



Outdoor Recreation

An Introduction

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The Concept and Study of Outdoor Recreation



OBJECTIVES

This chapter will:

- introduce key concepts within leisure studies;
- define outdoor recreation and describe associated characteristics and objectives;
- present a model of the outdoor recreation experience;
- probe the relationship between other forms of leisure and outdoor recreation;
- outline how outdoor recreation has evolved as an area of academic study.

INTRODUCTION

What is outdoor recreation? Your answer may be quick and intuitive—activities such as camping, fishing and skiing are examples of outdoor recreation. Why do you consider these activities to be outdoor recreation? What attributes do they display? Can outdoor recreation be distinguished from other pastimes such as leisure, recreation, sport and tourism? How can outdoor recreation be studied?

Chapter 1 introduces the concept of outdoor recreation. Key ideas in leisure studies (leisure, recreation, sport, tourism) are presented to set the contextual background for defining and understanding outdoor recreation. The concept of outdoor recreation is developed through a discussion of its characteristics, objectives and experiences. In probing the connections between outdoor recreation and other key concepts in leisure a relational understanding is established. The second half of this chapter directs attention to outdoor recreation as an area of academic study. Innovations and challenges are identified in tracing the development of outdoor recreation research. Emerging evidence of maturity supports the appropriateness of pursuing an interdisciplinary perspective.

KEY CONCEPTS IN LEISURE STUDIES

Leisure

Leisure is the good life. It is being able to do what you want. Leisure experiences are often accompanied by a special feeling of transcendence, in which an individual experiences "oneness" with an activity or environment. For individuals with a keen interest in the outdoors, leisure experiences often occur while interacting with the natural environment. In seeking to understand this phenomenon, scholars have discussed leisure as free time, activity, state of mind and state of existence (Edginton, Jordan, DeGraaf & Edginton, 1995; Godbey, 1999; Searle & Brayley, 2000).

Leisure is typically associated with free time or situations in which individuals have the luxury of choice (Godbey, 1999). This association between leisure and free time is so strong that the terms are often used synonymously (Edginton et al., 1995). Think about your daily routine and the amount of time you spend on each activity. The typical American spends ten hours on fulfilling biological requirements (existence), nine hours on garnering economic necessities (subsistence), and five hours on free time activities each day (Jensen, 1995). This amount of free time when considered over the course of life is staggering. When a person reaches the age of 75 he/she has had at least 156,000 hours of non-obligated time (Godbey, 1999). Does this mean that a person experiences leisure during all of this time?

Leisure has also been defined by the activities undertaken during free time. From this perspective leisure is characterized as activities which are pleasurable, purposeful, and undertaken voluntarily (Edginton et al., 1995; Godbey, 1999; Searle & Brayley, 2000). Dumazedier's understanding of leisure is frequently associated with this view, he states that "leisure is activity apart from obligations of work, family and society—to which the individual turns at will, for either relaxation, diversion or broadening his knowledge and his spontaneous social participation" (1967, pp. 16–17).

A third way of thinking about leisure is as a state of mind. Writing in this tradition, Kelly explains that "leisure is a mental condition that is located in the consciousness of the individual" (1990, p. 21). Leisure here is both subjective and personal. What is leisure to you may be very different than what it is to someone else. Particular attention has been directed at how attitudes and values shape the experience of leisure. Godbey (1999) observes that for an individual to experience leisure he/she must perceive free choice. Edginton et al. (1995) go further and emphasize that individuals must be both positive and open to the experience.

Leisure was historically associated with status and considered a state of being (Sylvester, 1999). Godbey (1999) traces leisure back to the Athenian political system which privileged a small minority to experience the "absence of necessity." Although not to the same extent, the association between social status and leisure has persisted. At the turn of the twentieth century Veblen (1934) observed the emergence of a "leisure class" who derived status from displaying extravagance and using time unproductively. Today leisure remains an important avenue for people to convey an image of themselves as goods and services associated with leisure are often used to claim status (Edginton et al., 1995).

Although each of the above perspectives describes a view of the term leisure, they have all been subject to criticism. Godbey (1999) provides one of the most comprehensive critical assessments, asserting that:

- 1 the concept of freedom is not absolute;
- 2 defining leisure as external activities excludes consideration of important internal or subjective factors;
- 3 regarding leisure solely as a state of mind negates consequences of reality; and,
- 4 an "absence of necessity" contradicts purposeful and willful undertaking required to experience leisure. In addition to these arguments, he urges for consideration of more broad questions regarding the applicability of the leisure concept to all persons regardless of gender, race and/or class.

