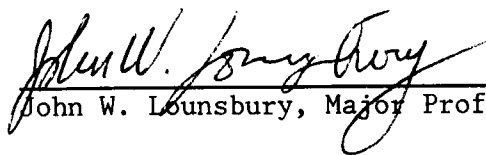
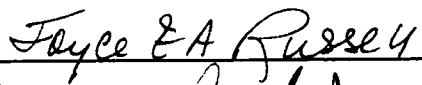
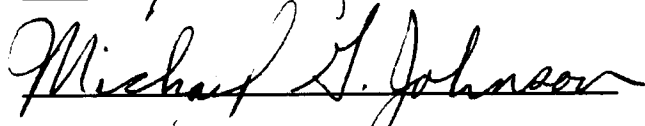


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Cynthia Philippa Golledge-Franz entitled "Vacation Expectations, Evaluations, and Life Satisfaction." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D., with a major in Psychology.


John W. Lounsbury, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:


Accepted for the Council:


Associate Vice Chancellor
and Dean of the Graduate School

VACATION EXPECTATIONS, EVALUATIONS,
AND LIFE SATISFACTION

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Cynthia Philippa Golledge-Franz

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to examine the taking of vacations in American culture. Topics for investigation included people's expectations for their vacations, their subsequent satisfactions, and the contribution of vacations to life satisfaction.

To examine these topics, vacationers were administered a set of two self-report surveys, administered before and after an actual vacation had been taken. Measures on both questionnaires were similar, assessing vacation motivations, vacation satisfactions, characteristics of the vacation, and life satisfaction.

Factor analysis revealed that expectations for the vacation fell into six areas: Social, Intellectual, Stimulus Avoidance, Competence/Mastery, Thrill-seeking, and Work Advantages. When individuals were asked to rate the difference between these anticipated and actual vacation experiences, results showed that degree of discrepancy predicted degree of dissatisfaction with the vacation. Individuals who reported fulfilling their expectations were most satisfied with their overall vacation, while vacationers who did not obtain desired opportunities for intellectual stimulation, thrill-seeking, mastery/competence, and relaxation reported being less pleased with their vacation.

Other manifest aspects of the vacation, such as destination, accommodations, and amount of time available were evaluated by the participant; correlational analyses demonstrated that vacation destination and the activities performed on vacation were most predictive of overall satisfaction with the vacation. The individual also rated the perceived degree of constraint or obligation associated

with these manifest aspects of vacation. Descriptive results indicated that people tended to incorporate a number of constraints and obligations into their vacations, although these were not found to relate significantly to vacation satisfaction.

Vacation satisfaction bore no relationship to satisfaction with family, work, or leisure; it did contribute marginally to overall life satisfaction. Regardless of vacation satisfaction, individual evaluations of recreational opportunities and standard of living improved after vacation, while satisfaction with parental family and with others declined following vacation.

This paper represents one of the few longitudinal, contextually embedded projects involving leisure research. As such, it addresses some anecdotal and experimental hypotheses about the role of vacations in American culture, and poses further questions for investigation. Finally, as an exploratory study, it also provides evidence for the potential of vacations as a topic for further study of human experience.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The current study examined people's expectations for and satisfaction's with vacations, and the contribution vacations made to overall life satisfaction. The need for such a study arises from the observation that, although vacations are a common experience for many Americans, surprisingly little empirical investigation of this topic has been accomplished. Concepts and measures from the field of leisure were used to frame the present research topic within a broader theoretical perspective.

Vacations may be considered a subset within the field of leisure research, which includes the investigation of general leisure activities, needs, motivations, and satisfactions. Although studies which focus specifically upon vacations are few in number (and will be discussed shortly), many of the research questions concerning vacations have common theoretical grounding in the broader field of leisure research. The field of leisure research itself has grown dramatically in the last 20 years, gaining recognition as a significant area of study. The writings of philosophers who discussed the value of leisure in human life (e.g., de Grazia, 1962) are supported by recent empirical investigations which find that leisure is important to one's well-being and satisfaction with life (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976; McDowell, 1981; Ragheb & Griffith, 1982; Russell, 1987). As a topic within leisure research, vacations offer an opportunity to observe the interplay of

motivations and satisfactions as they relate to vacations and to a global sense of well-being.

Vacations are important for many people; not only do they represent opportunities for respite -- from work, school, and everyday routine -- they also provide opportunities for relaxation, adventure, and socializing (Lundberg, 1980; Rubenstein, 1980; Shapiro & Tuckman, 1978). For most people, a vacation typically means "freedom from work," a block of free time which is highly valued. Receiving a paid vacation has been rated as an important benefit of work, and, for some individuals, increases in vacation time are preferable to a 10% pay raise (Quinn & Staines, 1979). Extra paid vacation time has also been preferred to an early retirement program, 4-day work week, 5-week unpaid annual sabbatical, and a 2% pay raise (Nealy & Goodale, 1967). For other people, even unpaid vacation time is highly desirable. Rubenstein (1980) found that 27% of her respondents would take up to half a year of vacation with no pay, if given the option.

Vacations may be so attractive because people can find few other blocks of free time in which they can pursue leisure activities. Although advances in technology were expected to reduce work time (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975), research indicates that the work-week for the average American has increased from 41 to 47 hours, and that the availability for free time has decreased by 37% since 1973 (Gibbs, 1989). Vacations, then, not only represent a chance to "get away from it all;" they also offer a relatively large, unbroken unit of time in which to pursue self-fulfilling activities.

Forming Expectations for Vacations

When faced with a block of vacation time, many people form a set of expectations regarding the experience they hope to have (Crompton, 1979; Lundberg, 1980; Rubenstein, 1980; Shapiro & Tuckman, 1978). Indeed, individuals may form these expectations several months in advance of the actual vacation (Crompton, 1979). Expectations may include the anticipation of opportunities to relax and relieve tension, do something adventurous, and/or to broaden one's intellectual or personal horizons. Rubenstein (1980) investigated the expectations of vacationers by asking readers of Psychology Today to describe their "dream" vacation, and found that responses fell into one of six "vacation needs," including opportunities for self-discovery, intellectual enrichment, adventure, togetherness, relaxation, and escape. The highest number of responses cited relaxation as a main reason for vacation; intellectual or spiritual enrichment was second in popularity. Thirteen percent of Rubenstein's sample took vacations to be with their family or to renew relationships with friends. People desiring adventure and excitement on their vacation tended to be younger, and were most likely to report that they usually felt depressed after a vacation. Eleven percent of her sample hoped to solve personal problems, or to "find themselves" while on vacation, while eight percent just wanted to escape routine. The latter group also tended to be younger, and demonstrated an ambivalence toward both work and leisure.

About one-third of Rubenstein's respondents reported that they were able to relax and enjoy the vacation as soon as it started; however, one-half of her sample needed a day or more before they began

to relax. She also found that men were less satisfied than women with their vacations, and that they were more eager to return to work once the vacation was completed.

Along other lines, Crompton (1979) focused upon the motivations regarding a vacationer's choice of destination. After analyzing interviews from a convenience sample of adults, he found that actual destination was less important than was its ability to provide a medium in which to satisfy an individual's motives. "Escape from a perceived mundane environment," the most common motive expressed by his participants, reflected the individual's desire for a temporary change of scene from everyday life. Interviewees also were interested in learning more about themselves, becoming more relaxed, and enjoying family togetherness and social interaction. Finally, some respondents perceived vacations as opportunities to break from their normal social roles so that they might indulge in behavior that Crompton described as "puerile" and "irrational." The author referred to this type of motive as "regression from normal role," as it typified behavior more commonly seen in adolescence.

Although Crompton's methodology and purpose were quite different from Rubenstein's (1980) investigation, the results of these studies are similar in their conclusions regarding vacation motivations. Further work along the same lines includes that of Dann (1977), who hypothesized that tourists sought anomie (escape) or ego-enhancement (status-building) while on vacation, and Wahlers and Etzel (1985), who found that people preferred vacations providing optimal stimulation in contrast to their everyday life. Wahlers and Etzel measured the individual's perceived everyday life stimulation level, and compared

this to the person's choice of vacation attributes (e.g., different, refreshing, educational, planned, and restful). Predictably, individuals who felt that their everyday life was over-stimulating tended to prefer more restful vacations, whereas those who were bored with everyday routine tended to choose vacation attributes that were more stimulating.

After reviewing these studies, it becomes apparent that many individuals form common expectations when anticipating a vacation, including expectations that their vacation will provide opportunities to relax, escape, strengthen family relationships, participate in social interactions, and provide for intellectual stimulation and self-development. The communality of these findings suggests that instruments could be designed to measure the type and strength of motivations formed for vacations, so that an individual's vacation expectations could be assessed prior to an actual vacation. Since there are no published scales of vacation motivations, at this point it becomes necessary to turn to the broader field of leisure research, in which several studies have focused upon the investigation of leisure motivations.

Comparing Vacation Expectations and Leisure Motivations

In order to identify and organize the results of leisure motivation research conducted until 1980, Crandall (1980) convened other distinguished contributors to the field of leisure research. Their discussion resulted in a list of 17 discrete needs thought to represent the domain of leisure motivations, including stimulus seeking, relaxation, social contact, physical exercise, achievement,

the enjoyment of nature, intellectual aestheticism, and escaping routine and responsibility.

One of the first sound psychometric scales to measure leisure motivations was developed by Beard and Ragheb (1983), who asked individuals to respond to 42 "reasons for engaging in leisure," which included items such as "to expand my knowledge," "to build friendships with others," "to challenge my abilities," and "to relieve stress and tension." Analysis of their data resulted in four motivation factors: Intellectual, Social, Competence/Mastery, and Stimulus Avoidance. The Intellectual scale measured the individual's desire to learn, explore, be creative, and be imaginative in leisure pursuits. The Social component assessed the degree to which the person expressed a need for friendship and interpersonal relationships, as well as a need for the esteem of others. The extent to which people sought leisure activities in order to challenge themselves, achieve goals, and compete against others was assessed by the Competence-Mastery scale. Finally, the fourth factor, Stimulus Avoidance, measured the individual's desire to avoid crowded areas and to relax.

Comparing the results of Crandall's (1980) and Beard and Ragheb's (1983) articles to studies of vacation expectations demonstrates that motivations for vacations and motivations for general leisure activities appear to be virtually indistinguishable. Because of this, it is possible to use instruments originally designed for general leisure research within the context of vacations, allowing the vacation researcher the use of tools which have already undergone some psychometric testing.

Examining Vacation Satisfaction

After assessing vacation expectations prior to vacation, the next stage of research could profitably include an examination of the factors relating to vacation satisfaction once the vacation was completed. Based upon the previous review, it is possible to assume that vacation satisfaction would reflect the degree to which vacation expectations were fulfilled. An individual who expresses the need for rest and relaxation prior to vacation should be influenced in his or her post-vacation evaluation by the amount of rest and relaxation obtained. An argument can be made that a discrepancy between anticipated and actual vacation experience should be related to overall satisfaction with the vacation, such that the lower the discrepancy between desired and actual experience, the higher should be vacation satisfaction. Conversely, a high degree of discrepancy between expectations and actual vacation experiences should lead to low vacation satisfaction.

Although this approach has been recommended for use in vacation research (Lounsbury & Hoopes, 1985; Pizam, Neumann, & Reichel, 1978), and in examining the relationship between general leisure motivations and satisfactions (Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987), it has not yet been implemented in a pragmatic way. The approach is analogous to studies in other fields, such as marketing, in which a relationship has been shown to exist among expectations, actual experiences, and resultant satisfactions (Anderson, 1973; Francken & van Raaij, 1981; Martilla & James, 1977). Anderson (1973) refers to "Consumer Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction" (CS/D) as a process which begins when the consumer forms expectations about the product s/he has purchased; CS/D is the

outcome of comparison between anticipated and real performance. A vacation is not unlike a consumer product, in which a certain amount of time and energy are invested in the anticipation of a successful outcome. In the field of leisure research, however, the investigation of leisure motivations and leisure satisfactions has rarely been longitudinally integrated (Lounsbury & Hoopes, 1988). Instead, these are generally assessed in separate studies utilizing different contexts, as in the case of vacation motivations and vacation satisfactions.

