SEGMENTING THE MARKET FOR LEISURE TIME SERVICES

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Abstract

This study investigates joint use of the satisfactions derived from leisure activities and from demographics to segment the market for leisure time services. These satisfactions, when experienced, represent affective benefits received by participants. To the extent these two types of variables can be found related to one another, public officials (and others) can develop programs to provide leisure services to serve these segments as jointly defined. In fact, the empirical results show that viable segments can be jointly characterized on the basis of demographics and these elements of the satisfactions experienced by consumers: Psychological, Educational, Relaxation, Physiological, and Aesthetic dimensions of satisfaction with leisure activities.

Recent years have seen a widespread increase in the application of segmentation techniques to the markets for services (Sawyer and Arbeit 1974; Anderson, Cox and Fulcher 1976; Darden, Darden and Kiser 1981; Griffith and Wells 1984). Predictably, these studies have involved a wide variety of different services. One of the areas studied has been the demand for market offerings that help consumers spend their scarce resource of time. In particular, marketing researchers have recently become interested in that aspect of human behavior that relates to the way consumers spend their leisure time (Anderson and Golden 1984; Bloch and Bruce 1984). These studies have investigated how individuals allocate their time to various leisure pursuits. Some have provided information concerning the characteristics of those segments of consumers involved in the more popular patterns of leisure activity (Hawes 1978).

Another stream of research has involved satisfaction as an output measure of the process of consumption (Oliver and Linda 1981; Swan and Trawick 1981). Here, researchers have sought to characterize satisfaction, find suitable measures for the construct, discover who finds satisfaction in consumption.

It is not surprising, then, that the conceptual confluence of these two streams of research should suggest an investigation into the satisfaction derived from leisure-time pursuits (Pierce 1980). This report deals with a study that provides an integration of these research topics. Its motivation was pragmatic; the study was commissioned by government officials charged with developing and managing programs designed to help citizens spend their leisure time in a satisfactory manner. In particular, this study sought to use a marketing perspective to explain who, in terms of the demographic characteristics of the participants, finds various elements of satisfaction in leisure pursuits. In essence, this was a market segmentation study where the segmentation variables, satisfaction and demographics, were considered jointly.

On this basis, the purpose of this research was work within the context of leisure services to: (1) investigate the existence of and provide empirical support for the relationship between elements of satisfaction and demographics; (2) discover the nature of the different segments of consumers delineated by this relationship; and (3) interpret these findings with respect to segmentation to provide marketing information useful to government officials responsible for developing programs to provide leisure time services.

Conceptual Background

Marketers can support consumption of leisure time in two ways: (1) by facilitating participation itself; and (2) by providing services (and products) used by consumers to support this participation. Examples of services of the first type are motion pictures, bowling alleys, and commercial swimming pools. Without the service in question, the consumer would be unable to participate in the leisure activity. Examples of the second type are movie reviews, bowling ball cleaners, and swimming lessons. Here, the service is an adjunct that presumably adds to the enjoyment of the activity, but is not necessary. Consumers could participate without them, by asking friends' opinions about current movies, washing their balls with available tools, and learning to swim by trial and error.

Thus, participation is often intimately connected to consumption of services (and products). Marketers, commercially-sponsored or otherwise, provide the services that are part of the total experience of consuming leisure time, a total experience that has a wholistic nature. As a result, the consumer (or anyone else) would find it difficult to distinguish that component of satisfaction which is intrinsic from that which is due to consumption of the products/services that underlie or support participation (Bloch and Bruce 1984).

Another aspect of this consumption process that makes leisure satisfaction difficult to conceptualize is the effect on overall satisfaction from the interaction between the various pursuits that constitute a person's regimen (Buchanan 1983). Some participants may concentrate their participation on one or a few activities. Others may spread their efforts over a larger number of different pursuits. As a result, the only measurement of satisfaction that may be possible for some consumers is their total satisfaction with their complete program of activities.