Shortcomings identified with each of the above perspectives have prompted the proposal of more holistic definitions. Writing in the early 1980s, Kelly defined leisure as "the quality of activity defined by relative freedom and intrinsic satisfaction" (1982, p. 82). This definition signaled a shift towards a multi-dimensional definition of leisure. As illustrated in Figure 1.1., the multi-dimensional definition of leisure involves time, activity and experience. These three dimensions appear enduring as they are also reflected in Godbey's most recent definition of leisure. He writes that "leisure is living in relative freedom from the external compulsive forces of one's culture and physical environment so as to be able to act from internally compelling love in ways that are personally pleasing, intuitively worthwhile, and provide a basis for faith" (1999, p. 12).

Recreation

The term recreation is often interchangeably used with the term leisure, even though the two terms are not the same. Recreation is derived from the Latin words *recreatio* and *recreate* which respectfully mean "to refresh" and "to restore" (Edginton et al., 1995). It was traditionally understood in opposition to work and gained currency during the Industrial Revolution as both employers and employees searched for ways to become rejuvenated from long hours of toil (Searle & Brayley, 2000).

Leisure is:

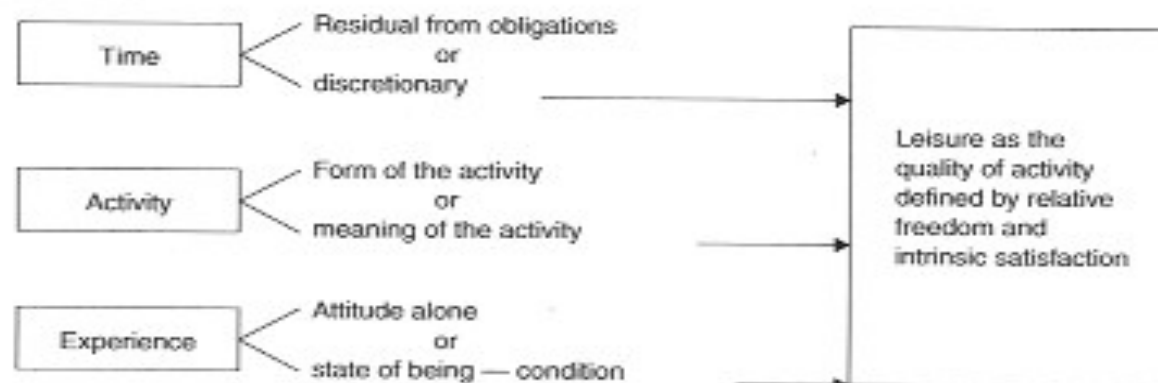


Figure 1.1 Multidimensional Definition of Leisure.

It was also during the Industrial Revolution that concern arose regarding popular activities such as gambling, drinking and related violence. Capitalists worried about production and citizens alarmed by "such ills" viewed recreation as an instrument to prepare citizens for employment and to better society (Edginton et al., 1995; Godbey, 1999). These views prompted recreation to become an entrenched part of institutions and organizations throughout the twentieth century (Edginton et al., 1995). Although a wider range of recreational activities are embraced today in a society of cultural pluralism (pleasurable activities selected by individuals), socially positive values associated with recreation endure.

Considerable disagreement exists regarding the definition of recreation. These differences are contingent upon:

whether or not recreation is a means to an end (such as achievement) or an end in itself, whether or not it should be limited to "moral" activity, whether or not it must refresh the individual for work, and whether or not it is determined primarily by the nature of the activity, the attitude of the respondent toward the activity, or the respondent's psychological state during the activity.

(Godbey, 1999, p. 14)

For the purposes of this book recreation is defined as "voluntary non-work activity that is organized for the attainment of personal and social benefit including restoration and social cohesion" (Kelly, 1996, p. 27). The term recreation is further illuminated by eight key characteristics. According to Sessoms (1984) recreation involves activity, has multiple forms, occurs during leisure, is motivated by satisfaction, resembles play, and has by-products. These characteristics reflect the scope of potential definitions and are helpful to detail subtle nuances that distinguish an activity as recreation (Searle & Brayley, 2000).