Turning then to studies of vacation satisfactions, it can be seen that past investigations of factors related to vacation satisfaction tended follow two lines of inquiry. The first line of research implicitly (but not directly) addresses the fulfillment of expectations held prior to vacation by asking individuals to rate their satisfaction with opportunities for relaxation, escape, and stimulation while on the vacation, which is then related to overall vacation satisfaction. The second line of inquiry concerns the more concrete and salient aspects of vacations, in which the individual is asked to evaluate his or her lodgings, food, and the weather.

Only a few studies have expressly focused upon vacation satisfactions. One of the earliest investigations was done by Klausner (1969), who collected questionnaires from male steel-workers who had taken a 13-week vacation from work (Kaiser Steel Corporation in California provided 13 weeks of vacation every five years to senior union represented employees). Among other things, he asked participants to respond to statements about family interactions during vacation. Results indicated that the chance to spend more time with

family was considered an important benefit of the vacation, and that family relationships generally improved during the vacation. More recently, Lounsbury and Hoopes (1985) administered a survey to working adults who had recently returned from vacation, and also found that family interactions contributed to overall vacation satisfaction. In addition, they identified four other factors which contributed to the evaluation of vacations. After performing a stepwise multiple regression analysis, they found that the factor which accounted for the most variance was Relaxation and Leisure, which assessed the way the individual's plans had worked out, pace-of-life, and the amount of fun experienced. Contributing also to overall vacation satisfaction was the Natural Environment, which assessed opportunities to be "close to nature," the weather, and the scenery. Opportunities to "get away from it all," which represented the Escape factor, and satisfaction with Food and Lodging also accounted for a moderate amount of variance. Overall vacation satisfaction was best predicted by opportunities for Relaxation and Leisure, which was followed in predictive power by Marriage and Family interactions, opportunities for Escape, and satisfaction with the Natural Environment. When examining the relationship of demographic variables to vacation satisfaction, Lounsbury and Hoopes found an inverse relationship between level of education and vacation satisfaction; more educated individuals tended to be less satisfied with their vacations. Unlike Rubenstein's (1980) study, they found no differences in vacation satisfaction between men and women.

Following the second line of inquiry, other researchers have focused primarily upon the more concrete and specific aspects of

vacations, such as traffic conditions, availability of resources, and cost (Pizam, Neumann, and Reichel, 1978). Pizam et al., surveyed tourists visiting Cape Cod and had them rate several items regarding the area. A factor analysis identified eight areas of tourist satisfaction, including beach opportunities, cost, hospitality, eating and drinking facilities, accommodations, campgrounds, and extent of commercialization. These were not related to a measure of overall satisfaction, but were presented for descriptive purposes.

At this point, it is again useful to turn to the broader topic of leisure satisfactions, which offers information relevant to a description of vacation satisfactions (Beard & Ragheb, 1980; Crandall, 1988; Donald & Havighurst, 1959; Hawes, 1978; Iso-Ahola & Allen, 1982; Lounsbury & Hoopes, 1988; Lundberg, Komarovsky, & McNery, 1969). For example, Hawes (1979) conducted a nationwide survey in which he found several "clusters" of leisure satisfactions including: newness, relating to people, mental activity, control, mastery, physical orientation, and self-understanding. Similarly, Beard and Ragheb (1980) found six satisfactions deriving from leisure, including psychological, educational, social, relaxation, physiological, and aesthetic satisfactions. In their study, reported psychological benefits of leisure involved a sense of freedom, enjoyment, and intellectual challenge, while educational benefits included self-discovery and learning about the surroundings. Physiological benefits of leisure included the development of physical fitness and well-being, while the aesthetic rewards included those elements considered pleasing, interesting, or beautiful.

As can be seen, the satisfaction domains assessed in the leisure studies just described are extremely similar to those needs expressed by participants in Rubenstein's (1980) vacation study, and parallel results from other vacation motivation articles. Taken together, these findings support the idea that evaluation of the vacation should be related to the degree to which vacation motivations were satisfied during the vacation. Instead of relating domain satisfactions (i.e., relaxation, intellectual stimulation, etc.) to overall vacation satisfaction, vacation discrepancy could be measured directly as the degree to which expectations were fulfilled, and then related to overall vacation satisfaction.

The presence of obligations or constraints, when perceived as a curtailment in the enjoyment of leisure, has become a salient topic recently for leisure researchers. A number of studies (Csikszentimihalyi, 1975; Gunter, 1987; Harper, 1986; Iso-Ahola, 1979; Kelly, 1976; Unger, 1984; Wagner, Lounsbury, & Fitzgerald, 1989) have found that freedom of choice is an important factor in determining an individual's perception of an activity as "leisure," and this perception may influence satisfaction derived from the leisure activity. Anecdotal evidence indicates that people often incorporate a large number of obligations and constraints into their vacations, which may have important implications for vacation satisfaction. Many individuals include in their vacation things they "have to do," such as visiting family or friends, and taking along job-related work. Other aspects of vacations represent potentially unavoidable constraints, such as the vacation budget, the time of the year in which the vacation may be scheduled, traveling with an

organized tour group, or traveling with one's children. The effect of these constraints upon the individual's satisfaction with the vacation has not yet been examined.

Examining the Relationship of Vacations and Life Satisfaction

Finally, in addition to the immediate psychological benefits anticipated by individuals, a vacation may also contribute to more long-term outcomes, such as overall life satisfaction. Given the money and effort that employees are willing to sacrifice in order for vacation time, and the needs which vacations are expected to fulfill, it is feasible that a vacation or set of vacations could affect life satisfaction. Lounsbury and Hoopes (1986) examined this proposition and found that life satisfaction improved after vacation. They also investigated the relationship between vacation satisfaction and several other variables, including job involvement, organizational commitment, intention to turnover, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. They found that job involvement decreased, while both intention to turnover and life satisfaction increased after vacation. Also, while life satisfaction improved for the entire sample, individuals who had higher vacation satisfaction scores also had higher life satisfaction scores after the vacation. Individuals who reported high levels of life satisfaction prior to vacation, and who had satisfying vacations, were most likely to demonstrate increased post-vacation life satisfaction. Lounsbury and Hoopes suggested that further research investigate the interaction of vacations and life satisfaction.

Further evidence of the potential contribution of vacations to life satisfaction is suggested by research which links an individual's

sense of well-being with his or her quality of leisure. Surveys conducted nationwide by Andrews and Withey (1976), and Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers (1976), indicated that life satisfaction was strongly predicted from "the amount of fun and enjoyment one experiences" and that quality of leisure was a significant contributor to one's perceived quality of life. Other researchers have reported similar findings. London, Crandall, and Seals (1977) found that satisfaction with leisure activities contributed to the perceived quality of life for advantaged groups (white-collar workers, married persons, and high socio-economic status individuals), while Ragheb and Griffith (1982) and Russell (1987) found that satisfaction with leisure contributed significantly to an individual's satisfaction with life. Allen and Beattie (1984) found that leisure satisfaction was the best predictor of satisfaction with community life. Also, some studies have pointed to the importance of leisure as it contributes to psychological well-being and mental health (Brooks & Elliot, 1971; Havinghurst, 1957; McDowell, 1981). Because vacations represent an opportunity to pursue a number of leisure activities which may facilitate the fulfillment of leisure needs, they may play a part in an individual's satisfaction with life. The contribution of vacations to an individual's perceived quality of life remains open to speculation.

In summary, three topics of interest have been discussed with respect to an investigation of vacations. The first of these concerns the expectations, or underlying motivations, people form when anticipating a vacation. Research conducted within the context of vacations and within the broader field of leisure indicates that

concepts and instruments already developed in the leisure field are appropriate for use in a study of vacations. The second topic concerned satisfactions derived from vacations. An approach was suggested in which vacation satisfaction should be related to minimal discrepancy between expectations and actual experience, and research to support this proposition was cited. Additionally, salient aspects of the vacation which might contribute to vacation satisfaction were discussed, such as accommodations and destination, as well as the presence of perceived obligations and constraints. The third topic concerned the relative impact vacations might have upon an individual's evaluation of life satisfaction. With these questions in mind, this paper now turns to goals proposed by the current investigation.

Goals of the Current Research

The primary purpose of the present investigation was to identify vacation expectations, and to examine the relationship between the perceived fulfillment of those expectations and vacation satisfaction. Based upon prior research, eight factors were chosen to represent vacation expectations: stimulus avoidance (rest and relaxation), intellectual stimulation, competence/mastery, social interaction (kinship and friendship ties), thrill-seeking (fun and adventure), work-related advantages, self-improvement/discovery, and desire to escape. Next, post-vacation satisfaction was related to degree of vacation discrepancy; that is, to the reported degree to which expectations were met. It was hypothesized that maximal vacation satisfaction would be reported by individuals who indicated they had fulfilled expectations to the extent desired, and that degree of

dissatisfaction with the vacation would be related to the extent to which anticipated and actual vacation experiences were discrepant.

A second goal of the present project was to offer a preliminary exploration of other factors predicted to affect vacation satisfaction. Items assumed to relate to vacation satisfaction included salient aspects such as traveling companions, services, destination, and perceived obligations and constraints that limited personal freedom while on vacation. Because of the scarcity of previous research in this area, specific hypotheses were not formed.

A third topic for investigation concerned an examination of the relationship between vacation satisfaction and overall life satisfaction, to ascertain whether vacations affected global life evaluations. Additionally, satisfaction with specific life domains were measured before and after vacation so that any differences in the areas of job satisfaction, satisfaction with family, and satisfaction with leisure might be noted. Although Lounsbury and Hoopes (1985) found that life satisfaction increased for their sample following a vacation, this prediction was not made in the current investigation. Instead, it was hypothesized that life satisfaction would change relevant to vacation satisfaction; that is, life satisfaction would improve following a satisfying vacation, and would decrease following a disappointing vacation.

Other personal and vacation-related information also was gathered. Vacationers reported the length of the vacation, specific destinations visited, and types of accommodations used. Upon their return, participants also were asked to indicate how long it took them to feel that they were "on vacation," whether or not they were ready

for the vacation to end, and how many days existed between vacation end and return to work. This information was collected for descriptive purposes, and, where appropriate, was examined for relationship to vacation satisfaction.

CHAPTER II

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Sample

Participants represented a convenience sample of 260 subjects, of whom approximately 25% were adults drawn from the general population and 75% were college students enrolled in a large southeastern university. Non-students were university personnel, clientele of local travel agencies, and other individuals. To obtain a more representative sample of the population, assistance from approximately 10 local travel agencies was sought. Although the owners/managers of the agencies were generally enthusiastic and willing to help, direct access to their clientele could not be obtained due to concerns of confidentiality. Leaving surveys for distribution by the personnel at the agencies resulted in a survey return rate of almost zero percent. In an effort to obtain a large number of individuals going on a vacation at the same time, bus tour agencies were solicited, but the owners/managers were unwilling to participate. Finally, one of the agencies had contracted to take approximately 200 people to Hawaii for ten days as part of an award program. Permission to solicit the group was obtained by agreeing to obtain information relevant to the agency. Unfortunately, direct distribution of surveys by the investigator was not allowed, and only 17 usable surveys were collected from the endeavor. Students were solicited in order to increase sample size, a decision which limits the generalizability of some results, to be addressed throughout the paper.

The age of participants ranged from 18 to 51 years, with an average age of 25 years. Forty-six percent of the sample was female, and 20% of the total sample were married. All subjects had at least a high school education; 71% had some college education, 8% had a professional or college degree, and 11% had some graduate education or an advanced degree. Estimates of family income ranged from less than \$5,000 to more than 75,000; the average income was \$25,000-\$30,000/year. Because this sample contained a majority of students, this figure may not be reliable, since some students receive support from families while some do not; others may or may not have included their parents within their estimate.