In this vein, Beard and Ragheb (1980) empirically derived a set of dimensions claimed to underlie

a person's satisfaction with leisure activities, either taken singly or as a complete program of participation. In a two-stage process, these researchers used principal components analysis to examine the structure of responses to a large set of satisfaction items obtained from groups of 603 and 347 participants. The respondents reported the extent to which each satisfaction item was true of them, responding to a battery that consisted of 51 items in its final form. The resulting leisure satisfaction scale (LSS) attained an alpha coefficient of reliability for the total set of items of .96, with alphas for the six dimensions ranging from .85 to .92. The six dimensions are:

1. Psychological. Psychological benefits such as: a sense of freedom, enjoyment, involvement, and intellectual challenge.

2. Educational. Intellectual stimulation and helps them to learn about themselves and their surroundings.

3. Social. Rewarding relationships with other people.

4. Relaxation. Relief from the stress and strain of life.

5. Physiological. A means to develop physical fitness, stay healthy, control weight, and otherwise promote well being.

6. Aesthetic. Aesthetic rewards. Individuals scoring high on this part view the areas in which they engage in their leisure activities as being pleasing, interesting, beautiful, and generally well designed. (Beard and Ragheb 1980, p. 26).

The concept of market segmentation suggests the market for consumption of leisure time can be formed into meaningful groupings of consumers on the basis of variables that are useful for planning marketing strategy. In the present study, the context is one of developing community programs of leisure activities for the market segments that can be delineated. By effecting segmentation, management can gain an advantage through targeting groupings of persons who are similar in terms of: (1) their responses to offerings in the marketplace and/or (2) other measurable characteristics of consumers; e.g., demographics. Thus, if patterns of individual satisfactions can be linked to patterns of demographics (Pierce 1980), a market segment can be jointly characterized in terms of satisfaction and demographics.

To allow marketers to use the resulting characterizations of market segments, these segments must be defined narrowly enough that their members have recognizable similarities; i.e., so they form a relatively homogenous segment. Using 51 different variables would likely prevent the resulting characterization of any given segment from being narrowly enough defined to provide a suitable target. On this basis it seems worthwhile to conceptually group the variables into the sets defined by the six dimensions of Beard and Ragheb.

One further point should be made regarding the use of satisfaction measures in this marketing study. From a conceptual standpoint, satisfaction can be viewed as a benefit received from a service (or product). In essence, finding satisfaction through participation in leisure activities is an affective benefit for participants. The concept of segmenting markets on the basis of benefits was introduced by Haley (1968) and subsequently applied to the marketing of services by other researchers (Sawyer and Arbeit 1974; Bahn and Granzin 1985). The implication of benefit segmentation for this study is that marketers of services can profitably view their task to comprise two stages. They should first determine the benefits required by their target segment(s), and then plan their programs to provide these benefits.

To consider the other set of segmentation variables, demographics have provided a time-proven measure of market segments. The applied marketing study on which this report is based used demographics to help governmental policy makers: (1) assess the nature of their constituent market for public recreational facilities and services; and (2) judge the acceptance of those facilities and services currently provided. Thus, the demographic variables included in this study reflect the real decision needs of government officials, and the set featured here was chosen on the basis of its usefulness to these policy makers.

Method

Data Collection

Data came from in-person interviews with adults aged 18 and over. The sampling frame comprised households from fifteen population areas located in five different voting districts of a single county in an eastern state. Households were selected to give a representative sample in terms of the socioeconomic characteristics of both urban and non-urban areas of the county. Dwellings were selected by stopping at the every fourth house on each street in the residential areas selected, and each house in the more sparsely populated areas selected.

Trained interviewers presented the self-completion questionnaire and remained with respondents to answer questions, motivate participation, and monitor compliance with the instructions. A total of 435 interviews were completed, which produced 420 usable questionnaires. The official governmental sponsorship of the survey resulted in a relatively high proportion of successfully completed interviews, 84 per cent.