Sport

The term sport is also widely used with many meanings. Application of the term has become so diverse that even popular sources have identified the challenge of defining it. The Internet Encyclopedia, as an example of a popular source, states that "despite the fact that everybody thinks that they know what sport means, defining sport is a very complex matter; the term constantly evolves to cover new ranges of human behaviour" (2007, online).

Given this complexity, the term sport is recognizable by key characteristics. These characteristics are consistently identified across popular sources (e.g., Internet Encyclopedia, 2007) and academic sources (Hinch & Higham, 2001; Searle & Brayley, 2000). Sport is characterized by physical activity (strength, agility, speed), structure or rules concerning space and time, competitiveness or goal orientation either among contestants or with oneself, and uncertainty of outcomes. A definition of sport incorporates many of these key characteristics. Kelly defines sport as "organized activity in which physical effort is related to that of others in some relative measurement of outcomes with accepted regularities and forms" (1990, p. 196).

Compared to recreation, which encompasses various forms of activities, sport focuses on

activities that exhibit a narrower set of characteristics. The International Olympic Committee (IOC), for example, promotes the Olympic Movement by recognizing International Federations that administer sport(s) at a world level and are constituted by national level organizations in many countries (IOC, 2007, online). Even with a more restrictive definition of sport, a diverse range of activities and events are still encompassed (IOC, 2007).

Many activities classified as sport also fit into categories of leisure and recreation. An individual may be intrinsically motivated to participate in such activities during free time and therefore consider his/her involvement as leisure. The same activity may be undertaken for the purpose of physical rejuvenation. This connection between recreation and sport is particularly strong because a majority of sport occurs at the local level and is considered as recreation (Hinch & Higham, 2001).

Tourism

The notion of travel has changed considerably in a relatively short period of time. More than 150 years ago travel was an experience reserved for the affluent and adventurous (Fridgen, 1991). The Grand Tour (1500–1820), for example, took sons of English aristocracy to France, Rome, Germany, and the Netherlands for as long as 40 months for studying, aesthetic appreciation, and experiencing culture (Fridgen, 1991). Today, travel is integrated both into everyday life and undertaken for specific purposes. This centrality and popularity are reflected by the recognition that tourism is the largest industry in the world (Hall & Page, 1999).

Tourism has also been defined in a number of ways. In a general sense, tourism is understood as "voluntary travel to a destination which is more novel than the place from which one traveled" (Godbey, 1999, p. 217). Hall and Page (1999) suggest that most definitions of tourism either conceptually or technically narrow this general idea. Conceptual definitions specifically understand tourism as "the temporary movement to destinations outside the normal home and workplace, the activities undertaken during the stay and the facilities created to cater for the needs of tourists" (Mathieson & Wall, 1982, p. 1). In this regard tourism is characterized by:

1. the movement of people;
2. the journey and the stay;
3. the distinction between normal residence and work (both of the traveler and of citizens at the destination);
4. its temporary nature; and,
5. purposes other than residency or employment (Burkart & Medlik, 1981 as cited by Hall & Page, 1999, p. 58).

Technical definitions are frequently employed by organizations in an attempt to capture information or measure specific populations (Hall & Page, 1999). Numerous organizations and government agencies have adopted technical definitions of tourism. One such example is the World Tourism Organization (WTO). The WTO was formed in 1975 and is the only organization with a global scope focusing on international tourism (Fridgen, 1991). According to

the WTO "tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes" (2007, online). Other government agencies have advanced definitions that are even more prescriptive or technical. For example, the National Tourism Resources Review Commission based out of the United States in 1973 recognized a tourist as being, "one who travels away from home for a distance of at least 50 miles (one way) for business, pleasure, personal affairs, or any other purposes except to commute to work, whether he stays overnight or returns the same day" (as cited in McIntosh, Goeldner & Ritchie, 1995, p. 11). In Canada, the Canadian Travel Survey similarly recognizes a person who travels the one-way distance of 50 miles (80 kilometers) as a tourist.