Procedure

From June, 1988, until April, 1990, subjects were approached individually or in groups, told the nature of the study, and invited to participate. Students received extra credit in a psychology course, and non-students were entered in a "University-Theme Prize" (i.e., sweatshirt, coffee mug) giveaway. Informed consent was obtained and a pre-vacation survey was administered to each subject. Seventy-six percent of the surveys were completed within four days prior to an individual's vacation; 92% were completed within 15 days prior to vacation. Upon their return, subjects were asked to complete a post-vacation survey. Seventy-two percent of these were completed within four days of return; all were returned within 16 days. One thousand surveys each (pre- and post) were created for distribution, resulting in a total return rate of 26%. Approximately 80% of those who completed the pre-vacation survey also completed the post-survey.

Measures

All measures were collected in two self-report surveys. The first of these was a pre-vacation questionnaire. The second, almost identical to the first, was administered as a post-vacation questionnaire. These measures, as they appeared in the questionnaires, may be found in Appendix A. The following is a description of the measures used, in the order in which they appeared in the surveys.

Pre-vacation Measures:

Vacation obligations and constraints. Seventeen items were used to measure the amount of obligation or constraint present in the vacation. Participants were asked to indicate on a Likert five-point scale the amount of constraint (1 = none, 2 = very little, 3 = moderate, 4 = considerable, 5 = unavoidable) in their choice to engage in a variety of activities during their vacation. Activities included visiting friends, visiting relatives, traveling with children, as well as other items such as vacation budget, time of year, and length of vacation. Table A-1 contains the items used in the current research.

Satisfaction with obligations and constraints. Sixteen items were used to indicate the affect with which the person viewed the previous 17 constraints (one constraint was unsuitable for rating). Using the previous items, individuals were asked to report how they felt about those aspects of the vacation, using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = delighted, 2 = pleased, 3 = mostly satisfied, 4 = mixed, 5 = mostly dissatisfied, 6 = unhappy, 7 = terrible). These are contained in Table A-2.

Vacation expectations. These were 66 items which assessed what activities the person hoped to do while on vacation; these were based upon a scale developed by Beard and Ragheb (1983). Using a five-point Likert scale, the person was asked to indicate to what degree he or she "would like to be able to" engage in a variety of activities (1 = not at all, 2 = not very much, 3 = about the same, 4 = somewhat more, 5 = very much more). Items included "expand my interests and knowledge," "have fun," "relax," "escape routine," "be physically active," etc. Items are listed in Table A-3.

Overall vacation anticipation. Twice within the pre-vacation survey, the individual's overall anticipation was measured using identical stems and alternatives. The individual was asked to indicate, "As I look toward my vacation, I feel...", using a seven-point scale (1 = delighted, 7=terrible). The first item immediately followed the constraints section; the second appeared immediately after the vacation expectations section (Tables A-2 and A-3, respectively). The items were averaged to obtain an Overall Vacation Anticipation score.

Life satisfaction. This measure consisted of 50 items in which the person was asked to report satisfaction with various life domains, including family, work, and leisure. These items were condensed from the work of Andrews and Withey (1976), and included 50 items from that study that best predicted life satisfaction. Items utilized a seven-point Likert scale (1 = delighted, 7 = terrible), and are listed in Table A-4.

Demographics. These included age, sex, marital status, education, and income.

Post-vacation Measures:

Satisfaction with vacation obligations and constraints. This scale was identical to the pre-vacation measure. The person was asked to reflect upon their feelings regarding various constraints once the vacation was completed so that any differences between these and the pre- measure could be noted. The measure is in Table A-5.

Vacation discrepancy. Using the pre-vacation expectations items, the individual was instructed to indicate to what degree he or she had been able to participate in various activities, relative to the amount desired (1 = not at all what I wanted, 2 = not as much as I wanted, 3 = about the same as I wanted, 4 = somewhat more than I wanted, 5 = very much more than I wanted). This measure is listed in Table A-6.

Overall vacation satisfaction. The individual's overall satisfaction with the vacation was measured twice, using identical stems and alternatives. The individual was asked to indicate, "As I look back at my vacation, I feel...", using a seven-point scale (1 = delighted, 7=terrible). The first of these immediately followed the constraints section, and the second item appeared immediately after the vacation discrepancy section (Tables A-5 and A-6, respectively). The items were averaged to obtain an Overall Vacation Satisfaction score.

Life satisfaction. This section of the questionnaire was identical to the pre-vacation measure.

Length of vacation. The person indicated when the vacation began and ended.

Vacation destination and accommodations. Using open-ended items, subjects were asked to indicate where they were going on vacation.

These were categorized into eight groups: cities/states, major amusement parks (such as King's Island, Disneyland, etc), beaches, the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, Gatlinburg (a tourist- oriented town near the Smoky Mountains), other national or state parks, foreign countries, and home. The respondent also indicated what type of accommodations they used, including campgrounds, family, friends, hotel/motel, time-share resort, other resort, onboard ship, and home.

Time required to feel "on vacation." One item assessed how long it had taken the individual to feel that she or he was "on vacation" ("as soon as I left...", "within a day," "within 2 days," "3 or more days," or "I never really was able to feel I was 'on vacation'").

Willingness to return home. An item asked the person whether he or she was more "ready to return home" or "wishing the vacation were longer" at the end of the vacation.

Number of days between vacation and return to work. Finally, the person was asked to indicate how many days there were between return from vacation and return to work (or school).

CHAPTER III

PRELIMINARY ANALYSES

Traditionally, there has been some concern regarding the use of students in psychological research concerning the adult population. In the current study, information regarding the individual's status as working adult and/or student was not solicited, therefore, it is impossible to accordingly divide the sample. It is assumed that most (but not all) of the younger participants (25 years and less) were students, and that most of the older participants were actively employed and out of school. For convenience, these groups will be referred to as "college students" and "older adults", respectively; however, it should be kept in mind that these labels are descriptive and not entirely accurate. Older individuals could have been students, and not all younger participants might have been undergraduates. In the following sections, comparisons will be performed in order to detect any differences between younger "college students" and "older adults." Where significant differences exist, they will be presented within the subtopic under discussion.

Length of Vacation

The length of vacation for each participant ranged from one to 36 days (five people took one or two day vacations), with a mean average vacation length of eight and one-half days (SD = 3.79) for both students and older adults. Examination of Table 1 reveals that the majority of student's vacations lasted 7-9 days, which reflects the fact that many of them completed the survey over Spring Break.

Table 1. Length of Vacation for Students and Older Adults

<u>Vacation days</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Older Adults</u>
1-3	2.1%	7.2%
4-5	10.3	14.5
6	6.5	5.5
7	13.5	16.4
8	17.3	10.9
9	31.9	3.6
10	11.9	14.5
11	1.1	5.5
12	1.1	1.8
13-14	1.1	7.3
15-20	2.1	10.8
21-36	1.0	1.8
	$\bar{M} = 8.36$ days	$\bar{M} = 9.27$ days
	$\underline{SD} = 3.02$	$\underline{SD} = 5.73$
	$\underline{n} = 185$	$\underline{n} = 55$

Destination and Accommodations

Participants were asked to indicate where they went and what accommodations they used while on vacation. Open-ended responses to these questions were sorted and categorized. The top three destination categories were identical for students and older adults. (Because an individual may have reported visiting more than one type of place, percentages pertaining to these categories do not equal 100.) At least 47% of this sample intended to visit a continental city or state while on vacation; visiting a beach was included in 30% of the vacations. Thirty-three percent of individuals spent at least some time at home during their vacation time, and 5% visited a major amusement or theme park during vacation (such as King's Island or Disneyland). Four percent visited the Great Smoky Mountain National Park or other national or state park, and 2% traveled overseas.

Regarding accommodations away from home, 32% spent some time with family or relatives, and 25% spent some time with friends. At least 29% stayed in hotels or motels, and 10% stayed in time-share condominiums or other resorts. A few (3%) people camped during their vacation, and 2% spent time aboard ship.

Vacation Expectations

Items comprising this measure were factor analyzed using the principal components method with varimax rotation. Examination of the scree plot and subsequent analysis of internal reliability estimates using Cronbach's alpha coefficient suggested six psychometrically sound scales. Scale reliability coefficients were .80 and above for both students and older adults; for this reason, these scales were

considered valid for both groups. Table 2 contains scale items, factor loadings, and reliability coefficients.

Four of the resulting factors were identical to those developed by Beard and Ragheb (1983). Consistent with their description, the Social factor assessed an individual's desire to interact with others, to influence others, and to develop or maintain friendships. The Intellectual factor was comprised of two components: the first of these assessed an individual's desire for knowledge, while the second addressed the need for creativity and imagination. The Competence/Mastery factor was also supported, and as Beard and Ragheb noted, also consisted of two components. The first of these measured the desire for general competence, and the second component dealt with a person's desire for physical activity and health. The fourth factor, Stimulus Avoidance, was also replicated. This factor assessed an individual's desire to rest and relax, and to avoid the hustle and bustle of daily routine. This factor was psychometrically different from the desire to escape. Items assessing the person's desire to "Escape routine or responsibilities" and "Forget about work or other concerns" tended to load negatively upon Stimulus Avoidance, however, they did not form a psychometrically sound scale (five items, $\alpha = .67$).

Two additional factors emerged, Thrill-Seeking and Work-Related Advantages. Items comprising Thrill-Seeking assessed the person's desire for stimulation, adventure, and risk-taking, and resembled Sensation-Seeking and Arousal-Seeking as described by Zuckerman, Kolin, Price, and Zoob (1964), and Mehrabian and Russell (1974). Finally, items which tapped an individual's desire to improve work

Table 2. Vacation Motivation Factors and Coefficient Alphas

<u>Factor</u>	(Number of scale items)	<u>Loading</u>	<u>Alpha</u>
<u>Intellectual</u>	(9)		.86
Expand my knowledge		.8206	
Expand my interests and knowledge		.7838	
Seek mental stimulation		.7305	
Explore new ideas		.6280	
Learn about myself		.6060	
Keep informed about the world around me		.5612	
Satisfy my curiosity		.4991	
Be creative		.4934	
Use my imagination		.4675	
<u>Social</u>	(6)		.84
Develop or maintain friendships		.7297	
Interact with other people		.6492	
Feel that I'm part of a group or community		.6308	
Meet new and different people		.5234	
Influence others		.5033	
Help others		.4970	
<u>Competence/Mastery</u>	(13)		.91
Develop physical skills or abilities		.7689	
Improve skills or abilities		.7542	
Challenge my abilities		.7466	
Master a new skill or ability		.7209	
Use my physical abilities		.6435	
Test myself		.6433	
Be physically active		.5989	
Get a feeling of achievement		.5819	
Compete with others		.5459	
Keep in shape		.5417	
Be good at doing something		.5015	
Coach, teach, or instruct others		.4371	
Work toward personal development		.5329	
<u>Stimulus Avoidance</u>	(8)		.83
Rest		.6601	
Relieve stress and tension		.6254	
Relax		.6901	
Slow down		.6182	
Avoid the hustle and bustle of daily activities		.6103	
Be in a calm atmosphere		.5271	
Avoid crowded areas		.4614	
Be alone		.3867	

Table 2 (continued).

<u>Factor</u>	(Number of scale items)	<u>Loading</u>	<u>Alpha</u>
<u>Thrill-Seeking</u>	(6)		.87
Be stimulated		.7386	
Seek pleasurable sensations		.7317	
Seek stimulation		.7096	
Be adventurous		.6724	
Get excited - get the adrenaline flowing		.6394	
Take risks		.6377	
<u>Work-Advantages</u>	(4)		.86
Think about a project at work		.8369	
Think about my job		.8190	
Plan projects I will do at work		.8119	
Work toward professional development		.5561	

performance while on vacation formed the Work-Related Advantages scale. Students were instructed to interpret work items as referring to "school" when completing the survey.