Measurement

The 51 satisfaction items were presented in a format calling for respondents to report their degree of agreement that a particular item was descriptive of them personally. The response

choices were: (1) Never true; (2) Seldom true; (3) Sometimes true; (4) Often true; and (5) Always true. To illustrate, the individual items followed the form of this item taken from those used to represent the educational dimension: "I learn things in my leisure activities simply because I like learning them." Tables 1 through 5 present the items used to measure leisure satisfaction, with wording of some of the items condensed for brevity. On the questionnaire, these 51 items followed a list of 57 leisure pursuits available in the county where they survey took place. This list served to remind respondents of the locally available means to leisure satisfaction.

The 12 demographics were measured by means of open-ended and forced-choice scales of conventional format. Table 1 indicates the nature of the categories and scales used to measure demographics.

Analysis

It would have been unwieldy at best to attempt to statistically relate the entire set of 51 satisfaction variables to the set of demographics. Therefore, for purposes of analysis, the satisfaction variables were grouped according to the basic dimensions of Beard and Ragheb, with the number of variables for each shown in parenthesis: Psychological (13), Educational (12), Social (11), Relaxation (4), Physiological (6), and Aesthetic (5).

Given a continuous set of satisfaction measures and a continuous set of demographics for each of six analyses, canonical correlation was selected as the appropriate statistical technique. Canonical correlation forms a linear compound (canonical variate) of the variables in one set that is maximally correlated with the linear compound formed using the variables in the other set. These pairs (roots) of correlated canonical variates are extracted sequentially until the number of such roots equals the number of variables in the smaller of the two sets. Successive pairs of variates are uncorrelated with the variates extracted by previous roots. Tests of significance for each root indicate its contribution to the analysis. To interpret the contribution of individual variables to the formation of a variate, one can examine the magnitude and sign of the correlation (loading) between each individual variable and the variate. Here, those loadings having an absolute value of .30 and above are considered to indicate variables important to the relationship, and these variables are used in the interpretation of the results.

Results

Table 1 presents the results of the analysis of the hypothesized relationship between the Psychological satisfaction variables and demographics, as computed using the SPSS-X package for statistical analysis. Two roots emerged as significant at the .05 level. To simplify the presentation of results, the signs have been

TABLE 1
CANONICAL ANALYSIS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL
SATISFACTIONS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

	Loadings	
Variables	Root A	Root B
Elements of Satisfaction		
I freely choose activities to do in spare time	-.07	.73
My leisure activities are interesting to me	.38	.57
I enjoy doing my leisure activities	.54	.32
I am frustrated in my free time	-.17	-.02
My leisure activities give me self-confidence	.11	.31
My activities give me a sense of accomplishment	.43	.33
I use many different skills and abilities	.54	.08
I consider leisure activities a waste of time	-.21	.07
When doing them I become fully involved	.08	.22
My choices are limited by my lack of skills	-.41	.13
I feel lonely in my free time	-.25	-.31
My activities are intellectually challenging	.49	.22
They have a positive effect on my life	.53	.35
Demographics		
Gender (0=Male; 1=Female)	-.46	-.20
Age (years)	.11	-.23
Time at current residence (years)	.21	-.30
Occupational prestige (U. of Ill. scale)	.68	-.08
Marital status (0=single; 1=married)	.36	.36
Education (years of schooling)	.07	-.27
Household income (8-point scale)	.47	.61
Number of persons supported by this income	.00	-.30
Ownership of dwelling (0=rents; 1=owns)	.54	-.22
Occupies single-family dwelling (0=no; 1=yes)	.36	.07
Occupies mobile home (0=no; 1=yes)	-.21	-.19
Occupies apartment or duplex (0=no; 1=yes)	-.25	.10
Canonical Correlation	.53	.43
Multivariate F-Ratio	1.69	1.38
Probability of a Type I Error	.001	.005

stated so that the highest loading for a satisfaction variable is positive.