Outdoor Recreation

The term outdoor recreation has been part of the leisure studies lexicon for over 50 years. Over this period of time many definitions of outdoor recreation have emerged. Unlike many of the other contested concepts in leisure studies, the term outdoor recreation has been employed with remarkable consistency. Characteristics associated with numerous definitions of outdoor recreation are summarized in Table 1.1. From this summary, outdoor recreation can be defined as voluntary participation in free-time activity that occurs in the outdoors and embraces the interaction of people with the natural environment.

While characteristics provide a way to recognize outdoor recreation, they fail to entirely capture the intent of such experiences. Therefore, Jensen (1995) asserts that the aims of outdoor recreation need to be clear and purposeful. The very essence of outdoor recreation is reflected in the realization of specific opportunities. In this regard Jensen (1995) proposes the following five objectives of outdoor recreation:

1. **Appreciation of nature**—outdoor recreation should build knowledge and enhance understanding of ecological processes as well as develop an awareness of sensitivity of natural environments to human impacts.



■ Plate 1.1 Why is Kayaking Considered an Outdoor Recreation Activity?

2. **Personal satisfaction and enjoyment**—outdoor recreation provides a vehicle by which people may positively experience nature, derive personal pleasure and/or intuitive enrichment.
3. **Physiological fitness**—outdoor recreation frequently provides opportunities for active physical engagement.
4. **Positive behavior patterns**—outdoor recreation should instill an attitude of respect, consideration, and sincerity toward fellow participants and resource managers.
5. **Stewardship**—outdoor recreation provides opportunity for the exercise of moral and ethical values towards the environment, stewardship should be a chief aim and spirit fostered by outdoor recreation.

The nature of the outdoor recreation experience itself also requires elaboration. Outdoor experiences are frequently (either explicitly or implicitly) limited to the occurrence of an activity at a particular site for a period of time (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966; Jensen, 1995). Considering outdoor recreation in this way omits many important aspects. Clawson and Knetsch (1966) have approached outdoor recreation in a holistic way and developed a model of the total outdoor recreation experience. The impact of their work is noted by Fennell who states that "one of the most oft quoted models of tourism and outdoor recreation research is one proposed by Clawson and Knetsch's (1966)" (2002, p. 7). As illustrated in Figure 1.2, the total outdoor recreation experience consists of five distinct phases. The experience begins with anticipation and planning. During this time an individual eagerly thinks about the forthcoming activity, may read extensively about what to expect and consults with others regarding proper equipment. The second phase involves some amount of travel to the site at which the activity is to occur. It is important to highlight "some amount of travel" to recognize that the site where an activity occurs may vary considerably from a short walk to a local greenway to the most remote reaches of the earth, such as the Arctic. The third phase involves actual participation in the intended activity. This is the phase of the experience that is typically solely associated with outdoor recreation. Return travel is the fourth phase. It is distinguished from travel to the site (phase two) because the participants are changed from the experience. Recollection, recalling aspects of the experience, is the fifth and final phase of the total outdoor recreation experience.

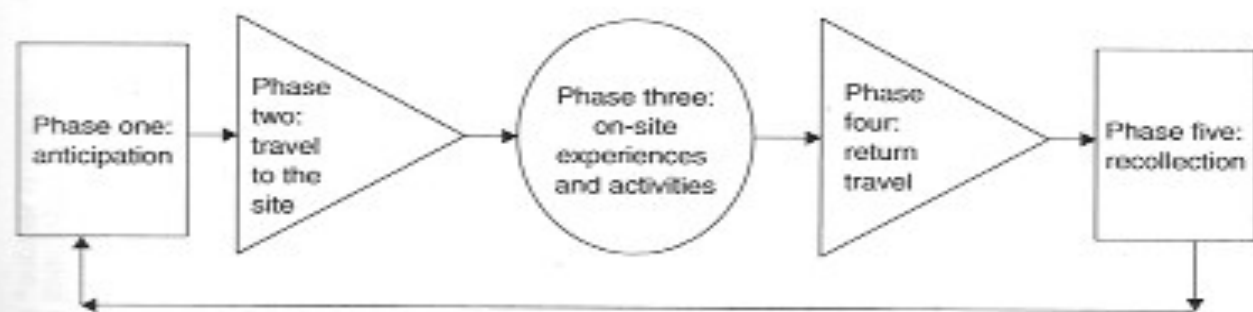


Figure 1.2 Phases of the Outdoor Recreation Experience.

