APPENDIX D

Jury of Experts

Christine ‘Chris’ Cashel, EdD

- Professor Emeritus from Oklahoma State University
- Noted author and authority in outdoor education
- 30+ years of experience in the field
- Former President of WEA

Scott Jordan, M.S.

- Oklahoma State University Outdoor Adventure Program Director
- Researcher in the field of outdoor education and leisure
- Outdoor Leader Level II WEA Instructor
- LNT Master Educator Trainer
- Former President of WEA
- On the Board of Directors at PRCA

Patrick Lewis, PhD

- At the time of this research, Dr. Lewis was a doctoral candidate at OSU
- Researcher in the field of outdoor education and leisure
- Contracted employee at Outward Bound
- Former Graduate Assistant for OSU Outdoor Adventure
- Former Graduate Teaching Assistant for the Leisure Studies program at OSU
- Certified WEA Outdoor Leader

VITA

Emily Ayers McKenzie

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: RECREATION EXPERIENCE PREFERENCE AMONG FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Major Field: Leisure Studies

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Leisure Studies at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July, 2011.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Science with an emphasis in Child and Family Services at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in 2008.

Experience:

Worked as a Graduate Assistant in a supervisory role over the challenge course and the challenge course facilitators from August 2009 until August 2010, and over local programming from August 2010 until May 2011 at Oklahoma State University Outdoor Adventure, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Worked as a Challenge Course Facilitator from May 2007 until August 2011 at Oklahoma State University Outdoor Adventure, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Worked as a Trip Leader from August 2009 until May 2011 at Oklahoma State University Outdoor Adventure, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Professional Memberships:

Member of the Wilderness Education Association from January 2009 until present.