In addition to the Escape scale, items designed to assess the person's desire for reflection and self-development were not found to form a sufficiently sound scale, nor did they fit into any other existing scale (four items, $\alpha = .69$). These items were: "Work toward personal development," "Improve my perspective on life," "Express more of my 'true' self," and "Balance the different aspects of my life."

Life Satisfaction

The forty-nine items in this section (using the pre-vacation survey) were factor analyzed using the principal components method with varimax rotation. Scales were formed by computing coefficient alphas, and items which lowered scale alphas were dropped. This procedure resulted in nine domain areas consistent with the results of Andrews and Withey (1976); all nine scales possessed acceptably high estimates of internal reliability (alphas ranged from .78 to .96). Table 3 contains life satisfaction items, factor loadings, and reliability coefficients.

The first of these scales was Satisfaction with Nuclear Family, which assessed relationships with spouse and children. Satisfaction With Self assessed the individual's perceived self-efficacy and personal enjoyment. Satisfaction With Others assessed the person's evaluation of existing friendships and respect from others. The scale measuring Satisfaction With Income asked participants to indicate how comfortable and well-off they felt concerning their own standard of

Table 3. Life Satisfaction Factors and Coefficient Alphas

<u>Factor</u>	(Number of scale items)	<u>Loading</u>	<u>Alpha</u>
<u>Satisfaction with Self</u>	(5)		.83
Yourself		.8103	
The way you handle problems that come up in your life		.7929	
Yourself - what you are accomplishing and how you handle problems		.7903	
The chance you have to enjoy pleasant or beautiful things		.5425	
How much fun you are having		.4917	
<u>Satisfaction with Nuclear Family</u>	(3)		.96
Your marriage		.9374	
Your wife/husband		.9358	
Your own family life (spouse, marriage, children)		.8385	
<u>Satisfaction with Parental Family</u>	(3)		.80
The things you and your family do together		.7349	
The responsibilities you have for your family		.5798	
Close adult relatives (parents, siblings, etc.)		.5617	
<u>Satisfaction with Others</u>	(5)		.78
How you get on with other people		.7386	
Your friends		.7206	
The reliability of the people you depend on		.6887	
How much you are admired or respected by other people		.4082	
The respect other people have for your rights		.3472	
<u>Job Satisfaction</u>	(7)		.86
The people you work with on your job - your coworkers		.9184	
The work you do on your job - the work itself		.8947	
What you have available for doing your job - equipment, information, good supervision, etc.		.8851	
Your job		.8825	
What it is like where you work - the physical surroundings, hours, amount of work you do		.8763	
The security of your job		.8421	
<u>Satisfaction with Standard of Living</u>	(3)		.91
Your current standard of living - the things you have like housing, car, furniture, recreation, etc.		.8530	
How comfortable and well-off you are		.8127	
The income you (and your family) have		.8032	
<u>Satisfaction with Recreation Opportunities</u>	(3)		.82
Nearby places you can use for recreation and sports		.8202	
The sports or recreation facilities you use or would like to use - like parks or bowling alleys		.7713	
Outdoor places you can go in your spare time		.7254	

Table 3 (continued).

<u>Factor</u>	(Number of scale items)	<u>Loading</u>	<u>Alpha</u>
<u>Satisfaction with Leisure</u>	(7)		.88
The amount of relaxation in your life		.8449	
Your chances for relaxation -- even for a short time		.8105	
The amount of time you have for doing the things you want to do		.7714	
The sleep you get		.7209	
The time you have for "yourself"		.5679	
How much you're able to do your special hobbies or interests		.5537	
The things you do in your free time		.3682	
<u>Satisfaction with Community</u>	(3)		.82
People who live in this community		.7321	
Your particular neighborhood as a place to live		.4791	
Your community as a place to live		.4564	

living. Satisfaction With Leisure Time included items dealing with chances for relaxation, time for self, and things done in the person's spare time. Satisfaction With Recreation dealt with opportunities for recreation and sports, and Satisfaction With Community assessed the individual's evaluation of their neighborhood and community. The Satisfaction With Family scale included the individual's evaluation of his or her own adult relatives, family activities, and perceived responsibilities toward family. Again, students were instructed to interpret items measuring Job Satisfaction as representing their academic work, however, results using this scale are assumed to be non-generalizable to the population.

Correlational analyses between life domain satisfaction and Overall Life Satisfaction were performed for both age groups, and all domains were significantly related to Overall Life Satisfaction. Students and older adults did not differ with respect to satisfaction across life domains.

CHAPTER IV

MAIN RESULTS

To address the questions posed in the introduction, the results of the analyses will be presented according to section within the survey. Presented first are people's motivations for vacations and the relationship of perceived discrepancy to vacation satisfaction. Other contributors to vacation satisfaction will then be examined, including the more "objective" aspects of the vacation and perceived constraints and obligations. Satisfied and dissatisfied vacationers will be compared according to vacation and demographic characteristics, and finally, the contribution of vacation satisfaction to overall life satisfaction will be examined.

Vacation Expectations

Students and older adults expressed varying expectations about their upcoming vacations. Descriptive statistics and t test results of vacation motivations scales are presented for both age groups in Table 4. All individuals hoped to enhance their personal knowledge, enjoy opportunities to rest and relax, and to pursue adventuresome and stimulating activities while on vacation. The students demonstrated the strongest desire for the latter, surpassing older adults in their anticipation of thrill-seeking activities. Most individuals appeared uninterested in improving their career or academic standing while on vacation; for both groups, scale means for "Work-related Advantages" were very low. Otherwise, students and older adults differed in two areas: Social and Competence/Mastery. Students desired more

Table 4. Descriptive Summary of Vacation Motivation Scales for Students and Older Adults.

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Alpha</u>	<u>Students / Older Adults</u>		<u>t test</u>
		<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	
Intellectual	.86	3.39 / 3.60	.75 / .84	ns
Social	.84	3.69 / 3.01	.82 / .90	p<.001
Competence/Mastery	.91	3.23 / 2.90	.86 / .72	p<.01
Stimulus Avoidance	.83	3.77 / 3.87	.79 / .75	ns
Work-related Advantages*	.87	1.81 / 1.66	.95 / .81	ns
Thrill-Seeking	.86	4.19 / 3.66	.73 / .83	p<.001

(Likert scale: 1 = desired "not at all"; 5 = "very much more")

n = 188-193 students; n = 60-61 older adults.

*"School-related Advantages" for students.

opportunities for both social interaction and opportunities to improve their competence and mastery. On the other hand, older adults did not wish to increase their contact with others, and hoped to encounter fewer situations in which they were required to demonstrate competence.

Vacation Discrepancy

Vacation discrepancy was measured as the individual's rating of the difference between anticipated and obtained vacation experiences. Upon return from vacation, individuals indicated whether they had obtained "too little," "too much," or "about right" amount of a particular type of experience, using a five-point Likert scale (refer to Table A-6).

Comparative t tests were performed to examine any differences between students and older adults according to reported vacation discrepancy. Results indicated no differences according to age; subsequently, all participants were included to determine estimates of internal reliability for each discrepancy scale (see Table 5).

To determine whether vacation discrepancy was related to vacation satisfaction, responses to this section of the survey were grouped into three categories: category 1) represented attainment of the experience to the degree the person desired (i.e., about right), category 2) represented either somewhat too little or too much of an experience, and category 3) represented that either none (or too little) or too much of an activity was experienced during the vacation. Hypothetically, those who achieved a balance between desire and attainment should have reported the greatest degree of satisfaction with the vacation; those whose desires and realizations

Table 5. Post-vacation Discrepancy Scales - Coefficient Alphas of Total Sample and Descriptive Statistics for Students and Older Adults.

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Alpha</u>	<u>Students / Older Adults</u>		<u>t test</u> **
		<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	
Intellectual	.86	2.94 / 2.85	.59 / .58	1.01
Social	.76	2.95 / 2.99	.63 / .54	.46
Competence/Mastery	.91	2.78 / 2.81	.62 / .57	.35
Stimulus Avoidance	.86	2.85 / 2.83	.67 / .64	.24
Work-related Advantages*	.84	2.62 / 2.78	.86 / .73	1.16
Thrill-Seeking	.92	2.92 / 2.81	.88 / .69	.40

(Likert scale: 1 = "little/not at all"; 3 = "about right"; 5 = "very much too much")

n = 188-193 students; n = 60-61 older adults.

*"School-related Advantages" for students.

**all t tests were non-significant.

were somewhat discrepant should have been less satisfied, and those who needs were not at all met (or met beyond desire) should have been the least satisfied with their vacation.

Because the motivation scales were highly intercorrelated, a multiple regression analysis to discover which need area was most determinant of overall vacation satisfaction was unsuccessful. Correlational analyses were then performed, which showed that Overall Vacation Satisfaction was most related to the person's satisfaction with opportunities to rest and relax (Stimulus Avoidance), and by his or her satisfaction with opportunities for adventure and stimulation (Thrill-Seeking). Otherwise, fulfillment of expectations to the degree desired was related to vacation satisfaction in all areas except for Work-related Advantages and Social opportunities. The average overall discrepancy score was then computed for each individual by combining all scales, and this was correlated with Overall Vacation Satisfaction. Results revealed that the greater the discrepancy between desired and actual attainment of all vacation expectations, the less satisfied the individual was with the vacation, $r(219) = .14$, $p < .05$. As the degree of discrepancy increased in either direction (the individual received too little or too much of an experience), degree of satisfaction decreased. Table 6 contains descriptive summaries of the six scales and correlations with vacation satisfaction. When correlational analyses were performed according to age group, degree of relationship between vacation discrepancy and satisfaction did not reach statistical significance for any of the scales measured.

Table 6. Post-vacation Discrepancy Scales for All Participants -
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations with Overall
Vacation Satisfaction.

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	Overall Vacation Satisfaction (<u>r</u>)
Intellectual	1.55	.47	.12*
Social	1.54	.47	.06
Competence/Mastery	1.57	.45	.14*
Stimulus Avoidance	1.63	.51	.15**
Work Advantages	1.69	.70	.07
Thrill-Seeking	1.70	.56	.15**

(Rating categories, converted from five to three point scale:
1 = balance between expectations and experiences; 2 = somewhat
discrepant in either direction; 3 = very discrepant in either
direction)

(n = 239-255)

*p<.05

**p<.01

Satisfaction with Manifest Aspects of Vacation

Contained within one section of the research survey was a list of items which assessed the vacationer's evaluation of salient aspects of the vacation, such as place(s) visited, amount of time available, accommodations, etc. Because of the more "objective" nature of these characteristics, i.e., they may have been more apparent and easily judged by the individual, they were labeled "manifest aspects." An attempt was made to factor the ratings of manifest aspects (contained in Table 7), however, items which did not apply to the individual were left blank, which created so many missing cases it was difficult to construct meaningful scales with an acceptable sample size. Instead, correlational analyses were performed to ascertain which item best predicted overall satisfaction with the vacation. As can be observed in Table 7, all manifest aspects of the vacation predicted Overall Vacation Satisfaction to a significant degree, most particularly, "the place(s) I visited," "my activities," and "my accommodations."

Generally, individual's attitudes toward many of the manifest vacation aspects were positive. Predictably, items which received less favorable ratings included doing or thinking about work while on vacation, the individual's vacation budget, and the amount of time available for the vacation.

A comparison of the attitudes of students and older adults revealed that students ($\bar{M} = 4.65$, $SD = 1.70$) felt far less favorably about bringing along children than did older adults ($\bar{M} = 2.17$, $SD = 1.67$), $t(67) = 6.01$, $p < .001$. This difference remained significant at the same level on the post-vacation survey; however, the vast majority

Table 7. Ratings of Manifest Vacation Aspects Before and After Vacation, and Correlations of Post-vacation Ratings with Overall Vacation Satisfaction (OVS) For All Participants.