Source: adapted from Clawson & Knetsch, 1966.

Recounting events and showing pictures of the activity to family and friends are common examples. This final phase also acts as a feedback loop which influences both anticipation of and planning for future outdoor recreation experiences.

Connecting Key Concepts

Leisure, recreation, sport, tourism, and outdoor recreation have thus far been treated as mutually exclusive or discrete concepts. Although it is initially helpful to introduce these key concepts in this way, it is important to recognize that many commonalities exist. Overlap between these concepts may be illustrated through the example of playing golf (see Box 1.1). Golf may be considered leisure if it is voluntarily undertaken due to a passion for the activity. Golf is also considered to be an activity which has inherently "recreational" qualities and offers external rewards to participants such as physical fitness and social belonging. Golf certainly mirrors the characteristics of sport (physical participation, rules, skills, competition), which is a more specific type of recreational activity. It may also qualify as tourism if travel of greater than 50 miles or 80 kilometers is involved. Golf is also usually played outdoors and thereby provides an amount of interaction between humans and the natural environment. Yet the degree of interaction between the participant and nature in golf is not as extensive as in other outdoor pursuits.



BOX 1.1 IS GOLF OUTDOOR RECREATION?

Golf is an increasingly popular activity, but is it outdoor recreation? This is a difficult issue and the definitions provided at the start of this chapter are useful in attempting to classify this particular activity. According to these definitions, golf may be considered leisure, recreation, tourism and sport. Many individuals undertake golf out of an internal love or passion for the activity during their free time from which they derive immense personal satisfaction. The Golf Nut Association illustrates the way in which individuals are drawn towards golf in an almost compulsive fashion. Other individuals may participate in golf as a recreational activity, deriving satisfaction from the experience and viewing it as a means of social obligation, exercise and/or relaxation. Travel is involved both to and from the golf course. Travel may also be initiated with the sole purpose of playing golf. Golf also certainly qualifies as a sport as it has well-defined rules, involves physical skills and has many levels of competition.

Golf certainly meets two of the criteria to be considered outdoor recreation. It may be both a free-time activity and may occur outdoors. But, does it emphasize interaction with the natural environment? This is a point of debate. Some argue that elements of nature (ponds, trees, wind) are important aspects of golf with which the golfer must interact. Others argue that interaction with the natural environment is not a primary focus, that golf courses are largely constructed or built environments which are, for the most part, meticulously maintained and that interaction between golfers and natural elements (water hazards, forests, gusts of wind) often result in great frustration.

Like many other activities, the classification of golf is largely subjective and strongly influenced by the manner in which it is undertaken. On the same golf course individuals may be experiencing leisure, participating in recreation, or taking part in tourism. The very nature of golf most closely aligns it with the concept of sport as it involves rules, physical skills and competition. Although many golfers may enjoy being outside, it is argued here that golf ought not be viewed at the resource end of the recreation continuum because it does not emphasize interaction with "natural environments."

As the above example illustrates, an activity may qualify as more than one concept. It is therefore necessary to probe, at a more refined level, the relationship between outdoor recreation and other key concepts. Mieczkowski's (1981) work in *Canadian Geographer* is acknowledged as being important in clarifying the inter-relationships among leisure, recreation and tourism (see Fennell, 2002; Searle & Brayley, 2000). As illustrated in Figure 1.3, leisure serves as a foundation for each of the other concepts. Mieczkowski (1981) views recreation, consisting of local and non-local forms, to occur entirely within the domain of leisure. Tourism extends beyond the reach of non-local recreation and incorporates the host of other reasons for which people travel including business and visiting family and friends.

Probing the relationships among these concepts continues to be of interest to scholars. Hall and Page observe that "there is increasing convergence between the two concepts [recreation and tourism] in terms of theory, activities and impacts, particularly as recreation becomes increasingly commercialised and the boundaries between public and private responsibilities in recreation change substantially" (Hall & Page, 1999, p. 5). They consequently assert that boundaries between these concepts should be considered "soft."