The first root relates the dimension of psychological satisfaction to demographics by means of the seven satisfaction variables and five demographics whose loadings reached an absolute value of .30. The first canonical variate for psychological satisfaction is defined by using skills and abilities, enjoying leisure activities, finding these activities have a positive effect on one's life, finding the activities

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intellectually challenging, experiencing a sense of accomplishment in the activities, not having one's lack of skill limit the choice of activities, and finding the activities interesting. Briefly stated, this variate represents the ability to use one's skills to obtain both pleasurable involvement and a feeling of success.

The related variate for the demographics set includes important loadings for higher occupational prestige, owning one's dwelling, having higher income, being both male and married, and living in a single-family dwelling. This variate predominantly reflects married men who have found a more successful, stable existence.

The second root based on Psychological satisfactions reflects the feeling that participants can freely choose their leisure activities, find them interesting, feel they have a positive effect on their life, gain a sense of accomplishment from them, enjoy them, gain self-confidence from them, and not feel lonely in their free time. This root suggests participants gain a positive, enjoyable sense of independence from their leisure pursuits, and meet with a feeling of having succeeded.

The corresponding demographic variate reflects higher income for the most part. Secondary contributions come from being married, a lower number of persons supported within the household, and a lesser time of residence in the county. This variate indicates more mobile, smaller, but wealthier families.

Table 2 presents the results of the analysis of the hypothesized relationship between Educational aspects of satisfaction and demographics. One root emerged as significant. This root is defined by satisfaction in learning new things, finding broader experiences, being encouraged to learn new things, being restored spiritually, and increasing one's knowledge about the environment. This root seems to reflect the finding that leisure pursuits allow one to reach out beyond an otherwise more limited existence.

The related demographic variate is defined by higher income, owning one's home, living in a single-family dwelling, not living in a mobile home, being married, and having lower formal educational attainment. This variate reflects a more settled homelife, and greater financial success despite a lower level of education.

The analysis involving the Social aspects of satisfaction did not show a significant relationship with demographics, producing a canonical correlation of .42, with a corresponding probability of Type-I error of .11. These non-significant results are not presented in a table.

Table 3 gives the results for Relaxation, where one root emerged as significant. The two variables that define the satisfaction variate are a contribution to one's emotional well-being, and respondents' participating because they like doing them. This variate suggests pleasurable participation to gain a psychic benefit.

TABLE 2
CANONICAL ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL
SATISFACTIONS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Variables	Loadings Root C
Elements of Satisfaction	
Some of my leisure activities give me broader experiences	.56
I do leisure activities which restore me spiritually	.43
I learn things in my activities simply to learn them	.62
My leisure activities encourage me to learn new skills	.52
My activities increase my knowledge of things around me	.37
My leisure activities help to satisfy my curiosity	.07
My activities provide opportunities to try new things	.07
My leisure activities help me to learn about myself	.20
My leisure activities help me to learn about other people	.27
My activities help me to learn about society in general	.21
My leisure activities help me to learn about nature	-.13
They help me accept differences among individuals	-.02
Demographics	
Gender (0=Male; 1=Female)	-.29
Age (years)	.26
Time at current residence (years)	.16
Occupational prestige (U. of Ill. scale)	.15
Marital status (0=single; 1=married)	.38
Education (years of schooling)	-.31
Household income (8-point scale)	.79
Number of persons supported by this income	-.14
Ownership of dwelling (0=rents; 1=owns)	.45
Occupies single-family dwelling (0=no; 1=yes)	.44
Occupies mobile home (0=no; 1=yes)	-.40
Occupies apartment or duplex (0=no; 1-yes)	-.17
Canonical Correlation	.43
Multivariate F-Ratio	1.34
Probability of a Type-I Error	.008

The demographic variate represents a higher income, one that supports a larger household, not living in an apartment or duplex, and greater occupational prestige. This variate indicates greater social and economic success in one's work, and a larger family living in more permanent quarters.