Item	Pre-vacation		Post-vacation		OVS
	<u>M</u>	(<u>SD</u>)	<u>M</u>	(<u>SD</u>)	(<u>r</u>)
1. Visiting relatives	2.63	(1.38)	2.72	(1.40)	.40**
2. Visiting friends	1.77	(1.03)	2.36	(1.33)	.30**
3. Bringing along job-related work	5.13	(1.58)	4.71	(1.60)	.11*
4. Bringing along children	3.34	(2.14)	3.17	(2.00)	.24*
5. Being part of an organized tour	4.39	(1.70)	4.12	(1.58)	.28~
6. Being part of a package vacation	2.96	(1.65)	2.93	(1.68)	.55**
7. Place(s) I will visit/visited	2.36	(1.45)	2.40	(1.43)	.76**
8. Planned accommodations	2.50	(1.38)	2.38	(1.26)	.56**
9. Vacation budget	3.72	(1.74)	3.37	(1.63)	.36**
10. Planned activities	2.76	(1.40)	2.67	(1.43)	.73**
11. Amount of time for vacation	3.69	(1.74)	3.85	(1.68)	.38**
12. Calendar placement of vacation	3.09	(1.59)	3.00	(1.39)	.52**
13. Traveling with relatives	3.17	(1.67)	2.80	(1.56)	.54**
14. Traveling with friends	1.88	(1.28)	2.13	(1.26)	.43**
15. Traveling with co-workers	3.33	(1.71)	3.52	(1.80)	.50**
16. Overall vacation plans	2.44	(1.43)	2.57	(1.37)	.87**

(Likert scale: 1 = "delighted"; 7 = "terrible". $n = 21-181$ for items 1-6, 13-15; $n = 249-254$ for items 7-12, 16)

* $p < .05$

** $p < .001$

of students did not actually bring children along on their vacation, as indicated by responses to other items.

Other attitudinal differences were found regarding the individual's vacation budget. As they looked toward their vacation, students ($\bar{M} = 3.87$, $\underline{SD} = 1.80$) were less satisfied with their financial resources than were other adults ($\bar{M} = 3.29$, $\underline{SD} = 1.44$), $t(248) = 2.26$, $p < .05$. Upon their return, both groups were equally satisfied with their vacation budget, students reporting significantly more satisfaction with their finances once the vacation was completed ($\bar{M} = 3.88$, $\underline{SD} = 1.81$ prior to vacation; $\bar{M} = 3.44$, $\underline{SD} = 1.68$ after vacation), $t(188) = 3.44$, $p < .001$. Also, students ($\bar{M} = 3.82$, $\underline{SD} = 1.78$) were less satisfied than were older adults ($\bar{M} = 3.30$, $\underline{SD} = 1.51$) with the amount of time they had for vacation both when looking toward their vacation, $t(245) = 2.06$, $p < .05$; and also, when reflecting back upon it ($\bar{M} = 3.97$, $\underline{SD} = 1.65$; $\bar{M} = 3.36$, $\underline{SD} = 1.70$, respectively), $t(249) = 2.44$, $p < .05$. Otherwise, there were no changes in satisfaction with amount of vacation time across administrations. Finally, a small number of college students who traveled with coworkers were significantly less satisfied about this upon their return ($\bar{M} = 3.07$, $\underline{SD} = 1.58$; $\bar{M} = 3.73$, $\underline{SD} = 1.91$, respectively), $t(14) = 2.87$, $p < .05$.

In areas of agreement, students ($\bar{M} = 5.30$, $\underline{SD} = 1.64$ and older adults ($\bar{M} = 5.32$, $\underline{SD} = 1.21$) felt similarly dissatisfied at the prospect of doing or thinking about work while on vacation. Upon return, both groups felt more favorably towards this (combined $\bar{M} = 5.13$, $\underline{SD} = 1.58$ prior to vacation; $\bar{M} = 4.71$, $\underline{SD} = 1.60$ after vacation), $t(85) = 2.56$, $p < .05$. Despite improvement in relative

standing, however, overall ratings for doing or thinking about work remained low. Both age groups also felt similarly about visiting friends; prior to vacation, both students ($\underline{M} = 1.76$, $\underline{SD} = 1.04$) and older adults ($\underline{M} = 1.80$, $\underline{SD} = 1.08$) felt pleased about visiting friends. Afterwards, all participants were significantly less pleased about visiting friends during the vacation (combined $\underline{M} = 1.77$, $\underline{SD} = 1.03$ prior to vacation; $\underline{M} = 2.36$, $\underline{SD} = 1.33$ after vacation), $t(164) = 5.74$, $p < .001$. There were no other significant attitudinal differences between students and older adults or between pre- and post-vacation responses.

Vacation Obligations and Constraints

Prior to vacation, individuals were asked to rate the degree of obligation or constraint that they associated with several activities they might engage in while on vacation, i.e., duties that they felt they "had to or ought to do." Results revealed that many individuals perceived some amount of constraint to be inherent in their vacation, as described in Table 8. Of the entire sample, 25% of participants regarded their overall vacation as encompassing considerable or unavoidable constraint, while another 38% described their vacation plans as moderately constrained. Students and older adults differed in the amount of perceived constraint regarding three vacation aspects. Predictably, older adults ($\underline{M} = 2.98$, $\underline{SD} = 1.80$) perceived themselves as being more constrained to travel with children than did students ($\underline{M} = 1.75$, $\underline{SD} = 1.29$), $t(127) = 4.45$, $p < .001$. Students ($\underline{M} = 2.92$, $\underline{SD} = 1.46$) were more obligated to travel with friends than were older adults ($\underline{M} = 2.31$, $\underline{SD} = 1.24$), $t(190) = 2.35$, $p < .05$, and they were more constrained to visit friends while on vacation (students: $\underline{M}$

Table 8. Distribution of All Participants' Reported Degree of Obligations and Constraints Prior to Vacation (In Percent).

(n)*	<u>Item</u>	<u>Degree of Obligation or Constraint</u>				
		None.....	Very little.....	Moderate.....	Considerable.....	Unavoidable.....
		:	:	:	:	:
		:	:	:	:	:
		:	:	:	:	:
		:	:	:	:	:
(182)	Visit relatives	21.4	17.6	17.0	18.1	25.8
(206)	Visit friends	17.0	20.9	19.4	17.5	25.2
(194)	Bring along job-related work	30.9	22.7	18.0	11.3	17.0
(133)	Bring along children	56.4	14.3	5.3	6.0	18.0
(126)	Be a part of an organized tour	40.5	23.8	16.7	7.9	11.1
(116)	Be a part of a package vacation	49.1	9.5	14.7	12.9	13.8
(255)	Place(s) I will visit	25.1	15.3	22.0	18.8	18.8
(258)	Planned accommodations	19.4	16.7	22.1	18.6	23.3
(258)	Vacation budget	16.3	7.8	27.1	24.0	24.8
(255)	Planned activities	27.5	28.2	28.6	10.6	5.1
(255)	Amount of time for vacation	8.2	8.6	27.8	18.4	36.9
(257)	Calendar placement of vacation	14.4	9.3	19.1	18.7	38.5
(150)	Travel with relatives	42.7	20.0	20.7	6.0	10.7
(197)	Travel with friends	25.9	19.3	21.8	14.7	18.3
(114)	Travel with co-workers	75.4	10.5	8.8	3.5	1.8
(258)	Overall vacation plans	14.0	22.9	38.4	17.1	7.8

*n = number of responses

= 3.28, $\underline{SD}$ = 1.43; older adults: $\underline{M}$ = 2.55, $\underline{SD}$ = 1.37), $\underline{t}(200)$ = 2.84, $p < .01$. Otherwise, all individuals tended to perceive their vacation budget, amount of time available, and the calendar placement of their vacation as highly constrained. On the other hand, vacationers tended to perceive themselves as having more freedom of choice regarding the activities they would pursue.

To ascertain whether any relationship existed between perceived degree of constraint and attitude toward the vacation, an index of average constraint was obtained for each individual and correlated with Overall Vacation Anticipation and Overall Vacation Satisfaction. The average constraint index was computed by averaging individual ratings of seven items responded to by most participants: place(s) I will visit, planned accommodations, vacation budget, planned activities, amount of time for vacation, calendar placement of vacation, and overall vacation plans. Although this index of average constraint was not related to overall satisfaction with the vacation ($\underline{r}$ = .05), it was moderately related to the enthusiasm with which the individual anticipated the vacation, $\underline{r}(236)$ = .18, $p < .01$. Individuals who reported having a greater degree of constraints associated with their vacation tended to anticipate their vacation with less enthusiasm.

Overall Vacation Anticipation and Overall Vacation Satisfaction

Individuals who anticipated their vacations positively tended to remain positive in their post-vacation evaluations, while those who experienced disappointing vacations appeared less pleased with their vacations from the outset. Specifically, an individual's Overall Vacation Anticipation score predicted his or her Overall Vacation

Satisfaction score, $r(248) = .62$, $p < .001$, so that ultimately dissatisfied vacationers ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.70$) were significantly less enthusiastic about their upcoming vacation than were satisfied vacationers ($M = 1.72$, $SD = .92$), $t(246) = 9.65$, $p < .001$.

Differences Between Satisfied and Dissatisfied Vacationers

A series of t tests and correlational analyses were performed in order to detect any differences between satisfied and dissatisfied vacationers with respect to age, sex, education, length of vacation, vacation destinations, and strength of expectations. Vacation satisfaction was found to be unrelated to age (older adults: $M = 2.31$, $SD = 1.31$; students: $M = 2.47$, $SD = 1.23$), $t(248) = .88$; or sex (female: $M = 2.33$, $SD = 1.29$; male: $M = 2.52$, $SD = 1.44$), $t(249) = 1.11$; or education, $r(230) = .04$. Length of vacation was compared between satisfied and disappointed vacationers, which revealed that dissatisfied vacationers took shorter vacations (satisfied: $M = 8.53$ days, $SD = 5.33$; dissatisfied: $M = 6.22$ days, $SD = 4.32$), $t(147) = 2.26$, $p < .05$; this was confirmed with a correlational analysis, in which length of vacation was related to vacation satisfaction, $r(149) = .20$, $p < .01$.

Because an individual could have listed multiple vacation destinations, it was impossible to distinguish whether dissatisfied vacationers had different destinations from satisfied vacationers. Instead, type of destination was rank ordered for both satisfied and dissatisfied vacationers (as had been done for the entire sample). The top three destinations for both groups were the same, which were: cities/states, beach areas, and national and state parks, respectively.

Finally, in order to test whether the expectations of dissatisfied vacationers had been greater than that of satisfied vacationers (thus, more difficult to fulfill), a series of t tests was performed. Results demonstrated that satisfied and dissatisfied vacationers did not differ statistically with respect to the strength of their expectations in any of the six motivation areas prior to vacation (see Table 9). In the current sample, satisfied and disappointed vacationers reported similar expectations regarding opportunities for social interaction, intellectual achievement, rest, and other experiences while on vacation.

The Contribution of Vacation Outcome to Life Satisfaction

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed using post-vacation life satisfaction as the dependent variable, and entering pre-vacation life satisfaction, overall vacation satisfaction, and the interaction of the two as predictors. Post-vacation life satisfaction was most strongly predicted by and accounted for by pre-vacation life satisfaction; however, satisfaction with vacation did contribute significantly to life satisfaction following vacation. The interaction term of pre-vacation life satisfaction and vacation satisfaction contributed nothing to the prediction of post-vacation life satisfaction (see Table 10).

Comparisons were then made between pre- and post-vacation evaluations of the nine separate life domains measured in this study, with particular attention given to evaluations of job, family, recreation opportunities, and leisure. Differences between pre- and post-vacation scores were noted in four life domains, which were consistent for both satisfied and non-satisfied vacationers.

Table 10. Multiple Regression Analysis of the Contribution of Vacation Satisfaction to Post-vacation Overall Life Satisfaction.