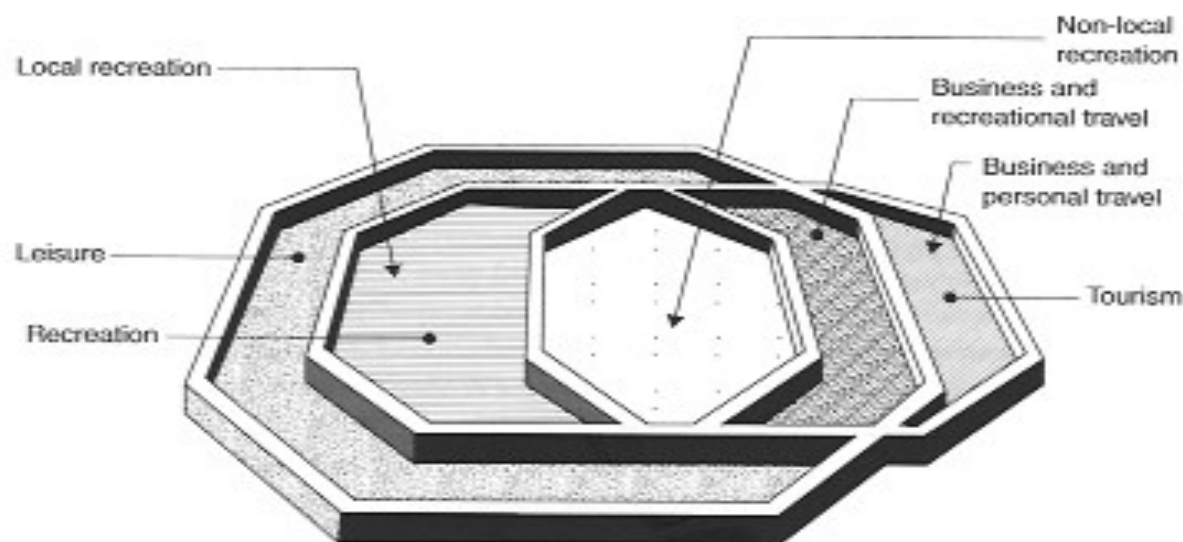


Figure 1.3 Inter-Relationships Among Leisure, Recreation, and Tourism.

Source: Mieczkowski, 1981, cited in Murphy, 1985.

Fennell (2002) observes that such convergence is the subject of perceptual debate. While tourism and recreation are sometimes similar, technical distinctions remain in most definitions. Reflecting upon definitions of tourism leads Fennell to observe that "space—the movement of travelers beyond a predetermined spatial limit—seems to be the key criterion in distinguishing tourism from other forms of recreation" (2002, p. 4).

Consideration of outdoor recreation more specifically reveals that, as a form of recreation, it fits within the purview of leisure when it is an activity that is both freely chosen and intrinsically undertaken. Differentiation is also warranted among the various potential forms of recreation. Jensen (1995) has developed a classification scheme that is helpful to make such a distinction. He suggests that recreation activities may be classified along a continuum. At one end of the continuum are forms which are resource-oriented (occur in natural settings and rely on natural resources). Activities that are user-oriented (occur in built or modified environments and depend on performance) are on the other end of the continuum. By following this classification scheme, outdoor recreation can be regarded as a category of activities that are located at one end of Jensen's (1995) continuum of recreational pursuits.

The model by Clawson and Knetsch (1966) provided an excellent starting point for understanding the total outdoor recreation experience but confounds the relationship between tourism and outdoor recreation. Travel is clearly embedded in their model as part of the outdoor recreation experience. Hall and Page come to the same conclusion from the opposite perspective in stating that "natural settings and outdoor recreation opportunities are clearly a major component of tourism, perhaps especially so since the development of interest in nature-based and ecotourism activities" (1999, p. 5). Their statement confirms the convergence between recreation and tourism at a broad level and recognizes that the relationship between outdoor recreation and particular forms of tourism is even closer. Despite this relative proximity, outdoor recreation is distinct from tourism. Hall and Page (1999) identify that how individuals define the activity themselves is important. Differences are also contingent upon the perspective taken in understanding and analyzing these activities. Outdoor recreation tends to focus on "recreational" and ecological elements whereas tourism tends to focus on spatial and "ecological" elements. Despite taking the former perspective in this book, which does not highlight spatial elements, the closely related topics such as ecotourism are discussed in the final chapter.