Table 4 presents the results for Physiological aspects of satisfaction. Here, all six of the variables contribute to the formation of the canonical variate. Leisure activities are seen as helping the participants to develop their physical fitness, control their weight, maintain their energy level, stay healthy, be restored physically, and find a physical challenge. In

TABLE 3
CANONICAL ANALYSIS OF RELAXATION SATISFACTIONS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Variables	Loadings Root D
Elements of Satisfaction	
My leisure activities help me to relax	-.05
My leisure activities help relieve stress	.19
My activities contribute to my emotional well being	.65
I engage in activities simply because I like doing them	.57
Demographics	
Gender (0=Male; 1=Female)	-.25
Age (years)	.08
Time at current residence (years)	.22
Occupational prestige (U. of Ill. scale)	.37
Marital status (0=single; 1=married)	.20
Education (years of schooling)	.13
Household income (8-point scale)	.47
Number of persons supported by this income	.65
Ownership of dwelling (0=rents; 1=owns)	.40
Occupies single-family dwelling (0=no; 1=yes)	.25
Occupies mobile home (0=no; 1=yes)	.12
Occupies apartment or duplex (0=no; 1=yes)	-.44
Canonical Correlation	.39
Multivariate F-Ratio	1.66
Probability of a Type-I Error	.005

TABLE 4
CANONICAL ANALYSIS OF PHYSIOLOGICAL SATISFACTIONS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Variables	Loadings Root E
Elements of Satisfaction	
My leisure activities are physically challenging	.33
I do leisure activities which develop my physical fitness	.82
I do leisure activities which restore me physically	.38
My leisure activities help me to stay healthy	.36
My leisure activities help control my weight	.54
My leisure activities help me maintain my energy level	.47
Demographics	
Gender (0=Male; 1=Female)	-.44
Age (years)	-.42
Time at current residence (years)	.02
Occupational prestige (U. of Ill. scale)	.01
Marital status (0=single; 1=married)	-.01
Education (years of schooling)	.11
Household income (8-point scale)	.15
Number of persons supported by this income	-.09
Ownership of dwelling (0=rents; 1=owns)	.48
Occupies single-family dwelling (0=no; 1=yes)	-.01
Occupies mobile home (0=no; 1=yes)	.03
Occupies apartment or duplex (0=no; 1=yes)	-.02
Canonical Correlation	.44
Multivariate F-Ratio	1.70
Probability of a Type-I Error	.001

short, these activities provide all the benefits associated with physical fitness workouts.

The demographics variate characterizes members of this segment as owning their home, being male, and being younger. Thus, younger men in established homes contribute to the formation of these two related variates.

Table 5 gives the results for Aesthetic aspects of satisfaction with leisure activities. Again, all five of the satisfaction variables contribute to the formation of the canonical variate. Respondents reported the areas or places where they engage in their leisure activities are: beautiful, well designed, interesting, pleasing to them, and fresh and clean. Restated, they find the benefits of a leisure environment that to provides a variety of aesthetically supportive attributes.

The demographic variate represents a greater likelihood of being male, younger age, higher income, and greater likelihood of living in a mobile home. Thus, in the aggregate, these predominantly younger men are better off financially, although some of them inhabit mobile homes.

Discussion

The results from the statistical analysis give clear support for the hypothesis that elements of satisfaction with one's leisure activities can be empirically associated with one's demographic characteristics. Because it is not logical to suppose satisfaction caused most of the demographics used in this study, a general causal influence from demographic characteristics to satisfaction seems reasonable.

Considered at the level of the basic dimensions of satisfaction, again the analysis supports the hypotheses used to guide this research. Five of the six dimensions of satisfaction were found related to demographics. Thus, demographics help us to understand the Psychological, Educational, Relaxation, Physiological, and Aesthetic benefits found gained through participation in leisure pursuits.