<u>Post-vacation Life Satisfaction</u>				
<u>Step</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>R² Incr.</u>
1.	Pre-vacation Life Satisfaction (PLS)	.75	.56	.56**
2.	Vacation Satisfaction (VS)	.76	.57	.01*
3.	Interaction (PLS X VS)	.76	.57	.00

* $p < .01$ ** $p < .001$

Specifically, Satisfaction with Recreation Opportunities increased after vacation (prior to vacation: $\underline{M} = 2.95$, $\underline{SD} = 1.09$; after vacation: $\underline{M} = 2.79$, $\underline{SD} = .98$), $\underline{t}(248) = 2.56$, $p < .05$, as well as Satisfaction with Standard of Living (prior to vacation: $\underline{M} = 3.13$, $\underline{SD} = 1.29$; after vacation: $\underline{M} = 3.02$, $\underline{SD} = 1.23$), $\underline{t}(228) = 2.03$, $p < .05$. On the other hand, Satisfaction with Others decreased after vacation (prior to vacation: $\underline{M} = 2.72$, $\underline{SD} = .78$; after vacation: $\underline{M} = 2.84$, $\underline{SD} = .79$), $\underline{t}(244) = 3.22$, $p < .001$, as did Satisfaction with Parental Family (prior to vacation: $\underline{M} = 2.74$, $\underline{SD} = 1.03$; after vacation: $\underline{M} = 2.85$, $\underline{SD} = 1.01$), $\underline{t}(233) = 2.30$, $p < .05$. There were no other differences between pre- and post-vacation life satisfaction scores when partitioned according to vacation satisfaction; there were no changes in life domain evaluations relevant to satisfying or unsatisfying vacations. When divided according to vacation satisfaction, however, examination of the means of life domains revealed that individuals who experienced unsatisfying vacations evaluated their life more negatively in all domains, both before and after vacation. The results of these comparisons, as shown in Table 11, suggest that satisfied and dissatisfied vacationers differed in another respect, that is, in the overall outlook concerning their own lives, altogether independent of vacations. In fact, Overall Life Satisfaction, measured prior to vacation, was found to relate to Overall Vacation Satisfaction, $\underline{r}(178) = .46$, $p < .001$.

Other Vacation-Related Information

Time required to feel "on vacation." When asked how much time elapsed before the person felt like he or she was "on vacation," 53% reported feeling "on vacation" as soon they left, and another 22% felt

Table 11. Life Domain Satisfaction Means of Satisfied and Dissatisfied Vacationers, as Measured Before and After Vacation.

<u>Before Vacation</u> <u>Satisfaction With:</u>	<u>Vacation</u> <u>Satisfaction</u>		<u>t test</u>	
	<u>High</u> <u>M</u> (<u>SD</u>)	<u>Low</u> <u>M</u> (<u>SD</u>)		
Self	2.96 (.89)	3.64 (1.21)	$\underline{t}(52) = 3.49$	$p < .001$
Nuclear Family	2.12 (1.41)	4.07 (2.10)	$\underline{t}(17) = 3.42$	$p < .01$
Parental Family	2.63 (.93)	3.52 (1.27)	$\underline{t}(51) = 4.30$	$p < .001$
Others	2.60 (.74)	3.67 (.71)	$\underline{t}(61) = 6.42$	$p < .001$
Job	3.20 (.95)	3.70 (1.24)	$\underline{t}(43) = 2.24$	$p < .05$
Standard of Living	3.13 (1.30)	3.30 (1.48)	$\underline{t}(55) = .71$	ns
Recreation Opp.	2.89 (1.09)	3.33 (1.17)	$\underline{t}(58) = 2.27$	$p < .05$
Leisure	3.51 (.98)	3.95 (1.01)	$\underline{t}(60) = 2.64$	$p < .05$
Community	2.93 (1.10)	3.52 (1.34)	$\underline{t}(56) = 2.69$	$p < .01$
OVERALL LIFE	2.41 (.92)	3.47 (1.38)	$\underline{t}(53) = 4.90$	$p < .001$
<u>After Vacation</u> <u>Satisfaction With:</u>				
Self	2.92 (.85)	3.95 (1.00)	$\underline{t}(54) = 6.28$	$p < .001$
Nuclear Family	2.22 (1.30)	4.09 (1.91)	$\underline{t}(21) = 3.91$	$p < .001$
Parental Family	2.71 (.89)	3.59 (1.26)	$\underline{t}(50) = 4.31$	$p < .001$
Others	2.70 (.72)	3.57 (.75)	$\underline{t}(59) = 6.96$	$p < .001$
Job	3.12 (.94)	3.58 (1.12)	$\underline{t}(51) = 2.37$	$p < .05$
Standard of Living	2.98 (1.18)	3.46 (1.61)	$\underline{t}(54) = 1.89$	ns
Recreation Opp.	2.71 (.94)	3.22 (1.06)	$\underline{t}(58) = 2.92$	$p < .01$
Leisure	3.45 (1.02)	3.93 (1.10)	$\underline{t}(33) = 2.05$	$p < .05$
Community	2.86 (1.09)	3.48 (1.43)	$\underline{t}(51) = 2.66$	$p < .01$
OVERALL LIFE	2.51 (.99)	3.56 (1.28)	$\underline{t}(53) = 5.07$	$p < .001$

(Likert scale: 1 = delighted, 7 = terrible).

that they were "on vacation" within one day; eleven percent of the sample required 2 days to feel "on vacation," while four percent required 3 or more days. Finally, ten percent of vacationers reported that they were "never able to really feel I was 'on vacation'."

Correlational analyses revealed that Overall Vacation Satisfaction was related to the length of time that it took to feel "on vacation", i.e., the longer it took to feel "on vacation," the less satisfied the individual was with the vacation, $r(255) = .41$, $p < .001$. There were no differences with regard to age or sex of vacationer.

Desire for more vacation time. Upon their return home, 72% of the sample indicated that they wished the vacation could have lasted longer, while 28% reported that they were ready to return home. Chi-Square analysis revealed no differences between men and women or students and older adults. Individuals who reported feeling "ready to return home" were less satisfied with their vacation (ready to return home: $M = 2.65$, $SD = 1.31$; wish the vacation were longer: $M = 2.34$, $SD = 1.21$); however, the difference was not statistically significant, $t(251) = 1.77$, $p < .07$.

Time elapsed between vacation completion and return to work. The majority (52%) of participants had to return to work or school the next day after their vacation, and 23% went back to work on the second day of their return. Six percent postponed returning to work or school for 3 days, and eleven percent enjoyed more than 3 days off before returning to work or school. No relationship appeared between time elapsed and vacation satisfaction or life satisfaction.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

A number of goals were established at the outset of the present research, among them the identification of vacation expectations and the relationship between an individual's perceived fulfillment of those expectations and satisfaction with the vacation. In addition, other salient aspects of the vacation were examined in terms of their relationship to vacation satisfaction, including vacation destinations, services, as were perceived constraints and obligations, such as visiting family and vacation budget. Another goal was to investigate the contribution that vacations might make to an individual's life satisfaction. Finally, additional information related to the taking of vacations was sought, including the number of days a person required before feeling like he or she was "on vacation", and whether or not the individual was ready to return home at the vacation's end.

Present results support the application of leisure motivation concepts and measures to the study of vacations, and suggest that vacations represent opportunities for an individual to fulfill leisure needs. Extension of Beard and Ragheb's (1983) leisure motivation scales resulted in the emergence of six types of vacation expectations, representing vacationers' desires to enhance their intellectual awareness, facilitate relationships with friends and family, improve their physical competence and mastery, pursue adventure and novelty, and of course, rest and relax. Predictably,

younger and older individuals differed to the degree they sought some of these experiences while on vacation. Students desired more opportunities for social interaction and more opportunities to improve or demonstrate competence and mastery than did older vacationers. Although "Work-related Advantages" ("School-related" for students) was another factor that emerged in this study, it would be more accurate to describe participants' responses to this scale as "work avoidance", as scores on this scale were extremely low. Unlike results produced by Rubenstein's (1980) survey, there did not appear to be any "work-aholics" in this sample who viewed vacations as time to catch up or get ahead in work. While this result was predictable for the students, it may be that a larger sample of older adults would have produced more individuals concerned about work while on vacation. Not included in the survey were items that measured the vacationers sense of "work piling up," which would probably have produced markedly different responses from older adults. Otherwise, two sets of experiences were strongly desired by all individuals; vacationers hoped to have a great amount of fun and adventure, and to be able to relax and relieve tension while on vacation.

Using qualitative methodologies, Rubenstein (1980) and Crompton (1979) also found that the pursuit of rest and relaxation was foremost in the minds of vacationers. The desire for stimulation and excitement, although present in these earlier studies, tended to be less of a priority, falling behind intellectual enrichment and kinship relations. The current findings appear to parallel advertising strategies of travel organizations, in which vacation destinations are promoted as both "fun and exciting" as well as "restful and relaxing."

The increase in desirability of thrill-seeking experiences while on vacation suggests that the advertising media may have had an effect upon the types of expectations the contemporary vacationer possesses.

The current research provides moderate support for a model which predicts satisfaction based upon the congruence or discrepancy of expectations and actual experience, similar to that of Anderson's (1973) Consumer Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction. The greater the discrepancy between desired and obtained experiences, particularly thrill-seeking, intellectual enrichment, relaxation, and opportunities to demonstrate or improve competence, the more likely was a vacationer to be dissatisfied with his or her vacation. However, the strength of the relationship between vacation discrepancy and vacation satisfaction was not as great as that between ratings of vacation aspects (destination, accommodations, activities, etc.) and satisfaction. It may be that the rated aspects of vacations were more salient in the minds of vacationers, leading to a greater association with vacation satisfaction. Also, it should be noted that there were few dissatisfied vacationers -- outside of an unfortunate event marring the vacation, vacations may be inherently satisfying. Most individuals were probably pleased just to have gotten away from work and responsibilities, and less concerned about obtaining optimal amounts of experiences.

Otherwise, the two types of experiences most highly desired by vacationers -- Stimulus Avoidance and Thrill-seeking -- were also the most important experiences in predicting vacation satisfaction. In contrast to speculation which suggests that an individual should not form high expectations for a vacation because they may be difficult to

fulfill, current empirical results revealed that there was no greater likelihood of disappointment when expectations were high. In fact, correlational evidence strongly suggests that the more enthusiastically the individual anticipates the vacation, the more satisfied he or she will be with the vacation.

It had been hypothesized that vacation satisfaction would contribute to life satisfaction (satisfied vacationers reporting greater overall life satisfaction); this prediction was only partially supported. Although the variance accounted for was statistically significant, it represented only one percent of total variance, and further tests could find little to indicate that satisfied vacationers exhibited improved life satisfaction, or that dissatisfied vacationers were significantly less satisfied with their lives. Regardless of age or sex, post-vacation life satisfaction was best predicted by pre-vacation life satisfaction. Nor was there any global increase in life satisfaction following vacation (regardless of vacation satisfaction), as Lounsbury and Hoopes (1986) found.

Perhaps not too surprisingly, an individual's overall satisfaction with his or her life (whether measured before or after vacation) was a good predictor of satisfaction with the vacation. The stability of overall life satisfaction noted in the present research, and its relationship to vacation satisfaction, offers support for other socio-psychological researchers who propose that life satisfaction may be a relatively stable trait rather than situationally determined. Studies in other fields have demonstrated that a person's global, underlying outlook on life may actually determine, rather than be moderated by, evaluations of temporal

events. Much of the literature which addresses stress management points to this conclusion, and in other areas, dispositional traits have been linked to job satisfaction (Staw & Ross, 1985) and leisure activities (Lounsbury & Hoopes, 1988). Certainly, future research involving vacations should explore this topic.

Despite the absence of a large change in overall life satisfaction, some changes were observed in life domain satisfactions before and after vacation, irrespective of vacation outcome. Following a vacation, all individuals reported greater satisfaction with their everyday opportunities for recreation, such as nearby parks and facilities. Also, individuals were uniformly more pleased with their standard of living following a vacation. The increase in satisfaction with "Recreational Opportunities" may be the result of usage of nearby state parks (of which there are many), or more likely, a visit to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. People also may have felt more positively about their standard of living as they reflected upon the fact that their income at least enabled them to take a vacation, an experience not everyone can afford.