THE STUDY OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

Understanding how outdoor recreation has been studied is equally as important as defining it. Essentially, this section establishes the epistemology of outdoor recreation. Epistemology is a Greek word that means the theory of knowledge (Welbourne, 2001). Campbell and Hunter explain that "a traditional task of epistemology is to establish and defend systematic standards, norms, or criteria that must be satisfied in order for us to have knowledge or simply have beliefs that are justified or warranted" (2000, p. 1). This task is relevant to developing an understanding of knowledge acquisition regarding outdoor recreation.

Manning (1999) provides a historical account of outdoor recreation research and development in his book *Studies in Outdoor Recreation*. In this work he traces early studies of outdoor recreation back at least 50 years and recognizes that they tended to be ecologically

focused due to the biological training associated with resource management. A shift in focus occurred after World War II when outdoor recreation emerged as an area of study for social scientists, largely through the presidential-commissioned Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC) in the United States. The association of social issues with outdoor recreation (e.g., crowding, conflict, access) and recognition of social variables of interest (e.g., economics, preferences, attitudes) in the 1960s and 1970s increased the breadth of early research to include social science disciplines such as sociology, economics, and psychology. Based on these historical observations, Manning describes that:

research in outdoor recreation has, then, evolved in the classic manner of most emerging fields of study. Most early studies were descriptive and exploratory, substituting data for theory, and were disciplinary-based. An expanding database allowed more conceptual and analytical developments, and ultimately a more multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach.

(1999, p. 8)

The above account of outdoor recreation research makes clear three important approaches to acquiring outdoor recreation knowledge. Initially, inquiry was undertaken from a disciplinary approach. A discipline, in the traditional academic sense, is considered a basic branch of knowledge. Conventional academic disciplines, often associated with foundational methods, have been used to structure academic institutions, construct basic knowledge, and pursue specialization with increasing refinement and isolation (Brewer, 1999; Savory, 1988). Yet outdoor recreation does not exactly fit within the traditional disciplinary approach and is more accurately described as disciplinary-based. Manning makes clear this distinction as he writes that:

outdoor recreation is not a discipline in the conventional academic sense. That is, it is not a basic branch of knowledge like biology, mathematics, or sociology. It is an applied field of study focused on an issue or problem that has attracted the attention of a broad segment of society.

(1999, p. 4)

As a repository of outdoor recreation information developed, a second tactic emerged in which research began to shift away from initial disciplinary-based approaches. Wall views this as a significant issue in that "recreation is a phenomenon which does not respect traditional disciplinary boundaries and is best understood by those willing to transgress the artificial barriers constructed by those who wish to segment knowledge into academic departments" (1989, p. 4). Consequently, it is not a surprise that a decade later Manning observes:

contributions from the traditional social science disciplines of sociology, psychology, and economics have declined relative to the contributions from researchers in the broader park, recreation, and related departments, whose studies are broader in nature and more appropriate to problem solving in an inherently interdisciplinary field.

(1999, p. 7)

While outdoor recreation remains a subject of interest to some researchers working from disciplinary perspectives, it emerged during this second approach as a substantive area of study in and of itself. This is the process of knowledge specialization. As a result, the subject of outdoor recreation constitutes a significant area of focus in professional schools or applied areas of study including natural resource management, forestry, ecology, tourism, environmental studies, planning, community health and leisure studies.

The relationship between a discipline-based and an applied approach has, at times, confounded advancement and recognition of outdoor recreation research. This tension primarily arises from systemic differences between basic and pragmatic approaches to research (Manning, 1999). Following in the positivistic tradition associated with the disciplinary approach, scholarly research focused on testing hypotheses to generate new knowledge. On the other hand, applied research tends to be pragmatic and aimed at addressing manageable variables of concern.

Partly due to the classical development of outdoor recreation as a field of study and to some extent a consequence of the basic versus applied schism, outdoor recreation research has been frequently criticized for lacking a theoretical basis (Crandall & Lewko, 1976; Hendricks & Burdge, 1972; Manning, 2000; Moncrief, 1970; Napier, 1981; Riddick, DeSchraver & Weissinger, 1984; Smith, 1975; Witt, 1984). In commenting on the state of recreation and leisure research, Hendricks and Burdge explained:

It is difficult to convince colleagues not steeped in leisure that we are engaged in meaningful research—not because we lack statistical and methodological expertise but because we lack a theoretical framework, a conceptualization scheme and a cumulative focus.