For the latter two sets of individual satisfaction variables, the satisfaction dimension that was derived appeared to be monolithic in that all the individual variables loaded positively beyond the

TABLE 5
CANONICAL ANALYSIS OF AESTHETIC
SATISFACTIONS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Variables	Loadings Root F
Elements of Satisfaction	
The places where I engage in them are fresh and clean	.55
The places where I engage in my activities are interesting	.77
The places where I engage in my activities are beautiful	.98
The places where I engage in them are well designed	.82
The places where I engage in them are pleasing to me	.61
Demographics	
Gender (0=Male; 1=Female)	-.51
Age (years)	-.42
Time at current residence (years)	-.14
Occupational prestige (U. of Ill. scale)	-.07
Marital status (0=single; 1=married)	.17
Education (years of schooling)	-.23
Household income (8-point scale)	.41
Number of persons supported by this income	.20
Ownership of dwelling (0=rents; 1=owns)	.01
Occupies single-family dwelling (0=no; 1=yes)	-.27
Occupies mobile home (0=no; 1=yes)	.37
Occupies apartment or duplex (0=no; 1-yes)	-.02
Canonical Correlation	.40
Multivariate F-Ratio	1.58
Probability of a Type-I Error	.005

prescribed level of importance. The analyses for the Educational and Relaxation dimensions also produced a unidimensional variate, but one that was not defined by all the measures used empirically to represent that construct. Finally, the Psychological dimension of Beard and Ragheb was split into two components by the analysis. However, both components reflected a feeling of success, and were distinguished from one another largely by participants' either finding pleasure or gaining independence from leisure activities.

Only the Social benefits could not be empirically linked to demographics. This finding is somewhat surprising in light of the apparent social benefits available from many of the leisure activities that respondents were required to consider before responding to the satisfaction items. Perhaps Social benefits are _experienced_ from leisure pursuits, but these experiences do not vary across the demographic segments of participants in the area surveyed.

Considering those demographic measures that contributed most to the results, four such variables loaded importantly on at least three of the six significant variates that were formed, with numbers of important loadings in parenthesis: income (5), rents or owns dwelling (4), gender (3), and marital status (3). To generalize in terms of these demographics, those reporting the greatest

benefit from their leisure pursuits were higher-income, married, male homeowners.

The implications of these findings for the marketing of leisure services to the public are several. First, the satisfactions are entirely positive in valence. None of those satisfaction items that loaded importantly had a negative substantive meaning (the negative loading for "being limited by a lack of skill" of course translates to a positive substantive meaning). The means for the 51 items ranged from (a substantively interpreted value of) over 3.0 to slightly over 4.0. Thus, it appears that the converse interpretations of the canonical roots (i.e., an orientation toward dissatisfactions) have little validity in an area where people are generally satisfied with their leisure opportunities.

Second, market segments can be jointly delineated in terms of demographics and the benefits from leisure activities. The four most influential demographic variables listed above dominate the demographic side of the characterizations of the market segments in this study. But each of the twelve demographics contributed importantly to the description of at least one of these segments. Thus, persons of differing characteristics are finding different benefits from their leisure pursuits, when considered in terms of five of the six dimensions of satisfaction proposed by Beard and Ragheb.

Third, each of the seven major elements of satisfaction (benefits) listed above may be used as the focal point for designing a program of leisure activities that appeals to persons with recognized demographic characteristics. Possibly two or more of these benefit segments may be combined to define an aggregated benefit segment, given that the aggregated demographics of the segment are consistent with a wholistic marketing strategy designed to provide the benefits in question.

Summary and Conclusions

This study investigated the efficacy of using aspects of participants' satisfaction with their leisure activities to characterize them through a description of joint benefit-demographic market segments. The orientation of this study reflected the pragmatic need of county government to delineate market segments useful for the development and management of programs providing services and facilities for residents. The results showed that dimensions of satisfactions that were conceptualized on the basis of previous research were generally empirically upheld as basic to these market segments. That is, these basic satisfactions/benefits were empirically coupled with demographics to delineate a set of segments for services that can provide target groupings of participants to whom government officials (and others) can direct their marketing efforts.

(References will be furnished upon request.