Conversely, all vacationers were less pleased with their friends and family after vacation, as "Satisfaction with Others" and "Satisfaction with Parental Family" both decreased after vacation. Supportive evidence of this decline was found in another section of the survey, in which all respondents rated "visiting family" slightly lower and "visiting friends" significantly lower once the vacation was completed. Although many vacationers were obligated to visit family and/or friends while on vacation, perceived obligation was not a good predictor of the individual's feelings about visiting relatives and

friends. An explanation for the disenchantment with friends and family following vacation may be found in the writings of Shakespeare, Lyly, and Benjamin Franklin, who all commented upon the tendency of fish and guests to become stale after three days (Beck, 1980).

Relationships with others may have become strained as compromises were necessarily made to accommodate the desires of different individuals vacationing together, not unlike difficulties faced by new roommates or marriage partners. If this analysis is correct, present findings suggest that vacationers give considerable thought to the amount of time they intend to stay with individuals outside of their household.

Turning to evaluations concerning the more "objective" characteristics of vacations, results indicated that manifest aspects of the vacation, such as destination, accommodations, and time of year, strongly predict the individual's evaluation of the overall vacation. These results do not suggest, however, that there are some destinations or times of the year which are inherently more satisfying for vacations. Although the majority of students took their vacation in the middle to latter part of April (Spring Break), other individuals in the current sample took their vacations at different times of the year, and all had a wide variety of destinations. As Crompton (1979) discovered in his interviews, objective elements may not be so important in and of themselves; their importance may stem from their role in facilitating or frustrating the fulfillment of expectations during the vacation. Lounsbury and Hoopes (1985) also speculated that vacation satisfaction was not predictable from objective attributes of people or situations, but instead was a function of a "person-environment" fit. Opportunities for relaxation,

adventure, social interaction, and intellectual enhancement were found to be dependent upon the individual's perception of the destination's ability to provide those experiences. Predictably, dissatisfied vacationers in this study rated the destination, accommodations, and calendar placement of their vacation lower, probably because they felt that these aspects of their vacation had interfered with their ability to enjoy themselves. (Participants may have associated "calendar placement of vacation" with weather conditions and rated it accordingly, although this cannot be confirmed.)

Consistent with Kelly's (1976) finding that many people perceive their leisure to be under some amount of obligation or constraint, participants in the current study also indicated that a number of aspects associated with their vacation were obligatory and/or constrained. Predictably, the amount of time available for vacation, the time of year in which the vacation could be taken, and the financial considerations were highly constrained for most of the sample. Otherwise, almost half of the sample reported that they were "considerably" or "unavoidably" obliged to visit family and/or friends, and 28% felt equally obligated to bring along job-related work. Despite this, degree of perceived obligation and constraint was unrelated to vacation satisfaction, although it was moderately related to the enthusiasm with which the individual anticipated the vacation.

An explanation of the lack of predictive relationship between constraint and satisfaction, as described by other researchers (Gunter, 1987; Francken & van Raaij, 1981; Kelly, 1976; Roadburg, 1983) may reside within Harper's (1986) discussion of "freedom in the experience of leisure." Harper rejects the notion that an activity

must be entirely free of obligation in order to be experienced as leisure. Instead, he proposes that freedom is lived through the experience of leisure; activities in which the person has freely consented, and in which there is ongoing cooperation, may allow for a pleasurable experience despite any objective obligation to engage in that activity. Although an individual may be obligated to visit family or friends, the visit may be perceived as acceptable and even desirable, and the experience itself experienced as pleasurable. On the other hand, if this obligation is not desired by the vacationer, it may constitute a source of unhappiness or frustration, and contribute to a lessened level of anticipation and/or subsequent satisfaction with the vacation.

Unlike previous studies which found differences according to sex (Rubenstein, 1980) and education (Lounsbury and Hoopes, 1985), satisfied and dissatisfied vacationers in this sample did not differ according to sex, age, or level of education. While dissatisfied vacationers tended to rate all aspects of their vacation more negatively than satisfied vacationers, only one objective difference appeared. Dissatisfied vacationers took shorter vacations (six days as opposed to eight days, which was the norm) than did satisfied vacationers.

As Rubenstein (1980) found, the more satisfied vacationers in the present study were able to "wind down" and enjoy their vacation soon after it began. At the completion of their vacation, vacationers did not want to return -- 72% of the participants wished that the vacation could have lasted longer (as opposed to being "ready to return home"); particularly those who were happy with their vacations. In fact,

three-quarters of vacationers did not return until they had to -- one or two days before their return to work or school. In her survey of how Americans view vacations, Rubenstein reported that most (no statistic provided) of her respondents were at least somewhat glad to be home, and eager to return to work. Although the type of question asked of participants was framed differently (in the present study, participants were forced to choose between two options -- in Rubenstein's survey, it appears a Likert scale was used), the current study suggests that vacationers were not as happy about returning to home and work as were Rubenstein's respondents.

In summary, several observations can be made. Individuals do form specific expectations regarding their upcoming vacations, and it is important that the destination(s) selected be perceived by the individual as having the ability to fulfill those expectations. A high degree of positive anticipation increases the likelihood that the individual will be satisfied with the vacation. It may be advisable to keep traveling with (and visiting) family and friends to a minimum, as several vacationers became disgruntled with others during their vacation. While a vacation may or may not have a direct impact upon one's overall life satisfaction, it may increase an individual's satisfaction with recreational opportunities and personal standard of living, thereby indirectly contributing to a sense of welfare.

On a larger scale, the present study demonstrates the profitability of using vacations as a context for study. Vacations not only provide information about topics particular to vacations and to the field of leisure research, but also to wider applications, such as the prediction of psychological response based upon congruence and

discrepancy of expectations and experience. Current results suggest that a model similar to Anderson's (1973) Consumer Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction may exist with regard to vacations, and perhaps for other leisure activities as well. Along these lines, the role that expectations play in subsequent evaluations of an experience bears further examination.

Although the present investigation did not delve deeply into the relationship between constraint and the experience of leisure, results suggest that there is not a linear relationship between degree of constraint and satisfaction with a leisure activity. Current debate concerning the meaning of leisure has not yet successfully described the role of leisure satisfaction as it relates to perceived constraints. The present investigation supports the views of Harper (1986) and others who propose that the meaning of leisure is a product of individual meanings and experiences, and may not be easily defined.

Preliminary investigation offered by the current study should serve as a basis for a continued and expanded study of vacations, with attention given to the recommendations presented.

Limitations and Recommendations

Undergraduates were solicited for participation after a number of difficulties arose in obtaining adults from the general population. The use of undergraduates, however, poses problems of generalizability in a study of vacations. Most particularly, a student's perceptions of and attachments to school and an employee's perceptions of and attachments to work are not analogous. While some scale responses appeared similar for these two groups, not enough working adults were present in the sample to assume that findings would be repeated in

another study which excluded students. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that only working adults, preferably drawn from several sources, are solicited in future investigations. The use of travel agencies which sponsor tours should be pursued, with the stipulation that the investigator be present for the distribution and collection of surveys. Also, more working adults might be solicited through cooperation with a large organization which employs many individuals, and has the vacation schedules of employees on record.

In addition to the foregoing, a second limitation concerns the fact that this investigation sampled only one vacation per individual. It is reasonable to assume that different vacations across time include varying expectations, constraints, and characteristics. To increase scientific understanding of vacations, it will be necessary to sample several vacations across time and across individuals. To address these and other issues, future research should employ a qualitative methodology, either singly or in conjunction with other quantitative measures. Qualitative methods, such as obtaining direct responses to open-ended questions (through interview or survey format) would facilitate a better understanding of the factors perceived by participants to influence vacation satisfaction. For example, using phenomenological (experience-based) interviews, individuals could be asked to describe their best and worst vacations. Thematic analysis would then be implemented to uncover themes common across participants. In addition, using interviews and/or open-ended statements in surveys, Crompton's (1979) study could be expanded to further investigate an individual's reasons for taking a vacation, and the role that expectations may play in vacation satisfaction. It

would be illuminating for individuals to describe their own perceptions of the relationship between expectations and satisfaction, and what other factors were important in evaluating the vacation.

In the initial survey of the current study, items were included to measure the individual's desire for escape and self-improvement while on vacation. Although an attempt to factor these items was unsuccessful, sufficient evidence exists in the literature to warrant further attempts to create meaningful scales measuring escape, self-development, and other motivations as described by Crandall (1980). It would also be informative to explore the differences between "escape to" an experience as opposed to "escape from" a situation. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies would be useful in creating a more complete set of vacation measures.

Vacation constraints and obligations could be pursued, with attention given to the effect (if any) upon an individual's satisfaction with a vacation. If future investigations also fail to find a relationship between rated level of obligation and vacation satisfaction, then Harper's (1986) argument that "freedom of choice" should not be included as a requirement in a definition of leisure would be supported. In addition, information regarding anticipated vacations to be taken after the immediately occurring vacation should be collected. An upcoming vacation which is perceived to be highly obligated might be offset in the individual's mind by the fact that he or she has another vacation scheduled which is relatively free of undesired obligations or constraints.

Qualitative methodologies could also pursue other unanswered questions. For example, what accounted for the dissatisfaction with

friends and family following vacation? What experiences contributed to a dissatisfying vacation? Vacation satisfaction was clearly predicted by the person's enthusiasm displayed prior to vacation; individuals seemed to know prior to vacation whether or not they would be satisfied. However, the reasons for an individual's global lack of enthusiasm toward a vacation remained indiscernible from the current instrument. Future research should have dissatisfied vacationers discuss their lowered anticipation prior to vacation, and also, to expound upon the effect of various elements of the vacation as it progressed.

Research which examines the contribution of vacations to life satisfaction remains equivocal to date. If global evaluations of life satisfaction are as relatively stable as some researchers have suggested, it might be worthwhile to include an instrument designed to capture variances of mood in future research. Vacations may have a more temporal than lasting effect. Undoubtedly, however, the number and nature of vacations that an individual is able to take should contribute to life satisfaction. Questions concerning the individual's history of vacations should be collected in further investigations, including average number per year, length of time, nature of vacation, perhaps even family history (as a child) of vacations. In this way, it would be possible to obtain a clearer picture of the meaning of vacations to individuals and the role that they play in a person's life.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

THE PRE- AND POST-VACATION SURVEYS

Table A-1. Vacation Obligations and Constraints.

Many activities that we do during our vacations have some amount of obligation, or are things that we feel we are bound to do to some extent. For the following list of activities you might do on your vacation, please indicate how obligated or constrained you feel that you are to do these things. Circle (na) if you will NOT do a particular activity.

* PACKAGE vacation or CRUISE refers to vacations that do NOT have daily scheduled activities one must do, whereas an ORGANIZED TOUR does have scheduled daily activities that are part of the vacation.

AMOUNT OF CONSTRAINT OR OBLIGATION

5. Unavoidable.....
 4. Considerable.... :
 3. Moderate.... : :
 2. Very little.... : : :
 1. None.... : : : :

THERE IS _____ AMOUNT OF CONSTRAINT IN MY CHOICE:	:	:	:	:	:
1. To visit relatives	1	2	3	4	5 na
2. To visit friends	1	2	3	4	5 na
3. To do or think about work related to my job	1	2	3	4	5 na
4. To travel with children	1	2	3	4	5 na
5. To be a part of an organized group	1	2	3	4	5 na
6. To be a part of an unorganized group (package) ...	1	2	3	4	5 na
7. Of place to vacation	1	2	3	4	5
8. Of planned accommodations	1	2	3	4	5
9. Of vacation budget	1	2	3	4	5
10. Of planned activities	1	2	3	4	5
11. Of the amount of time I have for my vacation	1	2	3	4	5
12. Of the time of year in which to take my vacation .	1	2	3	4	5
13. To travel with relatives (parents, in-laws, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5 na
14. To travel with friends	1	2	3	4	5 na
15. To travel with co-workers	1	2	3	4	5 na
16. Of my overall vacation plans	1	2	3	4	5
17. To take a vacation (that I have to take one).....	1	2	3	4	5

Table A-2. Satisfaction with Obligations and Constraints.