(1972, p. 217)

Smith (1975) also recognized that recreation research often specifies intractable, vague non-problems that resultantly do not hold up in practice. Others (e.g., Hultsman, Cottrell & Hultsman, 1998) have reinforced the need to be broadly applicable.

These once pervasive criticisms appear to be waning with time (Manning, 1999, 2000). Henderson (1994) explored the presence of conceptual and theoretical frameworks in four recreation journals during the 1980s and found that most articles included a theoretical basis. Research from disciplinary-based and applied approaches are becoming recognized as being complementary and together have advanced the state of outdoor recreation research. Important trends in the development of outdoor recreation research are the transition to theoretically-based investigations and understanding and synthesis of literature into conceptual/organizational frameworks (Vaske & Manning, 2008). Although sometimes these terms are employed interchangeably (e.g., Wall, 1989) they are distinct. Berkes and Folke offer further refinement by linking these concepts. They observe that “models describe how things work, whereas theories explain phenomena. Conceptual frameworks do neither; rather they help to think about phenomena, to order material, revealing patterns—and pattern recognition typically leads to models and theories” (1998, p. 15).

Conceptual frameworks are organizational devices which structure how we think about a particular phenomenon. Geoffrey Wall (1989), in his book *Outdoor Recreation in Canada*,

proposed a framework which details variables influencing leisure generally and outdoor recreation specifically. To Wall:

Outdoor recreation may be considered to have two basic aspects: the supply of recreational facilities and the demand for participation. Supply and demand interact through intervening decision-making processes to give rise to patterns of outdoor recreation. These patterns of outdoor recreation have associated economic, environmental, and social impacts.

(1989, p. 9)

The various linkages that connect the main elements are equally important. Supply (available resources) and demand (persons requiring the resource) relate through the decision-making process and ultimately shape participation. Wall (1989) refers to this as patterns of recreation consisting of quantitative measures, spatial elements, duration of activities, temporal distributions, nature of accommodations and group composition. The result of pursuing outdoor recreation is manifest in economic, environmental and socio-cultural consequences. Wall encourages others to pursue organizational devices as he writes that "the theoretical [conceptual] framework which has been presented is by no means the only possible one . . . nor is it exhaustive in its content" (1989, p. 16).

A third approach to outdoor recreation inquiry emerges with the accumulation of a critical mass of outdoor recreation research and ongoing conceptual refinements. Outdoor recreation in this third approach is identified as being multidisciplinary (Manning, 1999) and/or interdisciplinary (Manning, 1999; Wall, 1989). An interdisciplinary perspective of outdoor recreation is pursued in this book because it facilitates exploration of topics that transcend boundaries, permits incorporation of both pragmatic and conceptual considerations and reflects the continued logical progression of outdoor recreation inquiry.

SUMMARY

This chapter developed the contextual background in which outdoor recreation may be understood. Key concepts within leisure studies were discussed (leisure, recreation, sport and tourism) prior to concentrating on defining the term outdoor recreation. Unlike some of the other key concepts that have been widely interpreted, the term outdoor recreation has been employed with remarkable consistency and is considered a behavior that:

1. involves voluntary participation in free time activity;
2. occurs in the outdoors; and,
3. embraces the interaction of people with the natural environment. Probing differences among these key concepts highlights the importance of employing the terms with precision.

The second half of the chapter was dedicated to documenting how outdoor recreation has been, and may be, studied. Outdoor recreation has followed a "classical" progression from a primarily descriptive discipline-based approach to a conceptual and interdisciplinary

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scheme. In putting an interdisciplinary framework front and center in this volume, readers may gain an appreciation for its importance as well as the major elements that constitute the study of outdoor recreation.

KEY CONCEPTS

Applied approach	Outdoor recreation
Disciplinary approach	Phases of the outdoor recreation experience
Epistemology	Recreation
Leisure (multi-dimensional definition)	Sport
Objectives of outdoor recreation	Tourism

SUGGESTED KEY SOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

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- Virtual Library of Sport <http://sportsvl.com>
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REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Define the terms leisure, recreation, sport and tourism.
2. What is outdoor recreation?
3. Explain the similarities and differences among leisure, recreation and sport.
4. Is golf outdoor recreation?
5. Describe the total outdoor recreation experience?
6. How has the study of outdoor recreation evolved during the past 50 years?