

SU, KUANG HUA, Ph.D., December, 2007

Curriculum and Instruction

EFFECTS OF A SERIOUS LEISURE EDUCATION PROGRAM ON  
PERCEPTIONS OF SERIOUS LEISURE BEHAVIOR IN TAIWAN COLLEGE  
STUDENTS:  
A CASE OF BIRD-WATCHING

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The notion of serious leisure has received attention in the domain of leisure education. Stebbins (2000) suggested that leisure education centers not on casual leisure but on serious leisure. Although the wealth of qualitative research on serious leisure theory has contributed to the body of knowledge concerning the construct of serious leisure, quantitative investigation to the practice of serious leisure education remains scant.

This study investigated the effect of a serious leisure education program (SLEP) on the perceptions of serious leisure behaviors held by college

students in Taiwan. The SLEP, serving as an intervention, was developed based on Stebbins six distinctive qualities defining serious leisure. To put the SLEP into a school setting, the underlying curricular base adopted from transformative curriculum (Henderson & Hawthorne, 2000 ) for this study accommodated both transformative curriculum (TC ) and serious leisure as suggestive of self-development. Shaped by TC, the SLEP was characteristic of web-based community learning and maximal space for learners to reflect the meaning of leisure.

Perceptions of serious leisure behavior (SLB ) were measured with the researcher-developed SLB scale, which was constructed by extracting indicators of serious leisure behavior and developed with critical analysis, field test, item analysis, factor analysis, exploratory factory analysis, and confirmatory factory analysis. The SLB scale (30 items ) demonstrated good model fit.

A quasi-experimental design with nonequivalent groups and nonrandom

assignment was used, and three measurements (pretest, posttest, and postposttest) of SLB scores were taken. Participants were assigned to three groups: One experimental group took the SLEP, and two contrast groups took the casual leisure activity program (CLAP) and outdoor activity placebo program (OAPP) respectively.

The results show that the implementation of the SLEP had effects. In particular, students in the SLEP group who had low and intermediate pretest scores were affected most and demonstrated immediate and long-term effect from the intervention of the SLEP. An immediate effect was found in the CLAP group, but no lasting effect was present. For the OAPP group, no immediate effect and lasting effect were found. The findings were explained from curricular standpoints in conjunction with the differing curricular programs administered to differing groups.