How do you feel about these aspects	7. Terrible....
of your vacation?	6. Unhappy.... :
	5. Mostly Dissatisfied.... :
	4. Mixed.... : :
	3. Mostly Satisfied.... : :
	2. Pleased.... : :
	1. Delighted.... : :
IN LOOKING TOWARD MY VACATION, I FEEL ____ ABOUT:	: : : : :
1. Visiting relatives	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
2. Visiting friends	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
3. Bringing along job-related work	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
4. Bringing along children	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
5. Being a part of an organized tour	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
6. Being a part of a package vacation or cruise ...	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
7. The place(s) I will visit	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. My planned accommodations	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. My vacation budget	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. My planned activities	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. The amount of time I have	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. The calendar placement of my vacation	
- when I can actually take it	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. Traveling with relatives	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
14. Traveling with friends	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
15. Traveling with co-workers	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
16. My overall vacation plans	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. AS I LOOK TOWARD MY VACATION, I FEEL	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Table A-3. Vacation Motivations.

What are some activities that you WOULD LIKE TO DO on your vacation?
(not necessarily what you WILL do).

	5. Very much more....	
	4. Somewhat more.... :	
	3. About the same.... :	
	2. Not very much.... :	
	1. Not at all.... :	
On my vacation I WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO:	:	:
1. Expand my interests and knowledge	1	2 3 4 5
2. Seek mental stimulation	1	2 3 4 5
3. Keep informed about the world around me	1	2 3 4 5
4. Satisfy my curiosity	1	2 3 4 5
5. Explore new ideas	1	2 3 4 5
6. Learn about myself	1	2 3 4 5
7. Expand my knowledge	1	2 3 4 5
8. Be creative	1	2 3 4 5
9. Use my imagination	1	2 3 4 5
10. Have fun	1	2 3 4 5
11. Be in a calm atmosphere	1	2 3 4 5
12. Avoid crowded areas	1	2 3 4 5
13. Slow down	1	2 3 4 5
14. Be alone	1	2 3 4 5
15. Relax	1	2 3 4 5
16. Not think--tune out the world	1	2 3 4 5
17. Avoid the hustle and bustle of daily activities	1	2 3 4 5
18. Rest	1	2 3 4 5
19. Relieve stress and tension	1	2 3 4 5
20. Solve a problem related to my work	1	2 3 4 5
21. "Lose myself" in an activity or experience	1	2 3 4 5
22. Escape routine or responsibilities	1	2 3 4 5
23. Get excited - get the adrenaline flowing	1	2 3 4 5
24. Be adventurous	1	2 3 4 5
25. Take risks	1	2 3 4 5
26. Be stimulated	1	2 3 4 5
27. Seek pleasurable sensations	1	2 3 4 5
28. Avoid boredom	1	2 3 4 5
29. Seek stimulation	1	2 3 4 5
30. Get a feeling of achievement	1	2 3 4 5
31. Test myself	1	2 3 4 5
32. Challenge my abilities	1	2 3 4 5
33. Improve skills or abilities	1	2 3 4 5
34. Master a new skill or ability	1	2 3 4 5
35. Be good at doing something	1	2 3 4 5
36. Compete with others	1	2 3 4 5
37. Work toward personal development	1	2 3 4 5
38. Interact with other people	1	2 3 4 5
39. Develop or maintain friendships	1	2 3 4 5
40. Meet new and different people	1	2 3 4 5
41. Help others	1	2 3 4 5
42. Think about a project at work	1	2 3 4 5

Table A-3 (continued). Vacation Motivations.

	5. Very much more....				
	4. Somewhat more....	:	:	:	:
	3. About the same....	:	:	:	:
	2. Not very much....	:	:	:	:
	1. Not at all....	:	:	:	:
On my vacation I WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO:		:	:	:	:
43. Share my thoughts or feelings with another person....	1	2	3	4	5
44. Influence others	1	2	3	4	5
45. Feel that I'm a part of a group or community	1	2	3	4	5
46. Be intimate with another person	1	2	3	4	5
47. Coach, teach, or instruct others	1	2	3	4	5
48. Meet members of the opposite sex	1	2	3	4	5
49. Be physically active	1	2	3	4	5
50. Develop physical skills and abilities.....	1	2	3	4	5
51. Keep in shape	1	2	3	4	5
52. Use my physical abilities	1	2	3	4	5
53. Escape from responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
54. Feel free to pursue leisure activities	1	2	3	4	5
55. Spend time with people I am close to	1	2	3	4	5
56. Improve my perspective on my life	1	2	3	4	5
57. Plan projects I will do at work	1	2	3	4	5
58. Go to a new setting	1	2	3	4	5
59. Explore new places or cultures	1	2	3	4	5
60. Express more of my "true self"	1	2	3	4	5
61. Work toward professional development	1	2	3	4	5
62. Balance the different aspects of my life	1	2	3	4	5
63. Think about my job	1	2	3	4	5
64. Please and accommodate others	1	2	3	4	5
65. Do something simple and easy	1	2	3	4	5
66. Get so involved that I "lose myself" in an activity .	1	2	3	4	5
67. Forget about work or other concerns	1	2	3	4	5
68. AS I LOOK FORWARD TO THIS VACATION, I FEEL (check one):					
___delighted ___pleased ___mostly satisfied ___mixed					
___mostly dissatisfied ___unhappy ___terrible					

Table A-4 (continued). Life Satisfaction.

	7. Terrible....	
How do you feel about	6. Unhappy.... :	
these areas of your life?	5. Mostly dissatisfied.... :	
	4. Mixed.... : : :	
	3. Mostly satisfied.... : : : :	
	2. Pleased.... : : : : :	
	1. Delighted.... : : : : : :	
	: : : : : :	
34. What it is like where you work - the physical		
surroundings, the hours, the amount of work	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
35. What you have available for doing your job		
- equipment, information, good supervision, etc. .	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
36. How well your family agrees on how family income		
should be spent	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
37. The income you (and your family) have	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
38. How comfortable and well-off you are	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
39. Your current standard of living - the things you		
have like housing, car, furniture, etc.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
40. Your house/apartment	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
41. The outdoor space there is for you to use		
outside your home	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
42. Your particular neighborhood as a place to live ..	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
43. Your community as a place to live	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
44. The things you do in your free time	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
45. The time you have for "yourself"	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
46. How much you're able to do your hobbies		
or special interests	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
47. Outdoor places you can go in your spare time	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
48. Nearby places to use for recreation or sports	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
49. The sports or recreation facilities you use or		
would like to use, like parks or bowling alleys.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
50. YOUR LIFE AS A WHOLE	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	

Table A-5. Post-vacation Satisfaction with Obligations and Constraints.

How do you feel about these aspects of your vacation?

7. Terrible....
6. Unhappy.... :
5. Mostly Dissatisfied.... :
4. Mixed.... : :
3. Mostly Satisfied.... : : :
2. Pleased.... : : : :
1. Delighted.... : : : : :

IN LOOKING BACK AT MY VACATION, I FEEL ____ ABOUT: : : : : :

1. Visiting relatives 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
2. Visiting friends 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
3. Bringing along job-related work 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
4. Bringing along children 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
5. Being a part of an organized tour 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
6. Being a part of a package vacation or cruise ... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
7. The place(s) I visited 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. My accommodations 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. My vacation budget 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. My activities 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. The amount of time I had 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. The calendar placement of my vacation
- when I actually took it 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. Traveling with relatives 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
14. Traveling with friends 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
15. Traveling with co-workers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 na
16. My overall vacation plans 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. AS I LOOK BACK AT MY VACATION, I FEEL 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Table A-6. Post-Vacation Discrepancies.

What were some activities you were able to do while you were on vacation? How much were you able to do what you wanted?

	5. Very much more than I wanted....				
	4. Somewhat more than I wanted....	:	:	:	:
	3. About the same as I wanted....	:	:	:	:
	2. Not as much as I wanted....	:	:	:	:
	1. Not at all what I wanted....	:	:	:	:
On my vacation I WAS ABLE TO:		:	:	:	:
1. Expand my interests and knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
2. Seek mental stimulation	1	2	3	4	5
3. Keep informed about the world around me	1	2	3	4	5
4. Satisfy my curiosity	1	2	3	4	5
5. Explore new ideas	1	2	3	4	5
6. Learn about myself	1	2	3	4	5
7. Expand my knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
8. Be creative	1	2	3	4	5
9. Use my imagination	1	2	3	4	5
10. Have fun	1	2	3	4	5
11. Be in a calm atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5
12. Avoid crowded areas	1	2	3	4	5
13. Slow down	1	2	3	4	5
14. Be alone	1	2	3	4	5
15. Relax	1	2	3	4	5
16. Not think--tune out the world	1	2	3	4	5
17. Avoid the hustle and bustle of daily activity.....	1	2	3	4	5
18. Rest	1	2	3	4	5
19. Relieve stress and tension	1	2	3	4	5
20. Solve a problem related to my work	1	2	3	4	5
21. "Lose myself" in an activity or experience	1	2	3	4	5
22. Escape routine or responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
23. Get excited - get the adrenaline flowing	1	2	3	4	5
24. Be adventurous	1	2	3	4	5
25. Take risks	1	2	3	4	5
26. Be stimulated	1	2	3	4	5
27. Seek pleasurable sensations	1	2	3	4	5
28. Avoid boredom	1	2	3	4	5
29. Seek stimulation	1	2	3	4	5
30. Get a feeling of achievement	1	2	3	4	5
31. Test myself	1	2	3	4	5
32. Challenge my abilities	1	2	3	4	5
33. Improve skills or abilities	1	2	3	4	5
34. Master a new skill or ability	1	2	3	4	5
35. Be good at doing something	1	2	3	4	5
36. Compete with others	1	2	3	4	5
37. Work toward personal development	1	2	3	4	5
38. Interact with other people	1	2	3	4	5
39. Develop or maintain friendships	1	2	3	4	5
40. Meet new and different people	1	2	3	4	5
41. Help others	1	2	3	4	5
42. Think about a project at work	1	2	3	4	5

Table A-6 (continued). Post-Vacation Discrepancies.

	5. Very much more than I wanted....				
	4. Somewhat more than I wanted.... :				
	3. About the same as I wanted.... :				
	2. Not as much as I wanted.... :				
	1. Not at all what I wanted.... :				
On my vacation I WAS ABLE TO:		:	:	:	:
43. Share my thoughts or feelings with another person ...	1	2	3	4	5
44. Influence others	1	2	3	4	5
45. Feel that I'm a part of a group or community	1	2	3	4	5
46. Be intimate with another person	1	2	3	4	5
47. Coach, teach, or instruct others	1	2	3	4	5
48. Meet members of the opposite sex	1	2	3	4	5
49. Be physically active	1	2	3	4	5
50. Develop physical skills and abilities.....	1	2	3	4	5
51. Keep in shape	1	2	3	4	5
52. Use my physical abilities	1	2	3	4	5
53. Escape from responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
54. Feel free to pursue leisure activities	1	2	3	4	5
55. Spend time with people I am close to	1	2	3	4	5
56. Improve my perspective on my life	1	2	3	4	5
57. Plan projects I will do at work	1	2	3	4	5
58. Go to a new setting	1	2	3	4	5
59. Explore new places or cultures	1	2	3	4	5
60. Express more of my "true self"	1	2	3	4	5
61. Work toward professional development	1	2	3	4	5
62. Balance the different aspects of my life	1	2	3	4	5
63. Think about my job	1	2	3	4	5
64. Please and accommodate others	1	2	3	4	5
65. Do something simple and easy	1	2	3	4	5
66. Get so involved that I "lose myself" in an activity .	1	2	3	4	5
67. Forget about work or other concerns	1	2	3	4	5
68. AS I LOOK BACK ON THIS VACATION, I FEEL (check one):					
___delighted ___pleased ___mostly satisfied ___mixed					
___mostly dissatisfied ___unhappy ___terrible					

VITA

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